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**Volunteers Help Pack Mountaire Care Boxes**



**Car Dealers Absent from EV Meeting**



**Laurel Wins Back-to-Back State Titles**

PHOTO LINK: LONGWOOD GARDENS



# HEADLINES

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# CARNEY EXTENDS HEALTH EMERGENCY TO PROTECT HOSPITAL CAPACITY

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Not everyone is thrilled about Gov. John Carney's decision to extend Delaware's COVID-19 public health emergency for another 30 days. The order "aims to help protect capacity at our health care facilities and it enables the state to maintain eligibility for federal funding or assistance," said Charlie Quimby, a spokesman for the governor's office.

Charlie Copeland, co-director of the Caesar Rodney Institute's Center for Analysis of Delaware's Economy and Government Spending, is among many who don't see the point of continuing the emergency order. "COVID is over and it's been over for months," he said.

Copeland is a former legislator who served as leader of the Senate Republican Caucus in 2007 and 2008.

"Giving Gov. Carney another emergency extension is based on a lie that COVID is still a major health threat,

or at least one that's larger than any other respiratory virus, including the flu or the RSV that we're seeing spike in children and others," Copeland said.

The extension of the public health emergency is Carney's **10th**, not including the various state of emergency orders issued during the pandemic. Quimby noted that there's an ongoing staff shortage at health care institutions, and Carney and Division of Public Health officials already have warned that beds are filling up with cases of COVID, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and the flu. Specifically, Quimby said, the order:

- Allows the Delaware National Guard to take precautionary or responsive actions to help local authorities.

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# DE SUPREME COURT EXPLAINS DECISION TO OVERTURN VOTE-BY-MAIL

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

In a 69-page **decision** that cited versions of Delaware constitutions dating back to 1776, the state's Supreme Court this week explained its ruling overturning mail-in voting and same-day voter registration laws passed by the General Assembly earlier this year.

The state's highest court in October unanimously **ruled** the statutes unconstitutional but issued an abbreviated order due to time constraints imposed by the then-upcoming general election. This week's opinion explains the court's justification in full.

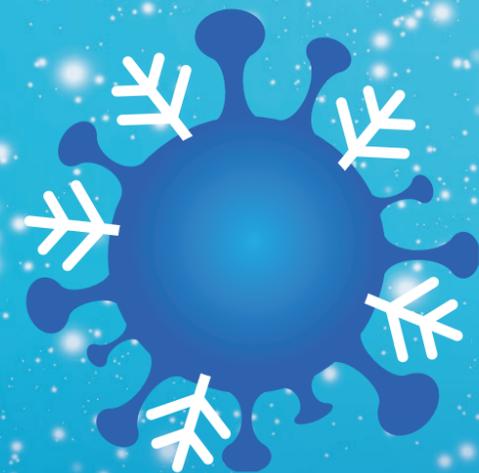
The decision focuses predominantly on the mail-in voting law before turning briefly to the same-day registration statute near the end. It explores the history of absentee voting in the First State, including legal challenges in **1939** and **1942**, a court opinion in **1972**, and the General Assembly's authorization of mail-in voting on an **emergency basis** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision also addresses the state legislature's failed initial **attempt** to amend the Delaware Constitution to allow no-excuse absentee voting, and its subsequent attempt to pass a near-identical bill without amending the Constitution.

"Stymied by the proposed amendment's failure in the House, the legislative proponents of the expansion of no-excuse voting by mail reverted—albeit with a measure of diffidence—to the ordinary legislative process," the court wrote.

The court emphasized that its decision should not be taken as a reflection of its views on the relative advantages and drawbacks of universal absentee voting or a later registration deadline.

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## Don't let COVID-19 freeze your holiday season.

COVID-19 doesn't just crash holiday get-togethers — it cancels them. So whatever you're celebrating this season, make sure you've gotten your bivalent booster and follow these other steps to stay safe and leave COVID out in the cold.

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visit [de.gov/holidays](https://de.gov/holidays).





# CULTURE

PHOTO LINK: FIRST STATE HERITAGE PARK

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# VOLUNTEERS HELP PACK MOUNTAIRE CARES BOXES TO FEED 12,000

BY BETSY PRICE

Mike and Judy Hall of Long Neck have been volunteering for years to pack **Mountaire Cares** holiday food boxes for the needy. For Judy, it's one of the ways she has been giving back in thanks for recovering from a 2012 aneurysm that required her to learn to walk and feed herself again.

