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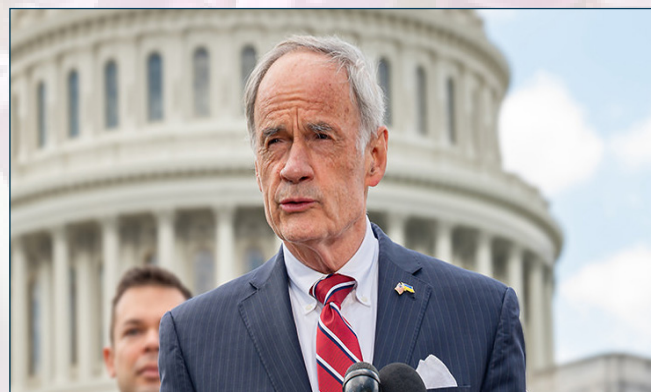


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Memorial Day Weekend Guide



Carper To Retire



Cape Beats Sallies in Boys' Volleyball Championship





*Community*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# YOUR GUIDE TO MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND IN DELAWARE

BY JAREK RUTZ

The unofficial beginning of summer is finally here, and the First State has plenty of events to celebrate Memorial Day weekend.

While many will be soaking in the sunshine and warm weather on their favorite beach, several celebrations in Delaware remind folks of what the day is really about: honoring members of the military who gave their lives protecting the United States of America. Two of the biggest events—the parade in Wilmington and the ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park—are Tuesday.

### Weather

Besides a 30% chance to rain Friday night, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, the sun will shine down on Delaware with comfortable temperatures Memorial Day weekend.

Friday will be mostly sunny with a high of 69 degrees, with temperatures dropping to 52 in the night, according to the [National Weather Service](#). Saturday will also be sunny with some typical afternoon showers with a high of 70 and a low of 54. Sunday will bring sunshine with a high of 75 and a low of 53. On Monday, Memorial Day, some sun will peak through the clouds with a high temperature of 76 and a low of 59.

### Travel

[AAA Mid-Atlantic](#) expects summer travel this year will “comfortably above” pre-pandemic numbers, despite airline ticket prices running 20 to 30% higher than in 2022. Those traveling by car can expect much cheaper gas prices—down from an average of \$4.61 per

gallon last year to \$3.42 per gallon this holiday weekend. AAA also predicted the best and worst times to travel this weekend:

- Friday, May 26 – Best time: before 12 p.m.; worst time: 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Saturday, May 27 – Minimal traffic impact expected
- Sunday, May 28 – Minimal traffic impact expected
- Monday, May 29 – Best time: before 10 a.m.; worst time: 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Several beaches will also expand to allow more people. For example, Rehoboth Beach will have a noticeably wider beach from Deauville to Delaware Avenue.

### Memorial Day weekend events

*Sussex County’s Memorial Day Service* starts at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 28, at the Circle in Georgetown. Sponsored by the [Georgetown Kiwanis Club](#) and the [Korean War Veterans Association](#), the keynote speech “Living Lives That Honor the Fallen” will be delivered by Sgt. First Class Justin Downen, U.S. Army National Guard, a combat veteran of the 3rd Special Forces Group and founder of the Green Beret Project that mentors and empowers disadvantaged children and teens. Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown will be the emcee for the free event. The rifle salute will be executed by members of the 198th Signal Battalion, Delaware National Guard, stationed at the Georgetown Armory. Taps and its echo will be performed by Sussex Central Band Director Ben Ables and Sussex Central senior Kylie Youse. Memorial wreaths will be placed by local veterans’ groups and service organizations in tribute to those who died serving America.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)





# ALL LANES OF DELAWARE MEMORIAL BRIDGE TO OPEN THIS WEEKEND

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The Jersey barriers that created a bypass lane during construction on the Delaware Memorial Bridge are being removed, with the goal of having all eight lanes open this weekend.

The three left lanes were closed from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily, Monday-Wednesday, May 22-24, to remove the concrete barriers. During this process, only the right lane will be open to traffic.

On the same three days, the left lane remained closed. A second lane will be closed from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for line stripping and concrete finishing work.

This week marks the end of a second phase of a major construction project to rehabilitate the bridge deck. David Hoppenjans, chief engineer for the Delaware River and Bay Authority, said that the three quarters of the New Jersey-bound span is now fully rebuilt.

The last phase, which is expected to begin after Labor Day, will focus on the right two lanes from the midpoint of the bridge to the New Jersey side of the structure.

For the latest in traffic information and project updates, follow the bridge on Twitter @demembridge or sign up for text alerts at [www.bridgealerts.com](http://www.bridgealerts.com).



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## COMMUTER RAIL LINK BETWEEN NEWARK AND PERRYVILLE ADVANCES

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The long-desired commuter rail service between Newark and [Perryville, MD](#), is inching forward. A new agreement between the Delaware Transit Corp. and the Maryland Transit Administration calls for studying the expansion of MARC train service 20 miles to Newark and hence into the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority system into Philadelphia and points beyond.

“The recently announced agreement by the MTA reflects DTC’s continuing commit to working with the MTA/MARC to close the commuter rail gap between Perryville and Newark,” said Bruce R. Demeter, the DTC’s chief of performance and innovation. “There are many questions to be answered before schedules or

infrastructure improvements can be determined. DTC will work with MTA/MARC, Amtrak and SEPTA to answer those questions and determine the viability of MARC service to Newark.”

Maryland has also signed a similar agreement with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority to expand MARC service to Alexandria, VA.

The various agencies will work with other organizations to help determine operational and infrastructure needs and explore “pilot service opportunities.”

