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July 9, 2023
Vol. 4, Issue 27

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Issues Expected to be Focus of 2024 Election



Students Win National Awards in Tech Conference



Tyler August Poised for the Draft

photo link: Killens Pond State Park



Headlines

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KITCHEN TABLE ISSUES EXPECTED TO BE FOCUS OF 2024 ELECTION

BY SAM HAUT

With three Democrats already announcing a run for statewide offices in 2024, politicians say they expect the election's main issues to be familiar to most voters.

"It's the cost of things going up and kind of wages being stagnant," said Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, minority leader in the Delaware State Senate.

"More and more I'm hearing from people, especially our increasing elder population that we have here in Sussex County, concerned about the price of their groceries going up, things that they have to spend money on every week where their Social Security kind of stays stagnant or their pensions stay stagnant," he said.

Julianne Murray, chair of the Delaware State Republican Party, predicted that education and crime will be big issues, especially in the race for governor. Gov. John Carney is ending his second four-year term and won't run for re-election.

"Where we are on test scores, not even getting into curriculum and things like that," Murray said. "Crime is still going to be an issue that people are going to be talking about."

What Murray doesn't want to see is a focus on identity politics. "Where I think we should be going is talking about issues instead of...getting into the weeds of identity politics," Murray said. "We should be talking about what's affecting people's day to day lives," Murray said.

Matt Meyer, the New Castle County executive who announced June 6 that he's running for governor, said there are several areas of concern such as ChatGPT and the healthcare system that he expects to come up.

"Everything from the struggles getting a doctor's appointment that I hear across the state and are particularly acute in Sussex," Meyer said. "The challenges of getting a quality public school education across our state.

The challenges of things like ChatGPT and a rapidly changing economy. How do we best position the state to address those issues, as well as various issues involving the environment and climate change."

Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester **announced** June 21 that she is running for Sen. John Carper seat. He has announced he is retiring. In turn, Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Wilmington, **announced** on June 26 that she is running for Delaware's lone congressional seat. Blunt Rochester and McBride did not respond to requests for an interview. Neither did the Delaware State Democratic Party.

One more sign that an election year is coming: Scott Walker banners—many painted on what seems to be pieces of material—are hanging from trees and other perches up and down Delaware. It's unclear exactly what he's running for.

While the state's presidential primary is on April 23, the state primary is still set for Sept. 10, 2024. A bill in this year's General Assembly that would have moved the state primary to the same day as the presidential one failed.

While no Republicans have yet announced for state office, Murray said the party plans to run candidates for all state offices. Murray believes voters tend to prefer outsiders.

"The electorate likes the idea of somebody that's not a career politician...even at the federal level, when you see like any of the polling or anything like that," Murray said.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT FUND GETS HALF OF PREVIOUS YEAR

BY SAM HAUT

The 2024 fiscal year **community reinvestment fund** allocates \$45 million to 153 different organizations, a big drop from the \$90 million allocated for 2023 fiscal year and the \$70 million allocated in 2022. The fund is part of this year’s bond bill and comes from **Senate Bill 160**, sponsored by Sen. Jack Walsh, D-Stanton, which allocates \$1,409,448,938 to address capital improvement projects across the state.

The money in the fund is used for various 501(c)3 organizations and towns across the state to help with capital improvement projects. Rep. Ronald Gray, R-Bethany Beach, who worked on allocating the money for the fund, said that they initially received \$250 million in requests that they had to whittle down to \$45 million.

“You can’t do it all. You’re doing not even a quarter of it that was available...But overall, I just felt just wonder-

ful,” Gray said. “I mean, this is my fourth year on the bond committee and one year we started out with 10 and we ended up getting \$20 million on this redevelopment fund, and this year it’s over double what that was. So we’ve been able to do a lot the last three years for a good bit of the 501(c)3s.”

Legislators work with the Office of the Controller General to make sure the money gets distributed properly and to avoid any overlap in funding, so none of the groups get more than they requested.

The reason for the \$45 million decrease in funds this year compared to last year, Gray said, is just based on how much money is available and what else the governor and controller general’s office are trying to get funding for.

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BY SAM HAUT

Since this year's General Assembly session opened in January, hundreds of bills have passed, from marijuana legalization to climate change regulations. Plenty are still waiting for the second half of the 152nd session of the Assembly, which begins in January. Minority Leader Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek, said Republicans had several tax bills that they are going to introduce at the start of next year's legislature that didn't get heard this year.

"We have four or five that are all going to be prefilled as soon as we get back into session, and that's going to be our primary focus," Ramone said. "But we're gonna watch the money...We're realistic. We're not going to ask for tax reductions if there's no money, but I have a strong feeling that we're going to have monies that we could focus towards those who need it most."

Ramone didn't name the tax bills to which he was referring.

Senate President Pro Tempore Dave Sokola, D-Newark, said he expects [Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 2](#), [House Bill 155](#) and [House Bill 215](#) to be among the bills that will be back. SS 1 for SB 2, sponsored by Sen. Elizabeth Lockman, D-Wilmington, would require Delawareans to get a permit before they can buy handguns. It passed the Senate 15 to 6, but it didn't get out of the House Appropriations Committee before the 2023 session ended June 30.

BILLS, ISSUES THAT WILL BE BACK BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HB 155, sponsored by Rep. Krista Griffith, D-Fairfax, would create more penalties if firearms aren't properly stored. While it passed both the House and Senate, an amendment change in the Senate requires it to be passed again in the House.

