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PHOTO BY MARCIA REED

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Omicron Found in Delaware



Food Bank To Hold Another Drive-Thru



Cape Henlopen Wrestling Victory

HEADLINES



PHOTO FROM DELAWARE GREENWAYS FACEBOOK

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DELAWARE CONFIRMS 4 CASES OFOMICRON; 1,079 NEW COVID CASES FRIDAY

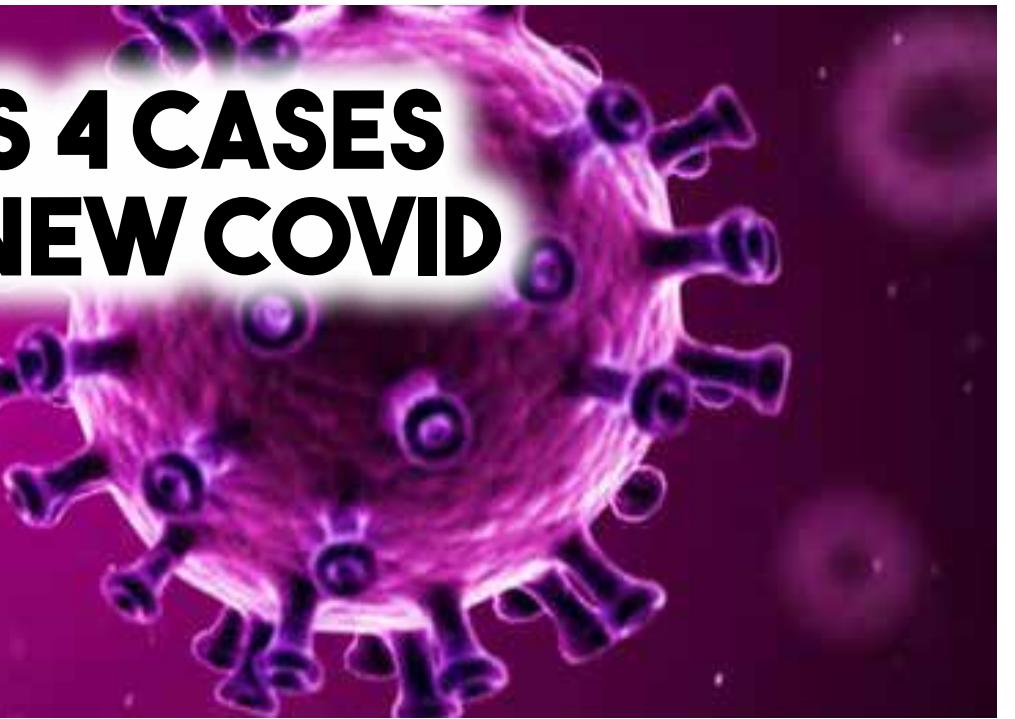
BY BETSY PRICE

The Delaware Division of Public Health has found the first four cases of the Omicron variant among Delaware residents, it announced Friday. The four cases involve two adults in their 30s, a teenager and a child under the age of 10, all residents of New Castle County. Two individuals were fully vaccinated and two were unvaccinated. None of the individuals had a known history of travel.

Those close to the people who were infected are being monitored in an attempt to slow the spread of the much more infectious form of COVID-19.

Across the country, health officials have warned there will be tsunami of cases coming because the variant, first discovered in Africa, is so infectious. It already has been discovered in surrounding states and the number of cases in New York and New Jersey are multiplying quickly.

Also Friday, the Division of Public Health reported 1,079 new cases of COVID, with 359 people in the hospital and 42 in critical condition. The day before,



Thursday, Dec. 16, it had reported 677 new cases. The state usually measures COVID stats from Friday through Thursday each week to compare with the week before.

For the week ending Thursday, the average number of daily new cases was 677, up from 596.6 the week before. The seven-day average for percentage of positive tests was 9.8%, up from 9.3% the week before. On Friday, the percentage of new positive cases was 38.2.

Hospitalizations during the week were up by 42 and critical cases by nine. During the week, 23 new deaths were recorded, bringing the total to 2,234.

The New Castle County Omicron cases were detected through random routine genomic sequencing of test specimens that are done by the Delaware Public Health Laboratory. Genome sequencing is a public health surveillance tool used to monitor the prevalence of COVID-19 variants; it is not used to diagnose individuals with a specific strain of COVID-19, as treatment recommendations do not differ based on variant strains.

COVID-19 tests will say whether you have a COVID-19 infection, but not which variant of the virus the individual might have. "With cases of the Omicron variant detected in our surrounding states, it was only a matter of time until we detected this variant in Delaware," said Dr. Karyl Rattay, Public Health director. She noted that many people who have it have reported milder symptoms than other strains have caused.

"We still have a lot more to learn about Omicron," she said. "Therefore, we need to do what we know works to combat all strains of COVID-19: get vaccinated, get tested when appropriate, wear a mask in indoor public settings, socially distance from others and wash your hands regularly."

The state expects an increase in demand for testing in the next several weeks because of the holiday and the new Omicron cases, but it hasn't seen statewide testing being affected. "However, in general, we are not seeing major issues meeting testing demand currently, given there are multiple testing options in Delaware," said Jennifer Brestel, a Public Health spokeswoman.

Those options included Curative testing trailers, state service centers and freestanding clinics—Canby Park, University Plaza, Blue Hen and Georgetown Plaza, state-sponsored Walgreens testing sites, other retail pharmacies, health care clinics, and the school testing program, she said.

In addition, she said several over-the-counter at-home tests are available from a variety of locations such as Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid and Amazon. "We expect supply of those tests to increase as well," she said.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

AMID GREAT TUMULT, RED CLAY PASSES TRANSGENDER POLICY 4-3



BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Red Clay School District on Wednesday night narrowly approved a policy that reaffirms transgender and gender diverse students' ability to use the restrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their gender identity.

Under Board Policy 8005, students who "consistently assert" a gender identity other than that which they were assigned at birth may use the corresponding restroom, or alternatively, a single-person restroom.

While the policy allows students to participate in physical education classes and intramural sports corresponding with their gender identity, athletes on interscholastic competitive sports teams will still have to abide by the policy set by the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association's board of directors.

School officials, under Policy 8005, are prohibited from sharing information relating to a student's expressed gender identity with parents unless given permission by the student. An earlier draft of the policy would have allowed for parental notification and consent, but it was amended after concerns arose over the safety of students who identify as transgender or gender diverse and whose parents may not be supportive.

