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Safe Surrender Day



Climate Bill Moves to House



August Closes Door on No. 1 Spartans

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

photo link: [Longwood Gardens](#)

photo credit Hank Davis

Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



MAN CHARGED WITH DUMPING SCREWS, NAILS ON HOCKESSIN ROADS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

A Pennsylvania man has been charged with dumping screws and nails in the Hockessin area, specifically Old Wilmington Road, Bellfield Court, Bengé Road and Westridge Road.

A **New Castle County police** investigation concluded that he was targeting a specific individual, who was identified and made aware of what happened.

They charged Scott Taylor, 31, with one felony count of criminal mischief, one felony count of stalking, one misdemeanor count of criminal mischief and one misdemeanor count of disorderly conduct.

Taylor was taken into custody without incident on Wednesday, arraigned by the Justice of the Peace Court 2 and committed to Howard Young Correctional Institution after failing to post \$5,000 cash bail.

People who know anything about these incidents or have possibly sustained damage from them are asked to contact Detective Adam Weldon at 302-395-2815 or Adam.Weldon@newcastlede.gov.





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BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware Courts are trying to ease the stress of 750 First Staters with outstanding warrants with its second ever safe surrender day set for Friday, May 12.

“As of the end of March, we had a total of just over 55,000 cases in warrants issued through the Delaware courts,” said Roger Roof, operations manager at the Justice of the Peace Court, during a press conference Monday. “This is a great step forward for the courts to be able to have people come in and clear some of those.”

At the event, which runs from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the **Leonard L. Williams Justice Center** in Wilmington, more than a dozen judges and courtrooms will be set aside. Public defenders, police, probation and prosecutors will all be on hand to help people clear any pending failure to appear in court, failure to pay or other outstanding warrants quickly and efficiently.

The safe surrender day is for Delawareans across the state, not just in New Castle County, and those with capias won’t be outright amnestied but they will have

COURTS HOPE SAFE SURRENDER DAY WILL CLEAR 750 WARRANTS

their warrants cleared during the day. A capias is similar to a warrant, but is issued to a guilty party. Being amnestied would mean the charges against a person are forgiven, similar to a pardon.

“They may have low level offenses, and instead of incurring fines, they can do community service projects to improve those neighborhoods where some of their undesirable activity occurred where they obtained charges,” said Sen. Darius Brown, D-Wilmington.

The last safe surrender day in Delaware was in 2009. About 1,000 people had their warrants cleared. In 2009, Brown said, a few folks had warrants out for more than a decade, and luckily they never got pulled over by a police officer, or they would have been in jail.

“Thankfully, they never got pulled over and never came in contact with a police officer,” he said. “We don’t want that to become an impediment and a barrier for individuals for employment or providing for their families or even just being able to pick up their child from daycare.”

The safe surrender day is a way for them to come forward to the courts, have their warrants cleared, sort out any missed payments and have a judge decide any punishment or community service.

Roof said that 15 years ago, less than 1% of people were taken into custody when they turned themselves in, and the judges are usually favorable towards those who safely surrender. He expects that number to be

slightly less for the state’s second safe surrender day.

Roof said safe surrender is an easier way to appear in court if someone has a minor traffic offense, a missing court date or even a missing payment and they do something as simple as roll through a stop sign. They’ll get pulled over by a police officer and wind up in the back of a cop car.

“That’s something that we don’t want to have happen,” he said. “We want to try to get these cases, these minor issues cleared as much as we can, as quickly and efficiently as we can.”

Liz Petrick, an administrator at the Justice of the Peace Court, said the courts are hopeful people will show up so that they can have those weights lifted off of their backs.

“We will have a big tent outside with tables for [civic, social and church] organizations to be there so that the people of their community are more comfortable coming,” she said, “because we do understand that many people are scared and they’re afraid to come to court as they’re afraid of what might happen.”

While she can’t promise those who turn themselves in won’t get locked up, she said outside of violent felonies, that is very unlikely to happen. Participants can bring one individual to accompany them.

For more information on May 12’s safe surrender day, click [HERE](#).





Community

BY KEN MAMMERALLA

Bethany Beach has announced free activities than run from June through October, including bonfires, concerts and movies. All events are weather-dependent and subject to beach conditions. Here’s the lineup:

Bethany’s bonfires

Bonfires will take place 6-8 p.m. Fridays in October on the beach off Campbell Place. Marshmallows, roasting sticks and glow bracelets will be provided while supplies last.

Bethany’s concerts

Bandstand performances take place on Thursday nights in the summer—with extra evenings in July—and Saturday and Sunday nights in September and October. Summer concerts typically begin at 7:30 p.m. Fall concerts begin at 6:30 p.m.

Summer Wednesdays will feature Kids Nights in July and the occasional rain date.

FREE CONCERTS, MOVIES AND MORE IN BETHANY

- June 1: Rob Benton, variety
- June 8: Red Dirt Revolution, country
- June 15: Uptown Band, variety
- June 22: ’70s Flashback Band, the “soundtrack of a generation”
- June 29: Dan and Dan Band, variety
- July 2: 287th Army Band, variety
- July 4: Mike Hines & the Look, party, with fireworks following
- July 5: Mr Jon, 6 p.m., musical comedy for families; The Little Mermen, 7 p.m., Disney tribute
- July 6: Downrange, US Army band
- July 12: 2b1, for families
- July 13: The Rock Orchestra, Eagles tribute
- July 19: Burn the Jukebox, variety
- July 20: High Noon, southern rock
- July 26: Teenage Satellites, pop and rock from Sussex teens
- July 27: Zydeco-a-Go-Go
- Aug 3: lower case blues
- Aug 10: The Jets, Elton John tribute
- Aug 17: Jesse Garron, Elvis tribute
- Aug 24: Max Impact, US Air Force pop and rock band
- Aug 31: Larger Than Life, boy band tribute
- Sept 2: Kategory 5, rock

