

photo link: White Clay Creek State Park

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

 Town Square LIVE

 @TownSquareLive

SUBSCRIBE



January 11, 2024

Vol. 5, Issue 2



Contents

- Community 3
- Business 6
- Government 10
- Education..... 19
- Sports22
- Stay Connected 28



Make Parents Pay for Child’s Car Crimes



Medical Marijuana Card for 65+ Without Doctor Consent?



St. Elizabeth Holds Off Sallies

photo link: Alapocas Run and Wilmington State Parks



Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



WILMINGTON COUNCIL: MAKE PARENTS PAY FOR CHILD'S CAR CRIMES

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Wilmington City Council is considering making parents pay for damages caused by their minor children who break into or damage cars. Carjacking and thefts of personal belongings in cars has been a major problem in cities across the country and Wilmington is no exception.

Some of this was sparked by a [TikTok dare](#) in which people—typically teenagers—break into cars, often documenting the process of hardwiring the vehicle to steal it. Known as the “Kia Boyz TikTok Challenge,” as certain Kia and Hyundai models were particularly quick and easy to steal. The cars were targeted so much that the [Wilmington Police Department](#) gave away steering wheel locks to prevent thefts.

In Monday night’s Joint Finance & Economic Development and Public Safety Committee meeting, a resolution was introduced to address the problem. Sponsored by District 6 Councilwoman Yolanda

McCoy, chair of the Public Safety Committee, the resolution urges the Delaware General Assembly to enact legislation that would make parents liable for auto insurance deductibles in motor vehicle crimes.

“We’ve been having a surge of crime here within the city, which has been going on for some time,” McCoy said. “Now we realize that what’s happening is it’s minors who are taking part in most of these issues with vandalism to the cars, the stealing of the cars and things of that nature.”

The proposal would amend Delaware Code to mandate that when a minor has been found or pled guilty to criminal mischief, carjacking, theft or any crime that results in damage to or loss of a motor vehicle, the parents or guardian of that minor are liable to pay any deductible of the vehicle owner who submits an insurance claim for repair or replacement. The liability to pay the deductible would have no impact or otherwise

be included in the \$10,000 limit on parental liability already established by law.

The law now says that “any municipal corporation, county, town, school district and agency of the state or any person, partnership, corporation or association, or any religious organization whether incorporated or unincorporated, is entitled to recover damages in an appropriate civil action in an amount up to \$10,000 in a court of competent jurisdiction from the parents or guardians of any minor under the age of 18 years, living with the parents, who shall intentionally or recklessly destroy or damage property, real, personal or mixed, belonging to such municipal corporation, county, town, school district or agency of the state, or person, partnership, corporation or association or religious organization.”

In short, the proposed resolution would add to the law. The current law doesn’t say anything about insurance, focusing only on the parental liability in a civil lawsuit.

“With minors, we do not want to penalize them for the rest of their lives when it comes to this, whatever it is that they’re going through at this very moment,” McCoy said, “but someone needs to be held responsible for all the damage that has been done here within the city.”

McCoy said she’s had tons of constituents who’ve had their cars vandalized, many more than once.

“It continues to happen, so we need the parents’ help,” McCoy said. “I don’t know whether or not we’ve tried to have any type of intervention, but this was my idea to try to intervene.”

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



BY JAREK RUTZ

A **Colonial School District** forum Tuesday about a vote to raise school tax revenue by \$61 million also served to ease fears about the effects of property reassessments.

“Everyone thinks that ‘Oh my God, my house is gone from this and it’s quadrupled, my taxes are going to skyrocket’, and that would be true except we have to reset the rate backwards,” said Emily Falcon, Colonial’s chief financial officer.

That means that if the property values quadruples, the school tax rate would be cut by a fourth, since the district must remain revenue neutral.

“We can’t get any more money after reassessment than we’re getting right now,” Falcon said, “Unless the school board chooses to take that little bit extra that they’re allowed to under Delaware law.”

That “little bit extra” is up to a 10% increase in the district’s local revenue. So if the revenue is \$50 million, the maximum revenue increase would be an extra \$5 million, which would be reflected in the tax rate and spread out among district residents. The district’s school

FORUM DETAILS PROPOSED TAX HIKE, REASSESSMENT EFFECT

board would have to vote on whether or not to raise the local revenue, but it is not obligated to do that or to raise it 10%. It can choose a smaller amount.

Falcon said she has no clue whether the board would vote on an increase. The board is more than a year away from needing to make that decision, as both New Castle and Sussex counties are expected to have its reassessments completed by July 2025, so the new tax rate would go into effect in fiscal year 2026, which starts in July 2025.

Delaware’s three counties have not been reassessed in decades. New Castle properties have not been reassessed since 1983, Falcon said.

“Properties built after 1983 are still assessed based on what their home would have been worth in 1983,” she said. “So a home built in 2023 gets backwards math to determine what it would have cost if it was on the books in 1983.”

Kent County’s reassessment is done and residents have already received letters detailing their new property values.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



DON'T WAIT. APPLY FOR FREE TUITION.

Cost doesn't have to keep you from going to college. Delaware's Student Excellence Equals Degree (SEED) Scholarship provides FREE tuition for Delaware high school graduates of any age to attend Delaware Tech.* The scholarship applies to associate degree, credit diploma, credit certificate, and workforce training programs.

SEED SCHOLARSHIP
dtcc.edu/SEED



*Students must meet eligibility requirements. Course fees and books are not covered by the SEED Scholarship.



Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BILL BANNING PAYING DISABLED LESS TAKES EFFECT THIS MONTH

BY PETER OSBORNE

Laura Randa started her search for a new headquarters with a list of 232 possible locations across the country before Delaware jumped to the top of the list.

“Our final decision to move Toivoa and Toivoa Coaching’s headquarters to Delaware was made when Delaware passed legislation to eliminate subminimum wage for people with disabilities,” Randa said.

“We hope to make Delaware the capital of the digital therapeutics industry,” she added. “That includes training and hiring 1,000 certified mental-health coaches over the next decade” to address the nationwide shortage of mental-health clinicians.

Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act authorizes employers, after receiving a certificate for the U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division, to pay wages less than the Federal minimum wage to workers who have disabilities for the work being performed. The General Assembly in late June 2021 passed legislation in a

near unanimous vote to phase out subminimum wages.