"I thought, 'You know what, I am just going to put myself out there and do as much as I can for other people since God gave me another chance,'" she said.

State Sen. Dave Wilson, R-Lincoln, Milford and Bridgeton, has been volunteering for more than two decades to pack holiday food boxes for Mountaire Farms. He was inspired by Roger Marino, a friend on the State Fair Board, who mentioned that Mountaire was packing dinner boxes for thousands.

"It brings the community together when you that company is willing to make that sizeable a donation

that will feed that many families," Wilson said.

The staff of the Delmarva Chicken Association closed its office in November to help pack Thanksgiving holiday boxes.

"We're both organizations that are part of the broader chicken community," Fisher said. "For us as a nonprofit that helps chicken growers and chicken companies and allied businesses, it's a way for us to remind ourselves that this is really all about putting food on people's plates."

More than 150 volunteers, including school children and members of area civic clubs, churches and nonprofits, will gather again Wednesday, Dec. 21, at Mountaire's Seaford plant to pack 3,000 Christmas boxes.

"They're just so many organizations that are part of it," Wilson said.

Each box is designed to feed a family of four. The

Christmas boxes are stuffed with a plump Mountaire roaster chicken, canned corn, green beans, yams, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes and brownie mix for dessert. Wilson said it takes about four hours for the group to pack the boxes.

"You just feel good about being a part of something that does so much for so many," Wilson said.

"The need always seems greater during the holidays, and we are blessed to be able to do what we can to help families this time of year," said J.R. LaPearl, director of Mountaire Cares, the company's charitable giving program. "What I love about these events is that it brings people together to share love and kindness to one another. That is what Christmas is all about."

The Mountaire Cares program takes place in both Delaware and North Carolina, where the company has plants, and will feed a total of 36,000. None of the boxes are available that day to the public. They already are reserved for families, churches and nonprofits, and are sent to churches and other food distribution programs to be given away.

Sometimes nonprofits will come pick up the boxes they will distribute. At Thanksgiving, Mike Hall said, the boxes are loaded onto pallets and then Mountaire workers stacked those into tractor trailers for delivery.

The Halls, who have been retired for about a decade, got involved with Mountaire through the Long Neck Sunrise Rotary Club. Mountaire works with several programs designed to feed the hungry that the Halls also work with.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

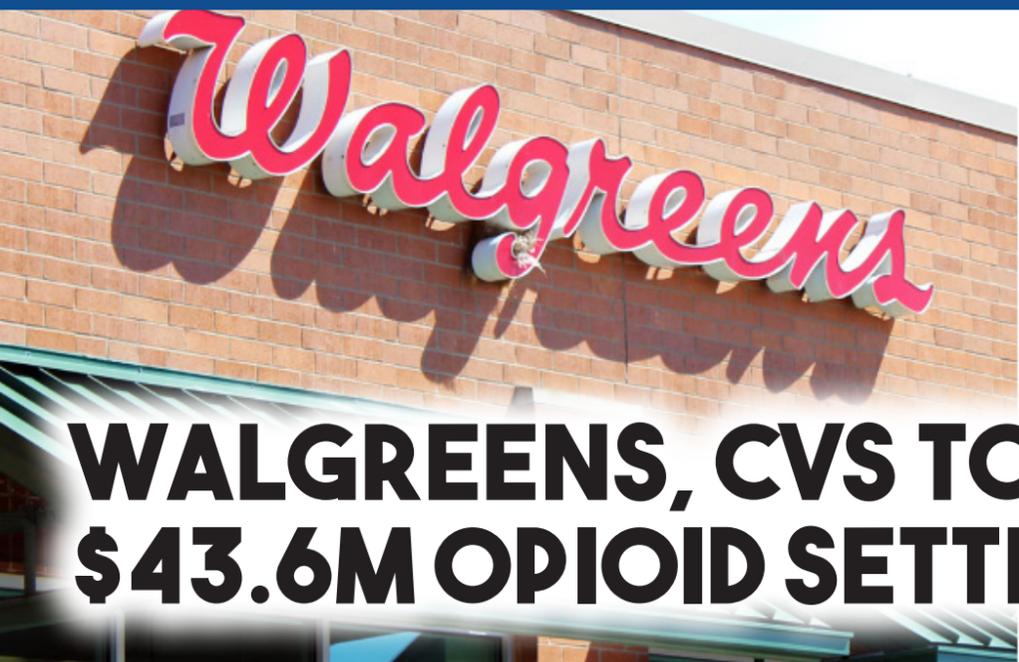


# BUSINESS

PHOTO CREDIT: CHRISTINA MORILLO / PEXELS

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# WALGREENS, CVS TO PAY DELAWARE \$43.6M OPIOID SETTLEMENT

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Delaware stands to receive some \$43.6 million from settlements with CVS and Walgreens over their roles in America's opioid epidemic. In total, **CVS** will pay \$5 billion and **Walgreens** will pay \$5.7 billion, which will be distributed amongst states and municipalities involved in the litigation.