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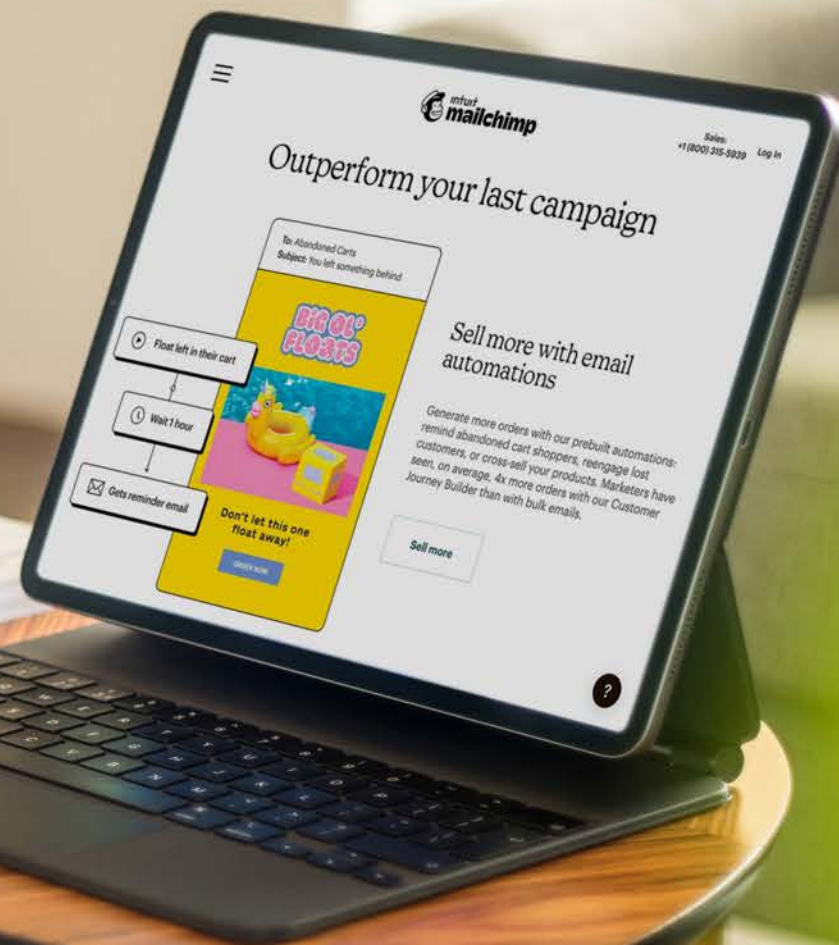


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DELAWARE BREAST CANCER COALITION

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Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BY BETSY PRICE

Weis Markets will expand into New Castle County as an anchor store for the 280,000-square-foot **Bayberry Town Center** in north Middletown. The grocery store, which will give those living in the area an option other than driving south into Middletown or north to U.S. 40 for food, is expected to begin construction next year and open in 2025, said Blenheim Homes Vice President Simi Senecha. The 64,00-square-foot store will be joined by a Weis gas station, which it refers to as a fuel facility.

The town center will include office, retail and town-home space and Senecha said Blenheim hopes to see small and large casual dining restaurants, health services such as physical therapists, dentists and urgent care, hair and nail salons as well as retail stores offering various wares.

Blenheim has not announced how much the center will cost to build in the Village of Bayberry.

The COVID-19 pandemic really spurred sales and growth in the north Middletown area, which Senecha said has become its own trade area.

“Retail growth has not followed a similar trajectory,” she said. “So we felt that there was a great need for a grocery store to service this area. We’ve heard that from a lot of residents, so we think that Weis (pronounced WICE) will be perfectly positioned to serve this community.”

Weis, which operates 97 stores in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, West Virginia and Virginia now has stores in Millsboro, Lewes and Millville.

The Village of Bayberry sits between Middletown’s main business area and the C&D Canal, along Boyds Corner Road (Route 896) between Jamison Corner Road and Routes 1 and 13.