HB 215, sponsored by Rep. Stephanie Bolden, D-Wilmington, would change Delaware's primary date for statewide office elections from the first Tuesday after the first Monday in September to the fourth Tuesday in April, the same day as the primary for the presidential election. That bill passed the House but didn't pass the Senate with three voting no and 18 not voting. It will still be live in 2024.

Bills from 2023 that are not passed in 2024 will have to be re-introduced for the 153rd session, which begins in January 2025. Sokola said all three of those bills will need greater discussion by the legislature before they are able to pass, including moving the date of the state primaries.

"A lot of us want to move it up," Sokola said. "But a lot of us are really concerned about the idea of a lame duck legislature with people who lost in primaries...because you can have people who all of a sudden are not going to be serving and they may be doing things that they wouldn't otherwise do if they were still going to be serving."

Ramone said Republicans didn't get very many bills passed but are happy for the few bills that they did get passed.

"[I]t's like 20 to one. They'll let one of ours run and 20 of theirs, and I think most of the ones that they let run, we did our best to minimize the unintended consequences," Ramone said. "Obviously I'm very happy that we finally got through the EV initiative on the House side. I think the amount of people that are frustrated and disappointed with this initiative from the secretary are astounding."

That electric vehicle bill, [House Bill 123](#) sponsored by Ramone, would require the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control to get approval from the legislature before it restricts the sale of gas-powered vehicles.

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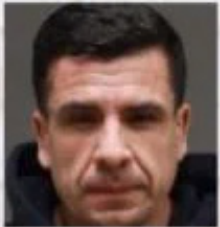
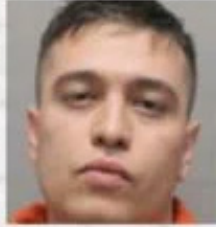
Culture

photo link: Delaware Art Museum
photo by S. Woodloe

BURGLARY INVESTIGATION



WANTED

MIGUEL A. GUTIERREZ-DIAZ
WANTED - BURGLARYJUAN CAMILLO CUERVO-MARTINEZ
WANTED - BURGLARYBENJAMIN ANDRES OVALLE-TAIBO
WANTED - BURGLARYJONATHAN ANDRES VEJAR-CARO
WANTED - BURGLARY

BY BETSY PRICE

Leaving home? Keep it to yourself.

In the modern turmoil of daily life, there's another worry: South American Theft Groups who target upscale homes. The [New Castle County Division of Police](#) and other law enforcement partners are warning Delaware residents about a nationwide trend of residential burglaries by groups known as "South American Theft Groups" or "Crime Tourists," according to a Friday [press release](#).

The highly organized criminals travel from state to state burglarizing homes and stealing from them. They use radios, disguises, lookouts and surveillance to case potential homes and neighborhoods. Once they act, the group moves fast, stealing jewelry, watches, designer merchandise, cash and gold bars, the press release said.

NEW WORRY: 'CRIME TOURISTS' WHO TARGET EXPENSIVE HOMES FOR THEFTS

They typically ship the stolen goods back to their home countries or try to sell them before they leave the country. New Castle Police have made several arrests of people in these groups but are still seeking some people wanted for outstanding warrants.

The theft rings often are composed of Chilean or Columbian nationals, the release said. The groups are targeting expensive homes and homes owned by Asian Americans, the press release said.

THEFT PREVENTION TIPS

New Castle Police recommend that home owners take additional steps to secure their property and personal belongings:

1. Consult with your homeowner's association on the installation of automated license plate readers at the entrance/exit of neighborhoods.
2. Secure doors and windows. Install solid exterior doors with deadbolt locks and reinforced frames. Use high-quality locks on all doors and consider upgrading to smart locks for added security. Install window locks on all accessible windows and reinforce glass with security film or laminates.
3. Install a comprehensive home security system that includes burglar alarms, motion sensors and security cameras. Display signs or stickers indicating the presence of a security system, which can act as a deterrent.
4. Install motion-sensor lights around the perimeter of your home, particularly near entry points. Ensure

that pathways, entrances and dark areas are well-lit to minimize hiding spots for potential burglars.

5. Join or establish a neighborhood watch program to create a sense of community and collective security. Communicate with your neighbors, report suspicious activities and look out for one another.

6. Keep valuable items, such as jewelry, cash and important documents, in a secure safe or lockbox. Avoid leaving valuable items in plain sight through windows or in easily accessible areas.

7. Maintain a well-kept appearance to deter potential burglars. Use timers for lights and electronic devices to create the illusion of occupancy when you're away.

8. Avoid sharing vacation plans or posting about being away from home on social media. Burglars can exploit this information to target unoccupied houses.

9. Install security bars or grilles on vulnerable entry points, such as basement windows or sliding doors. Consider reinforcing doors with door jammers or security plates to prevent forced entry.

10. Be aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activities to local authorities. Consider installing surveillance cameras to monitor and record activities around your property.

11. Report suspicious persons and vehicles to 9-1-1.



VETERANS CAN FILE FOR NEW BENEFITS AT JULY 14 FAMILY FUN DAY

BY JAREK RUTZ

A new Veterans Affairs family fun day is organized around a serious tent pole: Getting 150 or more Veterans to file claims for new federal benefits.

The Wilmington Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Veteran Benefits Administration hope the July 14 event will bring the additional resources available through the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act to service members, Veterans, their families, caregivers and surviving spouses. The PACT Act was signed into law Aug. 10, 2022, and expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances.

