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February 8, 2024

Vol. 5, Issue 6

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TOWN SQUARE LIVE





*Business*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# ECONOMIST PREDICTS MILD 2024 RECESSION, HIT TAYLOR/TRAVIS SONG

BY BETSY PRICE

A Baltimore economist known for his sense of humor left the punchline of his **New Castle County Chamber of Commerce** speech Tuesday to the last bit of his presentation:

“It will come nearly a year after I initially anticipated, but recession is coming in 2024,” **Anirban Basu** told the 200 people attending the chamber’s sold-out annual State of the Economy luncheon. It will be mild, he said.

Basu cited a variety of reasons as underpinning for that prediction: continued high interest rates; continued high federal debt; an inability of the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates; a lower number of mortgage applications; personal savings depleted by consumer spending; rising mortgage and credit card delinquencies; the lack of affordable housing; and an inversion in the 1-year and 10-year yields on treasury bonds.

“If I’m wrong about that, I’ll predict a recession for 2025,” he joked. “And I’m gonna keep predicting one until I get it right and then I will retire and then people

will say, well, that Basu — he knew how to forecast the economy.”

A recession is likely to hit hardest the people who comprise the bottom 50% of America’s wealth, he said. The top 10% — which controls 30% of the country’s wealth — and those between 51% and 90%, who control another chunk, are unlikely to be affected, Basu said.

The chair of the Maryland Economic Development Commission from 2014-2021, Basu admits he’s a pessimistic guy and looks for reasons to be pessimistic about the economy. He likes to pick a theme for his talks, and this year focused on the Good, the Bad and the Ugly, referencing Clint Eastwood movies. The prediction of a recession was his ugly. But there was a lot of upside in 2023 into 2024, he said.

“On an annualized basis in the current quarter, there are very few signs of a slowing economy,” he said.

One major upside, he insisted, is the very public Taylor Swift-Travis Kelce romance.

“Is this thing between her and Travis Kelce not the greatest thing ever,” Basu asked, to some laughs. “I think it’s precisely what this nation needs in these troubled times. It’s fabulous.”

Pictures of them kissing on the internet “has the country aglow,” he said. “This is going to end well because they are a very handsome couple, I think we must agree on that, and they are going to produce one very beautiful number-one hit song. When that occurs, and it will occur, the music is going to flow and I for one cannot wait.

### THE GOOD

- “Nobody” saw the explosive 4.9% growth in the third quarter of 2023, which helped push the year’s growth to an annualized 2.5%, “That is a far cry from a recession.”
- Consumers were spending aggressively in the first quarter of 2024 on retail sales, capping off a year in which they continued to spend more of the savings they amassed during COVID-19.
- That spending drove up the cost of things like travel and concert tickets (think Taylor Swift and Beyonce). “We just set a record for the most number of people to pass through TSA checkpoints.”
- There’s 9 million job openings in the U.S., and the economy just added another 353,000. Basu said he expected that employers’ biggest problem may be attracting and keeping workers.

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# POPULAR DEL PEZ GASTROPUB CROSSES BORDER INTO GLEN MILLS

& Burritos, Savanna Salad Bowls & Sandwiches, both in the Riverfront Market and Mi Ranchito Mexican Market in Newark. Judging by the crowd at the new Del Pez location in Glen Mills, the market is at a sweet spot.

The restaurant is in a former Bertucci's in **Concordville Town Centre**, which has an established Target, Home Depot and Staples and is near Maris Grove, the expansive retirement community, and newly built apartments. So far, the restaurant has been well received, Acuna says.

“In a way, the opening process reminds me a lot of the city of Newark when I opened my first location [Santa Fe Mexican Grill] over 20 years ago,” Acuna said. “Everybody knows each other, and they really work together and want the best for the well-being of the town.”

## DEL PEZ'S BEGINNING

More than 20 years ago, Acuna arrived in the United States from Columbia to study industrial engineering. While taking classes at Delaware Technical Community College and Wesley College, he worked in the hospitality industry, steadily progressing through the ranks.

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BY PAM GEORGE

Javier Acuna took a risk in 2016 when he opened **Del Pez Mexican Gastropub** on the Wilmington Riverfront. At the time, customers seeking Latin flavors wanted straightforward tacos, enchiladas and fajitas — the cuisine they ordered at Acuna's **Santa Fe Mexican Grill** in Newark and Wilmington.

But Del Pez is about creative flavors, artful plating and the interplay of ingredients, an approach widely accepted on American, Asian and even Italian menus.