Earlier this year, Maryland [announced](#) a plan with the federal government to replace the B&P Tunnel in Baltimore—the oldest in the Northeast Corridor—and save over seven hours of train delays every weekday.

MARC runs a half-dozen trains each weekday between Perryville and Washington’s Union Station. SEPTA [runs](#) nine trains each weekday from Newark into Philadelphia and eight from Philadelphia into Newark.

A 2021 Maryland Department of Transportation document identifies a half-dozen challenges, including track capacity, number and condition of switches, size and condition of maintenance and storage facilities, seats and train sets available, sharing the track and union contracts.

Kevin Hornberger, who represents Cecil County in the Maryland General Assembly, told Delaware Business Times in 2020 that there are several important infrastructure issues. They include a limited track (two lines and no switch), buy-in from the tracks’ owner (the U.S. Department of Transportation) and its other users (including Amtrak), and where to store MARC cars at the end of the day.

In 2017, the Wilmington Area Planning Council studied the gap, the only one in the 460 miles in the Northeast Corridor between Spotsylvania, VA, and New London, CT.

“WILMAPCO has not completed any additional work since that last ridership projection study,” said Dave Gula, the principal planner who wrote that study. “We continue to work with MTA/MARC and DelDOT/DTC to try to move forward with the MARC to SEPTA connection and the recent signing of the agreement is probably the first real step towards that goal.”







# MEET BARRY, WILMINGTON POLICE'S NEW TRAUMA AND WELLNESS DOG

BY BETSY PRICE

The city of Wilmington has added a trauma and wellness dog to its **police department**. The

18-month-old English Labrador retriever named Barry began work this

month. He will be the four-legged extension of the department's Critical Incident Stress Management/Peer Support Team, designed to help officers and civilian employees cope with the effects of critical incidents and promote overall health and wellness. Barry will also support the department's Victim Services Unit, and those affected by crime in Wilmington.

"We are excited to introduce Barry to Wilmington, and to expand our efforts to support the community and our employees," said Police Chief Wilfredo Campos in a city press release. "I believe strongly in the importance of ensuring the health and wellness of our residents, as well as the first responders and civilian staff—both on the street and behind the scenes."

Barry's handler, Lt. Harold Bozeman, is the commanding officer of the department's new Community Engagement Unit, as well as the department's CISM/Peer Support Team.

Barry has already made appearances at community meetings and WPD initiatives, such as the department's weekly Community Outreach Walks and its monthly Coffee with a Cop events.

Barry will also appear at the monthly Community Resource Fairs and other public events.

"This is the culmination of a nearly two-year effort to add a mental health dog to our employee support and wellness programs," Bozeman said. "I have already seen Barry making a positive impact on the morale of our officers and staff and I know that he will continue to do so as he settles into his role as a member of our work family."

Barry comes from the Texas-based nonprofit **K9s for Freedom and Independence**, with the support of the Barclays Military Service Employee Resource Group.



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# NEW YORK MAN SETS NEW DELAWARE FISHING RECORD

BY JAKE ELMER

For the second year in a row, a Delaware record has been broken for the same kind of fish. James Milano of North Babylon, NY, caught a record-breaking tautog measuring 34 inches and weighing in at 22 pounds, 14.4 ounces while fishing over a wreck in the Atlantic Ocean east of Indian River Inlet. It was 1 pound, 6.7 ounces heavier than the previous state record tautog caught by Brent Wiest in May 2022.

Two consecutive years with record-breaking tautog caught is a sign of an improving fishery for the species in Delaware, according to the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

Milana was fishing aboard the No Limit charter boat with Capt. Jon Azato. Efforts were not successful to reach Milano for comment.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council says tautog are a slow-growing species.

Milano was able to catch the record-breaking tautog just before the seasonal closure of the fishery. Tautog season closed on May 15 and anglers will have to wait until July 1 to target the fish again.

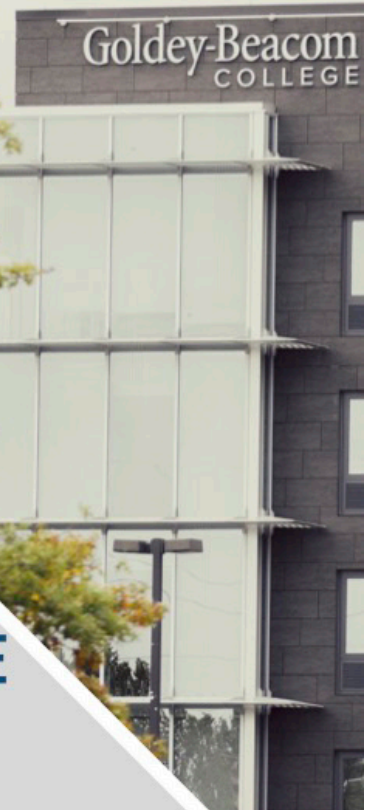
Tautog must be at least 16 inches to keep and anglers are limited to four per day. Tautog are structure-oriented fish, so anglers targeting them can fish over artificial reefs, jetties or wrecks. They are notorious bait-stealers, so it takes quick reflexes to land one.

While tautog are typically caught between 13 and 20 inches, there is always the possibility of hooking into a trophy like Milano. Tautog are also called blackfish and are considered a great eating fish with nice white-to-grayish meat. Many cooks bake it, but some prefer to eat it raw as sushi.