Final implementation will happen at the end of January. The bill was named the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act in honor of the tireless advocate of rights for Delaware’s disabled who passed away in 2018.

“We adopted a delayed approach to implementation to allow both workers with disabilities and employers a transitional period,” said House Sponsor Rep. Debra Heffernan (D-6), whose district covers much of northeast Wilmington. “This was to help facilitate a smooth transition, enabling individuals with disabilities and their families to find meaningful employment or training in a new setting.”

Heffernan said “jobs for people with disabilities has been a prime focus for me since first being elected. One of my first bills, in 2012, transformed Delaware into an Employment First state.”

Individuals with disabilities in Employment First

states receive state services, including members of the service-related industry. They are considered for placement in integrated employment making minimum wage or above before other placements (such as in sheltered workshops).

“Having a job is one of the most important steps to living a productive and independent life,” Heffernan said. “Paying a worker with disabilities less than minimum wage is pure and simple discrimination. Getting rid of the subminimum wage and sheltered workshops allows our state to acknowledge the value of every Delawarean with and without disabilities.”

“We have seen a few employers drop out of the program and a few more cutting back on how many they hire,” said Jim Greenwell, vice president of finance for Milford-based Kent-Sussex Industries.

It is a private nonprofit vocation rehabilitation organization that provides employment and training services to individuals with intellectual, mental, physical and emotional disabilities who live in Kent, Sussex, and lower New Castle County.

Greenwell said KSI has about 90 program participants at different stages of entering the workforce. About one-third are working in the community for 20-40 hours per week. KSI has been paying in-house program participants the minimum wage for the past eight years or so, he said.

The General Assembly passed a bill in June 2021 that would raise the minimum wage by at least \$1 per year until the state rate reached \$15 in January 2025. Since the start of 2021, Delaware’s minimum hourly rate has increased from \$10.50 to \$13.25 as of January 1, 2024.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



ANOTHER ALCOHOL BILL KICKS OFF THIS YEAR'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BY JAREK RUTZ

It's 8 o'clock somewhere!
That's what state senator Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin, said with exuberance after a law expanding the hours of alcohol sales in Delaware garnered approval from her fellow legislators.

House Bill 235, sponsored by Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, allows any individual or business with an alcoholic liquor license to sell at 8 a.m., an hour earlier than the current law of 9 a.m.

HB 235 is one of six alcohol-related bills in Delaware's 152nd General Assembly. The bill is now headed to the governor's desk for signature after unanimous support on the Senate floor Tuesday.

Alcohol licensees cannot sell for on-premises consumption after 1 a.m. They're also allowed to close before 1 a.m. by ordinance of the municipal corporation.

Alcoholic sales are allowed on every day of the year, but licensees are not required to be open to sell alcohol on Sundays, Thanksgiving, Easter or Christmas.

In what was the Senate's first meeting of this year's legislative session, two other bills, both relating to education, were unanimously voted for by all 21 senators and are now on their way to the House for consideration. They are:

- **Senate Bill 187**, sponsored by Sen. Sturgeon, D-Hockessin and chair of the Senate Education Committee, would ensure that educators who earned graduate degrees prior to becoming educators receive credit on the salary schedule for those degrees regardless of the specific subject area of those degrees. Once an individual is employed as an educator, in order to receive credit for any graduate degrees earned after that time, such degree must be in the subject area in which the educator is employed.
- **Senate Bill 188**, also sponsored by Sturgeon, would enact the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact. This would make it easier for teachers to transition to a new state, as their certifications and credentials would

Yes2Health
A free community health outreach program

- Health Education Classes
- Live in the Kitchen Cooking Classes
- One-on-one Nutrition Counseling
- Active Cooking Series (Cookbook club)
- Health & Movement Retreats

db DELAWARE BREAST CANCER COALITION

Register for free today >

transfer to other states in the compact. Licenses would require a bachelor's degree and completion of a state-approved program for teacher licensure like a teacher preparation program at a college or university. There was also a notable resolution voted for Tuesday that expresses the General Assembly's concern for the loss of life in the Israel-Hamas war and calls on the legislature and the citizens of Delaware to recognize its common humanity and the shared strength of the state's diversity.

Two Muslim and one Jewish faith leaders shared testimony, involving prayer, poetry and words of unification.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



Application Period Re-Opens: FEB. 1 - MARCH 1, 2024!

EDGE

GRANT COMPETITION

WEBINAR SERIES

Compete for grant funding through our EDGE (Encouraging Development, Growth & Expansion) initiative. It's a great way to help your small business start or grow!

EDGE Informational Webinar

MON. JAN 22 | 2:00 P.M.



Using SizeUp Delaware To Strengthen Your EDGE Application

TUE. JAN 23 | 10 - 11:15 A.M.



[DE.GOV/EDGE](https://de.gov/edge)



Goldey-Beacom
COLLEGE

NEW GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- Certificate in Marketing
- Certificate in Human Resource Management
- Certificate in Health Care Management
- Certificate in Entrepreneurship
- Certificate in Information Technology



Goldey-Beacom
COLLEGE

LOCATION | CONTACT | WEBSITE

4701 Limestone Road
Wilmington, DE 19808

302-225-6248
Admissions@gbc.edu

www.gbc.edu/

photo link: Town of Middletown, Delaware



Town of Middletown
Incorporated 1861



Town Hall



	Mayor • Kenneth L. Branner, Jr.		
	Vice Mayor • James Reynolds		
Town Council •	Robert McGhee	Andrew Chas	Aaron Blythe
	Robert E. Stout	Jim Royston	
Town Clerk •		Town Manager •	Morris Deputy

Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



SHOULD THOSE 65+ GET MARIJUANA CARD WITHOUT DOC CONSENT?

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that would allow Delawareans 65 or older to obtain a medical marijuana card without their doctor’s approval got some pushback Wednesday in a legislative hearing.

House Bill 285, sponsored by Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Newark would allow the state’s elders to self-certify for the card without a certification from a health-care provider, circumventing the doctor-patient relationship.