“We went through a lot of growth and change until we found a place where the market demand is where we need it to be,” said Acuna, founder of **Hakuna Hospitality Group**, which also includes La Taqueria Tacos



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# REYBOLD BUILDS RETAIL CENTER NEAR ST. ANDREWS



BY KATIE KAZIMIR

A retail center is slated to open this summer in Bear adjacent to St. Andrews, a residential community, both developed by **Reybold Group**.

The foundation for St. Andrews Retail Center, which will house eight stores, is complete and steel will go up starting in about two weeks.

“Reybold Group is eager to introduce vibrant retail that will take the lifestyle experience to new heights for residents at St. Andrews, as well as for the surrounding community,” said Jennifer Corbett, commercial leasing operations manager at Reybold Group. “We are committed to welcoming a variety of new businesses at this retail center to enhance what Bear has to offer.”

## REYBOLD SEEKS LESEES

Reybold Group said they have one signed lease from a future tenant and is seeking additional fitness, restaurant, retail and beauty tenants. Reybold representatives said they are in discussions with a pizza restaurant and a bubble tea shop.

It is at 1724 Pulaski Highway, also called Route 40, next to the Community Powered Federal Credit Union headquarters. The location is along a main corridor to Routes 1 and 95, and walkable to any of the residences at St. Andrews.

St. Andrews is the company’s largest residential community of 876 units, including 360 apartments, 450 townhomes and 48 single-family homes.



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*Government*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# MARIJUANA LAWS COME WITH PRICE TAG FOR TWO STATE DEPARTMENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Marijuana and the implications of its legalization in Delaware on certain state agencies, was part of the discussion in the Jan. 31 Joint Finance Committee hearings.

The Department of Safety and Homeland Security is set to receive a little over \$5 million of the total request specifically in response to the marijuana legislation. The Department of Justice, which also had its JFC hearing Feb. 1, asked for \$356,000 to reallocate positions relating to the marijuana control act.

The finance committee is responsible for setting the fiscal year 2025 state budget which starts July 1, and allocating funding to different programs and organizations throughout Delaware. It uses Gov. John Carney's proposed budget as one of the touchstones for decisions.

Its members had questions on how the recent marijuana legislation would affect staffing and finances.

## MARIJUANA AND JOBS

In addition to Homeland Security's nearly \$227 million in Gov. John Carney's recommended budget for next year, the department asked the committee for an additional \$175,900 for uniforms, supplies and other start-up needs for the capitol police officers at the Sussex County Family Courthouse. The extra ask would also cover the cost of handguns for capitol police.

The fiscal note on the bill that authorized the state to set up and oversee the growth and sale of marijuana said the state would need \$4,765,969 in total state cost for fiscal year 2025.

The marijuana money would go to:

- Office of the Marijuana Commissioner: Funds would purchase a software application that can track marijuana "seed to sale." The program provides compli-

ance oversight, process guidance, product tracking, guidelines and support to licensed businesses in the cultivation, processing and selling of marijuana.

- Marijuana Control Act Structural Changes: Funds would be used for reallocation of positions in the Attorney General Office and the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement, as well as other agencies to reflect structural changes.

When marijuana is sold, Robert Coupe, a former Delaware State Police superintendent who is the state's first marijuana commissioner, said there will be a 50% sales tax on marijuana products. "It will create the implementation of over 34 state positions," Coupe said. "Only five of those positions are actually in existence."