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photo by Mailchimp / Unsplash

The image shows a laptop on a wooden table in a home office. The laptop screen displays the Mailchimp website. The website header includes the Mailchimp logo, a phone number (+1 800 315 5929), and a 'Log in' link. The main heading is 'Outperform your last campaign'. Below this is a diagram of an email automation flow for abandoned carts. The flow starts with 'No Abandoned Carts' and 'Subject: You left something behind'. It then branches into three steps: 1. 'Float left in their cart' (with a play button icon), 2. 'Wait 1 hour' (with a clock icon), and 3. 'Gets reminder email' (with an envelope icon). The final step shows a yellow email preview with the subject 'Don't let this one float away!' and a 'BUY NOW' button. To the right of the flow diagram is the text 'Sell more with email automations' and a paragraph: 'Generate more orders with our prebuilt automations: remind abandoned cart shoppers, reengage lost customers, or cross-sell your products. Marketers have seen, on average, 4x more orders with our Customer Journey Builder than with bulk emails.' Below this text is a 'Sell more' button. A small question mark icon is visible in the bottom right corner of the laptop screen.

*Business*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





BY SAM HAUT

With the legalization of recreational marijuana, workplaces in Delaware will now have to contend with the increased usage that will bring. In response to the bills, the state of Delaware implemented a **new policy** May 3 for all executive branches to ban smoking or being under the influence of marijuana, similar to the use of alcohol. Claire DeMatteis, secretary of the Department of Human Resources, said that marijuana in all forms is banned in state workplaces.

“The State of Delaware, private corporations are updating existing policies to add the fact that the workplace needs to be marijuana free...That policy includes marijuana in any form,” DeMatteis said. “Because we know there are some people that make brownies out of marijuana, and cookies. And none of that will be tolerated in a state building.”

## MARIJUANA BANNED FROM DE WORKPLACES AFTER LEGALIZATION

The Delaware Department of Human Resources also encouraged other non-executive branch agencies to adopt and administer the same policy.

While recreational marijuana may be banned at work, people with a valid medical marijuana card will still be able to smoke or use edibles in state workplaces, except for those working in the Department of Corrections or in law enforcement. DeMatteis said there are no plans at this time to change that policy, due to safety.

“You can’t, in a prison, allow a correctional officer to smoke marijuana because he or she medically needs it. And that has always been the case...First and foremost, it’s a state safety issue,” DeMatteis said. “And you just can’t have first responders, particularly in a prison setting, bringing in marijuana, medical or otherwise.”

The state isn’t the only employer updating its policy. DeMatteis said that companies like JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, and colleges in Delaware are also banning marijuana in their offices.

“University of Delaware put out a big statement,” DeMatteis said. “Think about companies like JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America. They already have policies that now will be effective in Delaware since they operate in other states that have quote, unquote, legalized marijuana. So a lot of our private employers in the state have similar marijuana- and alcohol-free workplace policies.”

Adam Cantley, the dean of students at the University of Delaware, sent out an email May 1 reminding students

that the use, sale, manufacturing, distribution, possession or facilitation of the use of marijuana on campus is still prohibited. Under the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, colleges like the University of Delaware must ban the use of drugs like marijuana in order to receive federal funding.

The Delaware Society for Human Resource Management did not respond to requests for comment.

Jeanne Kress, the membership sales manager with the New Castle Chamber of Commerce, said that chambers of commerce don’t have conversations with businesses about their policies, so she doesn’t know if any companies updated their policies following marijuana legalization.

Ayanna Khan, president of the Delaware Black Chamber of Commerce, said they haven’t talked with their members about updating their policies following legalization, but know several companies with second chance initiatives. Those initiatives involve companies hiring people who’ve previously been convicted of crimes.







BY BETSY PRICE

**CorriXR Therapeutics** was given the “Most Promising New Company” award by attendees at the inaugural Delaware’s DNA 2023 Life Science Conference. Sponsored by **Delaware Bio**, the conference attracted 300 people to network and hear panels about industry trends.

CorriXR, the first spin-out of ChristianaCare’s Gene Editing Institute, is an oncology-focused biotherapeutics development company with what they describe as a ground-breaking gene editing platform technology. The startup was competing with four others for the title by presenting a three-minute pitch about what they were doing and how they were doing it to the conference audience, who voted for the winner.

Also in the running were:

- **Cosmos Pharmaceuticals** – The medical device company focuses on the relationship between medication adherence and patient outcomes.
- **Hartlon** – The start-up is developing a resorbable vascular stent designed to salvage limbs that are at risk

## CANCER-FOCUSED CORRIXR THERAPEUTICS WINS 'MOST PROMISING' AWARD

of amputation by restoring blood flow below the knee.

- **BioCurie** – BioCurie is developing an AI software platform that will revolutionize cell and gene therapy (CGT) production to make these lifesaving therapies faster, better and cheaper.
- **Cellergy Pharma** – Cellergy Pharma develops novel immunotherapies for the treatment of severe allergic diseases.
- **Innovative Precision Health** – Innovative Precision Health (IPH) is a healthcare technology company that provides comprehensive solutions for precision health. Its platform integrates data collection, analysis and interpretation and is implemented nationwide.
- **Nitro Biosciences** – Nitro Biosciences is a startup from the University of Delaware developing a live bacterial vaccine platform to target diseases/antigens normally hidden from the immune system.

As top vote getter, CorriXR will receive a \$2,500 prize and runners-up Cosmos and Hartlon each will receive \$1,000.

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photo by Charlie Megginson

LEGISLATIVE HALL

*Government*

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## CARPER SAYS HE'LL RETIRE AT THE END OF HIS TERM

BY SAM HAUT

Tom Carper, a U.S. senator representing Delaware since 2001, announced Monday that he's retiring when his term ends next year. Carper, 76, at a news conference on the Wilmington Riverfront, signaled his support for Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester, the state's first Black member of Congress, as his successor, *The Washington Post* reported.

