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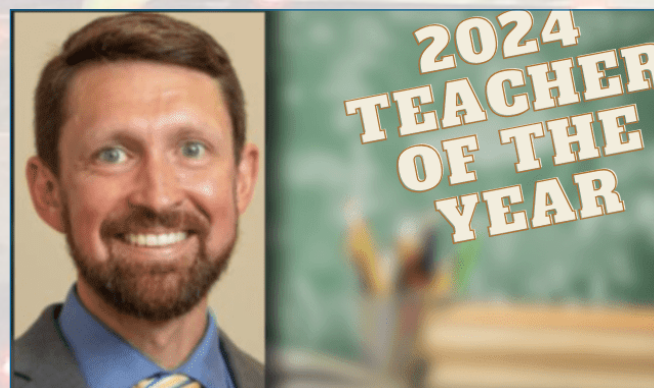
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Delaware Bio's Women in STEM



2024 Teacher of the Year



Dover Beats Smyrna for First Time in Five Years

photo link: Delaware DNREC



Headlines

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TWO STATE REPS. WANT DEATH PENALTY REINSTATED FOR SOME CASES

BY JAREK RUTZ

Two Delaware lawmakers are looking to reinstate the death penalty for criminals convicted of the murder of a law enforcement or public safety officer.

State Reps. Tim Dukes, R-Laurel and Danny Short, R-Seaford, announced Thursday that they are planning to introduce legislation in the new year that would reinstate the death penalty under those conditions. The bill, known as the “Law Enforcement and First Responders Protection Act”, comes in response to this week’s life-in-prison conviction of the man who savagely murdered Delmar Police Corporal Keith Heacock in April 2021.

“Corporal Heacock didn’t die in vain and we continue to address this issue, hoping to bring it to the House floor for legislators to make that decision,” Dukes said. “I think people just want to know that we won’t forget. We’ll remember Corporal Heacock and his service to the community and that he didn’t die in vain.”

Randon Wilkerson, 32, was charged for the killing of Heacock. Wilkerson was convicted of 16 charges, including two counts of Murder 1st Degree and 11 other felonies. He will serve the rest of his life in prison. Several community members commented on social media platforms in response to this week’s sentencing saying that the death penalty should be reinstated.

In 2016, the Delaware Supreme Court struck down Delaware’s capital punishment statute. Before that, there were 22 aggravating circumstances that, when linked to the commission of a murder, could have warranted capital punishment.

The new bill will mirror legislation that was drafted by Rep. Short in 2020, but had not been officially introduced. The revamped measure will be focused on addressing the constitutional issues cited by the High Court in order to restore the current capital punishment law and to reserve the death penalty for only murders committed under the following aggravating circumstance: killing a police officer or public safety official.



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DELAWARE MARIJUANA COMMISSIONER DESCRIBES CREATING NEW INDUSTRY

BY BETSY PRICE

As Delaware moves toward 2025 retail sale of recreational marijuana, lots of moving parts require decisions and implementation, the state's Marijuana Commissioner told a packed [New Castle County Chamber of Commerce](#) meeting Oct. 18.

Among those fine points are creating a digital infrastructure, formalizing regulations, and creating ways for people to apply for licenses, [Rob Coupe](#) said in a wide-ranging and detailed presentation. The state also must decide whether and how the medical marijuana industry will coexist with legal marijuana, he said.

One good thing about Delaware's timing, Coupe noted, is that the state can watch what New York, New Jersey, Maryland and other states have done and adopt their good ideas and try to avoid problems.

THE NEW LAW

The new law allows people who are 21 or older to own one ounce of marijuana for personal use, but still prohibits consuming it in public or in a car. Instead of the ounce of flower buds to smoke, the law will allow 12 ounces of concentrated marijuana or 750 milligrams of TCH, the active ingredient in pot, which covers edibles, oils and other forms of marijuana. It prohibits growing marijuana for personal use or selling marijuana.

Four types of licenses related to the industry will be granted: growing, manufacturing, retail and testing. In every category, some licenses will be for social equity owners, who are people said to be unfairly impacted by drug laws that were not equally enforced, especially across racial lines.

Only about half the people who use marijuana smoke it, Coupe said. That's because the fire ends up consuming more of the weed than they want. So about half of Delaware retail offerings will be in other forms, he said.

Medical marijuana sales, which are not taxed, were \$49 million in 2022 with only 17,000 participants, Coupe said. Recreational sales will be taxed at 15% when sales begin in 2025 and the state expects to have between 100,000 to 180,000 users, Coupe said.

Members of the Delaware Economic and Finance Advisory Committee were told Monday that the tax on recreational marijuana is expected to generate about \$8 million in 2025, but that money would not go into the General Fund.

Coupe—who brought a notebook containing a print-out of the laws—noted that the tax money is required to be used to support the Office of the Marijuana Commissioner, the Marijuana Regulation Fund and the Justice Reinvestment Fund. But, he pointed out, the law also says that any remaining money may be appropriated by the General Assembly as it sees fit and he thought that meant it would go back to the General Fund.

CREATING THE SYSTEM

The law authorized 14 jobs to create and oversee the recreational sales program. They included:

- Five for the Office of Marijuana Commissioner, including Coupe.
- 14 for Delaware Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement.
- Seven for the Department of Revenue
- Two for the Department of Agriculture
- Six in Health Systems Protection for the Division of Public Health.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

DELAWARE SEEMS DESTINED TO HAVE HARD BUDGET CHOICES NEXT YEAR

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware budget forecasts show that revenues and expenditures for 2025 are running at almost the same level as this year, which had a budget of \$6.1 billion. Even so, Dover politicians may have to scramble to figure out how to accommodate an additional \$400 million in expenses for 2025.