Oseinski said those 65 and older are usually automatically approved for a card by their doctor if they believe they will benefit from it, so the bill would save them a trip to the doctor and the costs that come with that. He also said doctors typically recommend their patients to start small and slow with dosage and then work their way up to make sure their body reacts to it positively.

His move comes 12 to 24 months before the Delaware marijuana industry is expected to be selling legal marijuana.

“Once the recreational market is up and running, basically anybody, if they’re 21 years and older, will be able to basically self-certify because it’s a recreational market,” he said.

The bill would also:

- Remove the requirement that a patient must have a debilitating medical condition to qualify for a registry identification card. Instead, health-care providers would determine whether a patient has a diagnosed medical condition that would benefit therapeutically or palliatively from the use of medical marijuana.
- Modify the issuance process of medical marijuana registry identification cards, which facilitate the acquisition, delivery, possession or transfer of medical marijuana.
- Allow for flexible expiration dates on registry identification cards, enabling 1-, 2- or 3-year expiration dates.

But a Long Neck representative, who is also an optometrist, had questions in Wednesday’s **House Health & Human Development Committee** meeting.

“We know that if you compare a 65-year-old to a 35-year-old, 65-year-olds have reduced reaction time, decreased vision, decreased hearing, decreased taste sensation, decreased smell,” said Rep. Jeff Hilovsky, R-Long Neck, “and so to have 65-year-olds...have carte blanche to just get as much as they want and have to get no sense of approval, no medical discussion with their physician. I can’t understand that.”

Osienski reminded Hilovsky that there’s right at 17,000 Delawareans who have medical cards. About 5,000 of those are 65 or older, he said. He also pointed out that while there’s plenty of anecdotal evidence and research, there has been no federally-funded research on the effects of marijuana.

Hilovsky argued that allowing older folks who sometimes don’t have the best senses of vision and hearing to self certify because it saves them a copay doesn’t help the public. It will mean people 65 who may be dealing with 65-year-olds who could be driving under the influence, with no one monitoring how much they get, Hilovsky said.

He said he’s worried about people waking up early in the morning, smoking or consuming marijuana and then driving or causing other harm to school children at bus stops or schools.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

HOUSE, SENATE REPUBLICANS SHOWCASE BILLS THEY PLAN TO PUSH

BY BETSY PRICE

House and Senate Republicans on Wednesday showed a new spirit of cooperation—and a determination to get proposals they consider common sense out in front of the public—by holding a joint press conference.

The focus Wednesday was on GOP bills that would curb future governors' unrestricted use of emergency powers by requiring legislative review and give the legislature and therefore average citizens who elected representatives more say on regulations created by state agencies, specifically things like the electric vehicle ones.

But the real intent seems to be to raise their profile and public awareness of their efforts in a General Assembly heavily dominated by Democrats who can shove a huge amount of their agenda through the legislative body without a single vote from Republicans and while ignoring their bills.

The results often left Republicans positioned as the uncooperating, naysaying bad guys constantly opposing progress.

Democrats also control the committees and have the power to allow bills to come up for hearings, which are necessary before they go to the House and Senate floor.

In the last few years, there's been several examples of Republican bills that went nowhere, but in subsequent years flew through the assembly once they essentially came back under a Democratic sponsor.

The Republicans had another point they wanted to make, voiced in different ways by different representatives: They don't just represent Republicans.

"This is an effort by us to make sure that we are representing Delawareans and Delaware, not Republicans, not Democrats, not blue, not red," said House Minority Leader Mike Ramone, R-Newark.

REPUBLICAN LIMIT ON EMERGENCY POWERS

Rep. Rich Collins' House Bill 245, which would require the General Assembly to approve the extension of a state of emergency order after 180 days, is the second version of the bill to be introduced.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



**Good for the heart
and soul**

Nothing brings families together like a delicious meal.

Locally owned and operated for more than 25 years, **Kenny Family Shoprites** are delighted to nourish our Delaware community!

[@kennyfamstores](#) [kennyfamilystores](#)



GILTNER SWORN IN AS SOLE REPUBLICAN WOMAN IN ASSEMBLY

BY BETSY PRICE

Safety and security on many fronts will be some of the main issues that **Valerie Jones Giltner**, R-Georgetown, will be paying attention to during her first session of the Delaware General Assembly.

Giltner, who was sworn in Tuesday as the Delaware General Assembly’s sole Republican woman, won a special election in December to replace Ruth Briggs King. She resigned before Thanksgiving after moving outside her district.

“I think she’s going to do a great job,” said Briggs King, who had been looking for the right person to replace her and urged Giltner to run. She also attended Giltner’s swearing-in Tuesday, the first day of the 2024 session.

Briggs King expects Giltner to focus on constituent service while keeping an eye on family values and on conservative values and concerns in the legislature.

“She’s going to be a hard worker,” Briggs King said. “She has a lot of my tendencies and she’s going to ask a

lot of questions. She has her own personality, her own way of doing things. She will be very effective.”

Both began their careers at Milford Hospital, she in medical technology and Giltner in critical care nursing. Both went on to work at national companies and often were the only women at the table in meetings.

“So she’s well versed in that kind of dynamic as well as negotiating, compromising and leading at the level,” Briggs King said. “She will be able to work on complex issues but make sure that there’s that voice that sometimes is under-represented.”

Giltner, who was joined by her parents Tom and Janice Jones, husband John Roehl, daughter Olivia, son Parker, his wife Lexie and their daughter Eden Grace, took the oath of office on a family Bible as Rep. Tim Dukes, R-Laurel, read her oath.

She chose Dukes because early on in the election process he became a mentor and spent time with her

CITY Fare

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
(302) 293-0008

TWO HOURS TO BRING A SMILE

NO MEALS ON WHEELS DELAWARE

canvassing neighborhoods that once had been in his district, but now are in her 37th District. He also took her son to Jamaica on church mission trips twice.

GILTNER CAMPAIGN

She’s become interested in safety and security—on roads, in schools, from flooding and from crimes—because the issues came up over and over again while she was campaigning, Giltner said. She had expected worries about schools and education.

“But I didn’t realize until I got into areas that I normally don’t visit that there was so much that was impacted by the security of our roads,” she said. “And then making sure that we have ample prosecution.”