The meeting was contentious from the outset.

A motion to remove Policy 8005 from the agenda was introduced citing a desire to provide more time for the public to provide input.

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CARNEY HAWKS IDEA OF NEW BOARD TO FOCUS ON WILMINGTON STUDENTS

BY BETSY PRICE

A meeting to get buy-in for a new program that would focus efforts on improving education for Wilmington school children often ended up in the same place: questions about the plan's details. "That's been one of the more difficult things about selling the concept," Gov. John Carney told people Tuesday night at Pulaski Elementary School.

It was one of four stops he plans to make by Dec. 21 to sell the Wilmington Collaborative Learning Program, which asks Brandywine, Christina and Red Clay school districts to agree for a new board to be set up that would oversee learning in the city.

They are three of the four school districts who educate Wilmington children through a confusing decision made under desegregation rulings in the 1970s. The number of city students in each district comprises 15% or fewer of its student body, which means decisions made for the majority often don't work for them. Colonial also educates city students, but has no physical



schools in the city. Their kids are bussed to Colonial schools in the burbs.

The collaborative is designed to focus on programs and resources that bear on issues that affect city learners in much greater degree than they do suburban learners, including poverty, crime, trauma, food insecurity, transiency as families move, and more teachers leaving city schools.

Ultimately, organizers want to create consistency for students while empowering educators, school leaders and communities to help them. All of that will result in improved outcomes for Wilmington students, they believe.

"People want me to tell them what we're gonna do, but that's not the way it works," Carney said as the meeting was nearing its end after an hour and 16 minutes. "It works from the bottom up and engaging parents and teachers and educators, working as a team."

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PHOTO BY SCOTT EVERE



NEW CASTLE COURT HOUSE MUSEUM TO BE CLOSED THROUGH SPRING 2022

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON



Beginning Dec. 31, the New Castle Court House Museum will be closed for the installation of a fire sprinkler system throughout the historic building. The project is expected to be completed in the spring of 2022.

According to a press release announcing the closure, all contractors considered for the project were required to have experience working with historic buildings.

Design schemes were reviewed by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service.

New Castle residents and visitors may experience some minor inconveniences during the time that installation is taking place. "Division staff and contractors will

make every effort to keep disruptions to a minimum and to facilitate the timely installation of a fire suppressant system that will make the court house a safer place for both visitors and staff," the release says.

Prior to installing the sprinkler system, the museum's contents will be made safe from damage and staff will continue to work in alternative locations in the building while installation is taking place.

Built in 1732, the New Castle Court House is one of the oldest active courthouses in the United States and was Delaware's first state capitol. At the court house in 1776, New Castle, Kent and Sussex counties declared their independence from Pennsylvania and England

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During its nearly 300 years of history, the National Historic Landmark has played many pivotal roles in the political, social and commercial life of both New Castle and Delaware.

Operated by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, the museum is a partner site in the First State National Historical Park. The court house and museum is located at 211 Delaware Street in New Castle.

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PHASE TWO OF I-95 REHABILITATION; NEW TRAFFIC PATTERNS, CLOSURES

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

As the I-95 Restore the Corridor project in Wilmington transitions to its second phase, DelDOT officials have announced upcoming changes to traffic patterns.

Phase 2 construction will require closures of I-95 Southbound in Wilmington throughout the month of December, including:

- Monday, Dec. 13 through Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021: overnight closures (9 p.m. to 5 a.m.) of I-95 Southbound from Exit 7 Delaware Avenue/SR 52 to I-295 split and the I-95 SB on-ramp from N. Jackson St.
- Friday, Dec. 17 through Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021: overnight closure (9 p.m. to 9 a.m.) of I-95 Southbound from the PA Line to I-295 Split.
- Friday, Dec. 17, 2021: ramp closure (9 p.m.), Exit 6: I-95 SB off-ramp to MLK Boulevard/4th St. This ramp will remain closed for the first portion of Phase 2 construction.
- Friday, Dec. 17, 2021: ramp closure (9 p.m.), N. Jackson St. on-ramp to I-95 Southbound. This ramp will remain closed until Phase 2 construction is completed.

- Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021: ramp closure (9 a.m. to 10 p.m.), Exit 7B, Delaware Ave./SR 52 North.

DETOURS:

- Monday, Dec. 13 through Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021: (I-95 SB overnight closures): Take Exit 7B Delaware Ave. to Jackson Street, left onto MLK Boulevard, right onto US 13 Southbound, to I-495 Southbound.
- Friday, Dec. 17 to Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021: (I-95 SB overnight closure): Motorists will be directed to I-495 Southbound at the PA Line. Local traffic entering I-95 Southbound from Naamans Road, Harvey Road or Marsh Road will be directed to Exit 8, US 202 Northbound to SR 141 SB to I-95 SB.
- Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021: (Exit 7B daytime closure): Motorists will be directed to Exit 7A, Delaware Ave./SR 52 South, left onto Adams Street, left onto Delaware Ave.

For additional information for the I-95 Corridor Project, visit www.restorethecorridor.com.



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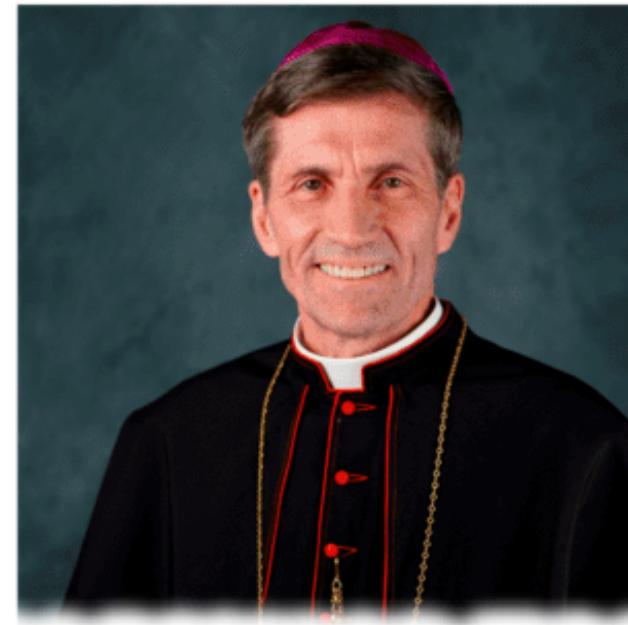
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NEW CATHOLIC BISHOP TO VISIT FOUR DELAWARE PARISHES AT CHRISTMAS

BY CHARLIE MEGGISON

Bishop William E. Koenig of The Catholic Diocese of Wilmington will tour the state for his first Christmas as Bishop. This will be the new Bishop's first Christmas as shepherd of the more than 240,000 Catholics who live in Delaware and on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

On Christmas Eve, Koenig will preside at the 4 p.m. Christmas Vigil Mass at the Church of the Holy Cross, located at 631 South State Street in Dover. The Bishop will then preside over an 8 p.m. Christmas Eve liturgy at Mary Mother of Peace Church near Oak Orchard, located at 30839 Mt. Joy Road in Millsboro.