That's what **Cerron Cade**, director of the state **Office of Budget and Management**, said he expected would need to be added to the state budget. It will be needed to cover expected hikes in Medicaid needs, salaries for state employees, particularly those in education and hikes in higher healthcare costs for employees and retirees, among other things.

That information led Monday to a couple of brief discussions from members of the **Delaware Economic and Finance Advisory Council** about whether Delaware—which relies on income tax, corporate taxes and real estate tax for the majority of its budget—would ever consider raising income tax rates or instituting a sales

tax. The council has no authority to suggest or support a tax or tax hike.

Delaware's budget years run from July 1 to June 30, and the state currently is in the middle of fiscal year 2024. If needs outstrip revenue, the state has several funds—\$316.4 million in its Rainy Day fund and \$402.6 million in its Budget Stabilization Fund—that could be accessed for help. That money came in handy in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic messed with the state's proposed budget.

DEFAC has been warning for more than a year that the heady days of nearly \$1 billion surpluses for 2022, 2023 and 2024, would end this year. The surpluses were a result of COVID money plowed into the state, unexpected but massive real estate transfer taxes and a rise in corporate taxes and capital gain taxes.

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photo credit: Rockwood Park & Museum

Culture

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WILM. PRAYER BREAKFAST INCLUDES PLEAS FOR PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST

BY BETSY PRICE

The fighting and loss of life in Gaza and Israel was brought up several times during Thursday morning's annual [Delaware Leadership Prayer Breakfast](#), attended by more than 500 people.

New Castle County Executive [Matt Meyer](#), who is Jewish, asked for a moment of silence for those who were killed or suffering as a result of the fighting after Hamas terrorists attacked Israel. He followed that by reading Daniel 2:14-23 from the Old Testament. In it, Daniel has a vision after being told he and his friends would be put to death. He responds by saying:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.
He changes times and seasons;
He deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.”

Meyer's opponent in the race to be the Democratic nominee for governor, [Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall Long](#), followed with 1 Peter 4:7-11 from the New Testament.

Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

The prayer breakfast is described as a way to gather in the spirit of Jesus Christ to pray for the leadership of the nation. The 500 people attending included state political, business and religious leaders from many churches. Many have been attending for years. Co-founder Robert A. Nickle, a watercolourist, brought his son and grandsons with him. The grandsons may have been the youngest people in the room.

PRAYER PROGRAM

State Rep. Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek, offered a blessing before the breakfast and the Delaware Worship Collective offered a sacred song in the middle of the program and led the crowd in “God Bless America” to end the program.

Keynote speaker Dr. Betty Uribe, who is a former JP-Morgan Chase managing director, told the crowd they should know the core values of the people in their lives, including family and coworkers. Many people claim to have upright core values, she said, but their actions prove otherwise. That becomes a case of “Your actions are so loud, I can't hear what you're saying,” she said.

Employers should spend enough time before hiring someone to understand what their core values are and see how they treat other people, such as wait staff and janitors, Uribe said.

“I don't hire anyone until I talk to the person in the front desk of the building and see did they treat you with respect and dignity? If they didn't I don't care if they're number one,” she said. “They don't belong on my team.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)



FAMILY-FRIENDLY HALLOWEEN FUN (AND ADULTS-ONLY, TOO)

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Here are some not-so-scary places to go trick or treating and celebrate Halloween in other ways. Be prepared for rain in the forecast this weekend. This calendar is chronological.

Fall Festival and Corn Maze, Mondays-Saturdays through Nov. 4, Fifer's, 1919 Allabands Mill Road, near Camden. Includes Motor Maze and play area, plus more events on Saturdays. All activities weather-permitting. Maze and play area \$12.95, \$16.95 Saturdays, free for 2 and younger. Maze and play area also sold separately. Other activities, such as the new apple cannon, sold a la carte.

Frightland, Fridays-Sundays through Nov. 4, plus Oct. 19 and Oct. 26, 309 Port Penn Road, Middletown. Eight haunted areas. \$40, \$50 on Saturdays, VIP pass \$80, plus \$5 parking, \$4 group discount and \$2 processing fee.

Great Pumpkin Carve, 3-9 p.m. Oct. 21, Chadds Ford Historical Society, 1736 Creek Road, Chadds Ford, PA. More than 70 giant pumpkins are carved and lit the first night and lit and displayed the second and third nights. Plus Haunted Trail and music by Kenny Thompson & Friends. \$15, \$5 for children 7-17 and free for children 6 and under. This writer's take: Amazing.

Pumpkin Patch and Corn Maze, Ramsey Farm, 400 Ramsey Road, Brandywine Hundred. Oct. 20-22, Oct. 27-29 and Nov. 4. Includes 10-acre maze, second maze for younger children, hay rides, farm yard playground, pumpkin painting and bonfires. \$15. If the farm be is closed for inclement weather, a voucher for future use will be issued.

Sleep Under the Stars, Rescheduled for Oct. 28. Carousel Park, 2700 Limestone Road, Pike Creek. New Castle County Parks and Recreation event includes

games, moon bounces, scarecrow making, hayrides, bonfires, costume parade, tent-to-tent trick or treating and screening of "Hocus Pocus 2." \$25 per car.

Trunk or Treat, 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 22, Shellcrest Swim Club, Wilson Road, Brandywine Hundred. Includes bonfire fun. \$10 per family.

Trunk or Treat, 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 24, Elsmere Library, 20 Spruce Ave., Elsmere. "Wear your favorite costume." Includes, crafts, games, candy, coloring, cider and doughnuts.

Halloween Party, 4-5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26, George Wilson Community Center, 303 New London Road, Newark. Costume contest, spooky storytelling, scary room and refreshments. \$5.