The announcement comes just days after public health officials announced that November 2022 was Delaware's deadliest month on record for overdose fatalities, at 43. That surpasses the previous monthly high total of 42 set in May 2022. November's 43 deaths included 21 people from New Castle County, 18 from Sussex County and four from Kent County.

Delaware's share of Monday's settlements will be placed in the state's **Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Fund** created last year with the General Assembly's unanimous passage of **Senate Bill 166**. The fund, which is overseen by an independent commission co-chaired by the attorney general and lieutenant

governor, was created to ensure settlement money is used to remediate and abate the opioid crisis without being diverted for other purposes. Organizations can apply for grants to pay for opioid remediation programs **HERE**. Grants are capped at \$100,000.

Separately, Attorney General Kathy Jennings **announced** Monday that she has completed her review of and plans to join two separate national settlements with Teva and Allergan, both opioid manufacturers. Those settlements, which will also go into the Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Fund, will bring the state an additional \$25.2 million.

Monday's settlement announcements are in addition to agreements with Johnson & Johnson, Amerisource-Bergen, Cardinal Health, McKesson, Purdue Pharma, Walmart, Mallinckrodt, McKinsey & Co. and Endo, totaling roughly \$250 million.

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# GLOBAL CASE MANUFACTURER MOVES FROM MARYLAND TO DELAWARE

**BY STAFF WRITER**

A company that designs and manufactures high-performance protective cases and racks used in industries ranging from broadcasting to defense, has chosen Frankford as the new site for its United States operations.

**CP Cases USA**, opened in 2013 by the owner of a similar company in the United Kingdom, will move from an 8,000-square-foot site in Bishopville, MD, to a 25,000-square-foot site in Frankford Business Park on U.S. Route 113. The company will bring nine current employees to the Sussex County location and plans to create 16 new jobs there over the next three years.

“CP Cases is so excited to become a part of the community of Sussex County, DE, and appreciates the support we’ve received from Delaware and Sussex County to expand our operations,” said general manager Peter Gill. “We look forward to offering high-quality manufacturing jobs in the community and continue building stable long-term operations in Delaware.”

Within the entertainment industry, the company’s customers have included musical acts such as the Rolling Stones, Elton John, Led Zeppelin, Queen and Pink Floyd. Its **products** include rack-mount transit cases, air-conditioned transit cases, Lightweight AirShip containers, camera rain covers and rugged textile and flexible material products. The company also serves broadcasting and media; entertainment and live events; energy and marine; medical; and security and defense industries.

Gov. John Carney said Delaware provides a great environment for small businesses and he’s glad CP Cases chose to relocate to Frankford.

“This investment shows that Delaware remains a leader in innovative manufacturing techniques,” Carney said.

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# FOOD & DINING



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## UNCLE JOHN'S BBQ OPENS IN FORMER CLAYMONT GAS STATION

BY PAM GEORGE

John Berl doesn't like to sit still, and his average walking pace would make some breathless. A few weeks after the long-awaited **Uncle John's BBQ Stand** finally opened, he was zipping from the dining room through the open kitchen to the area holding the giant smoker—and back again.

The restaurant at 2509 Philadelphia Pike in Claymont debuted Nov 15, but the site was a destination long before that. While construction was underway, Berl and his team operated out of Uncle John's BBQ food truck in the lot. The new commercial kitchen allows the chef to centralize food truck and catering operations while serving customers in the slender dining room. And he's proving that good things come in small packages.

### UNCLE JOHN'S PATH TO BUSINESS(ES)

The Claymont native grew up cooking with his Polish grandmother, who loved entertaining family in her North Graylyn Crest home. His parents divorced when he was nine, and visits to his father included barbecuing on the grill.

Along with a love for food, he developed a work ethic at a young age. A high school co-op program gave him time to work at Domino's Pizza shop. After graduation, he started a landscaping and construction business, and worked in a pizza and sub shop on the side.