On Christmas Day, Koenig will celebrate the Nativity of the Lord at the 8:30 a.m. Mass at St. Jude the Apostle Church, located at 152 Tulip Drive in Lewes. He will then

join parishioners for the 11 a.m. Mass at St. John the Apostle Church, located at 506 Seabury Avenue in Milford.

Additionally, Bishop W. Francis Malooly, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Wilmington, will preside at the 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass at St. Mary Magdalen Church, 7 Sharpley Road in Wilmington.

The Most Reverend William E. Koenig was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York on May 14, 1983. On April 30, 2021, the Holy See announced that Pope Francis had appointed him the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, succeeding Bishop Malooly.

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BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A Brandywine Valley SPCA emergency response team has brought 75 adoptable cats and dogs back from the Kentucky Humane Society in the wake of a deadly tornado outbreak across six states.

Relocating the animals will allow the Louisville shelter to have more space to accept lost and displaced pets from communities impacted by the deadly tornadoes.

The cats and dogs were expected to become available for adoption Dec. 15. They include large and small animals, as well as kittens and puppies.

The animals brought to Delaware were already up for adoption in Kentucky and were not lost or displaced by the tornadoes.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

SPCA BRINGS 75 CATS, DOGS BACK FROM TORNADO-STRIKEN KENTUCKY

"As soon as we saw the impact, we started planning, knowing there would be a significant need for help," said Adam Lamb, CEO of Brandywine Valley SPCA, in a press release. "These are the times we all need to come together for both pets and their people, and we're proud to have the resources to step up in such times of crisis."

The Kentucky Humane Society is the Bluegrass State's largest animal adoption agency. It provides support to under-resourced animal shelters in over 35 Kentucky counties, including Mayfield, which was ravaged by a Dec. 11 tornado.

Kat Rooks, initiatives director at Kentucky Humane Society, said it has provided the Mayfield-Graves County Animal Shelter with low-cost spay and neuter surgeries and transported more than 1,600 shelter animals from there in the last three years.

"We are heartbroken to see this community we love and know so well shattered by these storms," Rooks said in a press release.

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AFTER FOOD RAN OUT IN SUSSEX, FOOD BANK SET ANOTHER DRIVE-THRU MONDAY

BY BETSY PRICE

The spirit of the season and a commitment to service are bringing the Food Bank of Delaware back to its Sussex distribution site a week after its last monthly distribution there.

When the Dec. 13 drive-thru pantry in Georgetown unexpectedly ran out of food with hundreds of customers left in line, organizers and volunteers put on their Santa hats and announced they'd hold another one Monday. The drive-thru at Crossroad Community Church had planned to serve more than 1,200 clients. But when a produce truck didn't arrive as expected, about 250 people were left without food in a month that usually sees the largest number of people seeking help, said Kim Turner, spokeswoman for the Food Bank.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

Executive Director Cathy Kanefsky walked down the line of cars, apologizing and telling the drivers that the Food Bank would arrange another drive-thru for them.

Volunteers heard her and said they wanted to come back and help on Monday, Dec. 13, Turner said. "We are pleased to be able to hold a second food distribution in Georgetown this month," Kanefsky said. "When we realized we were not able to serve all who needed us last week, we quickly surveyed everyone who would need to be on board to host another distribution before the holiday week."

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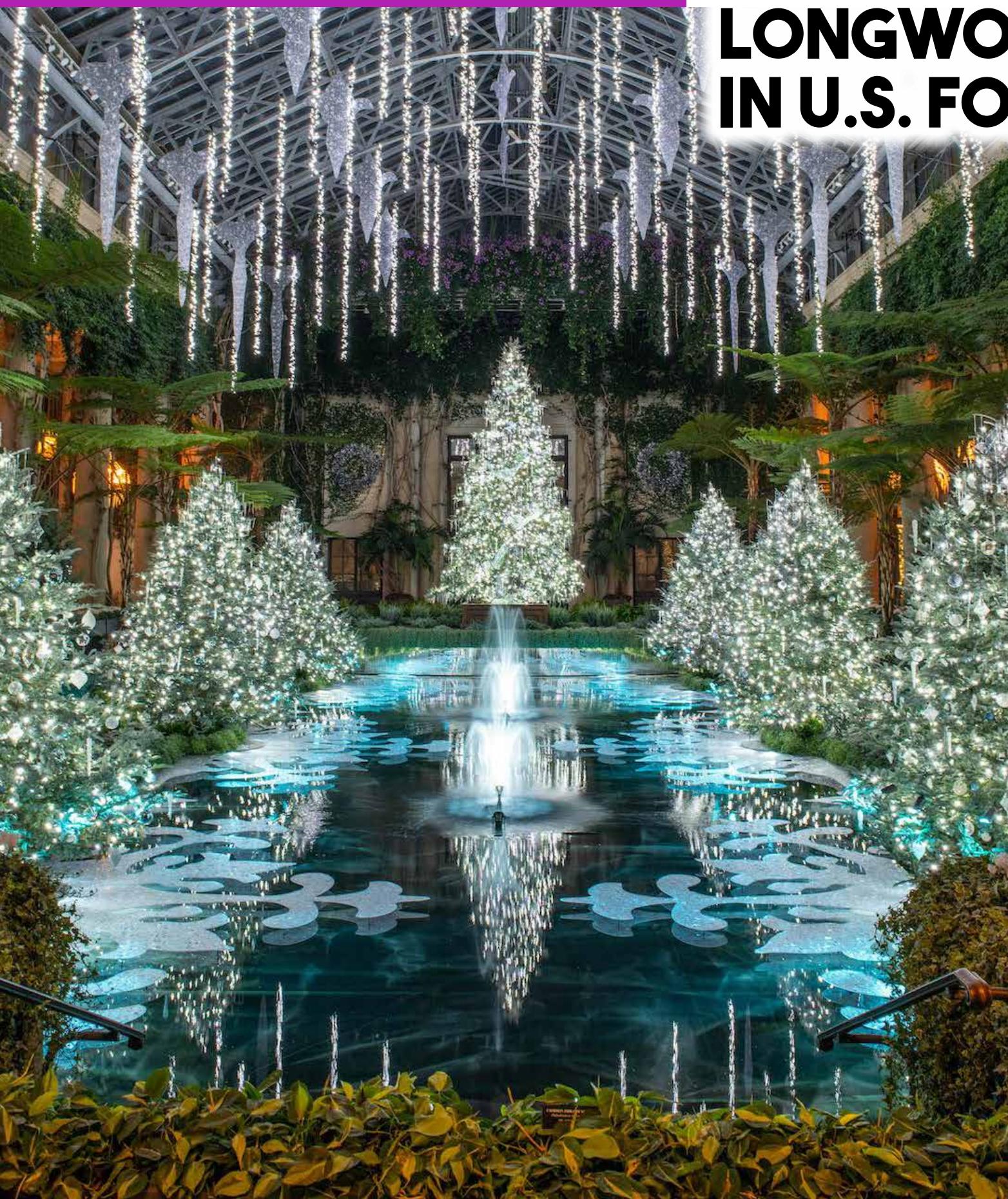
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LONGWOOD WINS BEST HOLIDAY LIGHTS IN U.S. FOR FOURTH STRAIGHT TIME