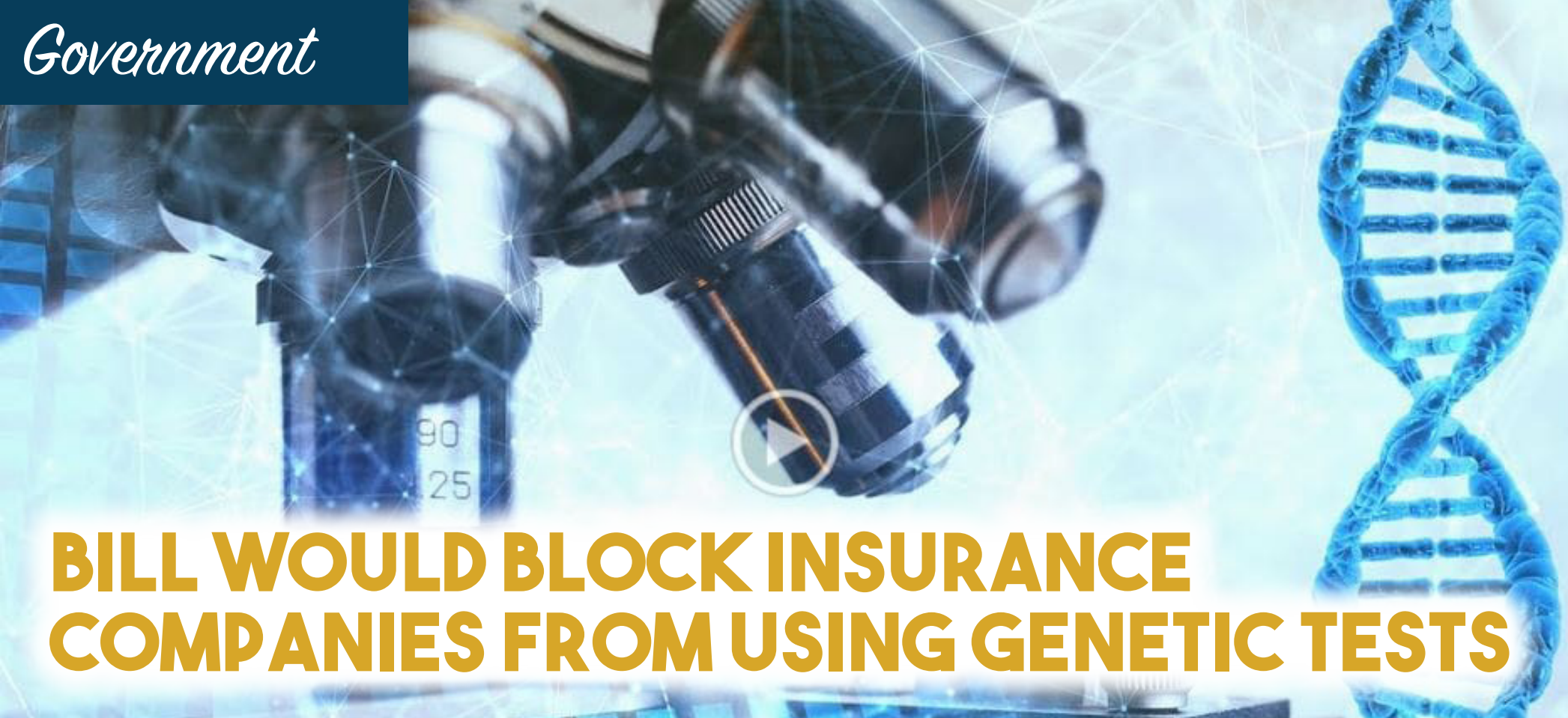
Coupe pointed out that applications will start rolling in this year and the state must determine how it charges applicants for a license. He said if each license cost \$50,000, it would generate a few million dollars for the state. Or, they could come up with some formula, like [New Jersey](#) has, which weighs factors such as the size of the business, for example.

He also said the commission projects about 85,000 customers, which will generate about \$42 million in tax revenue each year.

Also in committee hearing, Sen. Laura Sturgeon D-Hockessin, and others, including public commenters, wanted to make sure there was set funding for victim specialists in both departments to engage with those who have suffered from domestic and other types of abuse.







# BILL WOULD BLOCK INSURANCE COMPANIES FROM USING GENETIC TESTS

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

For decades, public health officials have fretted about insurance companies having access to genetic testing and using the results to deny coverage or set higher rates for people likely to get certain diseases. That was true even before people could casually send in a swab to a company like 23andme, AncestryDNA or Family TreeDNA, to be tested. Those results end up in huge databases and can be purchased by other businesses.

If **House Bill 286** passes in the General Assembly this year, it will forbid insurance companies from using that kind of genetic testing results as a basis for life insurance company rates.

“The knowledge that you’ve gained from a recreational genetic product could have a financial impact on your life insurance,” warned Rep. Jeff Spiegelman, R-Clay-

ton, the primary sponsor of the bill. Those impacts could include higher premium rates, denying coverage or terminating policies based on what Spiegelman said is private data.

Ancestry.com and 23andMe both include a disclaimer that consumers’ results may affect life insurance, but many users don’t realize it, Spiegelman pointed out.

“I thought that wasn’t fair,” he said. “And I didn’t think that was fair for Delawareans.” At the same time, he said, “I don’t want people kept in the dark about potentially serious health issues because they are worried about the financial implications of the results. This is a deterrent to wellness that we should eliminate.”

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# COST OF WEIGHT-LOSS DRUGS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES HITS TAXPAYERS



BY JACOB OWENS

When Gov. John Carney announced two weeks ago that his **Fiscal Year 2025 budget** proposal included more than \$93 million in additional spending for health care plan costs for state employees and retirees, he didn't mention that a significant portion of that is attributed to an exploding issue: weight-loss drugs.

Delaware officials budgeted about \$2 million in the current fiscal year to cover the cost of a new wave of injectable weight-loss drugs. So far, the state has been spending about \$2.5 million a month on the drugs — total health plan spending over the first six months is about \$15 million. That adds to higher health care claims overall for an aging covered population, and the state now faces a health plan fund deficit unless premiums are raised next fiscal year.