Trunk or Treat, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26, Greenbank Mills, 500 Greenbank Road, near Prices Corner. Registration requested, specifying if "you are a trunker or a treater." Also accepting candy donations.

Trunk or Treat, 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26, parking lot of the Route 9 Library, 3022 New Castle Ave., near New Castle. New Castle County Division of Police Community Services Unit is leading the pumpkin decorating, face painting and trick or treating.

Sea Witch Festival, Friday, Oct. 27-Sunday, Oct. 29, in and round Rehoboth and Dewey beaches. Produced by the towns' chamber of commerce. Includes trick or treating, parades, scarecrow trail, hayrides, games and other events that fill a 56-page program.

Halloween at Hagley, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28. Children are invited to come in costume and visit treat stations throughout Hagley's powder yard.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



photo link: Delaware Division of Small Business

Business

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BY BETSY PRICE

Four generations of women are working together in the bioscience industry and all bring different viewpoints, expectations and behaviors, attendees were told Oct. 19 during **Delaware Bio's** Inspiring Women in STEM 2023 Conference. They can all learn from each other, panelists said during a Bridging Generations session.

“A lot of times we are the ones that doubt ourselves or whether or not we’re capable of doing it,” said panelist Erica Woolridge, lead of AstraZeneca’s Global Supply Americas Regional Learning and Development. “We’re doing it, right? It’s happening. So this conversation around how we partner together generations is super important because there’s so much that we can learn from each other.”

The annual conference is designed to offer professional development and networking that encourages and inspires women in science, technology, engineering and math jobs. It’s the largest and longest-running Women in STEM program in the region, Kathi Vidal, director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, told attendees in a video address. The conference started

DELAWARE BIO'S WOMEN IN STEM CONFERENCE DRAWS 250 PEOPLE

about 10 years ago and during the early pandemic continued online.

About 250 women of all ages and a variety of jobs, including industrial and government scientists and engineers, academic researchers, educators, college students and entrepreneurs—attended Thursday’s conference at the University of Delaware’s Clayton Hall.

ENHANCING STEM CONFERENCE

Michael Fleming, president of Delaware Bio, said the organization had switched gears a bit this year and instead of focusing on speakers, it focuses on issues such as bridging generations and influencing as an individual.

Vidal, who is also an undersecretary for commerce, told the crowd that encouraging and incentivizing innovation is a key to creating more intellectual property, which is one of the cornerstones of the U.S. economy.

“Women represent the fastest-growing category of entrepreneurs worldwide,” she said, “but they’re less likely to be able to secure the capital and the intellectual property protections they need to attract investment and become sustainable.”

Women are also underrepresented as business owners. “According to the US Census Bureau’s annual business survey, men have an ownership stake in about 80% of U.S. businesses and a majority ownership share in 63% of U.S. businesses,” she said. “Meanwhile, women hold an ownership stake in about 37% of U.S. businesses, but only had a majority share in 21% of them.”

She said conferences like Inspiring Women in STEM will help women achieve more. “We need many more people to usher this new generation of radical innovation into the market,” Vidal said. “But none of this can happen without your involvement, and it will happen with your involvement. As STEM professionals each of you plays a vital role in keeping the American economy globally competitive. You play a crucial role in the onstant renewal of our industries and our culture.”

Women invent more empathetically, she said. They find a problem and seek solutions. “We need your energy, your enthusiasm, your drive,” she said. “We need your perseverance, and your knowledge, and programs like today’s Inspiring Women in STEM are pivotal to our success of bringing more women into STEM.”

Numbers were also a focus at the state of the Bridging Generations session. Baby boomers are aged between 77 and 59, Gen X is between 58 and 43, Millennials are between 42 and 27, and Gen Z is between 26 and age 11, said moderator Katie Lakofsky, associate director of Bioscience Workforce for the Delaware Biotechnology Institute.

But they’ve all faced similar problems, according to Lakofsky and panelists Woolridge; Tracy Shickel, associate vice president of corporate engagement of the University of Delaware; and Danielle Vozzo, manager of America’s Field Service Centers for Agilent.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



EVERNORTH TO EXPAND IN NEW CASTLE, ADD SPECIALITY PHARMACY

BY BETSY PRICE

Cigna Group’s **Evernorth Health Services** will use a \$4.62 million state grant to expand into a bigger building in New Castle and add employees over the next four years. The move will group several of Cigna’s companies—Evernorth, its specialty pharmacy Accredo Health Group and its specialty pharmaceutical distributor, CuraScript SD together for distribution of millions of doses of specialty medications for rare and complex conditions.

The \$4.62 million grant is said to be the largest given out this year by the state, followed by the \$4.5 million given to the **Agile Cold Storage**’s new Claymont facility.

Accredo will move from its 34,000-square-foot facility near New Castle to another location with 200,000 square feet, the company said. The facility will be staffed at the beginning by about 90 existing Delaware employ-