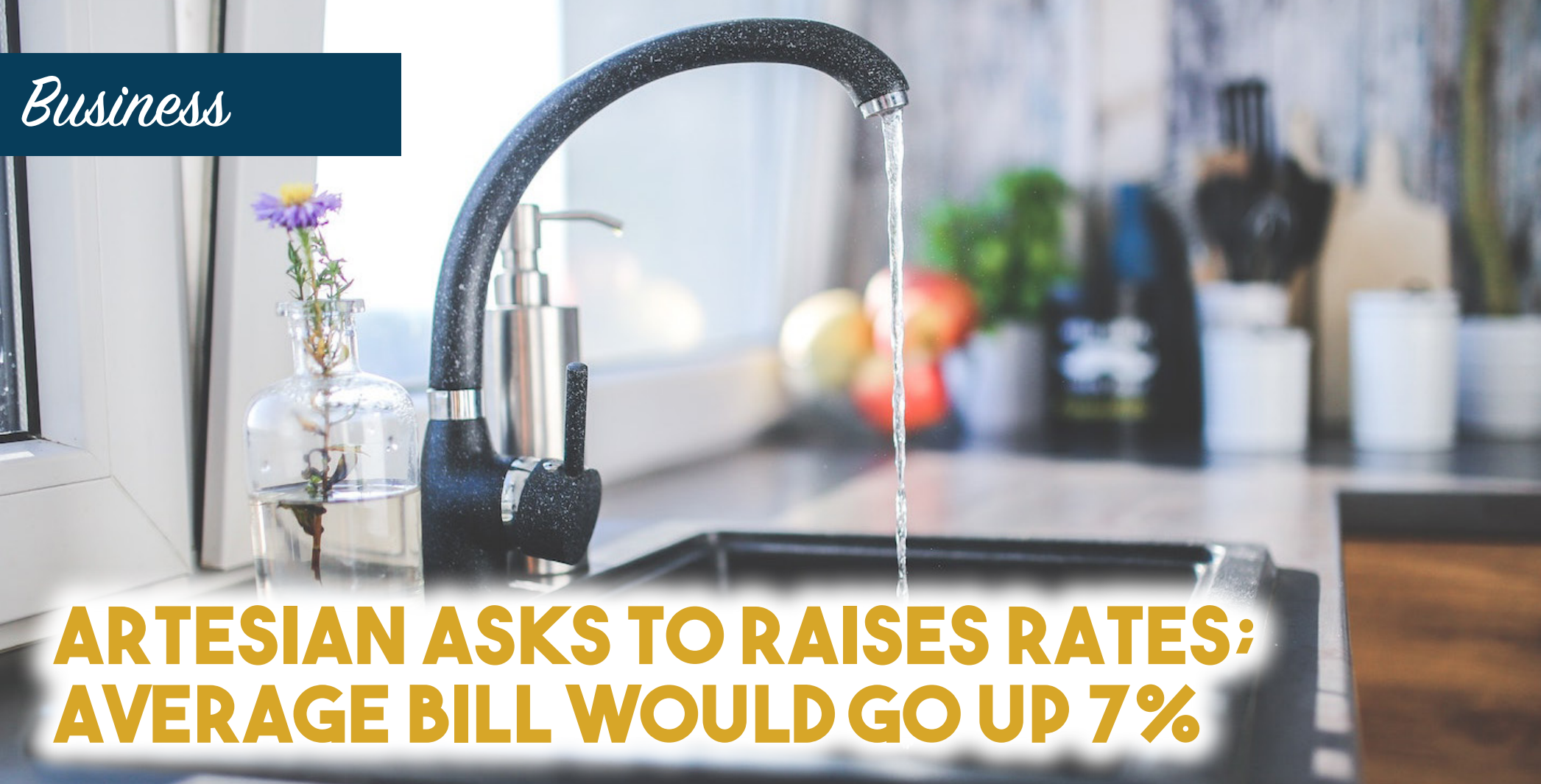
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The logo for the Delaware Division of Small Business, featuring a stylized 'D' icon and the text 'Delaware DIVISION OF SMALL BUSINESS'.



ARTESIAN ASKS TO RAISES RATES; AVERAGE BILL WOULD GO UP 7%

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The Artesian Water Co., which supplies water to over a third of Delaware’s residents, has filed a request to increase rates. If the Delaware Public Service Commission approves the proposal, the bill for the average residential customer using 4,000 gallons per month would increase \$49.90 to \$56.73. That’s not quite 7% higher.

The application to the PSC asks to increase revenue 23.84%, or approximately \$17.54 million, on an annualized basis. It’ll be months before the request is implemented.

Artesian’s request was announced just a day after **Veolia** said it wanted to increase its rates. Both utilities cited the cost of infrastructure investments.

Since Artesian’s last request for new rates nine years ago, it will have invested over \$158 million in water infrastructure across all three counties. That includes renewal and replacement of 45 miles of aging water mains (out of the 1,442 miles it has), addition of a major booster station, upgrades of existing stations, a new elevated water storage tank and upgrades to treatment equipment and facilities.

ARTESIAN’S STRATEGIES

Since that last rate application, Artesian said it has used various strategies to delay the need to raise rates, including:

- Taking advantage of historic low interest rates by issuing new and refinancing existing long-term debt to reduce its average interest rate by 33.7%, from 5.84% to 3.87%.
 - Making investments to add sources of supply, booster facilities and transmission mains to reduce its need to purchase water. As a result of these investments, Artesian reduced the required minimum amount of water it purchases from the Chester Water Authority by 83.3%.
 - Utilizing a Distribution System Infrastructure Charge between rate applications, which allows up to a 7.5% surcharge on customer bills for select infrastructure improvements, including main replacements, hydraulic improvements and water quality treatment. This enables Artesian to recover investments for necessary projects while avoiding a full rate increase. Artesian has in place the maximum 7.5% surcharge; once a change of rates goes into effect, this surcharge is reset to zero.
- “Artesian’s entire management team has championed cost-effective solutions, allowing us to continue to deliver the same superior services our customers have always relied on, despite current supply constraints and increased costs,” CEO Dian C. Taylor said in a statement.
- Its announcement for the rate hike pointed out ways it has helped customers:
- Artesian negotiated for full reimbursement of the \$10 million it invested to treat contaminated water from its Llangollen wellfield. Customers received a \$27 credit on their bill in October 2022, and active customers will receive a similar credit annually through 2025.

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photo by Charlie Megginson

Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



4TH GRADERS LEAD CHARGE TO STOP SMOKING IN PRIVATE CARS

BY SAM HAUT

Students in Leanna Vitti’s fourth grade class at Wilbur Elementary School spoke before the House Health & Human Development committee Monday to advocate for a bill that seeks to stop smoking in cars that contain kids.

House Bill 118, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Hensley, R-Odessa, would create a civil citation for people who smoke in a car that also contains someone under the age 18, whether a window is open or not. However, if

the bill becomes law, police won’t be able to pull someone over solely for that.

Before the bill unanimously passed the committee, seven different fourth graders talked about how they have been impacted by secondhand smoke and the dangers associated with secondhand smoking.

“One reason is that the smell is very bad and it lingers on the child’s clothing...Another reason is that smokers can expose their children to 4,000 different kinds of

chemicals that at least 70 of these chemicals can cause cancer, asthma attacks...that can result from second-hand smoke,” said Natalie Dixon. “Also, smoking in the car with children should be banned because it causes accelerated health issues for young children.”

Cecily Penland said she’s been in a car with a smoker and didn’t like it.

“Kids should have the right to be able to breathe clean air while in the car. Children don’t have a choice because it’s not like they could just say, ‘Oh, it’s okay. I’ll just drive myself,’” Cecily said. “Also, I’ve been in a car with a smoker before and I really don’t like it, it stinks.”

Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow, said he empathizes with the students because his mother, who died three years ago from lung cancer, smoked in the car when he was younger.