While covered workers contribute anywhere from 4% to 13% of plan cost under the state government's General Health Insurance Plan, the remainder of the plan funding is paid by state taxpayers via the state's General Fund. Comparatively, only about 25% of private employer's health insurance plans currently cover GLP-1

drugs at all, according to a survey last year by the health care company Accolade.

In 2021, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration approved a formulation of **Ozempic**, a drug made by the Danish manufacturer Novo Nordisk known as a GLP-1, or glucagon-like peptide-1 which have long treated type 2 diabetes, for use in weight loss. The drugs mimic a hormone that targets areas of the brain that regulate appetite and food intake, reducing a patient's perceived hunger and allowing them to lose weight.

### WEIGHT-LOSS FACTS

But GLP-1s require a patient to remain on the drug for at least four to five months to be most effective, according to the FDA, and the average monthly cost of the drugs runs around \$1,000 without insurance.

Ozempic, also known as Wegovy in its weight-loss form, is among the most prescribed medicines for state workers, according to data from the Delaware Department of Human Resources, which oversees the state's insurance plan. The number of GLP-1 prescriptions written for covered state workers or family members rose 28% in the five months from July to December.

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# MILFORD MOVES TO CONDEMN WIDOW'S PROPERTY FOR BIKE PATH

BY BETSY PRICE

*This report has been updated.*

The Milford City Council has voted to condemn eight acres of a widow's property and pay her \$20,000 for it, so the city can access the adjoining acres that it paid her brother more than \$500,000 for. Milford wants the property to build a new park in the southeast off South Rehoboth Boulevard and install bike and pedestrian paths that would help connect the town.

Annette Billings is seeking a lawyer to help her fight. She's due in court Feb. 13.

The city's move stunned her, she said. So did the price the city wants to pay her, she said, staring at legal documents about the property spread out over her farmhouse

kitchen table. A 2007 appraisal of the Sharp family farm's 38 acres — done when the family was thinking about selling lots — put its value at \$1.9 million, or \$50,000 per acre. Billings, 66, doubts her land's value went down as development in the area has soared.

She believes her brother was paid about \$25,000 per acre for landlocked property, which is why the city wanted to reach out to her. The property the city wants to take from her runs along one side of the brother's and then juts right along the water.

A 2021 appraisal done by the city in 2021 by W. R. McCain & Associates valued 17.02 acres at \$26,000 per acre for a total of \$445,520.

The May 2023 city appraisal, done by Dover Consulting Services Inc., puts the value of three pieces of her property at \$615,000, including the two pieces that lay along wetlands. The appraisal says the most likely use of the property is residential.

At one time, Billings had agreed to talk to Rob Pierce, director of Milford's Planning & Zoning, about a possible purchase and even told him he could have an appraisal done, as long as the city paid for it. Then she backed out, telling Pierce she was not interested and didn't want the appraisal after she saw the 2021 report and realized they wanted all the property.

Pierce and others called several times to talk to her, but she would not change her mind. When she got notice of the appraisal being done, she emailed Pierce to tell him she didn't want it. Efforts were not successful to reach Pierce for comment.

"So I was done with them then," she said.

Then she got a letter from David Rutt, the city attorney, saying her eight acres was only worth \$15,000, but the city would give her \$20,000.

Billings, who raises chickens for a living, said she's like many others: land rich and cash poor. She was not aware the city had decided to condemn the property so it could then use eminent domain to take it from her until she was served a notice of the lawsuit the city had filed against her.

The Council discussed the move in executive session, as it does with real estate matters, but voted in public. City Councilmember Todd Cullota declined to comment on the move, except to say he was the only one who did not vote for it.

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# DOVER COMMITTEE WILL LOOK AT WAYS TO HELP CITY'S HOMELESS

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

The mention of a small homeless encampment on Delaware State University property has led to the launch of a Dover committee assigned to find ways to help solve the problem in Delaware’s capital. The first meeting of Dover’s Unsheltered Working Group was on Wednesday at the Dover Public Library.

Its creation came about during last week’s Dover Council meeting, after the three-tent encampment at Delaware’s only Historically Black College and University came to light. It was followed with close to three hours of public comment on homelessness in Dover.

Dover Code Enforcement officers believe there are an estimated 40 homeless encampments throughout the city of Dover.

“A number one-tenth of that is still too much,” DSU Spokesman Carlos Holmes. “The existence of the home-

less camp was not a surprise to DSU,” Holmes said. It’s in the woods on the far side of the campus, away from the students. The university welcomes a look into the issue citywide, including possible solutions, he said.