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



PASSIONATE HOUSE DEBATES FOCUS ON ISRAEL, GAZA CONFLICT

BY BETSY PRICE

Dueling resolutions about the Hamas attacks in Israel and that nation’s invasion of Gaza drew intense—but civil—reactions on the first day of the 2024 session of the Delaware House of Representatives Tuesday.

First up was [House Concurrent Resolution No. 80](#), which noted that the attacks and invasion “resulted in catastrophic and heartbreaking losses of human life.” Delaware’s hearts go out to all who are suffering in Delaware and across the world, HR80 said.

The resolution called on the General Assembly to recognize that Delaware is “a state of neighbors bound together by empathy, compassion and a sense that we’re all stronger together. Majority Leader Melissa Minor-Brown, D-New Castle, said her resolutions “affirms that there is no place for hate in our state.”

Rep. Madinah Wilson-Anton, D-Newark, who gained national attention for heckling Vice President Kamala Harris during a speech at a holiday party and demanding a ceasefire, argued that the bill used sanitizing lan-

guage. “We’re whitewashing what’s actually happening,” she said, starting nearly an hour of debates.

More than 1,200 Israelis were killed on Oct. 7, she said. Since then, more than 23,000 Palestinians have been and probably more, hidden by the rubble of bombing by the “apartheid state of Israel.” Palestinians were not even mentioned in the resolution, she pointed out.

“This is not a religious conflict. It’s a situation of settler colonialism,” she said. “Palestinians come from all walks of life, including they’re also Jewish Palestinians. So to simplify this situation to one in which it’s a Muslim-Jewish thing is disingenuous. It’s misleading. And it leads to a conversation where we don’t talk about human rights. We talk about interfaith, or we talk about all of us just getting to know each other and understand each other. It’s not about a religious conflict at all.”

She noted that Minor-Brown did not have a Muslim leader appear before the House, as she did Jewish and other interfaith leaders.

“I don’t know if it was that they were not invited or if it was that they were invited and they were not interested in a charade like this,” Wilson-Anton said. “The word Palestinian is not even mentioned in this resolution,” she said. “The word genocide is not mentioned.”

Even so, she said, she planned to vote for the resolution. “It doesn’t say anything. It doesn’t call us to anything other than to continue to do our jobs, which is to recognize all Delawareans,” she said. “You don’t need a resolution to continue to do that.”

State Rep. Jeff Spiegelman, R-Clayton, who is Jewish, took the floor. However, the House has new wireless microphones and Spiegelman didn’t turn his on—that time—so online listeners have no idea what he said.

The resolution passed unanimously, with one member absent, and Wilson-Anton rose to introduce her [House Resolution 26](#), co-sponsored by Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow. It recognized the genocide and humanitarian crisis in Gaza and called on the Biden administration and federal delegation from Delaware to support a permanent and lasting ceasefire.

“I think I can say that all of us were horrified by the attacks on Oct. 7,” Wilson-Anton said. “It’s unfortunate that in the aftermath of the terrible attacks, the way that the Israeli government has responded has included indiscriminate bombing of innocent civilians.”

Many are displaced, living without shelter, food, water and electricity, she said. Her social media feeds are filled with photos of injured children, including some said to have undergone amputations without anesthetics.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



BY JAREK RUTZ

The Wilmington City Council discussed a proposal Monday night to contract with **St. Francis Hospital** to subsidize emergency ambulance service through 2024. The service mostly is used by the most vulnerable residents of the city, according to St. Francis. It had about 20,000 EMS runs in Wilmington in 2023.

In the council's Joint Finance & Economic Development and Public Safety Committee meeting Monday night, the details of the contract were explained.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Under the deal, Wilmington would pay St. Francis, which is part of the **Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic** network, up to \$3.5 million this year to subsidize the hospital's costs for emergency transports. This comes after Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki announced the city is faced with a potential crisis about emergency

WILMINGTON CONSIDERING \$3.5 MILLION SUBSIDY PLAN FOR EMS SERVICES

ambulance service, which had always been provided to the city without cost by St. Francis Hospital.

Faced with severe financial difficulties, St. Francis told the city in late 2023 that it would not be able to provide ambulance services in 2024. The St. Francis EMS program was available without cost to the city because people who were transported to the hospital were billed by St. Francis for employee and equipment costs through the health insurance program. St. Francis said the billing process was no longer covering the true cost of the service.

In recent weeks, the city administration and St. Francis explored alternative funding options to keep the ambulances running for at least another year. Purzycki said the city also considered having the Wilmington Fire Department add an EMS unit, which is still a possibility. The city also issued a request for proposals to see if another ambulance service could take over from St. Francis, but the only bidder was St. Francis for \$3.5 million.

The most feasible solution, Purzycki has said, is to enable the city to spend up the \$3.5 million.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

Celebrating National School Choice Week

DELAWARE FUTURE'S FEST
DISCOVER YOUR PATHWAY

Goldey Beacom College

27 January, 2023

10am-2:30pm

[Click here for more information.](#)



KENT COUNTY RESIDENTS FIRST TO SEE NEW PROPERTY VALUES

BY JAREK RUTZ

Kim Patterson Luton of Dover got a Christmas present nobody would want: A letter detailing the new reassessment of her family’s property. The letter, which arrived in mid-December, concerned property built in 2005 and long assessed at \$59,300. Under the new evaluation, her home is assessed at an eye-popping \$419,300.

“My husband and I are seniors and living on fixed retirement incomes, so of course we are concerned about any increase in property taxes,” she said. The Lutons were among the first Delawareans to see the results of a statewide property reassessment.

Property reassessments have not been done in New Castle County since 1983, in Kent County since 1987, and in Sussex County since 1974. That’s meant people are still paying taxes on decades-old old valuations, rather than current ones, affecting a variety of government services, including schools.

Kent County was expected to have its reassessments done by the end of 2024, but completed them early. Paul Hertz, commissioner of the **Kent County Levy Court**, District 6, said all letters of new reassessment values have been sent out, about 3,000 in total. New Castle and Sussex counties should have their assessments done by the end of 2025.

“New Castle and Sussex were delayed a year and their reassessments are happening,” he said. “That’s because they have so much more property, so their assessment will not go into effect this year, while our new assessments will be affected for fiscal year 2025.”