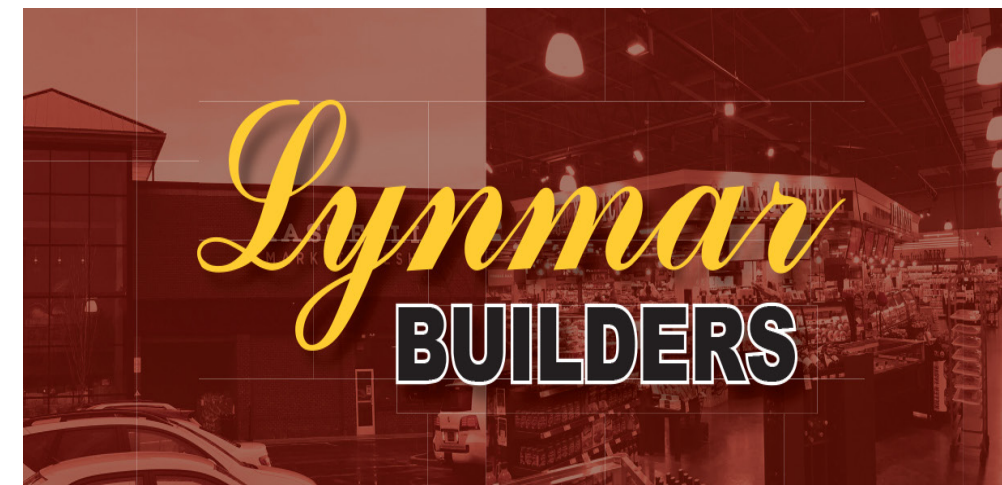
ees including pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, warehouse associates and operations staff. Evernorth expects the number of employees to more than double.

They will support patients diagnosed with some of the most rare and complex conditions known today, as well as help providers who help treat these patients.

The Delaware Prosperity Partnership supported Evernorth’s request to Delaware’s Council on Development Finance for a Jobs Retention Grant, a Jobs Performance Grant, a Capital Expenditure Grant and a matching Training Grant.

Evernorth officials first about the move in the council’s September meeting. Evernorth looks forward to deepening and expanding its ties in the community at its new location, said President Matt Perlberg.

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Food & Dining

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DONUTS, BARBECUE, PIZZA AND A SALUTE TO FRENCH FRIES

BY PAM GEORGE

Barbecue and donuts are big news in Delaware and one newcomer has decided to package them together. But word on the street also has good eats in Newark, where a West African restaurant just opened and La Casa Pasta prepares to celebrate its 45th anniversary.

BARBECUE AND BREAKFAST

Those who commute via Marsh Road in Brandywine Hundred may have noticed a flurry of activity at the short-lived [Rosenfeld's Jewish Deli](#) and Big Fish Market in Plaza III shopping center. Seemingly overnight, [322 BBQ](#) and [Hill Donut Co. & Pancake House](#) slipped into the space and quietly opened on Oct. 18

The concepts are the brainchild of David Wiederholt, who spent five years with the Starr Restaurant Organization in Philadelphia. The Culinary Institute of America graduate was the executive chef of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and a chef at Buddakan and Barclay Prime, where he undoubtedly deepened his beef knowledge.

He's putting that skill to good use at 322 BBQ, which is part butcher shop, barbecue joint and deli. We recently sampled a chicken cheesesteak made with chunks of tender, well-seasoned meat and fresh mushrooms. Wiederholt's desire to make the perfect brioche bun led to brioche donuts and a new division.

This is the third operation for the "combo concepts." The first two are in Mullica Hill and Swedesboro, NJ, which explains why the cashier tried to charge tax on a Delaware guest's order. Be patient during the opening weeks.

CATCH45 OPENS IN NEWARK

Longtime Delaware diners remember when finding a sushi restaurant was challenging. Today, you can purchase it in supermarkets. But the state is still woefully lacking in some cuisines, namely West African.

Myra Dorley, a native of Liberia and a Delaware resident since 2014, and Douglas Jones decided to do something about it. The partners recently opened the 45-seat

[Catch45](#) on Capitol Trail to serve Liberian dishes such as pepper soup with fufu—a starchy meal usually made from cassava—or rice, goat soup, grilled fish, chicken wings and plantains. The owners plan to serve Western breakfast foods and offer catering.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LA CASA PASTA!

[La Casa Pasta](#) in Glasgow will celebrate its 45th anniversary on Thursday, Nov. 2, beginning at 6 p.m. The party is open to the public and [tickets](#) are \$45.

The event will feature passed hors d'oeuvres and food stations, including a table for sliders, carving stations, pasta stations and dessert stations with mini cannoli. There will also be live music.

The restaurant has come a long way since Giuseppe and Anna Martuscelli were left as the sole owners of a small pizza place. Their partners pulled out after questioning the location. On New Year's Eve 1977, no customers stepped through the door. News Journal critic Otto Dekom changed all that when he raved about the mussels fra diavolo antipasto and lasagna.

Today, La Casa Pasta is the flagship of the Martuscelli Restaurant Group, which includes [Klondike Kate's](#) in Newark and the [Chesapeake Inn](#).

SCRAPPLE, SAUSAGE AND HAM—OH, MY!

Equipment delays paused the opening of [Helen's Sausage House](#) at 145 E. Main St. in Newark. Initially planned for Oct. 2, it should now happen later this month.

It's hard to believe that the Smyrna location opened in 1983; it feels like it's been part of Delaware's culinary lore for much longer.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



photo credit: Delaware State Police

Government

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WILM. CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PLEAD FOR RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

BY JAREK RUTZ

Three members of the Wilmington City Council, including the president, on Oct. 16 protested Mayor Mike Purzycki's decision to no longer require city residency for current and newly hired employees.

"We have the power to make sure that the residents get to make that decision and that we don't go from a five-year residency commitment to none," said District 2 Councilwoman Shané Darby. "That is extreme and unacceptable and it's disrespectful, and a slap in the face to our constituents."

District 1 Councilman Vincent White noted that Purzycki's decision came within the same hour he announced he would not be seeking re-election in the 2024 mayoral election. A member of the crowd said it was wrong for the mayor to make residency requirement decisions that affect the future of Wilmington when he's on his way out.

Efforts were unsuccessful to reach At Large Council member James Spadola, the council's only Republican, for comment.

White said that having a residency requirement fosters a strong sense of community, provides employees with a vested interest in the city's success and ensures taxpayer dollars benefit the local economy.