“My mother loved us dearly, me and my brother, and we loved our mother dearly, but she smoked with us in the car,” Morrison said. “And we both have allergies, my brother’s very allergic to cigarette smoke. And it’s that addiction that keeps you doing that, and makes it so that you don’t always think about other people. But I know that if this were law, she would have obeyed it because she obeyed the law.”

The bill has four additional sponsors and cosponsors, three Republicans and one Democrat. There is no fiscal note required for the bill, which now heads to the full House for consideration.

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DIVISION OF ALCOHOL STARTS PROCESS TO CREATE LEGAL POT INDUSTRY

BY SAM HAUT

The legalization of marijuana in Delaware will mean the state’s police agencies stop ticketing people for having it, but they’ll continue to pull people over for appearing to be under the influence.

Police already had stopped charging people with criminal possession for small amounts of pot in 2019, when Attorney General Kathy Jennings said she would no longer prosecute for misdemeanor possession of marijuana or paraphernalia. Now, agencies will stop giving out the civil citations which had replaced the criminal charges.

In the meantime, all eyes will be on the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement, charged with writing the regulations under which Delaware plans to set up a taxable, regulated industry to grow and sell

marijuana. It requires the appointment of a marijuana commissioner and three members of an appeals commission within 90 days of the bill becoming law.

After House Bill 2 officially became law, the division posted on its [Facebook](#) page that it will be working with the Department of Health and Social Services to implement the two bills and that they’ll hire new staff to help with enforcement.

Arshon Howard, public information officer for the state Department of Safety and Homeland Security, which includes the Division of Alcohol, did not elaborate further. Howard said no schedules for public meetings or proceedings have been published.

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HURRY UP AND VOTE: HANDGUN PERMIT BILL PASSES THROUGH SENATE

BY SAM HAUT

A grandstanding Sen. Dave Lawson, R-Marydel, ripped up pieces of paper as he ripped into a bill that will require training and permits before Delawareans are allowed to buy a handgun.

“Why do we want to continue to shred our constitutions and trash them? Why do we do that? I fought my entire life to protect this constitution,” Lawson said as he tore up paper. “And I will continue to do that. And the day you come for my guns, I would hate to see, because our citizens have the right to protect themselves. Please don’t put the citizens in this state in a box where they can’t get out.”

The Senate on Tuesday passed along party lines a bill that would require the permit and training. Now it goes to the House side of the General Assembly for a committee hearing.

Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 2, sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth Lockman, D-Wilmington, also passed the Senate Finance committee earlier Tuesday. The bill would require permits to be given only to a person 21 years old or older who can’t otherwise be prohibited from buying a gun and/or for whom there’s probable cause the buyer could do harm to themselves or others. They also must have completed a firearms training course within the last five years which meets certain requirements.

That training must include instructions on the safe handling of firearms and ammunition, safe storage of firearms and ammunition, and child safety. It must also include shooting fundamentals and skills, a review of state and federal laws, self-defense and confrontation management.

The training also must include live fire shooting exercises conducted on a range using at least 100 rounds of ammunition.

The bill allows for those making at or below 200% of the federal poverty level to be compensated in full by the state for the cost of the training courses.

The original **Senate Bill 2** was passed by the Senate Judiciary committee on April 26. The substitute bill makes the permit valid for one year instead of 180 days, says the Superior Court must hold a hearing where someone believes they wrongfully lost their permit within 15 days instead of 21 days, and extends the implementation time of the bill from a maximum of six months to a maximum of 18 months.

Lockman said in a statement after the bill had passed that it will help to reduce gun death in Delaware.

“Senate Bill 2 is a common-sense public safety bill that will increase the level of responsible gun ownership in Delaware, while reducing the bloodshed and devastation we see here in the First State on an almost daily basis,” she said.

Jeff Hague, president of the Delaware State Sportsmen’s Association, who was called as a witness by the Republicans, said that the bill would make it harder for women to buy guns, which in turn would make them less safe.

“This requirement that they go through a training class, submit to fingerprinting, a background check, and then wait for 30 days, is just an infringement that’s going to take at least three or four months before you’re able to purchase that handgun,” he said.

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FIRST OF SEVEN CLIMATE CHANGE BILLS MOVES TO HOUSE FLOOR

net emissions goals. Each cabinet level department would be required to have a climate change officer, and each of those officers would meet biannually to talk about the progress being made towards the state’s climate goals.

According to the [Center for Climate and Energy Solutions](#), 25 states and the District of Columbia have established some kind of target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions either through executive or legislative action. Rep. Richard Collins, R-Millsboro, said that because Delaware is such a small state, passing this bill wouldn’t have a large impact on climate change.

“What can Delaware do: We’re one million people out of eight billion,” Collins said. “Folks, when the Titanic hit the iceberg, they did the best they could to get to the lifeboats and save as many lives as they could. But you know they could have ordered everybody to take their teacups to start bailing it out, to make a statement. That’s what we’re trying to do here folks.”

Rep. Jeff Hilovsky, R-Long Neck, said he opposes the bill because it doesn’t provide enough oversight for the sweeping changes that it proposes.

“I think that when we look at the future of our state in the crystal ball, five years, 10 years, 15 years from now,” Hilovsky said. “You have to wonder what sort of, if any, manufacturing is going to want to center in a state that is so regulated by maybe people who don’t have to answer to anybody.”

This isn’t the first time Democrats have tried to pass a climate bill. Last year [Senate Bill 305](#) passed the Senate 13 to 6, but it wasn’t heard in the House.

More than two dozen people spoke about the bill during the public comment section of the session. Around 20 people, including members of the Delaware Sierra Club and the The Nature Conservancy in Delaware, spoke for it. About eight people, including members of the Delaware Chamber of Commerce and the Caesar Rodney Institute, spoke against it.

BY JAREK RUTZ

As part of a suite of other climate bills, the House Natural Resources & Energy Committee approved a bill that would require Delaware to lower its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 2050.