“It’s not a problem that’s going away,” Holmes said. “The poor and homeless have always been with us since the beginning of time.”

Homelessness and the lack of affordable housing are big issues across Delaware right now. The Delaware House and Senate housing committees held a **joint hearing** on the issue at the end of 2023, talking about how the issues are entwined.

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*Education*

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# COLONIAL ADDRESSES CONCERNS ABOUT SPORTS FACILITIES IN TAX FORUM

BY JAREK RUTZ

How Colonial School District sports will benefit from a \$61 million tax referendum was a common theme among questions during a Jan. 31 virtual public forum. District officials fielded queries about the effect of the referendum, which would raise average homeowners taxes by about \$250 annually. The money will be used to match state funds of \$122 million for maintenance and improvements on all of the district's 13 school buildings, which is 60% of the cost.

The district's residents must approve the tax hike via referendum to cover the 40% of the local portion, or it loses the state certificate of necessity funding.

Colonial Superintendent Jeff Menzer called athletic spending the "highest ticket item" of the capital needs, estimated to cost \$50.6 million is allotted to sports upgrades. Menzer and others from Colonial had very clear answers, and a positive outlook, to those inquiries.

"We're not hiding that fact, but what's really important is every student at every level deserves access to that," he said. "We're in a space now in our high schools across the state, private, public, parochial, it doesn't matter...we're looking at facilities that our students and families deserve."

He cited some notable sports facilities in New Castle County, such as the ones at the Charter School of Wilmington, Appoquinimink High School, Odessa High School and Abessinio Stadium at Salesianum School.

Lauren Wilson, the district's public information officer, added that when the sports facilities were in good shape, they were a resource for people who aren't even Colonial students.

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# CAPE HENLOPEN 6TH DISTRICT TO HOLD TAX HIKE VOTE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Cape Henlopen School District is the sixth district in Delaware to have a referendum this year in which residents will vote whether or not to raise local taxes. In total, the district is seeking a total of \$83,647,000 of additional local revenue. This year's referendum will take place Tuesday, March 26, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The district states it is a debt service and operating expense referendum to propose a new tax rate as a way to generate local revenue.

"The revenue generated from the approved tax increase will help the District address expenditures due to the increasing enrollment," read a statement. "Enrollment issues continue to be the main reason more funds are needed."

Cape Henlopen School District enrollment has grown from 4,150 students in 2001 to 6,587 this school year, and population studies show that the enrollment will continue to increase significantly over the next 10 years.

The last three referendums in the district were all successful, in 2014, 2016 and 2018, which collectively increased the tax rate by 37 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. Cape Henlopen has the second-lowest annual property tax rates in Sussex County with \$4.0282 per \$100 of value. Only Indian River residents pay less.

If passed, the impact on the average homeowner would be \$153.75 more a month, or \$12.81 a month.

Some of the main budget concerns the district has are:

- Safety & Security Needs
  - SRO's/Constables
- Staffing/Personnel Costs
  - Salary/Benefits
  - Hire All Positions Earned
  - Highly Qualified Teachers/Staff
- Unit Count Growth Outpacing Revenue Growth
  - +\$1,000,000 per Pay Cycle
  - +\$30,000 - Local Cost
- Other Personnel Costs
  - Substitute Teachers/Employees
- State Budget Cuts and Less Discretionary Funding
- Ongoing Athletic Facility and Facility Maintenance Costs
- Ongoing Support for Energy and Utilities
- Support for Strategic Priorities
- Inadequate Reserve Funding
- Investment in Our Future
  - Ongoing Technology Funding Needs
  - Ongoing Curriculum Needs
- Finite Resources

The district has stated that land purchase for future expansion is its top priority, which includes a district office relocation so that the high school can expand. It is looking to purchase up to 102.429 acres.

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# JFC PRAISES DSU AVIATION, SAYS IT SHOULD UPGRADE FACILITIES

BY JAREK RUTZ

Jokes were cracked, programs were praised and millions in state funding were requested from **Delaware State University** Feb. 1 Joint Finance Committee hearing. That committee is responsible for setting the state budget and allocating funding to different programs and organizations throughout Delaware.

DSU, the state's only Historically Black College and University, is asking for about \$47,000,000. It started its hearing on a light note. "Some of you may know I was in a fight with Elon Musk a couple of weeks ago," said DSU President Tony Allen.

Allen released a strong statement of disdain in response to a tweet from Musk suggesting that pilots that graduate from HBCUs have a lower IQ. Allen pointed out that out of the 101 HBCUs in America, DSU is ranked the third best public one and ninth overall.