BY BETSY PRICE

It might be a no-duh moment for a lot of people in the Mid-Atlantic, but Longwood Gardens has just been named the country's best holiday lights display in a botanical garden for the fourth year running.

Its Longwood Christmas display, with a theme this year of Fire & Ice, was chosen from 20 gardens in a contest sponsored by *USA TODAY's 2021 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards*.

"To win this national recognition is so rewarding for our entire team of staff and volunteers who plan and work tirelessly all year long to create our 'A Longwood Christmas' light display," said Longwood CEO Paul Redman in a press release. "Our thanks and appreciation to all who supported and voted for our Gardens."

The exhibit features more than 500,000 outdoor lights and fountains that dance to holiday classics, as well as lights and displays in the Conservatory.

In addition to the last four years, Longwood also was named best botanical garden in 2014, 2016 and 2018.

But people in the area know that. Timed tickets routinely sell out and now, and from the day the Christmas display opens, it's widely featured on all forms of social media by its visitors. Sales this year were limited by COVID-19, and most night times are gone from now through the week after Christmas.

Rounding out the top five in the 2021 contest were Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Virginia; Nights of a Thousand Candles at Brookgreen Gardens in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina; Gardens Aglow at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay, Maine, and Illuminations at Botanica Wichita in Wichita, Kansas.

Tickets are available at www.longwoodgardens.org.

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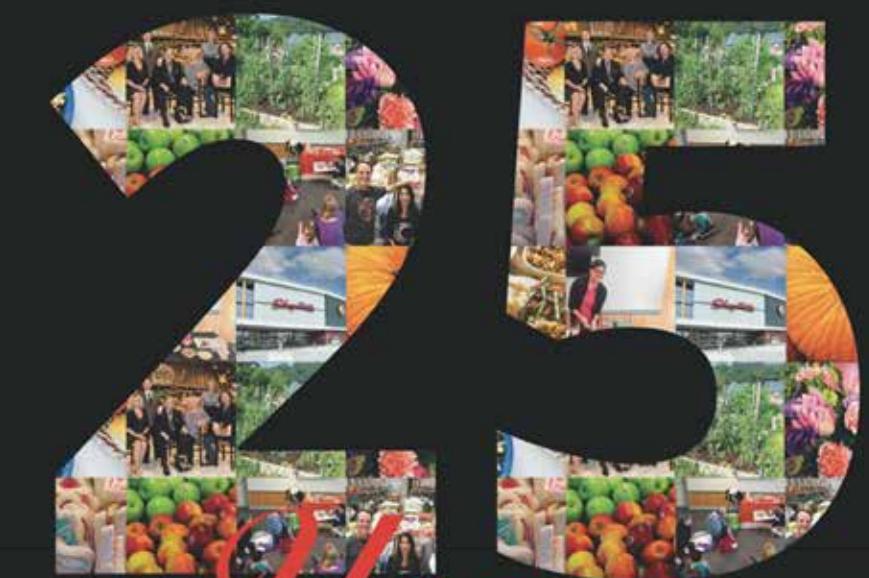
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BUSINESS

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WILMINGTON WINS \$15 MILLION DIGITAL FINANCIAL TECH COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

BY BETSY PRICE

A company that digitally links cash management accounts will build a \$15.37 million headquarters and customer service center in Wilmington, in hopes of adding 395 new jobs.

Investor Cash Management will become the newest addition to the city's hub of financial companies.

The company, which started in 2018 and now employs 30, offers a platform as a service. The company uses an application programming interface—or API-driven technology—to link cash management accounts directly to specified investments, transforming investment products such as mutual funds, exchange traded funds and/or shares into digital transaction currencies. The technology combines banking, investing and payments to drive client acquisition and increase assets.

Investor Cash Management will use \$4.26 million in state grants. The jobs will include tech positions, such as coders and programmers, along with sales, marketing,

customer service, administrative, finance and managerial positions.

The announcement was one of three pieces of happy economic news revealed Monday. The other two were **New B&M Meats'** \$18 million expansion, new building and 190 new jobs, as well as **Analytical Biological Services Inc.**, which will spend \$4.2 million to expand lab space and double its work force.

Delaware Prosperity Partnership began working with the financial company earlier this year to find a site.

The company will use a performance-based grant of \$3,797,310 and a capital expenditure grant of \$461,100 from the Delaware Strategic Fund. Those funds are dependent on the company achieving goals as outlined in their proposal to the CDF, which reviewed and approved the request.

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WILMINGTON MEATS MANUFACTURER TO BUILD \$18 MILLION PLANT, ADD 190 JOBS

BY BETSY PRICE

A manufacturer of raw sandwich steaks and chicken steaks will invest more than \$18 million to build a new 80,000-square-foot plant and add 190 new jobs. New B&M Meats Inc.'s addition to Wilmington's food production industry will use \$1.1 million in state grants to support the project in the city's Seventh Street Peninsula.

The company plans to start construction on the new facility in 2022 and open it in late 2023 or early 2024.