[House Bill 99](#), which is sponsored by Rep. Deb Heffernan, D-Bellefonte, says net state greenhouse gas emissions must be 50% of the 2005 levels by 2030 and have net zero emissions by 2050. Net emissions in this case doesn’t mean no greenhouse gasses are being created, but that if they are, they are paired with systems that remove carbon from the atmosphere, such as planting more trees.

The bill drew opposition from Republicans who said Delaware isn’t a big enough state to contribute much to global climate issues and that change could stop manufacturing companies from considering Delaware for projects.

The bill requires that the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, along with the governor’s office, produce and update a Climate Action Plan every five years starting in 2025, and a Climate Action Plan Implementation Report every two years starting in 2024. Both will outline what the state is doing to reach its

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HERE'S WHAT GOES INTO KEEPING DELAWARE'S AAA RATINGS

BY BETSY PRICE

The way Delaware handles its budgets, a growing population and efforts to diversify the state economy all help the state continue to earn a AAA bond rating, which means the state pays less when it wants to borrow money.

For example: The state received bids last week for its upcoming sale of \$380 million of AAA-rated General Obligation Bonds and it will pay little more than 1% interest on those bonds—even though the Federal Reserve has raised its benchmark interest rate more than 4% since Delaware last issued bonds.

That rating also allowed the state to have an additional \$1 million in savings by refinancing \$34 million of existing debt, said Secretary of Finance Rick Geisenberger in a press release from Gov. John Carney’s office.

Ratings are based on criteria that include the state’s financial performance and management, overall debt and approach to long-term issues. The highest ratings, Aaa/AAA, are granted to states that are well managed and prepared to pay their debts during periods of recession or fiscal stress.

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BILL PROMISES OFFICER FAMILIES DEATH BENEFITS AFTER SUICIDE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that establishes suicide as a line-of-duty death, allowing families of the deceased to receive benefits, passed the House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee Tuesday. Delaware law now does not list suicide as a line-of-duty death that would enable an officer's family to file for benefits.

House Bill 133, sponsored by Rep. Sherry Dorsey-Walker, D-Wilmington, makes clear that suicide is a death in the line of duty for Delaware's first responders, police officers, firefighters, correctional officers, probation officers and the National Guard.

SUICIDE AMONG SAFETY OFFICIALS

"Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for public safety officials," Dorsey-Walker said.

Nationally, she said, in 2022, there were 143 suicides by law enforcement, after 160 suicides in 2021. In November of 2022, nine law enforcement officials killed themselves nationally, and one, she said, was a Delawarean who lived in her district.

"Suicide is 54% higher than the general public for law enforcement officials," she said. "They have 70% chance of suicide after high stress incident without intervention, however, with intervention, that rate goes down to 3%."

Dorsey-Walker told the committee that one in three correction officers have PTSD and depression.

"I did not know that that was the case, and it absolutely makes me emotional," said Rep. Kendra Johnson, D-Bear. "You're already dealing with such a traumatic loss and then you compound that with how you lost your loved one."

The discussion pointed to resources that police officers have, including Delaware State Police's six and 10 free counseling sessions each year that officers may choose to attend for mental health support. Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown, pointed out that many officers don't want to seek help or other treatments because it's still stigmatized among certain communities.

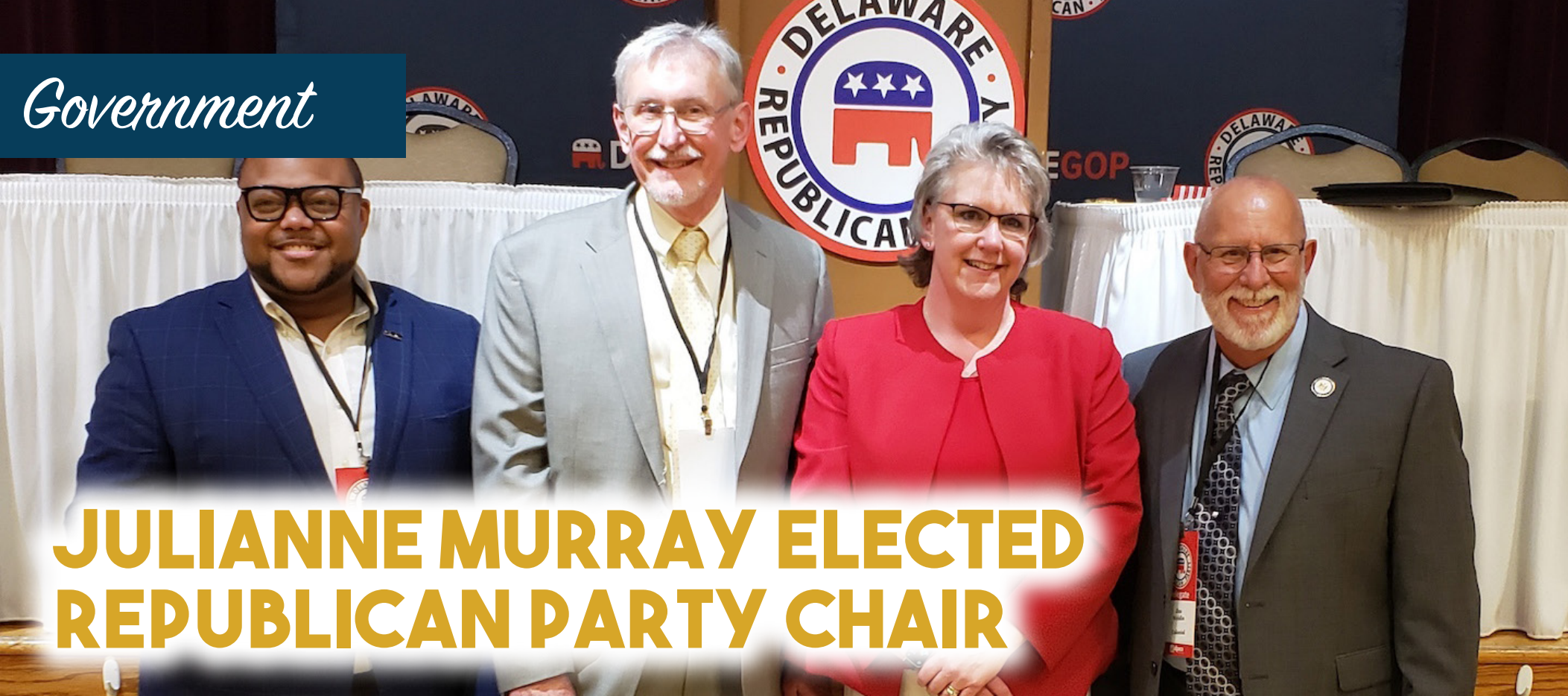
"Many of them are afraid that they'll be taken off duty," just for seeking help, she said. "So they suffer and they don't seek the help."