"The odds-on favorite to replace the longtime Delaware politico is Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.), who has indicated an interest in running for the Senate if Carper decided against seeking another term," according to *The Hill*. *Politico* made the same prediction.

In 1976, at the age of 29, he was elected to the first of three terms as Delaware's state treasurer. Six years later, he was elected to Delaware's at-large seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He went on to serve five terms as a U.S. Congressman. He then served two terms as governor of Delaware, beginning in 1993.

"Tom Carper has literally bent the arch of Delaware history," Secretary of State Jeff Bullock said. "I started my public service with Tom Carper as a 22-year-old intern. Over the next 17 years, I had the opportunity to serve as his chief of staff in the U.S. House, the U.S. Senate and for most of his time as governor."

"As chairman of the Environment and Public Works

Committee, Sen. Carper has protected our lands and waterways and played an instrumental role in the passage of both the landmark, bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act," U.S. Sen. Chris Coons said in his congratulatory statement.

"For more than five decades, Tom Carper has served our state and our nation with distinction," Senate President Pro Tempore Dave Sokola, Senate Majority Leader Bryan Townsend, and Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth "Tizzy" Lockman said in a joint statement. "His tireless dedication and infectious spirit have improved the lives of countless Delawareans across every corner of our state. From the redevelopment of the Wilmington Riverfront, the creation of the First State National Historic Park and the protection of our beaches and inland bays to his work as a champion of the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Post Office and American infrastructure."

"The First State National Historical Park is just one example of Sen. Carper delivering for Delaware, with the Wilmington Riverfront, record investments during his time as governor, numerous beach replenishments, bridge repairs along the C&D Canal, securing significant federal funding for various projects throughout the state, and countless other accomplishments adding to his legacy," House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf, House Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst and House Majority Whip Melissa Minor-Brown said in a joint statement. "It's difficult to find a politician—of either party—or political staffer who hasn't directly or indirectly been in Sen. Carper's orbit or influenced by him."

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# STATE OFFERS THREE DATES FOR ASSAULT WEAPON REGISTRATION

BY SAM HAUT

The Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security announced that it will be hosting several opportunities for Delawareans to register their assault weapons. There will be three dates, each from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., for people from each county to get a certificate, including May 27 at the Delaware State Police Troop 2 building in New Castle County, on June 3 at the Delaware State Police Troop 7 building in Sussex County, and on June 10 at the Delaware State Police State Bureau of Identification in Kent County.

Jeff Hague, president of the Delaware State Sportsmen’s Association, said he doesn’t understand why it’s taken the DSHS so long to start issuing certificates.

“I’m a little disappointed that it’s taken them 48 weeks to do something that the law said had to be done within

one year, only giving people one year to do this,” Hague said. “Homeland Security has waited until less than just about a month left before they did anything. That’s disappointing.”

People will not need to pay for the certificate and will still be able to get a certificate even if they can’t go to any of the listed dates. It is unclear, however, where people can go to get a certificate after the listed dates or what will happen if someone doesn’t have a certificate for an assault weapon after June 30, 2023.

Hague said the certification process should have gone through a public comment period because of the changes it makes.

“So if you’re establishing a rule or procedure, that’s a regulation,” Hague said. “By definition, that’s why I say



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that I believe it should have gone through to the Administrative Procedures Act for public comment to let people know what’s going on.”

To get a certificate, people must present a valid Delaware driver’s license, Delaware identification card, or U.S. passport, and a bill of sale proving the firearm was purchased before June 30, 2022. For inherited weapons, documents like a will have to be provided.

Hague said that it may be difficult for some people to produce a record that they purchased a certain firearm.

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# STATE RETIREES ON MEDICARE TO PAY 5% MORE FOR MEDICFILL PLAN

BY SAM HAUT

People who have retired from the state of Delaware and are now on Medicare will pay 5% more for the state’s special Medicfill insurance plan, a committee decided on Monday. The change starts Jan. 1.

The State Employee Benefits Committee had voted in March to increase premiums 9.4% for those on the group health insurance plan but not on Medicare.

“I’ve lost sleep over this,” said state Insurance Commissioner Trinidad Navarro. “I’d like everyone to know that. I think other members of the SEBC have as well because we know the challenges of living on a fixed income. But I think probably the most prudent thing to do is to recommend the 5% increase.”

The problem, from the committee’s perspective: not increasing premiums would add to the state’s projected deficit. The 5% increase would add \$3.6 million to the

projected \$77.2 million deficit for fiscal 2024, compared to a \$7.6 million increase to the deficit if rates don’t increase. The 9.4% increase in premiums for current employees and retirees under 65 will give the state a projected \$61.7 million and \$8.9 million in fiscal 2024, respectively.

Rates would need to increase by 9.6% for fiscal 2025 and 2026 to address the growing deficit, which would increase to \$476.7 million by fiscal 2027 assuming rates increased by 9.4% each year for all three groups, which include active employees, pre-65 retirees and retirees on Medicare. People speaking during the public comment part of the meeting disagreed.

“Medicare retirees are not the problem,” Mary Graham said. “The problem, if you want to call it that...is the substantial deficit year after year after year after year of



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the non-Medicare retirees, and that dwarfs the surpluses of Medicare retirees.”

Marca White, a retired state employee, said it isn’t fair to increase costs for retirees by any percent. “What fairness is there to increase this cost of this particular group’s healthcare by 9.4%, or even 5%, when it is already overfunded?” White said. “There is no fairness. I say there is none. Medicare with Medicfill and prescriptions are therefore not a problem. There is no fairness to further burden this particular Medicare group, who also has to pay between \$165 and \$188 a month to federal Medicare, where the other groups do not.”