The announcement was one of three economic good-news pieces Dec. 13. The other two were [Analytical Biological Services Inc.](#), which will spend \$4.2 million to expand lab space and double its work force, and [Investor Cash Management](#)'s \$15.37 million new headquarters.

Delaware Prosperity Partnership, the state's nonprofit public-private economic development organization,

and Wilmington's Office of Economic Development have been working with New B&M since 2020 to evaluate scenarios for combining operations in the region to expand. The meats company now employs 98 people in Wilmington. The company will use a state Performance Grant of \$195,975 to add 70 jobs to support organic growth at its Commerce Street location.

The new facility will be completed along East Seventh Street on three parcels of land totaling 10 acres with support from a Capital Expenditure Grant of \$555,300.

A second Performance Grant of \$359,450 will help the company add another 120 jobs at the new site to support increased production capacity, diversified product offerings and operational expansion through entry into new markets.

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BY BETSY PRICE

A Delaware-paid \$4.2 million renovation of a New Castle biological services company will set the stage for it to double its workforce in the First State. Analytical Biological Services Inc. is retrofitting 30,000 square feet of space in New Castle for its new office headquarters and lab space.

The company, part of the state's life sciences sector, will use two grants from the Delaware Strategic Fund to meet significant projected growth and add 36 new high-paying, full-time, skilled trade and professional-level positions—more than doubling its current workforce.

The announcement was one of three economic good-news stories released Dec. 13. The other two said **Investor Cash Management** of Chicago, Ill., would put

its new \$15.37 million headquarters in Delaware and that **B&M Meats Inc.** will add 80,000 square feet and 190 new jobs in Wilmington.

For more than 30 years, Analytical Biological Services has provided cell culture services, gene editing, human biospecimens, cell and tissue preparations and analyses, and samples storage. Its clients include nearly every major pharmaceutical and biotechnology company in the world that is involved in early-stage drug discovery or diagnostics research.

"When we realized we had a shortage of lab space for them to use as they grow their business, we made sure there was funding available for what we call Lab Space Grants," said Gov. John Carney in a press release. "The life science industry is essential to both public health and Delaware's economic future...We want companies that start here to stay and grow here."

The company's leadership asked the Council on Development Finance for a Performance Grant of \$262,260 and \$1 million from Delaware's Lab Space Grant incentive program.

The Performance Grant, to be drawn over the next three years, is for the creation of 36 new full-time high-quality Delaware jobs ranging from skilled trade to professional level. Qualified Delaware residents will have first opportunity for employment.

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FOOD & DINING

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WILMA'S HOPES FOR STRIKE WITH DUCKPIN BOWLING, NEW ORLEANS DINING



BY BETSY PRICE

Wilma's, a new duckpin bowling alley and creole eatery on Market Street in Wilmington, ticks a couple of boxes for the owners and for future clients.

The new restaurant—half vibrant colors for the bowling and half soothing streamlined earth tones in the bar and dining room—starts by giving new life to 902 N. Market Street. It's a location that's been a death sentence for at least three other restaurants in the spot during the last decade.

"I've heard everything from it's on Indian burial ground to it's a cursed space," says Rich Snyder, director of food and beverage for developers Buccini/Pollin Group. "I think it's just the right concept going in there at the right time. And I feel this is both."

For customers, it offers a place to socialize that goes a step beyond a bar. Snyder says that's important to a lot of young professionals who want to do more than sit around with a drink in their hand at a bar.

"We figured we'd do something that would create an activity that could attract people to the bowling activity but also have great food to complement the bowling," he said.

Already popular in places like Nashville, Cleveland, Baltimore and Atlanta, duckpin bowling also appeals to families because both the pins and the balls are smaller than traditional 10-pin bowling. Wilma's lanes are half the length of a typical alley.

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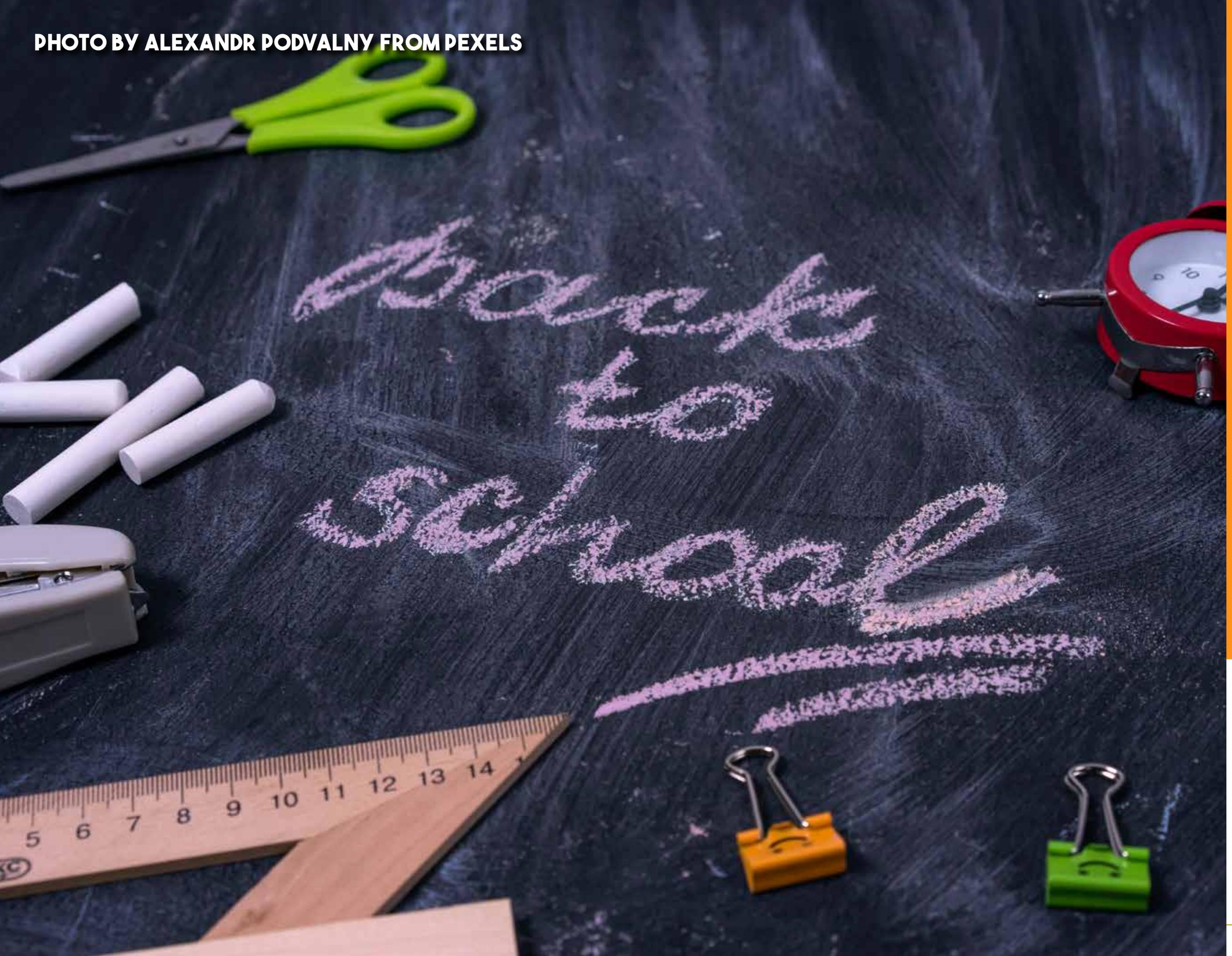
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EDUCATION