She said it's important for the legislation to ensure that there's resources available to line-of-duty officers and that it's clear their careers won't be impacted by taking advantage of help.

HB 133 now heads to the House floor.

Also Tuesday, a bill that extends liability protections for foster children on their driver's license learner's permit, passed to the House.

Senate Bill 95, sponsored by Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Claymont, clarifies that during the initial six months of a learner's permit, a foster parent is liable for the negligent driving of the foster child up to the limits of the foster parent's applicable insurance coverage.



JULIANNE MURRAY ELECTED REPUBLICAN PARTY CHAIR

BY SAM HAUT

The Delaware Republican Party’s convention started off with a speech decrying various ills that Democrats caused, from the electric vehicle mandate to paid family leave, and from early voting to letting 16-year-olds vote in school board elections. That came from Richard Foster, the temporary chair for the convention, meeting Saturday at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover.

Later, Loren Spivack, an author of several books criticizing Democrats, spoke about how people on the left have no principles and that capitalism is superior to socialism.

Each county later broke off into caucuses, where candidates for party leadership made their cases.

Julianne Murray, who was running against incumbent Jane Brady to lead the Delaware GOP, said she

would unite the party and energize Republican voters in the state.

“We need to be talking to two different groups,” she said. “Republicans who aren’t voting. Republicans who are voting are here. We need to be talking to the ones who aren’t voting and how we can get them reengaged. Voting is an emotional response. We [will] find the issue that hooks them.”

One Sussex County delegate asked Murray about an incident involving her husband calling Republican leadership RINOs, Republicans in name only, on a radio show. Murray said that she is not her husband, that she supports the Republican Party and she won’t control what people say.

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INTERCHANGE OF I-95, ROUTE 896 TO BE REDONE, STARTING MAY 7

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

This post has been updated.

A massive project starts in May to reconfigure the interchange between Interstate 95 and Route 896 just south of Newark. Here's the latest schedule:

Sunday, May 7: Multi-lane overnight closure on southbound I-95 between Route 72 and the Route 896 interchange, from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Monday, May 8 and Tuesday, May 9:

- Single overnight right lane closure on southbound I-95 in the vicinity of the Route 896 interchange, from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- Overnight ramp closure, southbound I-95 to northbound Route 896 from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. A detour will be posted.
- Single lane overnight closure on northbound Route 896 between Old Baltimore Pike and Welsh Tract Road.

Tuesday, May 9: Overnight lane shift/shoulder closure on the ramps from Route 896 to southbound I-95, from

8 p.m. to 6 a.m. The ramps will remain open to traffic.

Wednesday, May 10: Overnight single left lane closure on southbound I-95 starting south of the Welcome Center to the Route 896 interchange, from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Thursday, May 11: Daytime single left lane closure on northbound I-95 starting at the Route 896 interchange to south of the Welcome Center, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

WHAT THE WORK ENTAILS

The work is expected to end in 2025, with updates posted on its own [website](#). The focus is to decrease accidents by improving traffic flow, according to the Delaware Department of Transportation.

Breanna Kovach of DelDOT opened an informational meeting Wednesday with a discussion of “crash clusters” (areas with a lot of accidents) and “weaving” (areas where drivers are changing lanes). Bottom line: 746 crashes in the area from January 2019 to December 2021.

Before this project began, DelDOT had altered 896 and Route I-95 to dedicate stretches of some lanes for

incoming traffic, said Steven Penzoza, a vice president of Century Engineering. Those moves have helped, but not enough. The project will reconfigure existing ramps, widen I-95 northbound and southbound for a mile for new acceleration and deceleration lanes, widen three mainline I-95 bridges for new ramps, construct six new bridges, build 10 retaining walls and rehabilitate existing bridges.

New bridges will handle new flyover ramps that will split traffic and reduce the need to change lanes. The flyover ramps will go from 896 South to I-95 North and I-95 South to 896 South.

The project also will include high-friction surfaces on same ramps, new highways signs, lighting, intelligent traffic management systems and a shared-use path (10 feet wide, for pedestrians and bicyclists) on 896, crossing I-95.

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DNREC HEARS MOSTLY SUPPORT FOR EV MANDATE

BY SAM HAUT

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control on Wednesday heard from over 50 passionate people on a proposed electric vehicle regulation. The proposed **Advanced Clean Car Program** would, starting with the 2026 model year, require 35% of cars sold by Delaware dealerships to be zero-emission vehicles. That percentage would increase about 8% annually until it reaches 100% by 2035.

Of the over 130 people scheduled to speak during the four-hour session, around 40 spoke for the regulations and 11 spoke against. Over 50 people who signed up to speak were absent from the hearing, which had people commenting at DNREC’s office and through Zoom.

Most spoke as individuals, with officials including Clayton’s mayor and a representative of the American

Lung Association.

“Delaware is already in an electric supply and demand crisis,” Clayton Mayor Nick Smith said, expressing concern about the burden it places on municipalities.