There's a reason why the VA wants Veterans to sign up now: Under the PACT Act, if someone files a claim before Aug. 10, 2023, they will be back-paid to Aug. 10, 2022.

"But if they apply after, they'll only get back-paid to the date they apply, so it's a nice little caveat if they do it before Aug. 10 of this year," said Valerie Harwood, public affairs officer for the Wilmington VA Medical Center. "So the fair is to show appreciation to families and support for Veterans, but also to recognize and help the Veterans get these claims done before Aug. 9 so they can get back-pay for a whole year."

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CHILL OUT



DSO'S 23-24 SEASON: GUEST CONDUCTORS, JOHN WILLIAMS SALUTE

BY BETSY PRICE

The Delaware Symphony Orchestra's 2023-24 season will feature traditional classical programs interspersed with Hispanic and Latin-inspired works, a celebration of the music of John Williams and a chamber concert devoted to African music. Along the way, three guest conductors will handle baton duties when Music Director Laureate David Amado isn't on the podium to open and close the season.

"It's not only diverse with the people involved but also diverse in the musical selections," said Executive Director J.C. Barker. "Our goal is to reflect the community, not any one niche of the community."

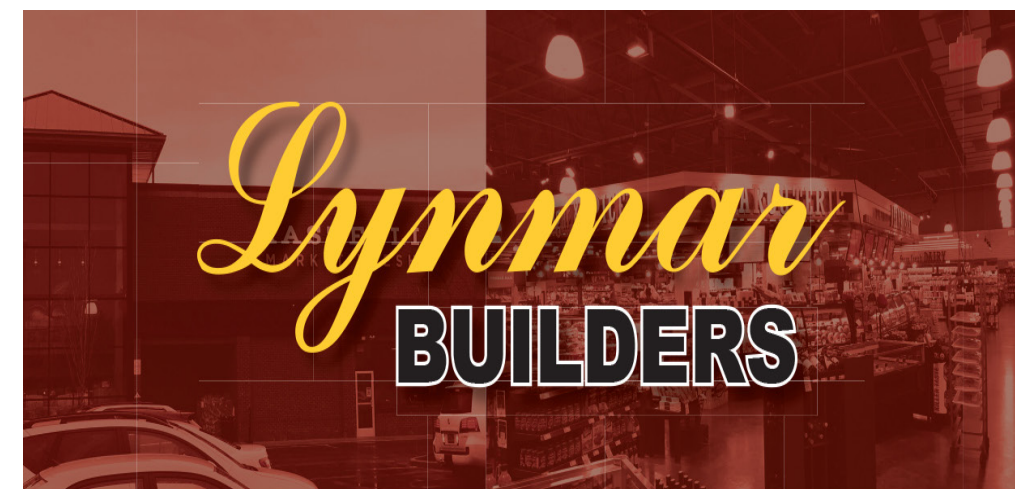
The community was kind to the symphony last year. DSO's last two spring classical concerts sold out. One was a tribute to movie music. The other was a celebration of

Amado's 20 years as musical director before he moved to emeritus position, and he gave the audience Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The numbers of those attending the Sussex County concerts doubled this year, and the Spring downstate concert also sold out.

"Audiences are back," Barker said. "I think it's indicative of a new community attitude and enthusiasm about the symphony, and I think that momentum will continue through this season."

The 2023-23 season will feature five Classics Series concerts at the Grand Opera House, with two repeated in Sussex County at Cape Henlopen High School in Lewes, and three Chamber Series concerts, with one returning to the Hotel du Pont's Gold Ballroom.

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BIG PLANS: CREATING JESTER ARTSPACE IN BRANDYWINE HUNDRED

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The people creating the [Jester Artspace](#) have big plans for a small(ish), long-abandoned building. “It’s slow going,” said board president Alan Baseden, who grew up across Grubb Road from the old farmstead that they are renovating, with the help of New Castle County. “A lot longer than I expected.”

When the building gets its certificate of occupancy, Baseden hopes that it will provide “art for all. A place to make and see art, sophisticated but not lofty art.”

The group was founded in 2015, and since then they have received enough grant funding to open the building. Right now, their greatest need is in getting volunteers to work on their punch list.

In [2016](#), they signed a 20-year lease with the county that covers the 1,373-square-foot building and 1.4 acres

that will include a sculpture garden and an outdoor gathering area. The county is spending \$1.3 million on the project, with also includes walking trails on 26 acres, Delaware Public Media [reported](#) in 2021. The lease doesn’t include cash rent, since the county is satisfied by their plans as public service.

“The county agreed that they would restore the house envelope and that we would fit out the interior,” a handout posted on the building says. “Their restoration work is now complete and the house has been handed off to us.”

“One of the sticking points is energy efficiency,” Baseden said. “Those historic stone walls have been left exposed, so it automatically fails. Everyone is involved in a good-faith effort to resolve this.”

JESTER ARTSPACE

The property is “a rare intact farmstead in Brandywine Hundred,” the Artspace [quotes](#) the New Castle County Historic Review Board. “An example of the early development of the hundred, before the suburbanization that occurred in the 20th century.”

They’ve found the building on an 1849 map, belonging then to Robert Johnson. Baseden theorizes that it could date to as early as 1799, when Grubb Road was rerouted, jogging toward the then-new Naamans Road, instead of running straight into Concord Pike. He theorizes that stones from a wall that used to line Grubb Road could have been used for the building. Parts of the wall can still be seen on Grubb, and more stones can be seen on the 26-acre Jester property.