The committee also voted to increase costs for prescription drugs for everyone.

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# RETIREE SKEWERS SUBCOMMITTEE FOR POSSIBLE CHANGE IN BENEFITS

BY SAM HAUT

A retiree's voice broke as she recounted to the SEBC Retiree Benefits Subcommittee on May 19 what it would mean for her health coverage to change.

"About 10 days ago, my husband was diagnosed with cancer," Diana Noonan said in the Zoom call. "He had scheduled for surgery next week. And the word cancer is daunting, and it's also been frightening, and it's rocked our family. I cannot imagine how much worse it would be if we had to worry about coinsurances and paying out of pocket prior to many of the surgeries and treatments involved. We simply do not have the funds."

Noonan said it's immoral for the subcommittee to consider taking away any of their healthcare benefits.

"I cannot imagine that this committee can begin to believe that it is anything but immoral and unethical to take any level of medical benefits away from us at this point in our lives," Noonan said. "Especially when for

over 30 years we had been told that while salaries were not great, our retirement benefits would be...We are people who have age but we still have value. We are parents and grandparents and we have busy lives."

Prior to Noonan's comments, the subcommittee had been discussing how they can lower the state's unfunded liability. That liability comes from the post employment benefits that are paid out of what's called the OPEB Trust Fund. It includes retiree benefits such as health-care, life insurance and disability, but not pensions. Money for those benefits will need to be accrued, or the state will not be able to support those benefits.

The state currently has an \$8.3 billion shortfall in that unfunded liability as of July 1, 2022, and estimates that shortfall will increase to \$20.7 billion by 2042 if nothing is done.

The subcommittee looked at three different methods to reduce the liability, including having state employee spouses only get 50% coverage under the plan, reducing the amount the state pays into the plan based on how long someone has worked for the state, and eliminating access to health coverage for people who don't work for the state when they retire.

When considering reducing coverage for employee spouses, Cheiron, a consulting firm, estimated two scenarios, model A, which applied to employees hired on or after Jan. 1, 2015 who later retire, and model B, which applied to any retirees on or after Jan. 1, 2025. For model A, Cheiron estimated a \$1.8 billion reduction in the liability over 30 years, while for model B, they estimated a \$2.7 billion reduction in the liability over 30 years.

In considering reducing the amount people get per year of service, Cheiron had model A, which applied to employees hired on or after Jan. 1, 2015, and model B, which applied to employees hired on or after Jan. 1, 2025. For model A, the state saved \$3.8 billion over 30 years, and for model B, the state would save an estimated \$3 billion over 30 years.

Finally, when considering eliminating access for people no longer with the state, Cheiron had model A, which applied to employees who leave state employment on or after Jan. 1, 2025, and model B, which applied to employees who leave state employment before Jan. 1, 2025 and weren't eligible to draw a pension before that date. For model A, the state would save an estimated \$1.5 billion over 30 years, and for model B, the state would save an estimated \$1.8 billion over the next 30 years.

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## REPUBLICANS POINT OUT HIGH COSTS, CHANCE OF FIRE IN EV DEBATE

BY SAM HAUT

Republicans led a charge May 18 to derail a bill that requires new homes and multi-family dwellings to be wired for electric vehicles, a move that Democrats say will help ensure the sale of more cars and help the environment. They failed.

**Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 103**, sponsored by Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Wilmington, would require all new single-family homes after 2024 and multi-family homes after 2025 be equipped with a conduit for installing an electric vehicle charger. While the bill is similar to the original Senate Bill 103, it clarifies the definition multi-family dwelling to only be for nontransient hotels, boarding houses, and motels, removes voltage from the definition of electric vehicle parking spaces for clarity, specifies that final site plans be submitted, not

just approved, by Jan 1, 2025, for multi-family homes, and clarifies that a charger can be installed in an unassigned parking space.

Republicans argued that charging cars in homes creates a fire hazard, that the state is ignoring people who don't want one and that installing home chargers is expensive. Senate Minority Leader Sen. Gerald Hocker, R-Ocean View, said that he's heard from firefighters who are against the bill.

"The fire service is totally, 100% against charging any vehicles in any residential areas, like a garage or a building...they have a fire on a charger on electric vehicles, that fire will not be able to be put out and there will be deaths," Hocker said. "I heard that presentation by a fireman."

According to **research** done by AutoinsuranceEZ, 1,529.9 gas vehicles catch on fire for every 100,000 sold, compared to 25.1 electric vehicles catching on fire for every 100,000 sold. While electric vehicles are less likely to catch on fire, their fires can burn for longer because of the nature of the lithium-ion battery.

Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, asked if people building their own homes would need to follow the same building requirements and McBride said that yes they would. Pettyjohn said that electric vehicle chargers aren't something they should be telling people to include in their homes.

"This starts to operate outside of those norms that we've put in building codes," Pettyjohn said. "Now if I'm somebody that's building my house and I don't put a conduit in for an electric vehicle, then I can't get a certificate of occupancy for my house. That's not right."

Rep. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Arden, owns an electric vehicle and said installing a conduit into an already built home can be difficult, making it more important to have them pre-installed in homes.

Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said that the change to electric vehicles should be market driven.

"This is a nicety to have, the same way that air conditioning or proper outlets for fireplace, upstairs dryer washer, all of these things," Buckson said. "But they're driven by the market and the desire of the customer to want those things."

"So if this is going to be as popular as you say it is, the market will do what it's supposed to do. This will be offered in a portfolio of options for the buyer to choose based on their budget and their desire."