Legislators applauded the successful and growing aviation program at DSU, which has 110 professional pilot students and 47 aviation management majors. Established at the institution in 1987, the aviation program owns a fleet of 26 airplanes. They are maintained at Delaware Airpark in Cheswold, the program's base of flight training operations. The school also recently partnered with United Airlines to help create professional opportunities for aviation students and graduates.

"I get excited when you come in here," said JFC Chair Trey Paradee, D-Dover. "There are times I want to laugh and cry, I'm just really excited to always hear all the good things that are happening on campus."

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# DELTECH QUESTIONED ABOUT EXTRA SALARY FUNDING, PAY DISCREPANCY

BY JAREK RUTZ

It was higher education day in the Joint Finance Committee Feb. 1, in which the big three state institutions — **University of Delaware**, **Delaware State University** and **Delaware Technical Community College** — made their cases for millions in state funding.

DelTech, which has \$100,460,200 penciled in through the Governor’s Recommended Budget, is asking for additional \$525,000 for salary competitiveness, which the committee pushed back on. Just as in last year’s hearing, Sen. Dave Lawson, R-Marydel, pressed DelTech President Mark Brainard with his questioning. Prior to Brainard even taking a seat in the middle of the fish-bowl of the legislators, Lawson questioned why the top 12 employees at DelTech make \$1.2 million.

“I’ve got a problem with that, I’ve got a major problem with it,” he said. “It needs to go to the classroom, to go to the kids.”

His concern was in response to DelTech asking for about \$525,000 in state funding which was not included in Gov. John Carney’s recommended budget for fiscal year 2025, to raise salaries for faculty and administration, or Plan A and Plan D employees, respectively.

“Plan A is for faculty and that’s about 450 employees college-wide,” Brainard said. “Salary Plan D is for administrators and that’s 45 individuals college-wide — deans, directors, vice presidents.”

Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton, and chair of the House Education Committee, also took exception to the request for funding to go to raises.

“What’s the point of having a stabilization plan if we’re going to now back fund it with a half a million?” she said. The stabilization plan, part of the governor’s recommended budget, is funded at \$982,300 and is meant to increase and maintain faculty salary competitiveness.

Both Williams and Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, who are former educators in Delaware public schools, said additional raises on top of the stabilization plan are not fair because of the requirements of kindergarten through 12th grade educators as opposed to the DelTech instructors.

“They don’t have the same requirements as our educators have to go through to be able to teach in a higher ed,” she said. “I mean, we have many of our representatives and senators who work at some of these places, and so you can’t compare the two. So if we have a stabilization plan in place, I don’t know why we’re now backfilling it with something else.”

Buckson, who’s on the Senate Education Committee, said the legislators and DelTech need to understand what Williams is saying without thinking that their work isn’t appreciated or important.

“Public school teachers and what they’re dealing with every single day is different,” he said. “Their requirements are definitely different and that has to matter if funds are limited.”

Brainard said the investments the General Assembly has made in the past few years has helped combat the shortage of instructors and he pointed out that DelTech monitors the average salaries of teachers in the 19 school districts. In the past, their instructors have been on par with the lowest-paying districts, and now, he said, DelTech educators earn about the middle of the pack, which is about \$45,000.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



photo credit: Nick Halliday



*Sports*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# MIDDLETOWN BREAKS OPEN A CLOSE GAME FOR DECISIVE WIN

BY GLENN FRAZER

The third-ranked Middletown Cavaliers outscored Odessa 23-5 in the final quarter to get the intra-district win Tuesday night 63-39 in boys' basketball. The Ducks were down by just six points as Henry Nyasagare buried a corner "three" late in the third quarter to make the score 40-34 heading to the final eight minutes. Middletown turned up the half-court defense and controlled that final quarter to gain the Flight A victory.

Odessa opened the game with a quick 5-0 advantage, but the Cavs fought back to grab the lead at 7-5. The two teams traded baskets the rest of the first quarter as Middletown led 12-10. The second quarter was also competitive with the Cavaliers taking a lead of 22-18 into halftime.

The visiting Ducks took their only lead of the second half at 26-24 when Jaylen Bernikow connected twice from beyond the arc on consecutive possessions. The lead was brief as Middletown went on a 14-2 run to go up 38-28 late in the third quarter. The Cavs held a six-point advantage at the start of the fourth quarter and built the lead quickly into double digits.

Middletown coach Azeez Ali told us how his team pulled away late. "We stayed the course. We try to get up by two possessions and build on it. We hang our hats on our defense and rebounding, and we controlled the pace. Odessa is good in the open court and we did a good job of keeping them in half-court mode."