The land was owned by the Day family from roughly the Civil War to World War II. Francis and Eleanor Jester owned it from 1953 until 1974, when it was sold to the county. The land was later used by Hy-Point Dairy.

Farmhouses like the Jester place “tell a story of Brandywine Hundred that doesn’t get told,” Baseden said. “Everyone wasn’t a du Pont. They scratched out a living on rocky soil.”

The Jester Artspace has received about \$200,000 in funding, primarily from four Wilmington-based foundations: the Welfare Foundation, the Longwood Foundation, the Crystal Trust Foundation and the Crestlea Foundation. He expects that funding to cover the costs of the work needed to open.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

WILMINGTON POLICE TO HAND OUT WHEEL LOCKS FOR KIAs, HYUNDAIS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Owners of Hyundai and Kia vehicles will have yet another opportunity to obtain a free steering wheel lock to prevent car theft. As the trend of Hyundai and Kia models being stolen continues, the Wilmington Police Department will give away the locks Saturday, July 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the parking lot of ShopRite, 501 S. Walnut Street. New Castle County Police hosted an event May 15 to make sure some Hyundai and Kia vehicles had the safety devices.

The Wilmington Police locks will be given away on a first-come, first-served basis. Those looking to take advantage of the giveaway must be Wilmington residents and arrive in their vehicle. Cars are eligible if they are a 2011 to 2021 Hyundai or Kia model with a key start ignition that has not received the anti-theft software upgrade from the manufacturer.

New Castle County Police offered these additional tips to protect your car from theft:

- Lock your doors, as part of your 9 p.m. routine. “At 9 every night, you should lock all vehicles, residences, garages, windows, gates and sheds; secure or bring inside your tools, bikes, keys and other valuables; and activate exterior lights, security cameras and alarm systems,” according to Family Safety and Health.
- Remove your keys and spare keys from the vehicle.
- Ensure the wheel lock is properly installed.
- Make sure all windows are closed.
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Park near surveillance cameras.
- Install an audible alarm or motion-activated in-car camera.
- Install an additional tracking device.
- Don’t leave valuables in your car.
- Don’t leave your car running unoccupied.
- Be alert.



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1ST STATE CALLED 2ND BEST ON 5G (AND IT'S FAIRLY CHEAP)

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Delaware is the second-best state for 5G cellular coverage, some number crunching of federal data concludes. But it has second-worst availability of broadband with speeds of at least 1,000 megabits. And online access is relatively cheap in the First State.

Internet access is a must-have for many families, and it's in the [news](#) with President Biden in June announcing a \$42 billion plan, called the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program, to expand high-speed internet access. Delaware is getting \$107,748,384.66 in BEAD [funding](#), the lowest of any state.

That could be roughly justified because the state is so small and has so few people, but neither geographic size nor population completely explains disparities in fund-

ing. Maryland and New Jersey, for instance, are getting roughly 2.5 times as much as Delaware, but their populations and areas are four to nine times higher. Texas is getting the most, more than \$3 billion. Washington, D.C., and three territories are getting less than Delaware.

Across the United States, almost all residential locations have access to broadband speeds of at least 50mbps. But streaming and gaming and households with multiple devices spur the desire for faster and faster speeds. And many people—and governments—consider fast internet access to be essential. That's why the federal government has a website called [Internet for All](#).

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Business

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photo link: Delaware Division of Small Business





BY JAREK RUTZ

Don Gordon, a senior vice president of Bank of America, put his day job on hold for 15 months to help thousands of Delaware State University students land full-time jobs. Bank of America's **Leader on Loan** program pairs key bank leaders with local nonprofit organizations and educational institutions with the goal of establishing sustainable growth in a specific community.

Spending over a year away from his day-to-day job, Gordon said he not only had the opportunity to give back to the community and create pathways for success for young Delawareans, but he discovered some things about himself.

"I learned a lot about some of the skillsets I haven't had the opportunity to use in a long time," he said. "There's a lot of value and experience to share with

BANK EXEC HELPS DSU STUDENTS FIND FULL-TIME JOBS

young people that are going to be going through those same experiences I've gone through and just letting them know what to expect and some of the changes in corporate America from when I first started my career."

At DSU, a top-rated Historically Black College and University, Gordon spent most of his time working in the Office of Career Services. Along with one-on-one meetings with students to help with career development, Gordon organized career fairs and also spent time in classrooms to help walk students through the opportunities that the career services office has to offer.

Gordon's tenure marked the program's first expansion into Delaware.

Luis Santiago was the other Delawarean to pilot the Leader on Loan program. Santiago worked with the Delaware IT Industry Council where he supported the development of a robust and flexible IT talent training system while strengthening the diversity of IT talent by enhancing the opportunities for under-represented populations and rural communities in Delaware.

At DSU, Gordon worked with students to build career readiness and worked with faculty to improve systems for serving students across the university's various colleges and departments. He also led a series of job expos that grew steadily in popularity throughout the pandemic.

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Food & Dining

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MILTON'S ZAVA ADDS DINNER; ALFRESCO BEACH DINING HEATS UP

BY PAM GEORGE

Now that the Fourth of July is in the rearview window, it's time to truly celebrate summer.

Dining outside and enjoying live music, sipping vino in a vineyard and bubbles on a farm, enjoying fresh produce and preparing delicious dishes at home all have their place.