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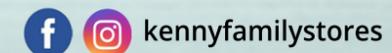
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# GOVERNMENT

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# CAR DEALERS ABSENT FROM GAS-POWERED VEHICLE BAN MEETING

BY STAFF WRITER

During a public meeting on the state's plan to totally ban the sale of most new gas-powered vehicles by 2035, those opposed to the proposal outnumbered supporters three to one. There was another virtual public workshop on the proposed regulations on Dec. 15.

Gov. John Carney announced in March that Delaware would adopt California's **zero-emission vehicle regulations**, which require automakers to deliver an increasing number of zero-emission light-duty vehicles each year beginning with model year 2027.

Under the proposed regulations, zero-emission vehicles include electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. Sales of those vehicles must comprise 35% of new car deliveries in 2026, incrementally building to 68% in 2030 and 100% by 2035.

Notably absent from the meeting was the group of people who will arguably be most impacted by the proposed regulation: car dealers. That may be because the

man tasked as a liaison between government and the industry has no clue the regulations are being considered.

"I don't know that I've seen anything to that effect come out of somebody's mouth and say, 'Hey, look, this is a law they're proposing,'" said Santosh Viswanathan, chairman of the **Delaware Automobile and Truck Dealers' Association's** Legislative Affairs Committee.

Delaware LIVE News offered to share information about the proposed regulations with Viswanathan, but he said "I don't know that I'll have the time to review it all." He said the Automobile and Truck Dealers' Association is the group tasked with representing dealers' interests in state government.

"I think this might be a better question for DNREC," Viswanathan said.

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# POLICE CHIEF SELECTED TO LEAD ST. LOUIS PD

had worked with the council to create a body-worn camera program.

“As the administration seeks a new police chief, it is my hope that the next chief is promoted from within the Wilmington Police Department, is someone with a vested interest in the city, and who will work day and night to ensure that the residents of Wilmington can feel safe,” Congo said in a statement.

He said law enforcement is a collaborative effort and the council will remain engaged with the administration and police department to continue improving morale within the department.

“I also hope to see a revival of a dedicated Community Policing Unit,” Congo said. “This unit was once comprised of a select group of officers who were visible within communities to help facilitate relationship-building with residents and who attended community meetings in their assigned areas.”

Tracy has served as Wilmington’s police chief since April 2017. Before leading that department, the Bronx native held command positions in the New York City and Chicago police departments.

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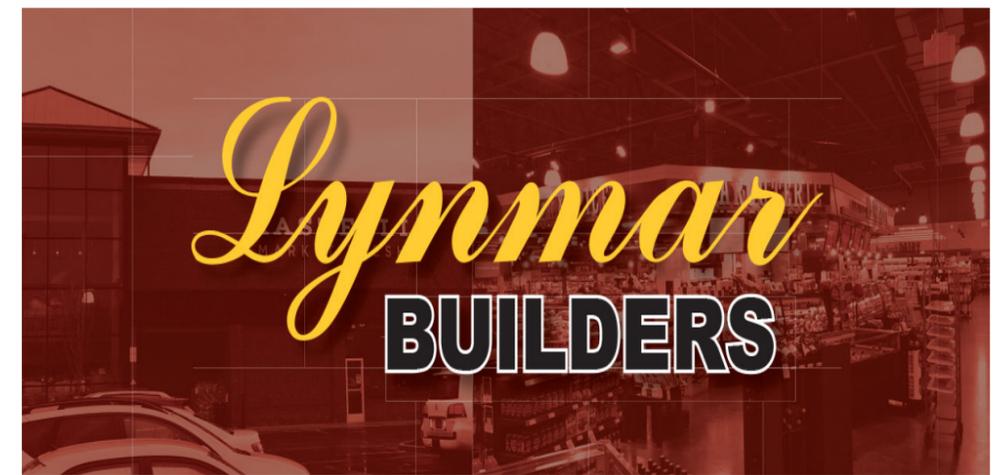
**BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON**

Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki hasn’t yet said how the city plans to replace police Chief Robert Tracy, who on Tuesday was selected to lead the St. Louis, MO, Police Department.

Tracy’s selection as the Gateway City’s top cop was **announced** by St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones Tuesday morning. It’s the first time in the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department’s 214-year history that it’s hired a chief from outside its ranks. Tracy will remain Wilmington’s police chief until Jan. 6, 2023.

“Between now and then, I’ll have more to say about the transition to a new police administration,” Purzycki said in a **news release**.