What Delaware’s residents really want to know is what the assessments mean to their bank accounts. Hertz said county taxes will not be raised overall and Kent County expects to bring in \$14.5 million in revenue next fiscal year, the same as this year.



Garrett B. Lyons D.D.S., P.A.
Cosmetic & Family Dentistry
Where extra is ordinary
Montchanin, DE • 302.654.1765

Taxpayers may see changes, though, he said. About one-third will pay more, one-third will pay less and one-third will pay the same, he said. Kent County tax now is 36 cents per \$100 of assessed home value. For next fiscal year, which starts July 1, he expects the county tax to drop to between 5 and 7 cents per \$100 per assessed home value to guarantee that same \$14.5 million in revenue.

A former Levy Court commissioner applauded that move. “I think the county would be wise to hold true to a revenue neutral assessment next year with the goal to be that taxation is fair and accurately assessed,” said Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover.

Hertz said the county isn’t pushing to raise tax revenue for two reasons.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



RETIREE HEALTH COMMITTEE SUGGESTION NO. 1: NO MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

BY BETSY PRICE

After nearly facing a revolt of retirees angered by the state’s move to substantially alter their health care, a committee has issued more than a dozen recommendations designed to keep them and the state’s coffers healthy. One of the recommendations made by the Retiree Healthcare Benefits Advisory Subcommittee—which met 20 times over nine months—was for the state to not use a Delaware-specific Medicare Advantage plan, which was what set off the retirees.

They viewed it a lesser plan that violated the state’s promise of excellent healthcare because it could restrict access to doctors and facilities, require referrals to other doctors which was not needed before and otherwise alter benefits. The recommendations also suggest that current retirees and future retirees have different levels of plans, and that payroll taxes rise to help current workers pay part of their own healthcare coverage. See the full report [HERE](#).

Other recommendations include:

- Continue to contribute 1% of general fund from the prior year to the Other Post Employment Fund, commonly called OPEB, which helps pay for retiree healthcare. It is massively underfunded now, a point that outside financial analysts often refer to as a worry and liability.
- Increase OPEB pre-funding from 0.36% of payroll to 0.5%, then increase by an additional 0.25% of payroll each fiscal year until it reaches 10%.
- Ensure that current Medicare-eligible and pre-Medicare state retirees and state employees who retire prior to Jan. 1, 2025 will be entitled to Special Medic-fill/Rx benefits with no changes to the state share percentage of payments when they are Medicare eligible. That’s the plan retirees didn’t want to lose.
- Limit changes to plan design, eligibility requirements, or contribution share/percentage to workers

“
We saw a boost in website referrals from Delaware LIVE during our admission season.
”
- URSULINE ACADEMY

hired on or after Jan. 1, 2025.

- Solicit public comment before the retiree health committee votes to adopt the final request for proposal for retiree healthcare plans.
- Research and measure the cost of state-sponsored healthcare benefits for three subgroups: current workers, eligible pensioners who are ineligible for Medicare and eligible pensioners who are eligible for Medicare.
- Address the issue of healthcare pricing in Delaware, including statutory, regulatory and administrative changes in 2024 to bring more transparency, consistency, affordability and sustainability to healthcare prices and price growth.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



ALAN DERSHOWITZ LEFT \$5 MILLION IN CHANCERY COURT

BY BETSY PRICE

Famed lawyer **Alan Dershowitz's** lively appearance Thursday in a Delaware **Court of Chancery** included debating former Harvard student and now Chancellor Kathaleen St. J. McCormick and eventually dropping checks worth nearly \$5 million onto the defense table. It essentially paid in full what **TransPerfect Global** owes the Chancery Court.

Along the way, the hearing—to decide if Transperfect should be charged with contempt for not paying—meandered into the Clinton Whitewater scandal, Charles Dicken's "Bleak House," Joseph Heller's "Catch 22" and Transperfect's desire to never be in a Delaware courtroom again.

Dershowitz's presence came during the latest skirmish in the long-running legal battle between Philip Shawe, owner of transcription company TransPerfect Global, and Robert Pincus, formerly of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP.

Pincus was appointed by the Chancery Court to oversee the sale of TransPerfect when Shawe and his former co-founder could not agree on a way forward for the company. In that arrangement, TransPerfect was required to pay Pincus' fees. After the sale for \$770 million to Shawe, Shawe filed suit in federal court, saying that Pincus inflated the cost of the sale. It also battled in Chancery Court, arguing that TransPerfect should not have to pay Pincus's invoices without knowing how the fees were accounted for.

Thursday's hearing was focused on TransPerfect's refusal to comply with two orders from McCormick to pay nearly \$5 million in fees to Pincus as well as more than \$441,000 to Pincus's lawyers, represented Thursday by Douglas D. Herrman of Troutman Pepper.

Dershowitz's appearance comes during a busy week for him. His name popped up again in documents related to convicted sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, whom Dershowitz had represented. Dershowitz responded with a 31-minute video welcoming the release of the Epstein material and saying it would prove he never did anything wrong. Dershowitz's wife, Carolyn Cohen, was in the courtroom Thursday.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

TOWNSQUARE LIVE

Let us build your marketing team!

Develop a strategy. Implement interactive platforms and get your name out there for all to see!

LOCAL BUSINESS EXPOSURE!

Effectively expand customer reach & exposure!



LOCAL BUSINESS EXPOSURE!

enhance community engagement and interaction



LOCAL BUSINESS EXPOSURE!



generate sales, customer retention and loyalty



it's more than just advertising- it grows your business!

Contact Bryan Shupe
302-542-9231
Bryan@MilfordLive.com



photo credit: Cab Calloway School of the Arts



Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



POLICE ACTIVELY INVESTIGATING THREATS AT NEWARK HIGH

BY JAREK RUTZ

This story has been updated with new information at 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 5.

An active investigation is happening at **Christina School District's Newark High School**. The **Newark Police Department** announced the investigation Jan. 4, as it is looking into threats made to the school and school staff.

“There is not believed to be a threat to the public and this is believed to be a ‘swatting’ type incident,” the department’s statement said.

Immediate attempts to reach the school and district for comment or additional details were unsuccessful.