The Cavaliers were led by point guard Clyde Frasier

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 - URSULINE ACADEMY

and Aviyon Matthews, with 15 points each. Nine different players scored points in the game for coach Ali. They play seven more games in the regular season that ends on Feb. 21. The Cavaliers will face another district rival Saturday as they travel across town to face Appoquinimink.

Odessa was paced by Bernikow with 10 points, while Jordan Earl and Tyshawn Wilborn both added nine points. The Ducks are now a very respectable 11-4 under first-year head coach Andre Wilburn. They have five games remaining in their quest for a tournament berth. It would be the first in the school's brief history.







# COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 7 GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The girls' basketball season ends on Feb. 21, so there are 15 days left in the regular season. The teams will make their final push to see if they can qualify for the state tournament at the end of the month.

The regular season game that everyone has been waiting for since early December is Thursday night, as No. 1 Ursuline travels to No. 2 Caravel. Both teams are undefeated in state play as both have lost games to out-of-state teams that are ranked high in the east region. If you can't get a ticket you can watch it on Delaware Live.

The SL 24 Unlock the Light tournament saw three girls' games this weekend including a great matchup on Friday night as Pauda faced Saint Mark's. The Pandas took home a 52-49 win to get their 11th win of the season.

The conference schedule is winding down and here are the current leaders as they look to lock up the conference championship in the next two weeks. Appoquinimink leads Blue Hen Flight A, while A.I. DuPont leads Flight B. St. Elizabeth leads Diamond State and the Independent. Dover is the current leader in the Henlopen North while Woodbridge leads the South.

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

**No. 1 Ursuline** (11-3) (LW No. 1) The Raiders won against Imhotep Charter (PA) last week. They travel to Caravel on Thursday and host Woodbridge on Saturday.

**No. 2 Caravel** (13-2) (LW No. 2) The Bucs beat A.I. DuPont last week. They host Ursuline on Thursday.

**No. 3 Sanford** (9-5) (LW No. 3) The Warriors beat St. Elizabeth last week. They traveled to St. Andrew's on Tuesday and are at Howard on Friday.

**No. 4 St. Elizabeth** (12-3) (LW No. 4) The Vikings went 1-1 last week with a win over Archmere and a loss to Sanford. The Vikings have three road games in three straight days, Howard Tuesday, Tower Hill on Wednesday and DMA on Thursday.

**No. 5 A.I. DuPont** (12-4) (LW No. 5) The Tigers lost to Caravel last week. They traveled to Padua on Tuesday and Tower Hill Wednesday.

**No. 6 Padua** (11-4) (LW No. 6) The Pandas beat Saint Mark's last week. They hosted A.I. DuPont on Tuesday and travel to Hodgson on Friday.

**No. 7 Dover** (13-2) (LW No. 7) The Senators enjoyed some time off last week. They traveled to Sussex Tech on Tuesday, host Kent Island (MD) on Thursday and travel the Old North Road to face Caesar Rodney on Saturday.

**No. 8 Cape Henlopen** (8-5) (LW No. 9) The Vikings won a pair of conference games over Sussex Central and Sussex Tech last week. They hosted Milford on Tuesday and travel to Sussex Central on Thursday.

**No. 9 Delmarva Christian** (14-1) (LW No. 10) Delmarva went 2-0 last week and has a busy week this week. They hosted Sts. Peter & Paul on Tuesday. They travel to The Salisbury School on Thursday and Middletown on Friday.

**No. 10 Howard** (9-5)(LW Unrank). The Wildcats went 2-0 last week with wins over Odessa and Smyrna. They host two games this week — St. Elizabeth on Tuesday and Sanford on Friday.







# COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 7 BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY GLENN FRAZER

The boys' basketball season ends on Feb. 21, so there are 15 days left in the regular season. The teams will make their final push to see if they can qualify for the state tournament at the end of the month.

The SL 24 Unlock the Light tournament saw six boys games over the weekend including a big Blue Hen Flight A game between Appoquinimink and Odessa. The Ducks had a late lead until Riley Buzby hit a three-pointer with over 20 seconds left. The Jags' defense held the Ducks off the scoreboard in the final seconds to pull off the win.

The conference leaders heading into the final two weeks of the season. Middletown leads Blue Hen Flight A Conference while Howard Flight B. Sanford leads the Independent Conference, while St. Elizabeth leads the Diamond State. Dover leads Henlopen North while Seaford and Lake Forest are tied for the South lead.

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

**No. 1 St. Elizabeth** (14-0)(LW No. 1) The Vikings beat Archmere and Howard last week. They host DMA on Thursday and travel to Saint Mark's on Sunday.