DINNER IS SERVED

Zava Café in Milton, which opened as a breakfast and lunch spot, now serves dinner Wednesday through Saturday. Expect creative entrees—co-owner/chef Danio Somoza also owns **Harvest Tide Steakhouse** in Lewes and the Mexican-influenced **Zocca** in Bethany Beach.

Zava's dinner menu includes crispy skin salmon with velouté sauce, bouillabaisse, pepper-crusted ribeye and assorted seafood over pasta. The restaurant takes reservations, but make sure you call the Milton location, not the original coffee shop in downtown Rehoboth Beach.

ALFRESCO DINING

Music and food create a harmonious marriage, and that's especially true when you're dining outside at a concert. **The Rocking the Docks** concert series at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal is adjacent to **Grain on the Rocks**, and concertgoers can order from Grain's food stand, which also sells beverages—including bottles of wine.

Many outdoor events have food trucks or allow you to bring your meal. Don't want to cook? Kate Applebaum, who owns **Cajun Kate's** with her husband, Don, suggests popping into the Philadelphia Pike restaurant before attending the free Thursday and Sunday concert series at Bellevue State Park. Nothing goes with the blues like a po'boy.

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Government

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DELAWARE STILL WORKING ON 32,000 TAX REFUNDS, NEW SYSTEM

BY SAM HAUT

Less than 10% of Delawareans who were due refunds when they filed their taxes are still waiting on them.

Since the beginning of 2023, the Delaware Department of Finance has received more than 387,000 requests for a 2022 tax refund. Its completed 355,641 of those requests, which totaled about \$230 million. The number of outstanding tax refunds is about the same number due this time last year, said Kathy Revel, director of the Division of Revenue. Most of what the state is dealing with now are returns received in the past two months, she said.

Refunds moved more slowly this year than the state is known for, however. Complicating matters is the Division of Revenue's new tax filing system. A new system finished coming up to speed in 2020 for business taxes. The second phase, focused on personal taxes, didn't

come online until October 2022, taking 22 months to complete. The third and final phase will involve corporate filings, said Revel. That should take about 18 months to return to a more seamless processing season.

Revel said that the Division of Revenue hired 12 seasonal staff to help deal with the 2022 tax season and the department is still working on some issues.

"We're working to resolve all issues as quickly as possible. We are dedicated to getting refunds out as quickly as we can," Revel said. "We know this tax season has been a little challenging for some individuals."

While the state received 387,000 requests for a refund, they've received a total of 570,000 tax returns. Those include people paying the state because they didn't pay enough in taxes.



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The benefit of the new system, Revel said, is that they will be able to reduce the amount of manual work state employees have to do by replacing it with more automation. Right now, the average time for an automated return to be completed is about eight days, while manual returns take an average of 44 days.

"The first year, because you're being so cautious, you seem to stop a lot more returns," she said. "So long term, we're going to program the system to follow more business rules and less manual intervention. That's our goal. It'll take us a little bit of time to get there. But that will mean faster processing times and faster refund times for taxpayers."

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LIVE



NCCO LIBRARIES GET FED GRANT FOR IMMIGRATION PROGRAM

BY JAREK RUTZ

New Castle County Libraries will get \$20,000 through a federal grant to create programming around a memoir about immigration, assimilation and culture. The 15 branches in the [New Castle County library system](#) will use “The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir” by Thi Bui as inspiration for the program.

“Thi Bui’s graphic memoir ‘[The Best We Could Do](#)’ was selected for its poignant portrayal of immigration, assimilation, culture and the lasting effects that displacement can have on a family,” said Matt Meyer, executive of New Castle County. “The book’s evocative illustrations draw the reader in and bring Bui’s story to life.”

The National Endowment for the Arts’ [Big Read](#) initiative aims to broaden understanding of the world and local communities and residents through shared reading experiences.

“The Big Read program will allow our community

members to engage with important topics while considering how historical events and issues of cultural and self-identity shape our present and future,” Meyer said.

New Castle County Libraries is one of 62 organizations in America picked to receive a 2023-2024 National Endowment for the Arts Big Read grant. The programming will take place between September and March 2024.

A total of \$1,075,000 will be allocated to the 62 organizations as part of this year’s Big Read grant, which invests in nonprofit organizations to develop innovative programming around a contemporary book.

“We are immensely grateful to the National Endowment for the Arts for their generous grant to Delaware, which will allow New Castle County to engage our community in meaningful conversations and inspire artistic responses,” said Jessica Ball, director of the [Delaware Division of the Arts](#).



JOHN MOLLURA
- PHOTOGRAPHY -

BEAUTY PORTRAITS - HEAD SHOTS
- FAMILIES -


302.222.6308

Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,800 Big Read programs, providing more than \$25 million to organizations nationwide. More than six million Americans have attended a Big Read event, over 100,000 volunteers have participated at the local level.

Created by Congress in 1965, the endowment is an independent federal agency that is the largest funder of the arts and arts education in communities nationwide. Its goal is to advance equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice by fostering and sustaining an environment in which the arts benefit all Americans.

“Through ‘The Best We Could Do,’ we hope to deepen our communities’ understanding of the immigrant experience and the resilience of families seeking a better future,” Ball said.