At approximately 1:10 p.m. on Jan. 4, the Newark Police Department Communications Center received a phone call from a subject claiming that they were outside of Newark High School and were planning to enter the school and shoot students and staff members.

Newark Police school resource officers along with Christina School District constables, who were already at the school, immediately responded to the threatening phone call.

Additional Newark Police patrol officers also responded to the scene and officers quickly determined that no shooting or acts of violence were taking place in or around the school.

Early investigative efforts led officers to determine that this incident was a hoax or what has commonly been referred to as a “swatting” incident and there was no threat to the student body, staff or school.

Detectives from the Criminal Investigations Unit responded to the scene to assume the investigation while Newark Police officers remained at the school to ensure the safe and peaceful dismissal of the students at the end of the school day.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



**New School Year.
New Teacher.
New Chance to Learn.**

*Ask Your Child's Teacher:
How can you and I ensure that my
child is academically successful?*



**School Choice
is Open!**



The families of 18,455 students made the charter school choice for the 23/24 School Year! Next year's choice window is open through Jan 10, 2024.

Want to know what your choices are?
Or how to apply for School Choice?
Check out
www.DECharterNetwork.org/school-choice/





DELAWARE FUTURES FEST ON JAN. 27 FOR STUDENT PATHWAYS

BY JAREK RUTZ

An all-day event for students to explore the various educational and career pathways and opportunities in Delaware is coming to a state college later this month.

From 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 27, Pike Creek's **Goldey-Beacom College** is hosting "Delaware Futures Fest: Discover Your Pathway."

The event is designed to inspire and inform attendees about the diverse high school pathways available to them, whether it be through traditional education, vocational training or other career-oriented options. It will provide students with a long-term look at how the choice they make regarding their high school or high school pathway will play out, said Britney Mumford, executive director of **DelawareCAN**, an education advocacy group that is one of the sponsors.

"Attending the Delaware Futures Fest offers students a unique opportunity to explore a myriad of education-

al and career pathways tailored to their interests and aspirations," she said. "This is the first event to highlight the many different options Delaware students have. We know that students who are engaged in their field of study not only perform better but have a more positive experience." By arming students with as much information as possible, Mumford said the hope is to foster more positive student outcomes.

The fair will feature representatives from high schools, colleges, community organizations and industries and businesses.

"By engaging with industry professionals, participating in hands-on activities, and accessing valuable resources, students can gain invaluable insights and make informed decisions about their future," Mumford said.

There will also be entertainment, snacks and a school supply giveaway.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

THE Independence SCHOOL
Inspire. Dream. Achieve.

Are you a parent to a current 4th or 5th grader?

The Independence School's unique Middle School curriculum helps students build their foundations to be exceptional citizens and leaders.

Scan the QR code to learn more!

TheIndependenceSchool.org • 302.239.0332

photo credit: Ben Fulton



Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 4 GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The girls basketball season saw some great games last week with conference games providing some upsets as the season ramps back up after the holiday break.

Wilmington Friends won the Quaker Classic over the weekend. They defeated Seaford 57-49 behind 19 points from Izzy Winchell. She made five triples and led a balanced Quakers team to the tournament title.

The Padua Pandas picked up their sixth win of the season over the weekend in their first eight games. They were 7-13 last season, just missing the state tournament. They will have some tough games coming up in the next couple of weeks, but should match their win total from last year soon.

There are no undefeated teams left in the state, but there are nine teams heading into this week with just one loss. Saint Mark's is one of them, but they have a gauntlet of tough games coming up against ranked teams including Padua, St Elizabeth, Wilmington Friends and Ursuline.

Here are the new top 10 for this week voted by our Delaware Live Crew.

No. 1 Ursuline (8-1) (LW No. 1) The Raiders defeated Archbishop John Carroll (Pa.), 61-57. They are off this week but host A.I. Dupont on Monday, Jan. 15.

No. 2 Caravel (7-1) (LW No. 2) The Bucs picked up a win over Tatnall last week. They have three road games

this week including a showdown with No. 4 St. Elizabeth on Tuesday.

No. 3 Sanford (4-4) (LW No. 3) The Warriors picked up a huge win over No. 5 Dover on Saturday. They traveled to Tower Hill on Tuesday.

No. 4 St. Elizabeth (5-1) (LW No. 4) The Vikings defeated First Stat Military last week. They hosted No. 2 Caravel on Tuesday and travel to Conrad on Thursday.

No. 5 A.I. DuPont (8-2) (LW No. 6) The Tigers beat Hodgson last week. They host Dickinson on Wednesday and travel to Concord on Friday.

No. 6 Dover (7-1) (LW No. 5) The Senators lost at No. 3 Sanford last week. They hosted Sussex Central on Tuesday and Sussex Tech on Thursday.

No. 7 Saint Mark's (7-1) (LW No. 7) The Spartans beat Tower Hill last week. They traveled to No. 8 Padua on Tuesday and Red Lion on Thursday.

No. 8 Padua (6-2) (LW No. 8) The Pandas defeated Tatnall last week. They host edNo. 7 Saint Mark's on Tuesday.

No. 9 Cape Henlopen (3-4) (LW No. 9) The Vikings defeated Caesar Rodney last week. They hosted Smyrna on Tuesday and travel to Milford on Thursday.

No. 10 DMA (5-3) (LW 10) The Seahawks won a conference game against Wilmington Charter. They travel to Newark Charter on Thursday.





COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 4 BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

It was a great week of basketball on the boys side last week, filled with a pair of top five games plus a lot of upsets.

The Smyrna Eagles are off to a great start this year including a pair of Henlopen North wins. They are 5-2 overall after having a 3-17 record last year. They have three straight at home including Cape Henlopen on Tuesday. That game was livestreamed on Delaware Live and the Vikings won their first meeting 61-44 on Dec. 12.

Wilmington Friends won the Quaker Classic over the weekend by defeating Glasgow 43-36. Joey Winchell led the Quakers with 15 points and Ryan Tattersall added 14 points. They improved to 4-2 on the season and have two road conference games coming up this week.

There are four undefeated teams left in the state and two of them reside in the Henlopen South. Seaford and Lake Forest are both 7-0 and will meet in Seaford on Jan 16. St. Elizabeth and Odessa are the other two teams.