"It promotes accountability and responsiveness by enabling employees to understand the residents' needs and concerns, which better facilitates effective communication and decision making," he said.

Darby read a prepared statement from District 4 Councilwoman Michelle Harlee, who also opposes dropping the residency requirement.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Halloween at Hagley



Saturday, October 28 • 11AM TO 3PM

Looking for a safe place to trick-or-treat this Halloween?

Children are invited to come in costume and visit treat stations throughout the beautiful surroundings of Hagley's powder yard.



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SMYRNA DETECTIVE ARRESTED ON CHILD SEX EXPLOITATION CHARGES

BY BETSY PRICE

A detective with the Smyrna Police Department was arrested and charged Oct. 16 with distribution and possession of child pornography. Michael Anthony Kealty, 33, is accused of distributing child pornography via his Snapchat account in August 2023.

Federal agents executed a search warrant at his residence on Sept. 22, 2023, and found more child pornography in his Snapchat account, according to court records.

If convicted of distributing child pornography, Kealty faces a mandatory minimum penalty of five years in prison, with a maximum penalty of 20 years. If convicted of possession, he faces a maximum penalty of 10 years.



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WILKERSON TO SERVE LIFE IN PRISON FOR MURDER OF DELMAR COP

BY JAREK RUTZ

A Delmar man will spend the rest of his life in prison for the murder of Cpl. Keith Heacock in April 2021, Delaware's Attorney General office announced Oct. 16. Randon Wilkerson, 32, has been convicted of 16 charges, including two counts of Murder 1st Degree and 11 other felonies.

On the morning of April 25, 2021, 22-year Delmar Police Department veteran Cpl. Keith Heacock responded to a 911 call for a domestic incident. Upon arrival at the residence, Heacock was viciously attacked by Wilkerson and was later found unconscious, having suffered multiple blows to the head. He died of his injuries later that week, leaving behind his wife, four children, and a devastated community.

Wilkerson was later arrested and charged with

Heacock's murder, in addition to the severe assault of the two elderly victims that morning.

Prosecutors convicted Wilkerson Monday of the following charges:

- Two counts of Murder 1st Degree
- Five counts of Possession of a Deadly Weapon During the Commission of a Felony
- Three counts of Possession of a Deadly Weapon by a Person Prohibited
- Two counts of Assault 1st Degree
- Burglary 1st Degree
- Assault 3rd Degree
- Terroristic Threatening
- Offensive Touching




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Education

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CORY HAFER NAMED 2024 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

BY JAREK RUTZ

Cory Hafer, an engineering and science teacher at **Appoquinimink School District's Middletown High School**, is this year's teacher of the year. Hafer won over 19 other finalists, one from each district and a charter school representative. All finalists receive \$2,000.

In addition to winning \$5,000 to use for his students, Hafer pockets an extra \$5,000 prize. This is the 60th year in a row the recognition has been given out.

Ashley Lockwood, a fifth-grade teacher at Lulu Ross Elementary in Milford School District, took home the award last year. As usual, the former teacher of the year gives some words of encouragement for the new awardee.

"The best part of this experience is that it's never over," she said. "It never ends. This is truly just the beginning." The opportunities will change, she said, "but the responsibility to outlive teaching and advocate for students will always be your work to do."

"To represent Delaware, my home...will always be the greatest honor of my life," she said. "From the bottom of my heart, thank you so very much for all of your support."

Hafer took the stage and thanked his administrative staff, Appo school district, as well as his family.

"The biggest thing I take away from this experience is that I've learned a lot about how important it is to build those connections," Hafer said. "Look at all of the 20

candidates and everyone talked about the idea that building connections and creating an educational space where students are excited to learn and connected with the real world is going to lead to really meaningful education."

SELECTION PROCESS

The candidates were nominated by their districts or the Delaware Charter Schools Network during 2023 based on their superior ability to inspire students with a love of learning, exemplary demonstration of professional traits and strong sense of dedication and devotion to teaching.

Each nominee submitted an application exemplifying his or her teaching philosophy and five Delaware Department of Education staff members independently evaluated each application. A former Delaware Teacher of the Year and department staff member observed each candidate in the classroom as part of the process.

Taking into consideration the ratings from the application review and observations, as well as a recorded presentation by the nominees, another independent panel of non-department judges then selected Hafer as the winner.



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 DELAWARECAN

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HOW THE WLC PLANS TO SPEND \$16.6M TO IMPROVE CITY SCHOOLS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Wilmington Learning Collaborative’s governing council voted Oct. 17 for a budget containing various programs intended to improve outcomes for city students. The budget is for this fiscal year, which concludes June 30, 2024. It totals \$16,632,690.20, with \$10 million set in the state budget for this year, and the other \$6,632,690.20 is carryover funds from last year.

Executive Director Laura Burgos said the programs are largely a result of her working with all nine principals of the schools involved in the collaborative. She also said it’s important the budget gets passed so the group isn’t in January or February and still waiting to get programs started.

The collaborative’s state funds are allocated towards the following initiatives. Those funds are then further broken down by the collaborative, whose goal is to improve academic and societal achievement for students at nine city of Wilmington elementary schools across the Brandywine, Christina and Red Clay school districts.

Expanded Learning Time (\$4,900,000)

Summer Academy – \$3,000,000

A Summer Academy will be created to serve at least 2,500 students from mid-June through mid-August. The program will span six to eight weeks across multiple WLC school sites and staffed by current teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals and nonprofit partners. There will be a weekly skill focus and thematic unit with daily activities focused on project-based learning and STEAM activities.