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# MARIJUANA FUNDING APPROVED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE

BY SAM HAUT

During the mark-up of the state's operating budget Tuesday, the Joint Finance Committee approved \$4.1 million to pay for regulation of a new marijuana industry in Delaware, including 28 new state jobs. Of the \$4.1 million allocated, \$2.2 million is expected to be ongoing funding and \$1.9 million is expected to be for one-time costs, as provided by the bills that passed in April legalizing marijuana and creating a state-regulated and taxed industry.

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, argued that adding more employees will cost the state more money that it may or may not recoup in the future.

"It's going to start out to be—I don't know—\$4 million, and then we're going to eventually lead to where we're making money and paying that back and making money," Buckson said. "But we're adding, I don't know, maybe 30-plus employee positions, that doesn't equal more?"

Sen. Trey Pardee, co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee, responded that the upfront cost is necessary. "The anticipation is once this program eventually gets up and running, depending on whose estimates you believe, it will at some point be generating somewhere perhaps in the neighborhood of \$30 to \$40 million," Pardee said.

The state is supposed to start granting licenses within 18 months.

Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Brookside, said in a press release that once funding is fully allocated, they can start to get the marijuana industry going in Delaware.

"Now, the real work begins with getting this new industry off the ground, and that starts by providing the funds to establish the regulatory infrastructure within state government," Osienski said. "I'm grateful to JFC for fulfilling its pledge and moving our effort forward. These funds will come back to Delaware several

times over in new, good-paying jobs and tax revenue, while also ending the prohibition against marijuana."

The committee approved 28 new positions in various departments. In the Department of Finance under the new marijuana law, seven new full-time positions were added and an additional \$163,500 from the general fund. In the Department of Health and Social Services, it added six new full-time investigator positions and an additional \$116,700 from the general fund.

In the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, it added 14 new full-time positions and an additional \$1,162,900, and an additional \$200,000 for rent and utilities to expand the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement to accommodate the new marijuana division. In the Department of Agriculture, it added one agricultural specialist and an additional \$21,300 from the general fund for that position.

The Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement will also create a separate, administrative Office of Marijuana Control Commissioner within the Department of Safety and Homeland Security.

Under the new marijuana law, up to 30 retail licenses will be issued within 16 months of the bill's effective date and a 15% marijuana control enforcement fee is assessed at the point of sale. Of those 30 licenses, half will be social equity licenses given to businesses that are majority owned by either people who have been convicted of certain marijuana offenses or are from areas that have had high amounts of arrests and convictions for marijuana.

The general assembly will have to approve the full budget once it makes its way out of the Joint Finance Committee.

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*Education*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# NEW HODGSON VO-TECH BUILDING EXPECTS \$80 MILLION DEFICIT

BY JAREK RUTZ

New Castle County Vocational Technical School District is facing an \$80 million deficit for its new **Hodgson Vo-Tech High School** that is supposed to start being built this summer and opened in three years. The culprit: Soaring building costs and scarce supplies, continuing a trend that started during the pandemic as governments everywhere used federal COVID money to tackle infrastructure and other construction jobs, but was made worse with inflation.

“The cost of products we see in our everyday lives, and eggs are probably the biggest example we saw,” said Joe Jones, superintendent of **New Castle County Vo-Tech**. “But when it comes to construction of this magnitude, prices have just skyrocketed.”

Hodgson isn’t the only education project that needs help. The state has a “market pressure” review process that decides if and how much construction projects need to deal with inflation and other issues. Gov. John Carney’s recommended budget for fiscal year 2024,

which starts July 1, includes \$107.5 million for cost overruns. Already this year:

- Appoquinimink School District has been approved for \$24.9 million for its Louis Redding Middle School reno, bringing the total to \$81.9 million.
- Appo also received \$2.9 million for its Summit Elementary School project, bringing the total to \$53 million.
- Cape Henlopen will receive \$6 million for work on a middle school, bringing that project to \$63 million.
- Christina School District received \$9.66 million for its Bancroft School project.
- Indian River School District received \$30 million for its new Sussex Central High School, bringing the total to \$189.6 million.

The new Hodgson will replace the current school and will be built next to the existing building on Glasgow Avenue in Newark.

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## INDIAN RIVER TO SPEND \$2.8M ON SCIENCE OF READING CURRICULUM

BY JAREK RUTZ

Indian River School District will spend \$2.8 million on a new science of reading curriculum expected to improve literacy rates and test scores, but its school board took a shot at the state for mandating the move without providing money for it.

The Sussex County school district serving 10,799 students will invest in a five-year contract with **Core Knowledge Language Arts**, under a unanimous vote from its board Monday night. Other districts are in the process of doing the same, as the state has mandated through a **law** that evidence-based reading curriculum must be implemented by the 2027-2028 school year.

The **Department of Education** lists different curricula districts can choose from that aligns with the science. It vets each curriculum through **EdReports**, an organization that grades materials that schools use.

Science of reading is a cognitive brain research that shows how students learn to read, according to Monica Gant, chief academic officer for the Delaware Department of Education. The approach believes that nearly all children learn to read in the same way no matter their ethnicity or background and that fundamentals such as focusing on phonics are key to success and later performance in reading. It is made up of six essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension and oral language. They work in unison to help with word recognition and language comprehension.

Phonics is an area some education officials and advocacy groups think the state needs to double down on in order to improve its disturbingly low **reading test scores**. According to the **Delaware State Report Card**,

just 42.36% of students are proficient and meet grade-level standards in English language arts.