Wilmington City Council President Ernest “Trippi” Congo II congratulated Tracy—an official he’s been highly critical of—on his new job. He noted that Tracy



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# RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO STOP ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

After dispersing \$122 million in rental and utility assistance, the Delaware State Housing Authority will stop accepting applications in the new year to manage application volume, the agency announced Tuesday.

“There is no guarantee when the program will resume accepting new applications,” the Housing Authority said in a news release. The program closure is necessary due to overwhelming demand, the agency said, causing funds to be “depleted at an exorbitant rate.”

No new applications or recertifications will be accepted for the **Delaware Housing Assistance Program**, or DEHAP, after 8 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 2, 2023. Landlords and tenants may continue submitting applications and recertifications until the Jan. 2 cutoff. Those with open or in-progress applications submitted prior to the deadline should continue to monitor their emails, text messages and voicemails for status updates.

This will be the second time the Housing Authority stopped accepting DEHAP applications due to over-

whelming demand. In September, the program was **paused** to modify regulations and manage application volume. It reopened in October with tighter restrictions.

It’s not clear whether the qualifications will be adjusted after the upcoming pause is lifted. According to the Housing Authority, people experiencing emergencies, such as eviction with a set court date, the immediate risk of homelessness or utility cut-off can start a new application for assistance after Jan. 2 through one of the program’s 15 **Community Navigators**. The Housing Authority emphasized that the DEHAP program is not permanently ending, but said “the program in its current format will eventually end.”

For additional details on the DEHAP program, visit [decovidhousinghelp.com](https://decovidhousinghelp.com) or call 1-866-935-0407.



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## NEW CASTLE COUNTY URGED TO INCREASE, EXPAND IMPACT FEES

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

New Castle County on Monday was given a draft plan by consultants to expand—and increase—the impact fees charged for development. The county adopted such fees in 1999 to “finance new or expanded infrastructure and service needs for development.” And they have not changed much since.

The county’s consultants recommended adding fees to encourage low-income housing and open space; differentiating more types of housing and businesses in assessing the fees; and raising the fees. If what was recommended is approved, most developers would pay a lot more and would most likely just pass along those costs to the people and businesses that buy and rent those houses and commercial properties.

New Castle County breaks down impact fees into parks and special facilities; libraries; county facilities; EMS; fire and rescue; and law enforcement. Current impact fees, for example, total \$1,157 for a single-family house.

One slide in the consultants’ presentation concluded that that \$1,157 fee should go up—just to account for inflation since they were last adjusted in 2006—to \$2,036. The slide provided five scenarios for adjusting fees, including no increase and various timetables and methods of increasing them. Four of the five scenarios call for indexing the fees to inflation.

One push to increase the impact fees is that County Council this fall voted to spend \$7.5 million over three years to preserve open space and agricultural land. Establishing a separate fee for open space will help finance part of that plan.

Doing the math on average current growth—2,000 homes and four million square feet of commercial space annually—the consultants pegged the open-space fee at \$377 for a single-family detached house.

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# EDUCATION

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# STATE BOARD: GREAT OAKS CHARTER WILL NOT BE SHUT DOWN

BY JAREK RUTZ

**Great Oaks Charter School**, a Wilmington charter serving a student body of more than 80% Black students, will not be shut down. After nearly three months of being placed on formal review by the Charter School Accountability Committee, Education Secretary Mark Holidick recommended Thursday night to the **Delaware State Board of Education** to allow the school to continue operating. The board voted in support of that recommendation.

The review was triggered because the charter submitted an enrollment of 236 students at the beginning of the year. Its authorized enrollment is 325 students, so the charter had 37% fewer students than the number agreed upon with the state. Jim Mazarakis, chair of the Great Oaks School Board, previously said it was diffi-

cult to recruit and maintain students the past couple of years because of the pandemic. He also has pointed out that the school serves 90% minority students and 30% special needs students.

Kim Klein, secretary of operations at the Department of Education, shared the 22 conditions for Great Oaks that the charter will have to meet to ensure its survival. Klein shared some of the deadlines, but not all. Some of those conditions include:

- An authorized enrollment of 200 students, rather than 325, for next school year.
- Must submit a revised budget for the current school year that aligns with its current enrollment of 236 students.

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- Must meet 90% of its authorized enrollment by April 1, 2023. That is 180 students.
- Submit a plan on how it intends to build cash reserves back up and meet the state’s financial framework performance metrics.
- A detailed plan for the six teachers that are currently not licensed and certified in the area that they’re teaching.
- Evaluations for administrators and teachers.