Spring Break Academy – \$750,000

The Spring Break Academy will serve students at or approaching grade level, as well as students identified as Gifted and Talented, which by state code, are students identified with the capability of high performance because of their: general intellectual ability; specific academic aptitude; creative productive thinking; leadership ability; visual and performing arts; and psychomotor ability

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PAY PANEL TO GIVE CARNEY EDUCATOR SALARY PROPOSALS NEXT MONTH

BY JAREK RUTZ

Raises seem likely to be on the way for all Delaware educators, from teachers to bus drivers to custodians and everything in between. The state **Public Education Compensation Committee** will submit its recommendations to Gov. John Carney's office by Nov. 15. Whatever salary recommendations he includes, the committee's or another version, in his proposed budget for fiscal year 2025, must be approved by the General Assembly.

The educator raises popped up several times Oct. 16 when the Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Committee met and discussed factors affecting the fiscal year 2025 budget, which starts July 1. Money is expected to be tight and higher salaries, higher costs for insurance for both retirees and employees, and rising Medicaid costs are among the reasons why.

At the Oct. 16 compensation committee meeting, the 15-person group, which includes legislators and education leaders, discussed creating state-funded units for information technology workers.

The group was deciding between two funding mechanisms for IT workers: one would cost the state \$4,837,830 next fiscal year and the other would cost the state \$6,446,395 next fiscal year.

The committee, formed to make pay recommendations to make Delaware a more attractive place to work for educators, opted for the more expensive option.

Delaware created the committee at the start of the 2022-2023 school year after neighboring Maryland passed a law that would bump teachers' starting salaries to \$60,000 by 2026. New Jersey is also raising teacher salaries. Here's what the committee settled on as recommendations for each employee group:

- 1,305 – teachers and professional staff: a 2% increase plus a \$1,875 stipend (state cost = \$212,658,997 over next four fiscal years).

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POSITIVE OUTCOMES CHARTER KICKS OFF SIX RENEWAL HEARINGS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Positive Outcomes Charter School of Camden came prepared for its sixth meeting with a state committee that reviews Delaware’s charter schools’ progress.

Positive Outcomes showed the committee a short video presenting a lot of anecdotal and data-based successes. “We’re very proud to be in front of you today seeking our sixth renewal of our school,” said Ed Emmett, school director. “This renewal would actually take us into our fourth decade of providing services to students throughout all three counties.”

The 13-person **Charter School Accountability Committee** is made up of charter leaders, community members and Department of Education officials from academic support, student support, operations support, educator support and more.

Positive Outcomes is the first of six schools to go through the renewal process this fall. Delaware charters are required to go through a renewal process every five years in which they make their case to stay open by offering data focused on student achievement, test scores,

school climate, graduation rates, suspensions and more. The accountability committee curates a report for Mark Holodick, Delaware’s secretary of education.

The decision about renewal is guided by three questions said Committee Chair Kim Klein: “Is the academic program a success? Is the school financially viable? Is the school organizationally sound?”

Positive Outcomes has students from seven different districts this year, Emmett said, with Lake Forest providing the highest number. It serves seventh through 12th grade and its enrollment of 115 students is 46.96% low-income and 65.22% have disabilities.

The school has a proficiency rate in math and English language arts that is lower than the state average: 5% of students meet grade-level expectations in math and 13% meet those for English language arts. Statewide, those numbers are 41% and 31%, respectively.

Chronic absenteeism is also higher at the charger than the state average: 45.37% of its students are chronically absent, which means they miss 10% or more of school

days in a year. The state average is 20.79%. Emmett said the school had a 20% chronic absenteeism before the pandemic.

“We’re seeing average daily attendance rates improve, but we still are really working with students to remind them of why being in school is important,” he said. “It’s one of our major points this year because we cannot improve deficits if [students] can’t come in the building.”

Next, Positive Outcomes will respond to a report created by Accountability Committee during a public hearing Oct. 24 at 5 p.m.

The other charters up for renewal this year are First State Military Academy, Freire Charter School Wilmington, Great Oaks Charter School, Kuumba Academy Charter School and Sussex Montessori School are the six up for renewal this year.

Here the schedule:

- First State Military Academy –Thursday, Oct. 19, 1 p.m.
- Freire Charter School Wilmington – Monday, Oct. 23, 1 p.m.
- Sussex Montessori School – Oct. 30, 1 p.m.
- Great Oaks Charter School – Oct. 31, 8:30 a.m.
- Kuumba Academy Charter School – Oct. 31, 1 p.m.

To see a timeline of meetings, reviews for each school and find live streams to the public hearings, click [HERE](#). Secretary Holodick’s decision on all six charters will be presented to the State Board of Education Dec.14 at 5 p.m.



MOVE TO BAN MILFORD STUDENT PHONE RECORDINGS DEEMED REDUNDANT

BY JAREK RUTZ

A proposed policy to prohibit **Milford School District** students from taking audio and video recordings in school buildings turned out to be redundant and was tabled at the school board meeting Oct. 16. Tabling the policy means the board took no action and it won't be revisited unless a board member asks for it to be.

The idea of addressing recordings was proposed by Laura Manges, the district's director of human resources, during the board's September meeting. Board member Matt Bucher expressed concern about the proposal and said he was against its adoption.

"I'm inclined not to support this policy and my reasoning is pretty simple," he said. "We already have it in the code of conduct that electronic devices of any kind are not to be used by students during the school day within the school properties within the buildings."

"So the argument is not per se that this is an unreasonable policy, it's that it's a duplicate policy and we don't want to clutter?" asked board member Adam

Brownstein, to which Bucher confirmed his position.

Bucher said adopting this new policy would be redundant. "I can't see a peripheral reason to have an additional policy," he said. "If we just enforce the policies that we already have on the books, there's no need to do an additional policy saying the same thing and saying 'Well, this time we really mean it.'"