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UD: ALL SPRING STUDENTS MUST BE VACCINATED, BOOSTED

BY BETSY PRICE

The University of Delaware will require all spring students to be vaccinated with a booster shot by Jan. 24 whether they are on campus, online or in a blended schedule. In an email announcement to students Thursday, the school credited the fact that 90% of the campus had been vaccinated with keeping the number of new cases and the rate of positive tests low.

“However, the pandemic continues to affect our community—especially through the recent emergence of the widespread Delta variant and the more-contagious Omicron variant—and research shows that the effectiveness of the initial vaccine doses wanes over time,” it said.



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The UD email pointed out that the students who were vaccinated for fall semester are likely eligible for boosters and should get them.



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UD NOT AS HARD HIT FINANCIALLY DURING FALL SEMESTER AS OFFICIALS PREDICTED

BY BETSY PRICE

University of Delaware President Dennis Assanis's dire warnings of huge financial deficits in fall semester didn't come true, he told UD's Board of Trustees Dec. 14. The school had expected an operating shortfall of up to \$30 million. Assanis said it was actually closer to \$9 million, a number that could be "completely wiped out with a solid winter session," Assanis said.

He credited the involvement of staff members in planning COVID-19 precautions, especially Dr. Tim Dowling who was director of Student Health Services and now has accepted a job as associate clinical professor at Touro University's College of Osteopathic Medicine in California.

More than 90% of the UD community was vaccinated and more than 100,000 surveillance tests have been administered since September 2020 to keep the virus from spreading. There was no evidence of classroom

spread, Assanis said. Students and staff are being encouraged to obtain booster shots as soon as they are eligible, he said. He said he wasn't sure what problems the more infectious Omicron variant would create. "But I'm staying conservatively optimistic that we will know how to deal with it," he said.

A drop in the number of students because of COVID-19 will roll through the system for years, he said. But bringing many people back to campus also has resulted in increases in first-year enrollment, graduate enrollment and UD's first-to-second-year retention rate.

UD already has already received nearly 26,000 applications for the Class of 2026, which will star in the fall. That's a 7.8% increase from 2020 and reflects increases from Black, Hispanic, multi-race, Delawarean and international students, he said.

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Cancer isn't waiting for COVID-19 to be over.

One in three Delawareans will get cancer. Unfortunately, many have put off their cancer screenings in the past year. Screenings detect cancer early, when it's most treatable. If you've skipped or canceled a screening due to the pandemic — for breast, cervical, colon, lung, or prostate cancer — don't wait one more day. Call your health care provider to schedule your cancer screenings today.

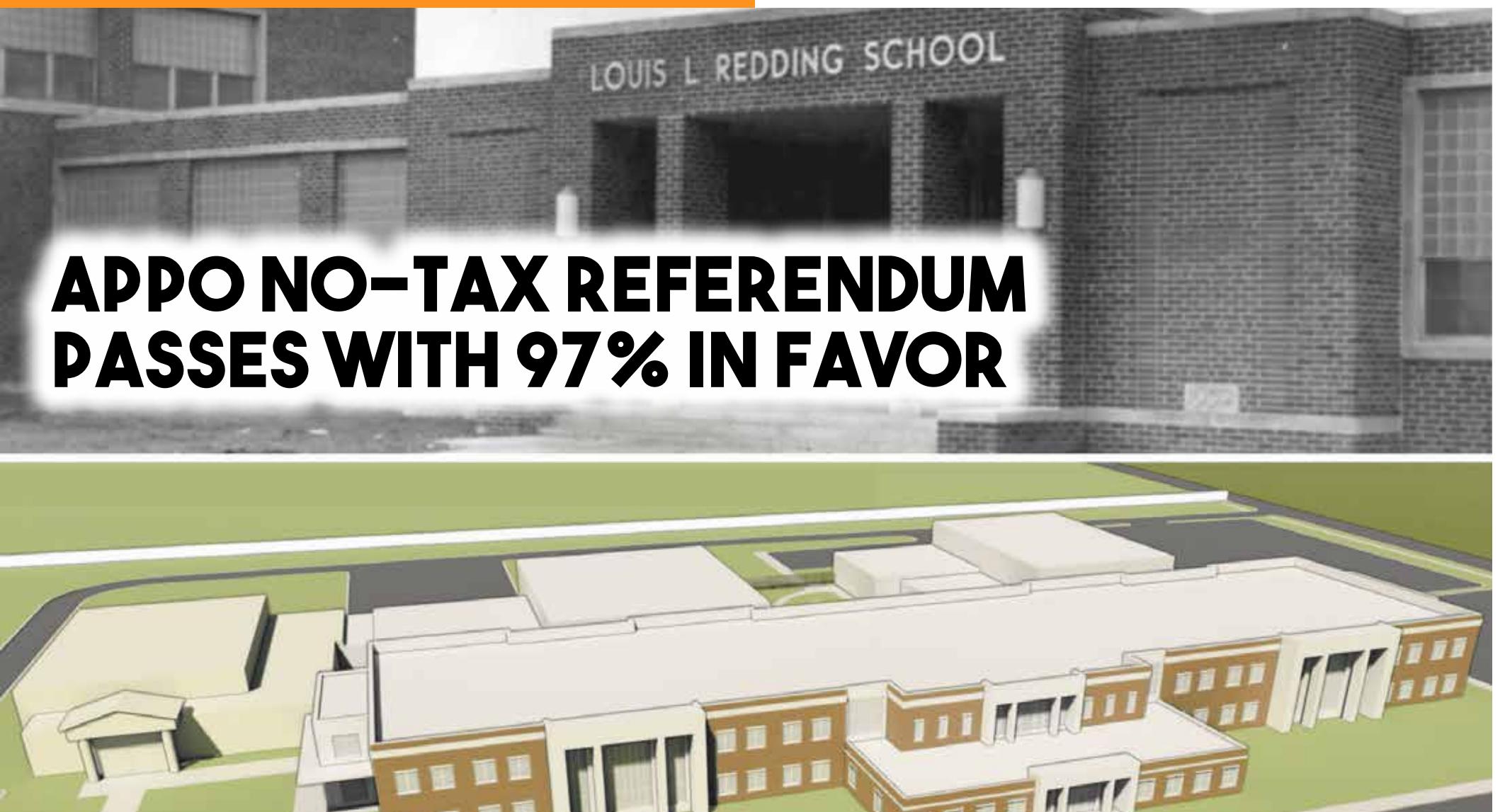
If you don't have a provider, we can help. If you are uninsured or underinsured, you may be eligible for free screenings. To learn more about eligibility requirements and recommended cancer screenings, and other information, please visit HealthyDelaware.org/Cancer.