BY JAREK RUTZ

The Wilmington Learning Collaborative will have to wait until next month for Christina School District to select its parent representative to serve on the group's governing council. In its monthly board meeting Tuesday, Christina's school board announced it is still reviewing applications from four parents vying for the seat.

"We have not had the number of applicants that we would have hoped for," said Superintendent Dan Shelton.

The collaborative, which was officially created Nov. 1, includes nine schools from Christina, Brandywine and

## LEARNING COLLAB HAS FIVE VACANT BOARD SEATS

Red Clay school districts. The collaborative aims to improve educational outcomes for inner-city children and families.

Brandywine **selected** its parent representative, Starr Wilson, during its board meeting Monday. But Brandywine only had one applicant, Shelton said, opposed to Christina's four. The district will interview the applicants in the coming weeks, Shelton said.

Christina's board is waiting on two of the four applicants to finish turning in their materials, according to board member Naveed Baqir. That delayed the process.

That means the 12-person Learning Collaborative governing council still has five open seats. Here's a look at the Learning Collab's council so far:

- Christina superintendent: Dan Shelton
- Brandywine superintendent: Lincoln Hohler
- Red Clay superintendent: Dorrell Green
- Christina city school board member: Alethea Smith-Tucker
- Brandywine city school board member: Shanika Perry
- Red Clay city school board member: Adriana Bohm
- Brandywine parent representative: Starr Wilson
- Christina parent representative: TBD
- Red Clay parent representative: TBD

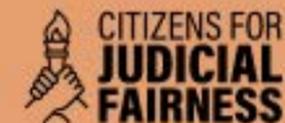
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## HOCKESSIN COLORED SCHOOL NO. 107 OPENS AS HISTORIC SITE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A school building in Hockessin instrumental to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that desegregated public schools, will enter a new chapter driven by diversity, inclusion and equity.

Hockessin Colored School No. 107, which operated from 1920 to 1959, was a one-room schoolhouse built to serve Black children who were not allowed to attend school with white children. It attracted national attention in April 1952 when Delaware Chancery Court Chief Judge Collins J. Seitz issued his decision that the disparity between white and African-American students violated the U.S. Constitution.

Hockessin Colored School No. 107 students, now in their late 80s and 90s, returned Wednesday, this time to a jam-packed, newly renovated building that celebrates their shared history.

After a decade of renovations and planning, what was

once a school building symbolic of America's racial divide is now the Center for Diversity, Inclusion and Social Equity. Ten former students entered one-by-one through the front doors as the crowd erupted in thunderous applause.

For former student Sonny Knott, that door went from a symbol of oppression to a historic landmark—a fitting bookend for a life during one of America's most transformative centuries for people of color.

"I was in the second grade in 1937 when I first walked through that door," Knott said. "Now 85 years later, I'm walking through that door again. I'm excited about this day because I can bring my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren, my neighbors here, because this is our history."

Every former student has stories to tell about their experiences at the school, Knott said—many funny and

happy, others traumatic and terrible. Knott said students at Hockessin School were made to use often-outdated hand-me-down books that white schools no longer wanted or needed. Often, when the books made their way to Hockessin School, there would be missing pages, making it impossible for students to read aloud or follow class instruction.

He joked that so many student names would be written in the back of the book that by the time his school received them, it sometimes seemed like there were more names than pages.

"It's very, very important that the kids nowadays know what we went through," Knott said.

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# CAESAR RODNEY MOM WITHDRAWS SUIT OVER DODGEBALL INCIDENT

BY JAREK RUTZ

A mother who sued over her son’s injuries in a school dodgeball game, has withdrawn her lawsuit. India Scott had filed suit herself in the Court of Common Pleas in Kent County in April after her seventh-grade son, Charles Cottman, was injured during a game at **Postlethwait Middle School**. She sued the father of the student who hit Charles for \$30,000 to cover Charles’ medical costs. He was diagnosed with a concussion and is seeing a team of doctors at **Nemours Children’s Hospital**, Delaware.

Judge Anne E. Hartnett, told Scott during an Aug. 22 hearing she needed to find a lawyer or the case would be dismissed. Scott did, but chose to dismiss the case anyway. It had been set for a hearing Monday.

“Charles is still being evaluated by his team of doctors,” Scott said, “When he is released from doctors’ evaluations and care, I will follow up with a civil lawsuit.”

According to court records, there was an 11-second

period during a Jan. 10 game of dodgeball at Postlethwait Middle School which showed the 9th-grade student hitting Charles’ head after Charles eliminated that student from the game. The case also drew attention because Charles is Black and the student who hit him is White. The school district would not allow Delaware LIVE News to view the video.