Bucher said there wasn't any particular event or incident that led to the policy proposal. But the district has every right to exercise a recording ban during the school day within its buildings. Students have the responsibility of reading and understanding the code of conduct, he said, and school staff have the responsibility of enforcing it.

Other board members acknowledged the proposal is somewhat of a duplicate policy. "Let's not bother with the policy," Bucher said. "Let's just enforce the policy we already have, which is many years old."

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DOVER EDGES SMYRNA FOR FIRST TIME IN FIVE YEARS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Before Friday night's game, the Dover Senators had not been able to beat the Smyrna Eagles since 2018 and for the first time in head coach Chipp Knapp's career. In 2018, Dover defeated Smyrna 46-38 in front of a homecoming crowd at Dover. In that game, they were powered by Jordan McGee (Temple) and Javon Peace (Central Connecticut State) who accounted for six touchdowns in the game.

This game it would be quarterback Nahseem Cosme and John Parker who is playing both wide receiver as well as running back filling in for the injured Jakwon Kilby. The duo accounted for all three touchdowns in the game.

After a scoreless first quarter, Smyrna struck first on a nine-yard run from Kahmaj Kearney who then ran in a successful two-point conversion for an 8-0 lead. Dover

answered a few minutes later on the first of two touchdowns for Parker as he plunged in the end zone from one yard out, but failed on its two-point conversion attempt the lead was 8-6 at halftime.

Midway through the third quarter, Cosme scored on a QB keeper from one yard out to give the Senators a 12-8 lead. Smyrna then answered a few minutes later on a trick play. Smyrna quarterback Jacob Tiberi took the snap lateraled the ball to his left to Kearney who then wound up and threw a pass to a wide open Andre Ashley for a 67-yard touchdown giving the Eagles a 14-12 lead.

Less than a minute later, Parker scored his second touchdown of the game. Parker took the handoff up the middle, but was met in the backfield by Smyrna's Caleb Blane. Parker made a nice spin move to spin out of the tackle from Blane and went 58 yards for the touchdown

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giving the Senators a 18-14 lead which would stand as the game's final score.

Dover's defense was able to hold the potent Smyrna offense to 14 points in the game. It forced two turnovers in the red zone which kept two touchdowns off the scoreboard. In the first quarter, Cosme picked off a pass from Drew Marks in the end zone. The other turnover came right before the end of the second half on the six-yard line Tiberi attempted to run, but Ryan Perkins was able to strip the ball away from Tiberi giving the ball back to the Senators.

Dover improves to 7-0 on the season and still sits at the top of our Super 7 Rankings as the No. 1 team in Class 3A. Smyrna drops to 2-5 on the season.

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CAPE BEAT DELMAR IN FIRST REGULAR SEASON GAME

BY SHANNON TIMMONS

In a packed Champions Stadium, two teams, both of whom are truly champions, took the field for the D1 vs. D2 Game of the Week. These two teams have a friendly rivalry. They are always well coached, fundamentally sound, quick and built as tough as hockey players come. Both programs have set the bar for excellence in high school field hockey in Delaware and consistently produce players who go on to continue their academic and athletic career at the next level. Cape and Delmar field hockey are synonymous with the word champion. Delmar has won seven state championships and Cape Henlopen has 10.

When these two teams meet, it is always a big night in field hockey and that proved to be true once again. It was Oct. 22, 2016, the last time Cape Henlopen defeated Delmar in a regular season game until Thursday.

The first quarter got off to an exciting start with both teams trading possession in the midfield. It didn't take Cape long to draw its first penalty corner of the night with 12:08 on the clock. Devon Degregory (Salisbury University commit) inserted to Grace Wiggins (University of Richmond commit), but her shot was wide of the cage. Delmar's Jordyn Hollamon (University of Maryland commit) took the ball down the middle of the field unassisted and found the circle at the 10:49 mark for Delmar's first corner. Emily Bitters (Shippensburg commit) inserted Hollamon, whose shot was saved by Cape's goalkeeper Morgan Newcomb. At the 9:53 mark, Delmar got another chance on a corner, but DeGregory denied a pass into the circle. Delmar's offense dominated the quarter and produced another corner at 7:18. Hollamon shot but was denied by

Newcomb. The match was scoreless at the end of the first quarter.

The second quarter was a lot of back and forth in the midfield for the first few minutes. At the 10:00 mark, Delmar earned its first corner, resulting in no goal as the ball deflected off a stick. Delmar had the offensive advantage for the first half of the quarter, but that would shift at the seven-minute mark when Cape grabbed its first corner and scored off a pass from Wiggins to Hannah Maney, who shot, and Atia Sabbaugh put her stick on it to deflect it up into the cage. Cape took the lead 1-0. Delmar would not be denied its opportunities to score. Corners at 4:29, 3:29 and 2:45 all resulted in blocked shots by Newcomb or shots that went wide. With just 45 seconds left, Cape took a corner and Degregory inserted it to Wiggins who dribbled right to find space and unloaded a shot with a big swing and scored to put Cape up 2-0 going into halftime.

Both teams regrouped at the half and got some much needed rest as substitutions to this point were sparse. These teams are in great condition and the starters don't get much of a break. Cape came out with a corner at 10:50 but it did not get converted to a goal. The quarter was a stalemate with great play in the midfield by Cape's Wiggins and Rishko as well as Delmar's Hollamon and Bunting. At 6:30, Delmar created another corner opportunity, but Cape's defense denied its attack. Delmar's Brooke Moore was a defensive star in this quarter and seemed to show up everywhere Cape was in the circle.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY BENNY MITCHELL

The rain moved out of the area allowing the Cape Henlopen homecoming parade to march into the stadium in front of a large raucous home crowd. It was a night fit for a king for the Vikings. Maurki James filled that role as he rushed for 216 yards scoring four touchdowns and was crowned homecoming king at halftime, helping lead the Vikings to a 35-0 victory over the Caesar Rodney Riders Friday night.