Here are the new top 10 for this week voted by our Delaware Live Crew.

No. 1 St. Elizabeth (7-0) (LW No. 2) The Vikings beat FSMA and then No. 1 Sallies 84-77 last week. The Vikings host Conrad on Thursday night.

No. 2 Sallies (4-5) (LW No. 1) The Sals went 1-1 last week winning at Malvern Prep (PA) before losing to St. Elizabeth. The Sals are finally home for the first time in over four weeks when they played No. 5 William Penn on Tuesday.

No. 3 Dover (6-1) (LW No. 3) The Senators went 2-0 with wins over Polytech and Sanford They have a pair of road games this week as they faced Sussex Central on Tuesday and Sussex Tech on Thursday.

No. 4 Middletown (3-3) (LW No. 4) The Cavs defeated St. Georges Tech last week. They hosted Howard on Tuesday and Newark on Thursday

No. 5 William Penn (4-2) (LW No. 7) They won a pair of games last week over Appoquinimink and Tower Hill. They were at No. 2 Sallies on Tuesday and host Delcastle on Thursday.

No. 6 Sanford (4-3) (LW No. 6) The Warriors lost a tough one to No. 3 Dover 61-59 last week. They hosted Tower Hill on Tuesday and travel to St. Andrew's on Friday.

No. 7 Odessa (8-0) (LW No. 9) The Ducks defeated Newark in its first Blue Hen Flight A game. They were at Red Lion on Tuesday and host Christiana on Thursday.

No. 8 Lake Forest (7-0) (LW Unranked) The Spartans beat Sussex Academy last week. They host a pair of games this week as they faced Delmar on Tuesday and ECHS on Thursday.

No. 9 Mount Pleasant (8-2) (LW Unranked) The Green Knights defeated Caravel last week. They host St. Georges Tech on Thursday.

No. 10 Saint Mark's (9-1) (LW No. 10) The Spartans defeated Laurel last week. They hosted Christiana on Tuesday.





ST. ELIZABETH HOLDS OFF SALLIES IN SOLD-OUT SHOWDOWN

BY JOE SINGLES

The sellout crowd and the big game atmosphere had little effect on both teams as St. Elizabeth settled in to their 2-2-1 full court press defensively and received some hot three-point shooting to get them on the scoreboard early and often, scoring 20 points in the first six minutes of the contest. Sallies clawed their way to within four, but this would be the closest they would get the rest of the game. Temple Owl recruit Aiden Tobiason made his presence known early as his relentless attack on the offensive boards and sharp shooting led Vikings to a 24-20 first quarter lead.

Three minutes into the second, Sallies continued to play hard and make the most of their opportunities around the basket. The Sallies' defense held the Vikings

to only eight points in the first five minutes of the quarter, making it more a more difficult for the home team to get the good looks at the basket they enjoyed in the first quarter. St. E looked a bit out of sorts. The extension of the Sallies D to take away the three-point shot and less offensive rebounds forced the Vikings to run more halfcourt sets. Solid foul shooting helped the Vikings withstand their offensive troubles as Steven Nixon Jr. knocked down a deep three-point shot to extend the lead to nine, only to see Sallies cut it to seven at the half—42-35 St. Elizabeth. Tobiason led all scorers at the half with 18 points.

Back and forth they went early in the third. Sallies seemed to embrace the up and down pace in which the

Vikings wanted to play at and beat the home team at their own game on a number of possessions. Coach Cassidy didn't like what he saw early and called a time-out at the 4:40 mark despite still being up seven. The Vikings players seemed rattled but not deterred, weathering the storm and keeping the away team at arms length. Without glancing at the scoreboard, one would might think Sallies had gained the momentum, but all their hard work didn't result in points, leaving them down seven once again with 1:26 to go in the quarter. The Vikings would add a deep three-point shot at the end of the third quarter to extend the lead to 64-54 going into the fourth.

Good players come up big in big games and Tobiason met the standard as he came out in the fourth quarter and scored St. E's first five points on two free throws and a three-point shot. Up 15 with 3:25 to go in the game, St. Elizabeth continued to stick with the game plan, pushing the ball when the opportunity presented itself, but conversely working the ball around the perimeter in the half court looking for dribble penetration openings regardless of who had the ball in their hands. Julius Wright and Nixon Jr. showed great poise down the stretch, making the correct decision to push the ball or pull back and run the clock. When all was said and done, the home Vikings would go on to secure the victory, 84-77. Tobiason and his teammate Wright led the way with 28 points each to propel St. Elizabeth to a well-earned victory in front of a sellout and then some crowd.





BLUE COATS SPLIT WEEKEND SERIES WITH KNICKS

BY PATRICK GARYANTES

The Blue Coats returned to Chase Fieldhouse this weekend after splitting a doubleheader out in Portland (OR) against the Remix. The Westchester Knicks came to town winless in four games of regular season play.

Game one was a fun, high scoring affair that saw the Blue Coats earn a 128-121 victory, as they led by a significant amount through most of the contest. Kenneth Lofton Jr. led the Coats in game one with 26 points, 11 rebounds and five assists. A few other standouts for the Blue Coats were Ricky Council (20 points), Terquavion Smith (18 points) and a pair of double-doubles from Darius Bazley (21 points, 11 rebounds, five assists) and Javonte Smart (19 points, 12 assists, five rebounds).

The Knicks had a historic night in the loss as former Belmont star Dylan Windler notched a G-League record 33 rebounds! That is not a typo. In fact, while tweeting out stats after each quarter of the game, I purposefully left out the gaudy rebounding stats for Windler because I thought it was a typo. Windler also led the team with 23 points. The record night paid dividends for Windler, as later that night he signed an official two-way deal with the Los Angeles Lakers. The Knicks also got 20+ point nights from Jacob Toppin, 7-1 center Dmytro Skapintsev and DaQuan Jeffries.

Game two saw both teams undermanned. Obviously, Windler had made his way to Los Angeles upon signing

the two-way deal, but the Blue Coats were also down some star power as both Council and Smith were called up to join the Sixers in Philly on Saturday night.

The Knicks jumped out to a big lead in the first quarter, 29-14 at one point. The Blue Coats fought back to eventually take a 79-78 lead in the third quarter, however the Knicks retook the lead and never looked back as they took a 118-108 road victory.