Scott says that her son has lingering issues that will require continuing medical and therapeutic care. She’s now waiting on the final tab of Charles’ medical bills, as well as travel expenses to take him to and from the doctor’s office. Scott had rejected a \$1,500 settlement offer.

Charles’ medical and travel expenses have totaled much more than the \$1,500, Scott said.

Delaware’s **statute of limitations** allows Scott to file a lawsuit up to two years after the incident happened.



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# TEACHER'S UNION GETS ONE WISH: PAY COMMITTEE MOVES MEETING

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware's state teachers union got one of its wishes Monday when the state committee charged with adjusting the salaries of public school workers announced it will push its monthly meeting back an hour.

Mark Holodick, education secretary and chair of the Public Education Compensation Committee said at the start of Monday's regular meeting that starting next month, the committee will meet at 4:30 p.m. rather than 3:30. The earlier time meeting makes it difficult for teachers to attend, particularly elementary school teachers, since many of them are on the clock until 4:30 p.m.

Union officials had blamed the lack of teachers attending for one reason the committee voted last month to delay any formal recommendations on salary until next year.

Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, pointed out that the meetings should be held on Monday and Friday, so they won't conflict with legislators on the committee having to attend General Assembly sessions Tuesdays,

Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Rep. Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek; Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin, chair of the Senate education committee, and Rep. Kim Williams, D-Stanton, chair of the House education committee, also are members of the 15-person committee.

After the committee voted to delay its recommendations, which is allowed in the bill that created the committee, the **Delaware State Education Association**—the teacher's union—called for educators to attend the committee meetings. That led to a move to have the meeting start later in the day. That point is underscored by the fact that there is just one current educator is on the committee: **Christina School District's** Dave Kohan.

"Now, elementary educators have time after dismissal to get the things done that they need to get done, and to be fully engaged in our meetings," Holodick said.



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# CAESAR RODNEY'S STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSES ON MENTAL HEALTH

BY JAREK RUTZ

Caesar Rodney School District's new five-year strategic plan will focus heavily on social and emotional learning.

"Meeting the needs of the child, especially around social, emotional and behavioral health was the number one item that was brought up on our students surveys, parents surveys, community surveys, teacher surveys, our talks with the Department of Education, steering committee, really across the board," said Caesar Rodney Superintendent Christine Alois.

Recognizing and improving student mental health moved to the center of attention in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students already seeking help were cut off from their normal support and the stress of virtual classes and other disruptions seemed to have triggered a wave of anxiety and other issues.

More than 1,500 surveys were turned into the district to help the steering committee create an updated strategic plan. They were reviewed by 15 focus groups before it was approved by the district school board this fall, Alois said. .

Alois said a broader approach to instruction that incorporates a student's wellbeing, mental health and social behaviors is now more important than ever. Social and emotional learning aims to instill knowledge, skills and attitudes in students to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals.

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# SPORTS

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## LAUREL BULLDOGS WIN BACK TO BACK STATE FOOTBALL TITLES

BY BENNY MITCHELL

For two seasons the Laurel Bulldogs have carried the target on their back with the number one ranking in Class A and for two seasons they have raised the state championship trophy at Delaware Stadium in December.

“Unbelievable,” Laurel head coach Joey Jones said after the Bulldogs defeated St. Elizabeth 28-13 to win the DIAA Class A state football championship for the second straight year.

Laurel’s Owen Chaffinch recovered a St. Elizabeth fumble on the first play of the game at the Vikings’ 37-yard line. Four plays later Xavier Limehouse on a fourth and two went around the left end for a 29-yard touchdown run. Michael Gonzalez-Perez converted the kick as Laurel led 7-0 just 2:17 into the game.

Laurel added to its lead early in the second quarter on a 13-yard touchdown run by Tate Walls. Gonzalez-Perez converted the kick as the Bulldogs led 14-0 with 9:23 to play in the first half.

St. Elizabeth was driving on their its possession, but the drive was halted when Ny’Aire Farlow jumped the route and intercepted Chris Soto’s pass at the Laurel 46-yard line for the Bulldogs second takeaway of the first half. Laurel was unable to capitalize on the turnover and was forced to punt the ball as Kaden Shockley kicked a low ball that rolled to the St. Elizabeth 14.

The Vikings put together a solid 10-play, 86-yard drive capped off by a 22-yard halfback pass from Chris Character to a wide open Tony Shiavoni. Soto converted the kick as St. Elizabeth cut the Laurel lead to 14-7 at halftime.