“The Indian River power plant is being forced to must-run and the municipalities paying hundreds of millions of extra dollars throughout the next four and a half years while at the same time rapidly increasing the demand in an adequate system by requiring people to move to electric vehicles,” he said.

“In Delaware, we’ve estimated over \$5 billion in public health benefits cumulatively by 2050 for transition to zero emission, passenger vehicles, trucks and cleaner energy,” said Will Barrett, national senior director for clean air advocacy with the American Lung Associa-

tion. “Our study points to hundreds of lives saved, over 10,000 asthma attacks avoided, over 55,000 lost work-days avoided because the air will be that much cleaner.”

WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT EVS

Judy Butler has taken many steps to reduce her carbon footprint, like buying electric vehicles and investing in companies that support alternative energy. And she feels the government needs to step up and take more action.

“To achieve the kind of dramatic reductions in hydrocarbon pollutants and greenhouse gases, needed to safeguard future generations, we must have effective, strong governmental policies,” she said. “Therefore, I strongly support the Advanced Clean Cars II initiative.”

Robert Thomas said he opposes DNREC having sole discretion over the decision.

“It creates a taxation that we have not been able to vote on or say yes,” he said. “This whole thing is a mandate that should not be passed by DNREC, but it should be done as legislative. It should be put on the ballot and let the people and the citizens of this state vote in favor or disfavor of using this zero emissions vehicle standard.”

Sue Vatnick said she lives near a highway, so her health is negatively affected by tailpipe emissions, which the regulation would help to lower.

“New Castle County received a D in ozone levels from the **State of the Air** report card issued by the American Lung Association,” she said. “We must continue to lower tailpipe emissions in Delaware for the sake of our health to help put the brakes on climate change. Zero-emission vehicles are our future.”

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HABITAT FOR HUMANITY GETS \$1.2M TO HELP SENIORS AGE IN PLACE

BY KEN MAMMARELLA


Sussex County Habitat for Humanity has received a \$1,248,610 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide low-income seniors with safety and accessibility improvements—such as grab bars, railings and lever-handled doorknobs—so they can age in place.

“With this grant, the three Delaware Habitats will... complete 180 low-barrier, high-impact home modifications over the course of three years, optimizing each client’s home environment for safety, accessibility and quality of life,” according to HUD.

“We know the positive impact that essential home modifications can have on someone’s life,” said Kevin Gilmore, CEO of Sussex County Habitat for Humanity. “We are excited to partner with the Habitat organizations in Kent and New Castle counties to provide assistance statewide.”

The Delaware grant was one of 13 made by HUD, totaling \$15 million.







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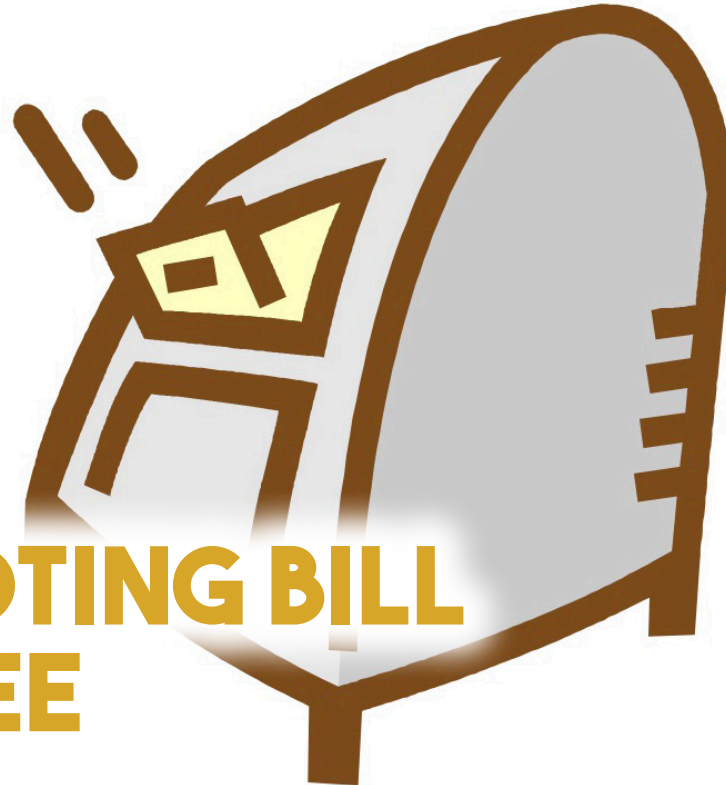


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NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING BILL PASSES SENATE COMMITTEE



BY SAM HAUT

The Senate Executive Committee on Wednesday privately advanced a bill, with four members in favor, that allows for no-excuse absentee voting in Delaware, joining 35 other states and the District of Columbia.

Senate Bill 3, sponsored by Sen. Darius Brown, D-Wilmington, would amend Delaware's constitution to allow absentee voting for any reason. However, voters must sign an oath or affirmation saying they are free from improper influence before voting. Currently, someone must have a disability, be sick, have a religious exemption or have other reasons for not being able to vote in person on election day.

The bill has 16 additional sponsors and cosponsors, all Democrats, with Sens. Marie Pinkney, D-Bear, and Elizabeth Lockman, D-Wilmington, saying during the committee hearing that they'd like to be added as sponsors.

A fiscal note is not required for the bill, which goes to the full Senate for consideration. A two-thirds majority of the Legislature has to vote for it because it will amend the Delaware constitution. The Senate is more than two-thirds Democrat, the House slightly less.

REACTIONS TO ABSENTEE VOTING

Claire Snyder Hall, executive director of Common Cause Delaware, said that the fewer barriers to voting, the better.

"Voters should not have to provide the government with an excuse to vote safely from home," Hall said. "The COVID crisis helped us all understand that today, voting in person on Election Day just doesn't work for most Americans. All around the country, other states did what Delaware did, people were allowed to vote absentee during the pandemic, and the results were phenomenal."