“Some of us have been stressing phonics for 40 years and it came in fashion and went back out and apparently they realized that is the right thing to do,” said board member Donald Hattier. “It does make a difference and that’s how we taught our kids, with phonics, at the dinner table.”

The 5-year contract includes teacher materials, student materials and consumables, mClass licenses and interventions, and professional learning, according to Kelly Dorman, the district’s director of elementary education. mClass is a system that helps track data on the success of the new curriculum, she said.

The \$2.8 million will come from the district’s Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, which gave Indian River \$45,600,503 in **pandemic relief funds**.

Board members James Fritz repeated several times in anger and annoyance that the state is mandating a new curriculum but isn’t giving financial support to districts. “Yet another unfunded state mandate,” he said, “So if the media could report that I’d appreciate it.”

The pandemic relief money is not part of the district’s operating budget and must be spent by September 2024 or the district loses it, so Indian River does not have to adjust its annual budget to fit in the \$2.8 million.

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# Charter School

## CHARTERS IGNORED, STATE TO CHANGE LEADER CERTIFICATIONS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Despite months of outcry from the charter school community, the Delaware State Board of Education voted May 18 to create a pathway for charter school leaders to be certified under the same requirements as district leaders.

It's a move that Kendall Massett, executive director of the [Delaware Charter Schools Network](#), previously called offensive, degrading, ridiculous and infuriatingly insulting when Regulation 1596 was introduced in February. The pool of charter leaders is a mix of those fully licensed and certified, some who are licensed but not certified as leaders, and some who have no licensure and certification.

“Your voice matters’ is what I tell my children, the other 18,220 charter students, their parents, charter teachers, staff, leaders, board members and the community,” she said. “They used their voices and the State

Board of Education, except for Rev. Powell, chose not to listen.”

The issue stems from the State Board of Education’s February meeting when Education Secretary Mark Holodick said Delaware wants to make sure charter school heads are certified and licensed in accordance with the requirements of district school leaders.

For certification, charter school leaders may either:

- Enroll in a traditional or alternative route to certification program that leads to traditional administrator certification and complete the program within three years.
- Earn approval for a digital portfolio submitted to an external vendor who will review work samples to measure competency and alignment to professional standards for educational leaders.

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# DSU RAISING TUITION BY \$1,500 A YEAR STARTING IN FALL

BY JAREK RUTZ

Students of Delaware State University can expect to pay \$1,500 more for tuition next year, the HBCU announced May 18. To ensure long-term financial stability, DSU is raising tuition \$750 a semester, but students whose families earn less than \$30,000 a year will actually get a decreased tuition, although the university has yet to announce what the discount will be.

Ben Addi, DSU's chief financial officer, said the move assists in "making the thoughtful decisions necessary to continue our growth trajectory while delivering on our promises to our community."

Increased revenue will help the university upgrade classrooms and residence halls and also allow it to invest in additional academic programs.

Antonio Boyle, DSU's vice president for strategic

enrollment management pointed out that DSU is 37% less expensive than the next least-expensive four-year university in the state and 73% less than the highest.

The **Inspire Scholarship** will not be affected. It's a full-tuition scholarship that prospective students can apply for if they graduated from a Delaware high school with at least a 2.75 grade point average and no serious behavioral problems or criminal charges. In 2022, 67% of incoming Delaware freshmen were Inspire Scholars.

Tuition expenses for students with Presidential Scholarships or fully-funded athletic scholarships will not change.

DSU will modify its scholarship formula to ensure the lowest-resource families will experience a reduction of up to \$1,000 in total cost of attendance.



The announcement comes a day after the University of Delaware's board of trustees voted to increase tuition by 5% next school year.

DSU President Tony Allen said the most critical aspect of the college's mission is to extend opportunities to more students to prepare them for a faster, smaller and more connected world.

In-state students will pay \$10,953 a year in tuition and fees and \$20,875 for out-of-state students, not including housing or a meal plan. Housing costs at the university range from \$5,818 to \$12,768 per year, and meal plan options range from \$1,265.38 a year to \$5,059.33.

For more information on tuition and fees at DSU, click [HERE](#).





photo credit: DleawareLIVE Sports



*Sports*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





Sports

# CAPE BEATS SALLIES IN STATE'S 1ST BOYS VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

BY NICK HALLIDAY

When Cape Henlopen’s boys volleyball team traveled to Wilmington in April to play Salesianum, the Vikings stayed close for two sets before the Sals pulled away in the third for a sweep. Those first two sets remained in the mind of Cape Henlopen coach Tyler Coupe when game-planning for the rematch, which took place May 23 at Smyrna High School for the first DIAA championship in the sport.

The Vikings worked the plan to perfection, finding open spaces while on the attack and clogging the Sals’ hitting lanes on defense in a 3-0 sweep to earn the championship trophy. The victory set off a wild celebration between the team and a sizeable contingent of Cape students who made the trip to Kent County.

“We knew we could hang with them. We knew we had a chance to beat them. We just had to execute on a much more consistent basis. We did that tonight,” Coupe said. The set scores were 25-23, 25-17 and 25-19.

The Vikings started strong, building an 11-4 lead in the first set before the Sals fought back to make it 19-18. Charlie Casas added a point for the Vikings with a blast, but the Sals eventually tied the score at 20. A few points later, Salesianum was up, 23-21, but two errors knotted it again. William Cerf scored on a block to send Cape to set point and an error ended it.

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# CAPE, TATNALL ADVANCE TO LACROSSS CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The No. 1 seed Cape Henlopen Vikings and the No. 2 seed Tatnall Hornets advanced to DIAA girls' lacrosse state championship. Cape Henlopen won its 13th straight championship last season, with a 16-4 victory over the Tatnall Hornets. Now the rematch is set up as both teams advanced with commanding wins.