Neither team could get much going on offense in the third quarter. Early in the fourth quarter, St. Elizabeth got a key stop as Laurel went for it on fourth and two. Shockley was held to a one-yard run giving the Vikings the ball at its 46-yard line with 8:16 to play in the game.

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BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Wilmington Friends school won its second state with a 10-7 victory over the Caravel Buccaneers. The Quakers were in the championship game in 2018, but had some major injuries that created a lopsided loss to Woodbridge. Their last state championship came in 1984 with a 22-12 victory over Claymont.

The Quakers were led by the third generation of Tattersalls, quarterback Robby, son of coach Rob Tattersall and long-time coach Bob Tattersall. Ryan Tattersall is the younger brother of Robby Tattersall and also sees significant time for the team also on defense.

Robby has been the leader all season at the quarterback position doing it both in the air and with his legs. He led them in the championship game as well as he had 115 yards on 23 carries on the ground, and went 13 for 21 with 117 yards passing with one touchdown. Robby hit Ishmael Johnson for a four-yard touchdown pass in the first quarter to give Friends a 7-0 lead. Late

## FRIENDS HOLDS OFF BUCCANEERS FOR STATE TITLE

in the second quarter, Friends added a 32-yard field goal from Alessio Christanetti-Walker which would later prove to be the winning score.

After a scoreless third quarter, the Buccaneers began to find their offense. Midway through the fourth quarter Caravel quarterback Truman Auwerda found his groove. Starting on their 15-yard line, Auwerda connected with Vandrick Hamlin for 42 yards to start the scoring drive. Then on fourth and 14, Auwerda found Mekhi Carmon who made a great sliding catch to keep the drive going. On the next play, Jordan Miller was able to punch it in from six yards out for the Buccaneers only touchdown of the game.

Caravel would get a second chance late in the fourth quarter after forcing the Quakers to punt. After a completed pass to Christian DeRegis on first down, Auwerda looked for him again over the middle. However, this time Friends defensive back Andrew McKenzie stepped in front of the pass to intercept the ball and solidify Wilmington Friends as the 2022 Class 2A state champions.

When asked about the win, coach Bob Tattersall said “This was much more difficult because I spent most of the time standing around. He (son Rob) is just what this team needed.”





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# SMYRNA EAGLES "FLY HIGH" FOR STATE TITLE

BY GLENN FRAZER

In their semifinal victory two weeks ago, the Smyrna Eagles used multiple offensive sets to feature the run game, only attempting five passes to advance to the championship game. Once they got to Delaware Stadium, it was Brian Wright and the passing attack that propelled the Eagles to the fourth title in school history since 2015. It just goes to show you the versatility of this team that possesses a multitude of weapons. That explosive offense, paired with a relentless defense combined for a 52-7 win over Dover for the Class 3A championship.

Smyrna and Dover finished the first quarter in a scoreless tie, but the second quarter would be a harbinger of things to come. Markell Hohlman ran for 30 yards to the Dover 26 on the first play of the second quarter. That would set up the first score of the game as Wright found Nolan Fretz open at the two, and he backpeddled into the end zone less than a minute into the quarter. Those two were instrumental in Smyrna's second touchdown. Following a well-placed kickoff by senior Joshua Michael, Stephen "Truck" Driver tipped the ball to himself at the Dover 33-yard line. It would

take the Eagles just three plays to get another touchdown as Wright passed 30 yards to Fretz at the Senator 13 and on the next play, Hohlman got the left edge for the TD and a 12-0 lead.

Undaunted, Dover fought back on a nine-play, 56-yard drive featuring three completions from Nahseem Cosme to John Parker, the final pass for 14 yards and a score. Brandon Yoder split the uprights as Dover pulled to within five points at 12-7 with five left in the half. However, five minutes was more than enough for the Eagles to put two more touchdowns on the board—an 18-yard "side-arm" pass from Wright to Yamir Knight, and a Knight two-yard run out of the "Earthquake" with just 14 seconds to go for a Smyrna 28-7 lead at the break. That final score featured an outstanding sideline catch by Fretz as he kept his feet in-bounds for a 21-yard gain as he was falling to the ground. A definite highlight from the Smyrna senior who posted his most productive game of the season.

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# HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL, WRESTLING RANKINGS: WEEK 2

BY NICK HALLIDAY

## DELAWARE **LIVE** SPORTS TOP 10 RANKINGS

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