Delaware had previously tried to implement no-excuse mail-in voting through **Senate Bill 320**, which was signed into law last July. But that bill was ruled **unconstitutional** by the Delaware Supreme Court in October 2022 in the case Higgin v. Albence, thus necessitating the change to the Delaware constitution.

"Research has found that there is an approval rating of 64% in favor of this approach," said Linda Barnett, representing the nonpartisan League of Women Voters of Delaware.

"Surprisingly, research has found that neither party particularly benefits or is hurt by this approach. The percentage of voters in both parties was just about the same. There are only 15 states that require this kind of excuse for voting and it's time for Delaware to get out of that group."

"This law would allow the dream of America to become more true every time," said Charito Calvachi-Mateyko, co-chair of the Delaware Hispanic Commission and a native of Ecuador.

"Ecuador was not the beacon of democracy in the world," Calvachi-Mateyko said, but its Election Day was "a celebration to see our neighbors and love each other no matter how different opinions we have. That is how I embraced this country."

TOWN
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photo credit: Jarek Rutz



Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



PADUA'S NIGHT OF ARTS TAKES A STEP INTO WONDERLAND

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Pandas of [Padua Academy](#) took a stroll into Wonderland April 26 for the all-girl Wilmington private school's Night of the Arts. The annual event's theme this year was "Alice in Wonderland," but not every piece pertained to the classic tale.

Rather, each artist has several pieces on display that had different meanings and were made with the full gamut of materials, including charcoal, oil paint, pastels and pencils. The two-hour event highlighted work from Padua's Fine & Graphic Arts classes.

Senior Monica Grace designed the poster for the art show and one of her pieces was particularly emotional. It was a framed case that had a bloody leaf, gun shell casings and a drawing of a woman with branches stemming from her hair, with one holding a baby in a cocoon.

"My great-great-grandma lived in Italy during the Holocaust, and she died in the bombing in Italy," Grace said. "She died with her child in her arms right next to a tree. He survived, but she died."

Her favorite piece on display, which tied into the theme of the night, depicted a young girl looking up at a distorted monster.

"I love the really great contrast between the black and the bold colors," she said, adding that her favorite material to work with is oil paint because it's smooth, blends easily and can be painted over if a mistake is made.

Grace's grandfather was in the music field, and that creative gene stuck with her, as she's always had a passion for art and hopes to go to college for fashion design innovation.

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BY JAREK RUTZ

Wilmington Christian School is getting a new headmaster, starting July 1. Jonathan Nazigian was selected by the Hockessin school’s board of directors, following an international search.

“God has led us to an individual with strong Godly character, long-term Christian school experience and servant-leadership qualities,” said Lesley Aulick, chair of the headmaster search committee.

Nazigian’s relationship with Wilmington Christian began in fall 2021, when he was hired as a Bible department chair and upper school Bible teacher.

WILMINGTON CHRISTIAN NAMES JONATHAN NAZIGIAN AS HEADMASTER

With more than 25 years of experience in Christian schooling, Nazigian has served as a principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, teacher, department chair, leadership institute director and varsity basketball coach. He earned degrees from **Liberty University** in Virginia and **Cairn University** in Pennsylvania.

Nazigian and his wife, Debbie, have been married for 24 years and have three sons.

“Mr. Nazigian’s leadership is marked by courage, integrity and skill,” said Michael McCudden, president of the board of directors. “The WCS board of directors is confident that he is the leader we need for the next season of organizational stability and growth in excellence at WCS.”

He’ll be the sixth headmaster in the school’s 77-year history.





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Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

SPRING SPORTS WEEK 6 RANKINGS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

DELAWARE LIVE SPORTS TOP 10 RANKINGS

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



AUGUST CLOSES THE DOOR ON NO. 1 SPARTANS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Tyler August led the way in a 4-0 victory over the No. 1 Saint Mark's Spartans. August threw five scoreless innings allowing four hits while striking out 10 batters. In the bottom of the sixth inning, Tyler belted a line drive down the right field line for a double, driving in two more runs to put the game out of reach. Drew Simpson came in relief for August and threw two scoreless innings, recording the last six outs of the game for the save. He also went 2-for-4 at the plate. Sammy Diaz-Martinez went 2-for-4 while scoring two runs for the

Seahawks. Jackson Dorsey also added two hits, scoring one run.

Brad Marks started the game for Saint Mark's lasting four innings, allowing seven hits and two runs while striking out two and walking one. Ryan Smitj came in relief for Marks and allowed three hits and two runs over two innings, striking out three batters. Jameson Summerill and Sean Satterfield each had two hits for Saint Mark's.



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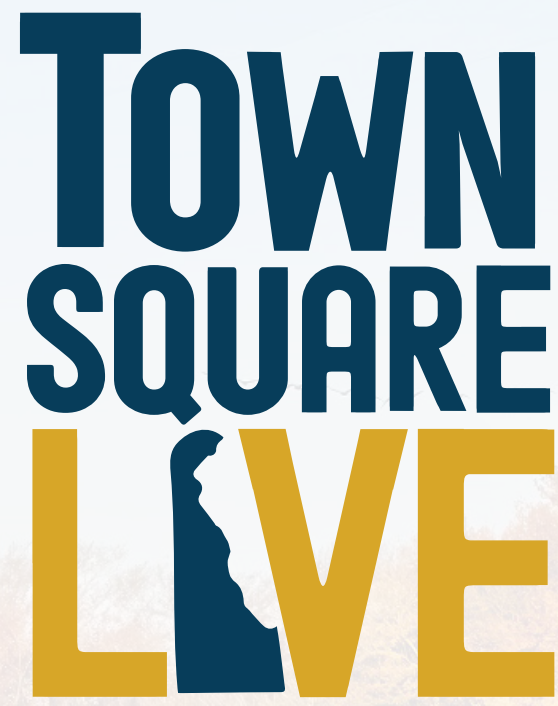
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