To schedule your cancer screening by phone:

Call your health care provider, dial 2-1-1, or speak directly with a nurse navigator at the health system nearest you, below.

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Bayhealth: 302-216-8328
Beebe Healthcare: 302-291-4380





APPO NO-TAX REFERENDUM PASSES WITH 97% IN FAVOR

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Voters in Appoquinimink School District have overwhelmingly voted in favor of a referendum to renovate and expand the historic Louis L. Redding Middle School in Middletown. Unofficial results released Dec. 14 showed that the measure passed by a vote of 2,992 to 106.

The vote was marketed as a “no tax increase referendum” because the district has already secured the funding for the project through its own savings and the state’s contributions.

The 69-year-old Redding Middle School suffers from

several outdated and failing systems that are original to the building and have become more expensive to maintain than to replace. Through a combination of taxpayer money, developer impact fees and growth in the tax assessment base, Appoquinimink School District has committed to funding the local portion of the construction costs—24% or \$13.675 million.

The state will fund the remaining 76% of project costs—\$43.305 million—using money it has set aside for major projects like the one at Redding.

Appoquinimink Superintendent Matthew Burrows said in a statement that he is happy and relieved the district will be able to give Redding students and staff a school capable of delivering the same 21st-century education as the rest of the district’s facilities.

“I’d like to thank our parents, our staff, our volunteers, and this fantastic community,” Burrows said. “Your support at the polls have made this a very happy holiday for our District.”

Appoquinimink School Board President Michelle Wall, whose two children both attended Louis L. Redding Middle School, agreed. “With the successful passage of this no-tax referendum, the residents of the Appoquinimink School District again showed what is important to all of us...community,” she said in a statement.

The passage of the referendum was the result of the “collective efforts of our district community that will allow us to move forward with the renovations and restoration of this special school,” Wall said. “I am confident that the future of Redding will be just as bright as its historic legacy.”

After the numbers were announced to a room filled with volunteers and staff Dec. 14, former Redding principal and referendum co-chair Cyndi Clay offered some closing thoughts.

“I have been blessed to live in this community all my life. I’m part of the history of Redding,” Clay said. “I was a student here. My husband and all three of our children went here as well. Finally, our turn has come. I’m grateful that the community understood the need and responded to our call for support. What we did today will make a difference in our future.”

PHOTO BY PIXABAY FROM PEXELS.COM



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STATE LAUNCHES NUMBER HOUSEBOUND CAN CALL TO BE VACCINATED AT HOME

BY BETSY PRICE

The state of Delaware has created a toll-free phone number that residents who can't travel because of disability, age or several illness can call to arrange for a COVID-19 vaccination or booster shot at home. The Department of Health and Social Services is partnering with independent pharmacies in each county to deliver the vaccinations to eligible Delawareans five and older.

Participating pharmacies include Ivira Pharmacy in Wilmington and Milford, Camden Pharmacy, Seaford Pharmacy and Express Pharmacy in Laurel.

The state also is launching a campaign to encourage people with disabilities, their families and seniors to be vaccinated to avoid serious illness or death because COVID-19.

State hospitals are once again filling up with COVID-19 cases. On Tuesday, the state said 325 people were hospitalized because of it. Right now, the state said, those cases are caused by the Delta variant.

However, national public health officials and agencies are warning that the much-more-infectious Omicron variant is about to explode in the U.S. and its spread will be quick but not as severe. Already, cases have been reported in 33 states, including New York and New Jersey, but not yet in Delaware.

People with disabilities and seniors are at higher risk for serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19. In Delaware, about 80% of the 2,218 people who have died from COVID-19 were 65 or older.

The state's new homebound vaccine number—1-888-491-4988—will go into effect on Wednesday. Live operators will staff it from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays. They will assess calls.

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BY BENNY MITCHELL

The Cape Henlopen Vikings used eight pins enroute to a 51-23 victory over Caesar Rodney in a Henlopen Conference Northern Division match. Cape Henlopen starts the season as the number one ranked team in Division I.

"It is obviously easier to be the hunter rather than the hunted so we are in a different and unique situation. We have taken the mindset that we are out to compete and everyday is an opportunity to compete," Cape Henlopen head coach Chris Mattioni said.

The match began at 160 pounds where C.J. Fritchman and Carson Kammerer got the Vikings out to a fast start with a pair of first period pins at 160 and 170 pounds before the Riders D.J. Baker responded with a pin at 182 pounds.

CAPE HENLOPEN PINS THEIR WAY TO VICTORY OVER CAESAR RODNEY

"Starting the match at 160 was good for us with C.J. there, from 145 up is the meat of our lineup and we are going to compete with anybody in all of those weight classes," Mattioni said.

Alex Taylor recorded a pin at 195 pounds to give Cape Henlopen an 18-6 lead. The 220 pound bout featured two of the state's top-ranked wrestlers between Cape Henlopen's No. 2 ranked Dalton Deevey and Caesar Rodney's No. 4 ranked Josh Dyer. Deevey jumped out to a 4-1 first period with a takedown and cradle for two nearfall points. The two traded escapes to start the second and third period before Dyer scored a takedown late in the third period giving Deevey a 5-4 decision.