PARAMEDICS, FIREFIGHTERS, VET GROUPS GET \$71.9M IN GRANTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The state Senate voted June 30 to send a \$71.9 million grant package to Gov. John Carney to bolster fire companies, ambulance services, senior centers, Veterans organizations and other community groups. The Grants-In-Aid bill for fiscal year 2024 includes:

- \$22.7 million for organizations that provide benefits to Delawareans in the areas of health, substance-use disorder treatment, the arts, tourism and community services. This is a 10% increase from last year.
- \$16 million for ongoing paramedic operations in all three counties, plus an additional \$1 million for each county to improve or enhance paramedic options.
- \$10 million in statewide support for fire and ambulance companies to ensure maintenance and operation of trucks, ambulances and rescue boats. This is a 20% increase from last year.
- \$9.9 million for services, programs at senior centers
- \$3.9 million for the county seats of Wilmington, Dover and Georgetown.

- \$3.2 million in \$50,000 allocations to each fire company and public service ambulance company in the state.
- \$608,000 for Veterans organizations in all three counties. This is a 20% increase from last year.

Delaware's Joint Finance Committee creates the annual Grants-In-Aid legislation, which allocates funding to dozens of nonprofits across the state that are engaged in everything from treatment for substance-use disorder and behavioral health counseling to arts programming, historic preservation and emergency services.

“The Grants-in-Aid bill provides much-needed funds to our volunteer fire companies, senior centers and nonprofit organizations that offer vital services to residents up and down the state,” said Rep. William Carson, D-Smyrna and chair of the Joint Finance Committee. “These organizations and groups fill a huge need in Delaware. Without them, seniors, Veterans, and people



in need would have fewer options available to them for various services.”

House Bill 197, this year's grant package, includes funding for 18 new nonprofit agencies and community organizations that were not included in last year's legislation.

“This legislation will provide much-needed support to our nonprofit community and do a lot of good for a lot of people,” said Sen. Trey Paradee, D-Dover and vice chair of the Joint Finance Committee. “From homeless shelters to community arts organizations, these groups provide critical services to some of our most vulnerable neighbors and give us an unbelievable return on our investment.”



photo link: Delaware Museum of Nature & Science



Education

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13 STUDENTS WIN AWARDS AT NATIONAL SKILLS COMPETITION

BY JAREK RUTZ

Thirteen First State high schoolers were recognized among 16,000 participants in this year's SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Atlanta. Students, including 41 Delawareans, participated in events involving construction trades, video broadcasting, graphic arts, automotive trades and leadership skills. Three students secured top 10 finishes in their specialty and 11 students received SkillPoint awards, which represent achievement in demonstrating proficiency and workplace readiness in a student's occupational specialty.

Delaware was recognized by the [National SkillsUSA](#) office for having the largest high school membership percentage increase and the largest overall membership percentage increase for the 2022-2023 school year.

Here's who earned top 10 finishes:

- Vincent DeLuca (Delcastle) finished top 10 in HVAC specialty.
- Kaiden Brown (Delcastle) finished top 10 in Aviation Maintenance Technology specialty.
- Noelle Evans (Delcastle) finished top 10 in Screen Printing Technology specialty.
- Clinton Bertollo (Delcastle) finished top 10 in Sheet Metal specialty.

Here's who earned SkillPoint certificates:

- Noelle Evans (Delcastle) for Screen Printing Technology specialty.
- Clinton Bertollo (Delcastle) for Sheet Metal specialty.

- Abigail Rife (Delcastle) for T-Shirt Design specialty.
- Claire Austin and Sophia Cooper (both Polytech) for Audio-Radio Production specialty.
- Jackson Garret (Polytech) for Cabinetmaking specialty.
- Rebekka Cullen (Sussex Tech) for Pin Design specialty.
- Kiara Davis, Pipe Drace, Ciara Gustin (all Sussex Tech) for Video News Production specialty.
- McKinley Stokley (Sussex Tech) for Video News Production specialty.

SkillsUSA is a career and technical student organization that aims to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens. Its vision is to produce the most highly-skilled workforce in the world, providing every member the opportunity for career success.

The SkillsUSA National Championships are career competition events showcasing the best career and technical education students in the nation. Through an investment from business and industry partners of about \$36 million, the event occupies a space equivalent to 31 football fields or 41 acres.





10 FIRST STATERS WIN NATIONAL AWARDS IN TECH CONFERENCE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Ten Delawareans won awards at the 45th annual **Tech- nology Student Association Conference** in Louisville, KY, last week. 130 First Staters participated in individual and team events among a crowd of more than 8,000.

Competitions gauged their skills in: architecture, podcasting, biotechnology, board game design, career prep, coding, cybersecurity, data science and analytics, video production, dragster design, extemporaneous speech, fashion design and technology, flight endurance, foundations of information technology, future teacher, manufacturing prototype, microcontroller design, photographic technology, solar sprint, software development, STEM animation, structural engineering, system control technology, technology problem solving,

VEX robotics, video game design, virtual reality visualization, website design and more.

Achievement awards were given to:

- Samhitha Vallury, MOT Charter School, for service as secretary of Technology Student Association.
- Samra Iqbal, Caesar Rodney High School, for service as reporter of Technology Student Association.
- Roger Seedorf, MOT Charter School, recognized as High School Teacher of the Year.
- Laura Barnas, Postlethwait Middle, recognized as Middle School Teacher of the Year.
- Mike Fitzgerald, Delaware Department of Education, recognized as the National State Advisor of the Year.