**No. 2 Dover** (12-2)(LW No. 2) The Senators beat Sussex Central last week. They hosted Sussex Tech on Tuesday and travel to Caesar Rodney on Saturday.

**No. 3 Middletown** (9-3)(LW No. 3) The Cavs defeated William Penn last week. They hosted Odessa on Tuesday and Tri State Christian Academy (MD) on Thurs-

day. They travel to Appoquinimink on Saturday.

**No. 4 Sallies** (8-7)(LW No. 4) The Sals beat Smyrna and Sanford. They hosted Howard on Tuesday and travel to Saint Mark's on Thursday.

**No. 5 William Penn** (8-4)(LW No. 5) They lost to Middletown last week. They hosted Newark on Tuesday and entertain Howard on Saturday. They travel to Christina on Thursday.

**No. 6 Sanford** (11-4)(LW No. 6) The Warriors beat Howard and lost to Sallies. They hosted St. Andrew's on Tuesday.

**No. 7 Appoquinimink** (9-4)(LW Unranked) The Jags won both conference games last week. They host St. Georges Tech, then host Newark on Thursday and Middletown on Saturday.

**No. 8 Howard** (9-4)(LW Unranked) The Wildcats lost to St. Elizabeth last week. They traveled to Sallies on Tuesday, Mckean on Wednesday and then to William Penn on Saturday.

**No. 9 Saint Mark's** (13-2)(LW Unranked) The Spartans beat DMA last week. They host allies on Thursday and St. Elizabeth on Super Bowl Sunday.

**No. 10 Seaford** (13-1)(LW No. 7) Seaford suffered its first loss of the season on Feb. 3 65-63 to Lake Forest. They hosted Woodbridge on Tuesday and then Sussex Academy on Thursday.







# SANFORD DEFEATS HOWARD BEHIND BIG THIRD QUARTER

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The No. 6 Sanford boys' basketball team hosted unranked Howard Wildcats in front of a sold-out crowd Feb. 1. Sanford was riding a six game winning streak while Howard came in riding a four game winning streak.

From the opening tip, Howard set the pace of the game both offensively and defensively. Their tenacious defense and attacking offense had Sanford on their heels the whole first half. They started the game off with an 8-0 run causing Sanford to use an early timeout, but the Warriors were unable to come up with a game plan to slow down the Wildcats. Howard led the entire first half while taking an 11-point lead into the half by a score of 29-18.

Sanford came out in the third quarter with a plan to give the Wildcats a taste of their own medicine. They stepped up their pressure on defense and attacked the basket on offense changing roles with the Wildcats.

The Warriors went on to outscore the Wildcats 29-7 in the third quarter, taking their first lead of the game on a deep three from Khareem Hart who scored a team-high 20 points for the Warriors with 2:10 left in the third quarter. The Warriors capped off the third quarter scoring on a put back basket from freshman Marquis Newsome, who added eight points for the Warriors. Sanford now found themselves with an 11-point lead as they lead 47-36.

Howard did put up a fight in the fourth quarter, but was never able to climb out of the 11-point deficit after the big third quarter from the Warriors. Sanford held on to defeat Howard 69-61 to push its winning streak to seven straight games. Howard was led by sophomore guard Bryson Lane who scored 18 points for the Wildcats.





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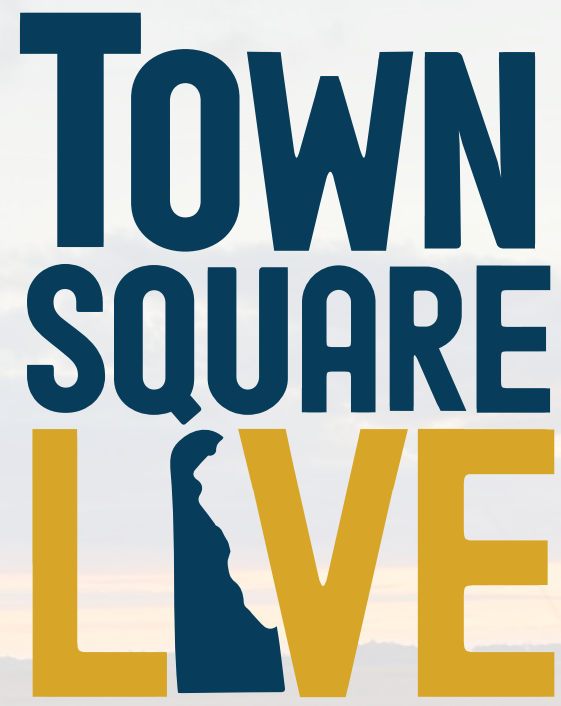


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*CEO, Bryan Shupe / 302-542-9231 / shupe@delawarelive.com*