Cape Henlopen faced off against Sussex Academy in the first of two games in the 2023 DIAA girls' lacrosse semifinals. In the regular season, Cape defeated Sussex Academy by a score of 10-7, but Cape turned it up in the playoffs. Cape jumped out to an early 4-0 lead before Sussex Academy answered with two goals of its own. After the two goals from Sussex Academy, Cape called a timeout to talk things over and regroup. Well the timeout worked. Cape went on to score six straight goals to close out the first half taking a 10-2 lead into half.

Cape came out of the half and dominated Sussex Academy as it did in the first half. Cape out-scored Sussex Academy 10-2 in the second half to come away with a commanding 20-4 victory. Louise Rishko led the Vikings with seven goals while Claire Lopez added five goals. Anna Lopez was just a wall in goal as she made 10 saves in the game.

Sussex Academy was led by Emily Bisaha with two goals and goalkeeper Morgane Leeper added six saves.

In game two of the night, the Tatnall Hornets faced off with the Archmere Auks. Tatnall dealt Archmere its only loss in the regular season with a 20-4 victory. They would end the Auks' season in similar fashion.

Archmere started the game off going up on the Hornets quickly 2-0. However, the Hornets would sting right back. The Hornets then went on to outscore the



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Auks 12-2 the rest of the half to take a 12-4 lead. The Hornets then went on to outscore the Auks 9-1 in the second half, to walk away with a 21-5 win.

Lydia Colasante led the Hornets with seven goals and two assists. Kali Clayton had four goals and three assists. Charlotte Wilkerson also added four goals. In the net, Devon Chipman was stellar, totaling 11 saves for Tatnall. Archmere was led by Sara Denning with two goals.

Cape Henlopen and Tatnall will face off Thursday evening at Delaware State University with a start time of 6. It's a rematch from last season's state championship in which Cape defeated Tatnall 16-4. Cape is going for its 14th straight state championship Thursday night.

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## 2023 DIAA TRACK AND FIELD STATE CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

BY GLENN FRAZER

A large crowd was on hand May 18 and 19 as Dover High hosted the 2023 DIAA state track and field championships. The student-athletes enjoyed much better weather this year as temperatures hovered in the 60s to low 70s as opposed to 2022 when sweltering heat drove temps into the 90'.

The closest team competition took place in the boys' division II, as Delaware Military took a slight lead into the day's final two events. The 'Hawks had 91 points leading both Saint Mark's and A.I. DuPont by less than seven points, with just the pole vault and the 4x400 relay events remaining. The relay final came first as DMA finished second to Dickinson while A.I. took third and the Spartans finished fifth. Everyone then gathered to watch the final event of the day, the pole vault lasted another 20 minutes. Dallas Parker cleared

13' to take the gold medal, his teammate Augustin Ramos placed fifth, and the Saint Mark's "vaulter" took seventh and eighth, while DMA didn't place in the event. Those final two results gave the Tigers from A.I. a total of 106 team points, finishing ahead of DMA (99) and Saint Mark's (97) for their first team title since 2019.

Besides winning the pole vault, Parker also took gold in the high jump and the 300 meter hurdles. Ethan Walther won the 800 and 3200 meter races for DMA. Saint Mark's scored in almost every event, with six second place finishes.

Salesianum won the team title in Division 1 for the fourth straight year with a total of 124 points. The next five teams were separated by just 10 points, as Cape Henlopen took second with 69 points, followed by Middletown with 68, Smyrna with 67, Caesar Rodney had

60 as the Riders edged Sussex Central with 59 points. The Sals received first place performances from Matt Miller in the 1,600 meter race, Matthew Klous in the pole vault, Jasyn Truitt in the 200, and Bishop Lane in the 400. Sallies also won the 4x100 and 4x200 relay races.

The Division 1 champions from Padua have now won nine consecutive years, while Smyrna finished second for the seventh straight time. The Pandas had 187.67 points to the Eagles' 93. Juliana Balon won the long jump plus the 100, 200 and 400 meter races for the Pandas. Sophia Holgado took gold in the 3200 while Mary Flanagan won the 800. Smyrna is the last team other than Padua to win the championship back in 2013.

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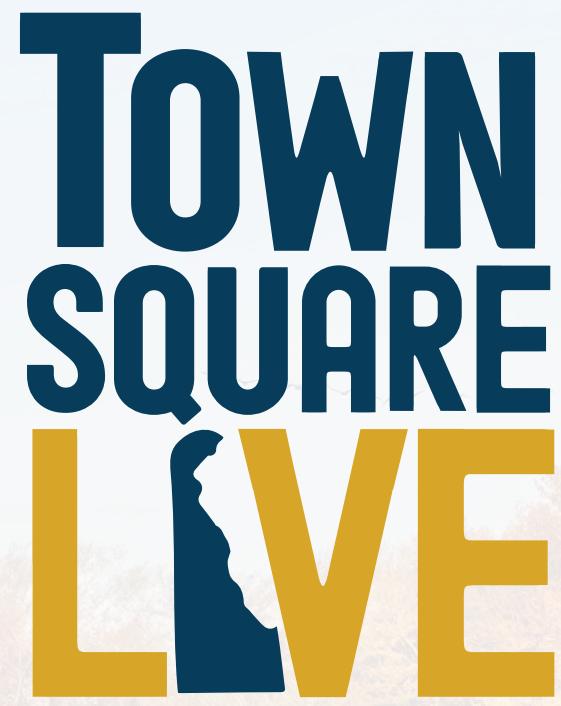


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