The Blue Coats needed players outside of the regular rotation to step up and contribute substantially if they were going to compete and they did get that on the night, particularly from guard Jared Brownridge. Brownridge, a rare elder statesman to the G-League at 29 years old, has been with the Blue Coats since 2017 and is a career 39% three-point shooter. I mention that because Brownridge would hit six of his first seven threes and finish with 18 points on the night off the bench. Lofton, the lone two-player available on Saturday night, would battle through a tough first quarter (two points) to finish with 27 points, nine rebounds and four assists to lead the way. Javonte Smart would add 25 points and five assists in the loss.

Delaware now sits in seventh place in the Eastern Conference with a 3-2 record and headed to College Park on Wednesday to take on the Skyhawks.





WILLIAM PENN WINS FLIGHT-A OPENER OVER APPO HIGH

BY GLENN FRAZER

William Penn fell behind early, but closed the first quarter on a 16-5 run to lead Appoquinimink 21-10 Jan. 4 in boys basketball action. The Colonials actually found themselves down 1-0 before the game clock started. A William Penn player dunked the ball during pregame warmups, resulting in a technical foul. Jaguar junior guard Riley Busby converted one of two free throws to give Appo the lead before the game clock started. Buzby nailed a long-range shot at the “top of the circle” giving the Jags an 8-5 lead before the Colonials went on their big run to end the quarter.

Appo trailed 28-10 early in the second quarter as Emmanuel Vonhm poured in nine points, scoring in the paint and from beyond the arc to pace William Penn. Head coach Tom Purse (in his seventh year at Appo) called a timeout, settled his team and watched them go

on a run of their own (14-2) as they went into the half down by six points at 30-24.

The two teams played an even second half, both scoring 22 points in the third quarter, and 20 points each in the final frame as the Colonials secured a “hard fought” 72-66 win. Vonhm scored a game-high 30 points including three from long range. Asked about Vonhm’s ability to step out and shoot the three, head coach Gary Lumpkin told us after the game, “E-man is not going to Steph Curry it, but I was pleased with his shot selection tonight as he has the ability to knock it down.” Colonial teammate Jaylin Horsey added 15 points and several excellent assists. William Penn held Appo’s leading scorer Kaleb Ra’lfa to just two points in the opening half, disrupting his offensive looks at the basket. Coach Lumpkin was asked about his team’s overall effort. “My



URSULINE

November 10th
 Lower & Middle School Open House
 Upper School Shadow Days in
 November & December

Mark your calendar & register today! Private tours also available.

expectations for this team are high...we have a way to go for where we plan to be.” His team made a late charge last season, advancing all the way to the state championship game at the Bob Carpenter Center, losing to Salesianum.

The Colonials took a double-digit lead late in the game, but Coach Purse’s Appo Jags played tough to the final buzzer and closed the gap to make it close. Although he scored only two points in the opening half, Ra’lfa nailed three shots beyond the arc and finished with 20 points for the game to lead the Jags. Daniel Harvey chipped in with 13, while Buzby and Dillon Griffith added 10 points each.



Stay Connected

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE IS
YOUR SOURCE FOR NEWS
AND INFORMATION IN
THE NEW CASTLE AREA
OF DELAWARE. STAY
CONNECTED WITH US BY
PHONE, EMAIL OR
SOCIAL MEDIA BY
CLICKING ON THE LINKS.**



PHONE: 302-542-9231



**For News & Information: NEWS@DELAWARELIVE.COM
To Advertise With Us: SHUPE@DELAWARELIVE.COM**



[instagram.com/townsquaredelaware/](https://www.instagram.com/townsquaredelaware/)



twitter.com/townsquarede



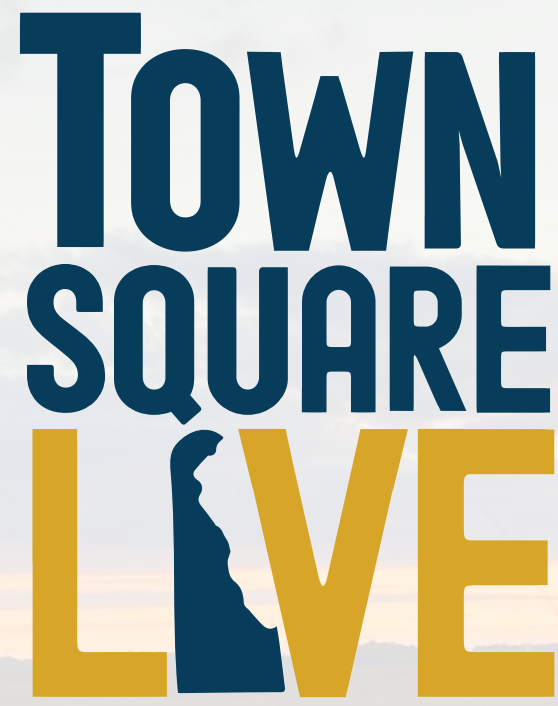
[facebook.com/townsquarelive/](https://www.facebook.com/townsquarelive/)



Watch Delaware Live on YouTube!



[linkedin.com/company/delaware-live-news](https://www.linkedin.com/company/delaware-live-news)



 Town Square LIVE  @TownSquareLive

Without these collaborators, this outlet would not be possible:

Bryan Shupe, CEO

Betsy Price, Editor

Sonja M. Frey, Publisher

John Mollura Photography

Design your 2024 through Intentional Business and Marketing Planning

As a locally-owned company, Delaware LIVE News takes pride in working alongside regional businesses to develop digital marketing campaigns, through our daily news platforms.

From large corporations like Christiana Care, Delaware Tech Community College, and Delaware Department of Health to small shops like Fur Baby Pet Resort, Dolce Coffee Shop, and Benvenuto Tuscan Restaurant, we customize each plan to optimize the needs of each of our marketing partners.

I would love the opportunity to meet with you for 10-15 minutes to see how we can help. You can click the link to set up a meeting with me in our virtual office: <https://meetings.hubspot.com/shupe1>

CEO, Bryan Shupe / 302-542-9231 / shupe@delawarelive.com