"That was a good test for Dalton, Dyer is a tough wrestler and Dalton was able to get out to a fast start and get a big win," Mattioni said.

Lucas Ruppert rounded out the upperweights with a pin in 5:42 at 285 pound as Cape Henlopen extended its lead to 27-6. Alex McEvoy stopped the string of Cape Henlopen victories with a 19-4 technical fall at 106 pounds followed by Cole Moffett's 8-2 decision at 113 pounds as the Riders closed the score to 27-14.

The Vikings got back to back pins from Holt Baker (120) and Josh Wright (126) and extended their lead to 39-14. The Riders answered with a pin from M'Ja Smith at 132 pounds followed by Cameron Cataldi's 7-4 decision at 138 pounds.

Cape Henlopen ended the night with a pair of pins by Mikey Frederick (145) and Luke Bender (152).

Both teams will compete at the Beast of the East on Saturday and today. Cape Henlopen will travel to Caravel Academy on Wednesday, Dec. 22 for a dual meet that will be livestreamed on Delaware Live Sports.

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HOWARD FALLS TO NEUMANN GORETTI IN OVERTIME

BY JOE SINGLES

The Howard Wildcats boys' basketball team hosted regional powerhouse Neumann Goretti Dec. 12 at Salesianum High School. The Saints traveled north to Delaware after securing a big win Dec. 11 in Arlington, VA beating Bishop O'Connell High School 72-70. Both teams came out with a ton of energy, full court pressing on every possession, forcing turnovers at both ends. The momentum seemed to be with Howard early as they secured multiple offensive rebounds leading to second chance opportunities. The Saints would clean up their play as the quarter continued, leading 12-11 after an exciting first eight minutes.

As the second quarter progressed, the Saints looked more and more uncertain as the Wildcat defensive pressure seemed to wear on the Goretti ball handlers. The Saints would weather the storm however and find themselves up 24-17 with 3:14 to go in the half relying heavily on the three-point shooting of senior guard, Masud Stewart. Howard would come right back on the strength of their defensive intensity, forcing turnovers and scoring 12 points in the last three minutes to tie the score at 29-29 going into halftime. The intensity level on both ends of the court resulted in a highly entertaining half of basketball.

The second half started with the same intensity as both teams went on mini runs and looked like each were starting to pull away. The Saints once again relied on the strong inside play of 6'7 power forward, Sultan Adewale and the hot shooting of Stewart who sunk his sixth trey of the game at the 1:23 mark of the third. The Wildcats on the other hand received contributions from a number of players and continued to give Goretti trouble with its extended 2-3 zone. Howard appeared to slow down at the end of the quarter as Neumann Goretti finished the third up 53-45.

Howard bounced back strong at the start of the fourth, speeding up the Goretti ball handlers with a full court, zone press. The Saints would turn the ball over on their first two offensive possessions of the quarter leading to four Wildcat points, bringing



them to within three. The Wildcat pressure continued to pay dividends deep into the quarter with the Cats trailing 64-62 with 1:08 to go. After one made free throw by Goretti, De'Mere Hollingsworth for Howard would come down a draining a three-pointer from the wing to tie the game at 65 with 45 seconds left. Neither team was able to get off a quality shot in the last 45 seconds and after an amazingly entertaining four quarters of basketball, it was only fitting that overtime would be needed to decide this contest.

The success that the Wildcats had in regulation dwindled in overtime as Neumann Goretti stayed the course. The Saints attacked the basket and capitalized on Howard's foul trouble making their free throws and patiently allowing the clock to wind down. Goretti secured a 77-72 victory in what will likely be looked back on as one of the best basketball games of the season played in Delaware. Stewart led all scorers with 24 points for the Saints while the team effort by Howard earned the respect of fans and coaches alike.

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LATE GAME HEROICS BY PENN'S VALMOND SINK APPO

BY NICK HALLIDAY

No. 6 William Penn Colonials boys basketball team travelled to Middletown to face off with the No. 8 Appoquinimink Jaguars in a Blue Hen Conference matchup of two top-ranked teams Tuesday night. Both teams came into the competition sporting 1-0 records after their first games.

William Penn controlled the lead for all of the first half. It led 14-10 after the first quarter of play then took their largest lead of the half in the second quarter when Penn's superstar Gabe Valmond hit his second three-pointer of the game giving the Colonials a 27-16 lead with 3:02 left in the second quarter. William Penn would take a 29-20 lead into the half.

In the third quarter the Jaguars threatened to take the lead from the Colonials, but couldn't take their first lead of the game since they led 3-2 in the beginning of the game. Down 36-31 late in the quarter Owen Parrish took a pass from Haji Bell deep behind the three-point line, but without hesitation he buried the deep three pointer. Moments later after a missed shot by Penn Appo came right back down the floor Bell pulled up for a jumper in the lane that bounced off the rim, but Nathaniel Burlew was there for a one-handed tip to put the ball in tying the game at 36 all. Penn did not relinquish the lead though scoring five straight points to end the quarter up 41-36.

Appo used the momentum from the third quarter to finally take the lead from the colonials who controlled

the lead for majority of the game. With six minutes left in the game, Christian Barksdale hit a three-pointer from the right wing giving the Jaguars a 44-43 lead. After going back and forth for a few minutes Appo was able to maintain the lead for the majority of the fourth quarter with its largest lead of the game 53-48 with 2:43 left in the game.

With a little over a minute left in the game Appo led 53-50. However, that lead wouldn't last long. Penn regained possession after a missed three-pointer from Appo, and with the game on the line, it would look to their leader. Valmond got the ball dribbled through his legs a couple times then stepped back to drain a highly contested three-pointer to tie the game at 53. After a missed three-point attempt from Appo's Bell Valmond got the ball back again.

Benjamin Vohm came up to set a screen for Gabe, who dribbled around to the top of the key giving him a wide open three point attempt, but he missed the shot. The Jaguars grabbed the rebound and took off in transition back down the court as Jaeden Ysaguirre looked up court hitting a sprinting Parrish out ahead of the Colonials defense for a layup taking a 55-53 lead with 14 seconds left in the game. William Penn then called a timeout to set up its final play of the game.

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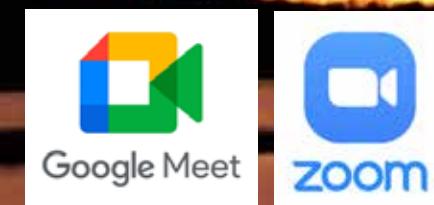


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