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CAPE'S JAKE GELOF SET TO GO EARLY IN MLB DRAFT

BY PATRICK GARYANTES

Jake Gelof ends his collegiate career as Virginia's all-time home run king, slugging 48 homers in his three seasons with the Cavaliers. He passed E.J. Anderson's (1995-1998) mark of 37 home runs back in April, on his way to batting .321 on the season with 23 bombs while driving in 90 runs. During his career, Gelof played in 161 games and aside from the home runs, he hit 46 doubles and seven triples, while batting .329 with a .429 on-base percentage.

That level of production has Gelof listed as MLB.com's number 35 overall prospect for the 2023 MLB Draft. They have the 6'1" 195-pound third baseman described as:

"A right-handed-hitting corner infielder, Gelof does not get cheated at the plate. He has an aggressive approach, looking to do damage and tap into his huge raw power, especially to the pull side. Gelof takes big swings,

but he showed an ability to get to his power in 2022, limit strikeouts, draw walks and make adjustments, even if some think he'll be power-over-hit when all is said and done."

Scouting grades are a metric used to describe a player's physical tools. In baseball, the scale used to measure a player is from 20 (being very poor) to 80 (being Hall of Fame worthy, can't miss elite). Very rarely do you see players rated on the ends of the spectrum. As an example, baseball's number one prospect currently, Jackson Holliday of the Orioles, is listed as a 65-overall grade.

MLB Pipeline has Gelof's scouting grades as follows: Hit: 50; Power: 60; Run: 40; Arm: 55; Field: 50; OVR: 50

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MLB HOPEFUL TYLER AUGUST POISED FOR THE DRAFT

BY PATRICK GARYANTES

Delaware has been no stranger to seeing high level talent drafted into Major League Baseball. Every year it seems a player or two get the call that they have been drafted and all of us at Delaware Live Sports/302 Sports go right into our group text with excitement about someone we've watched play getting the opportunity of a lifetime.

In recent history, players like Zack Gelof (Cape Henlopen/Virginia, 2021 Rd 2, pick 60, Oakland A's), Colin Peluse (Middletown/Wake Forest, 2019 Rd 9, pick 284, Oakland A's), and Chad Kuhl (Middletown/Delaware, 2013 Rd 9, pick 269, Pittsburgh Pirates) all have had their name selected in the MLB Draft. Not to mention standouts who have signed deals outside of the draft.

So, with another MLB Draft set to take place July 9-11, there are a few #delhs ball players who should hear their names called during the three-day selection event. One of those players being DMA standout, Tyler August.

We asked Tyler what's it like to be going through the process of getting ready to be drafted by an MLB team. "It's an amazing process. Every kid dreams of this and the fact I get to experience this is great. A year or two ago I would've never thought I'd be in the position I am in now and with the support of my family and friends it has been a really good experience."

August has had an absolutely incredible three-year run at DMA that has seen him win two baseball DIAA

State Championships (2021, 2023), a DIAA Wrestling team State Championship (2022-2023), a Gatorade POY award (2023), first-team All-State honors (2022, 2023), and a spot on the prestigious Blue-Gold All-Star Game roster. Tyler told us winning Gatorade POY "felt amazing earning that accomplishment. Just shows the hard work I've done and the grind really paid off. Especially after not getting it last year really motivates me to get it this year and I was happy to check it off my list."

During his senior campaign, August dominated on the mound (6-1, 1.29 ERA, 87 Ks, 49 IPs), behind the plate as a catcher, and at the plate as a hitter (.411/.500, 1 HR, 20 RBI). Stats like that and a four-pitch arsenal like the one below has scouts salivating and has Tyler potentially seeing a drafted range of round six through 10, a source close to Delaware Live stated.

FB: 92-94mph, Top- 97mph; CH: 83-85; CB: 73-76; SL: 79-82 (Credit: PBR Mid-Atlantic)

August comes from the right pedigree as well. His father, Brian, is a Delaware Sports Hall of Famer and was drafted twice himself, out of high school (Saint Mark's) in the 44th Round by the Baltimore Orioles, and again in 1997 after his third year at University of Delaware, in the 18th round by the New York Yankees. Brian has also been the manager of Wilmington University for the entirety of Tyler's life, 18 years, compiling 522 career wins.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

DIAA FOOTBALL REALIGNMENT FOR 2023 SEASON

BY JASON WINCHELL

The calendar just turned to July and that means the new DIAA football season is getting closer. This is the third year of the new class system in Delaware, but this year will have a different look as some schools have switched classes. The football committee wanted to add one team to Class 3A to make it 12 teams. Then they wanted 18 teams in Class 2A instead of 21 teams, then 16 teams in 1A instead of 14.