“He is a special player and a special person. A lot of those plays he had to make something out of nothing,

KING JAMES POWERS CAPE HENLOPEN OVER CAESAR RODNEY

he just ran so hard tonight,” Cape Henlopen head coach Mike Frederick said.

Cape Henlopen’s initial drive stalled at the Caesar Rodney 25-yard line. On third down, Julius Timmons pass was tipped at the line by Tremaine Batson and intercepted by Jackson Cunningham at the Riders’ 20-yard line. The Vikings opened the scoring late in the first quarter when Jameson Tingle connected with Lextyn Wescott on a 19-yard touchdown pass. Wilson Ingerski added the point after kick as Cape Henlopen took a 7-0 lead.

James scored his first touchdown of the night on a 47-yard run down the right sideline. Ingerski’s kick put the Vikings ahead 14-0.

On the next Cape Henlopen drive, the Vikings went 80 yards using four minutes and 30 seconds capped off by a 12-yard touchdown run by James as the Vikings took a 21-0 lead into halftime.

James found the end zone two more times in the third quarter on runs of 85 and six, giving the Vikings a 35-0 lead and the start of a running clock with 3:56 left in the third quarter.

“This was a really good game, I am proud of these kids. Our offensive line was all underclassmen tonight,” Frederick said.

Cape Henlopen improves to 5-2 overall and 1-1 in Class AAA District 2. They will host Smyrna this Friday night with a kickoff at 7 p.m.

“I don’t think there is going to be any problem getting the team ready and prepared. We played Smyrna back to back last year and it wasn’t pleasant, both games were pretty one sided. I think we are going to have a good week of practice. I think they are incentivised to show Smyrna that they are better than they have been in the past,” Frederick said.

Caesar Rodney fell to 0-7 overall and 0-2 in District 2. The Riders travel to take on St. Georges Saturday with a kickoff at noon.



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BY SHANNON TIMMONS

This week was exciting for high school field hockey as they take to the fast astroturf at Rullo Stadium at the University of Delaware for the Turf Bowl. I don't expect the top teams in either division to change much in the next two weeks of regular season play. But there are teams that still have six or seven games left to play and could change the landscape of who finds their way into the tournament brackets. Milford is the surprise team of the season and continues to play well. St. Georges had a tough week and will drop out this week and I welcome newcomers the top 10, William Penn and Delcastle in D1. D2 sees DMA join the top 10 again, but Lake Forest drops out. The No. 10 spot has been tough to fill consistently in D2 all season and counting the preseason picks seven teams have occupied that position.

THE CORNER SCOOP: WEEK 6 FIELD HOCKEY TOP 10 RANKINGS

Game of the Week: Delmar at Cape Henlopen was Oct. 19.

DIVISION 1

No. 1 Smyrna 10-0 The Eagles didn't disappoint this week and picked up two more wins. Goalkeeper Hallie Geiger is committed to play next year at Drexel and has only given up four goals and has 34 saves. The Eagles played at Tatnall Oct. 17 and hosted Indian River Oct. 19 and are in the Turf Bowl at University of Delaware Sunday, Oct. 22, against Padua.

No. 2 Cape Henlopen 11-1 Cape will finish out its regular season with home games, always an advantage when you play on turf. The Vikings will play in the Game of the Week when they hosted D2 powerhouse Delmar Oct. 19, in Champions Stadium.

No. 3 Milford 8-2 The Bucs picked up a BIG win in overtime this week in the game of the week against St. Mark's. What a show these athletes put on for their teachers on Teacher Appreciation Day. They faced Indian River away under the lights Tuesday Oct. 17, Seaford at home Oct. 19 and Laurel at UD in the Turf Bowl Oct. 21.

No. 4 Middletown 8-2 Head Coach Stefany Krygier has her Cavaliers on the move! It's been almost a month since they lost a game and this week will be important for their tournament seeding. They were home Tuesday Oct. 17 vs. CR, at Conrad Oct. 19, for their Pink Out Game and home Oct. 20, vs. Polytech.

No. 5 Charter School of Wilmington 7-2 The Force is a team with a lot of games left on the schedule. They play three tough matchups this week, let's see if they can hold onto their spot here in the top 10. They played Oct. 17 at St. Mark's, Oct. 19 at home vs. Newark Charter and Oct. 21 in the Turf Bowl vs. Archmere Academy.

No. 6 Polytech 8-3 The Panthers' season has been inconsistent. They win and lose games alternately and can't seem to get a win streak going. Three of their next four games are against top teams in this division so they have their work cut out for them. This week, they were home Tuesday vs. Lake Forest and Oct. 20 at Middletown.

No. 7 Odessa 8-2 I can't say enough good things about Odessa this season. Head Coach Maria Collier and her roster of 19 Ducks are making a name for themselves. They had a busy week with Dover at home Oct. 16, sister school Appo at home Oct. 18 for Senior Night and Oct. 20 they played Delcastle at UD for the Turf Bowl.

No. 8 Appoquinimink 6-5 The Jags saw their other sister school, Odessa, Oct. 18 and played St. Georges Oct. 19 in the Turf Bowl at UD. They need to rebound from a loss to Middletown as these next two weeks are all about getting the best seed possible for the tournament.

No. 9 Caesar Rodney 5-5 The Riders had a tough week ahead of them with three games against very successful opponents. Oct. 16 home vs. Delmar, Oct. 17 at Middletown, Oct. 19 home vs. Laurel.

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