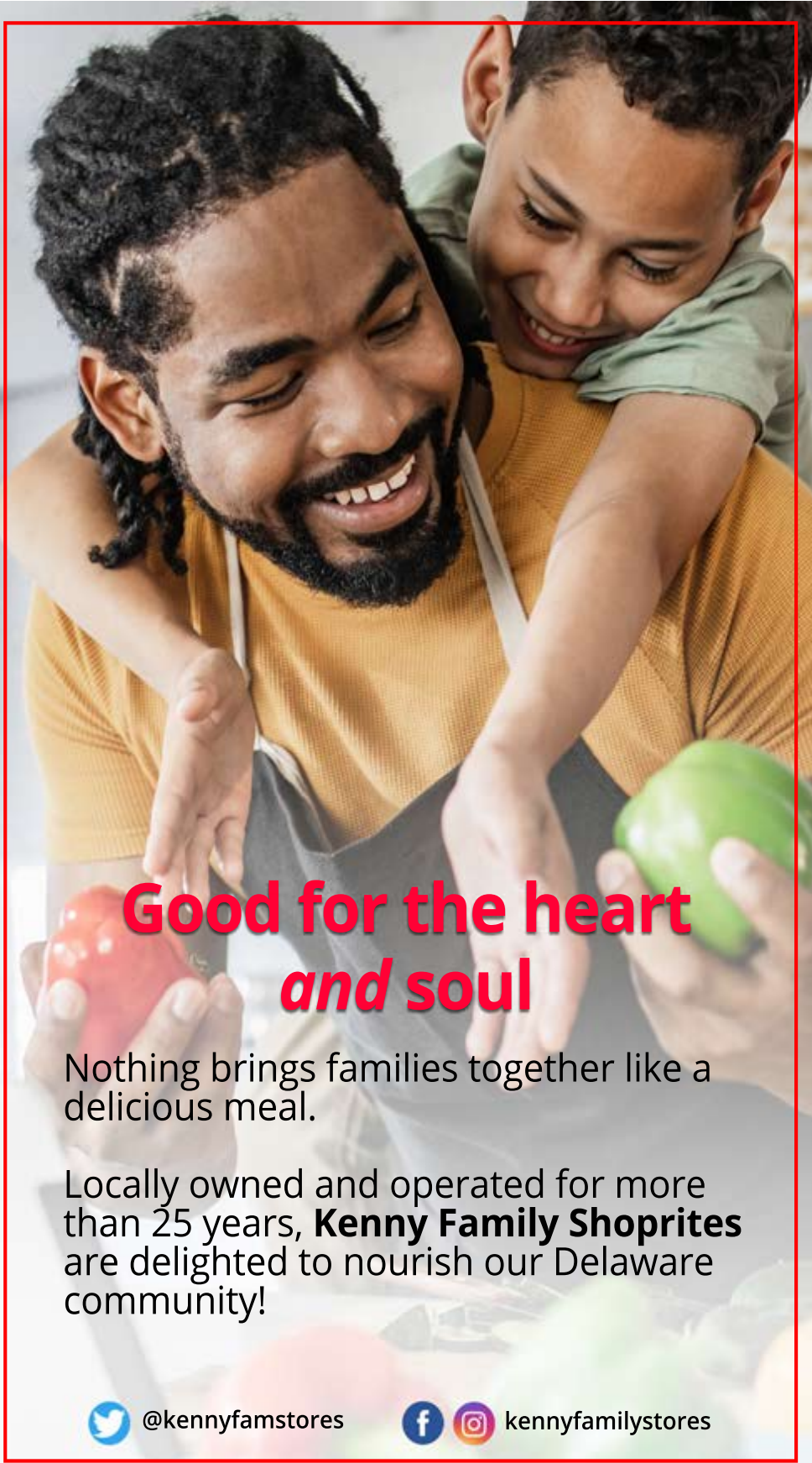
Let's take a look at the teams that switched classes this year starting with the team heading to 3A. Saint Mark's is the team moving up to 3A in September and I think they will be just fine playing in the top class. They have six home games and face Caesar Rodney (CR) and Cape as their two crossover opponents. They have two tough 2A teams on the schedule still and finish the season with Middletown and Sallies. Moving them up brought back the Sallies vs Saint Mark's football rivalry.

We have two teams moving up from 1A to 2A this year, as the two-time defending 1A champs Laurel

Bulldogs are joined by the Odessa Ducks. The Bulldogs were familiar with some 2A teams as they were 4-0 against those teams last season. They have a solid defense and will be playing in the same district as Delmar, Woodbridge, Milford, Sussex Tech and Lake Forest. They also have Sussex Central and CR on the schedule.

The Ducks will have their first senior class this season and are coming off a solid season. Their schedule is loaded this year with Middletown and Appoquinimink of Class 3A and then district games against Archmere, Friends, Howard, Tower Hill and Mount Pleasant. Their two-year state tournament runs in their first two football seasons was impressive, but making the 2A tournament this year would be quite the feat.

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COLBY REEDER INVITED TO SAINTS ROOKIE CAMP

STAFF WRITER

Colby Reeder, brother of Troy Reeder who is a member of the Minnesota Vikings, could join his brother as an NFL player. Colby (16) would also be the third active Salesiaum alum in the NFL with his brother Troy (14) and Minnesota Viking teammate Brian O'Neill (14). Colby earned an invite to the New Orleans Saints rookie camp with a chance to earn himself a spot on its 53-man roster.

Colby started his college career at the University of Delaware where he was a four-year contributor. Reeder played in 35 games for the Blue Hens as he amassed 173 total tackles, 86 solo and 87 assisted. He added 22 tackles for a loss, 8.5 sacks and four interceptions. He was named the ECAC All-East Defensive Rookie of the Year

and CAA Defensive Rookie of the Year. Then was selected to the 2021 Fall CAA Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll and All-CAA Third Team.

In 2022, as a graduate, Colby only had 10 days to choose who he was going to play for and decided to go play for the Iowa State Cyclones of the Big 12. Reeder made eight starts, missing four games due to injury. In those eight games, he ranked seventh on the team with 38 tackles, including 4.5 for a loss. He had 1.5 sacks and five quarterback hurries to go with three takeaways, which led the team, with two interceptions and also recovering a fumble.

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