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Courtside View—Week 2 Girls' Basketball Top 10

photo link: Downtown Wilm DE



# Headlines

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# STATE HEADING INTO YEARS OF NEAR-LEVEL REVENUES, BOARD SAYS

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware can expect a revenue surplus of \$364.8 million heading into the 2025 fiscal year. It can also expect a few years of plateaued revenues instead of the nearly \$1 billion surpluses of recent years. Some legislators would argue the state doesn't have surplus in reality, because that money will be needed for expected rises in costs for a number of programs, including health insurance for employees, scheduled employee salary raises, high pension costs and higher Medicaid costs.

## REVENUE GROWTH TRENDS

Even so, said State Rep. Danny Short, R-Seaford, the best news out of Monday's meeting of the [Delaware Economic Forecast and Advisory Council](#) is that the state's financial position improved between its October and December meetings.

"It's a good picture to have a revenue increase when, in fact, a lot of folks were anticipating a recession not too many months ago," said Short, who is a member of

the council. "It looks like we're not going to have that, hopefully. Knock on wood."

The council's prediction added \$89 million to the forecast of \$6.6 billion in revenues for FY2025, which starts July 1. It seems to reflect a growing belief that the nation will avoid a recession, a feeling bolstered by a recent announcement that the Federal Reserve Board has no plans to raise interest rates again and may begin to lower them next year.

If the U.S. does indeed have what many term "a soft landing," it will be the first time in history that inflation has risen to 5% or more and the country hasn't gone into a recession, the committee said.

Short, who has been in the General Assembly for 18 years, said he would like to see the state do the same kind of analysis of its expenditures as it does revenues.

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## DOGGIE DAYCARE IN MILFORD

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# DELDOT TO STUDY RESTORING PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE DOWNSTATE

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

A Delaware Department of Transportation unit has received a federal grant of up to \$500,000 to study bringing back passenger rail service to the Delmarva Peninsula.

“The Diamond State Line will provide rail service south from Wilmington or Newark through Dover to Harrington, and then continue southbound along one of two potential routes, based on the presence of existing railroad rights-of-way or other corridor opportunities,” said C.R. McLeod, director of community relations for DelDOT.

The first step is assessing the two corridors. The Federal Rail Administration grant also calls for considering a no-build alternative and the area already has old train lines. The first corridor extends through Seaford, with service to Salisbury, MD. The second corridor

would branch at Harrington and run east to Milford, and then south to Georgetown, with service to Berlin, MD. Neither would directly serve Delaware beaches.

“Station stops in between Wilmington and Salisbury or Berlin are tentatively envisioned at towns and activity centers along the corridors, but specific station locations will be identified in Step 1 once the route alternative(s) are determined,” he added.

The Delaware Transit Corp. expects work on the train **proposal** to run Feb. 1, 2024, through Sept. 1, 2024.

“A strong case for providing intercity rail service across this region is based upon the existing and expected socioeconomic conditions,” he said.

The population downstate is growing fast, particularly for retirees in Sussex. In 2020, 20% of Delawareans were 65 and older, up from 14% in 2010.

The peninsula is turning from an agricultural economy, with areas of industrial activity, into one where the jobs are in professional services, retail, hospitality and healthcare. Train service also could boost economic development.

“The US Census data also reveals that Areas of Persistent Poverty, Historically Disadvantaged Communities, rural populations and tribal lands also have clusters of concentration along the proposed Diamond State Line,” he said. “Census tracts on the western side of Sussex County, around Seaford, have rates of poverty over 20%, and not surprisingly these tracts correspond to the Areas of Persistent Poverty and the Historically Disadvantaged Communities.”

## RAIL SERVICE IN THE PAST

The Pennsylvania Railroad, which then owned the main lines in Delaware, terminated passenger service in 1957, he said. For six months in 1965, the Pennsylvania Railroad ran a passenger train called the Blue Diamond on a trial basis, but it did not attract sufficient business. That might have been because the schedule wasn't that friendly.

According to a [Railroad.net](#) forum, a train left Delmar at 5:50 p.m., arriving in Philadelphia at 10:10 p.m., via Wilmington. A train left Philadelphia at 12:50 a.m., reaching Delmar at 4:25 a.m. Intermediate stops were at Clayton, Dover, Harrington, Bridgeville and Seaford.

There has also been irregular train service to Dover for NASCAR races and to Harrington for the Delaware State Fair, but none of it successful enough to revive train service downstate.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

# WILMINGTON REDUCES PARKING FINES; RIPS OUT METERS TO ADD KIOSKS

BY BETSY PRICE

Wilmington's had lots of parking news in recent days. First, the Wilmington City Council last week passed a new law that starting Jan. 1 will reduce parking tickets from \$40 to \$25 for people who pay the fine within 14 days of getting the ticket.

On Tuesday, the city announced it is installing parking kiosks and eliminating parking meters, work that will take place in phases, starting this week in the Riverfront District. The kiosks will accept coins, credit cards or payment through the Park Mobile app. Motorists can also pay by text. The goal, the city said, is to make paying for parking in Wilmington easier and more convenient.

"It's encouraging to see all these steps being taken," said Ken Grant, member of the Wilmington Fines and Fees Justice Team. He has been front and center battling the city over its parking practices, frequently hammering the city with videos on social media.

"The city still needs to take some time and really do a comprehensive overview of the entire system," he said.

Five new parking kiosks were to be installed Tuesday in the Riverfront District, which has had kiosks for year. The new ones will serve as a test run to make sure there are no issues with the system, the city said in a press release.

The next phase of installments, set to start in January, will put kiosks at 44 locations in the Downtown Busi-

ness District. Commissioner of Public Works Kelly Williams said the kiosks will appear wherever there currently are downtown meters. Once the kiosks are installed, the city will remove the old meter heads and eventually the poles that support them.

As the kiosks are activated, meters on that block will display a yellow sign that says "Pay at kiosk," reminding motorists to do that.

The kiosks are being installed by Flowbird, which has a \$604,000 contract to buy and install the kiosks, and to provide ongoing support.

The kiosks will accept coins, credit cards or payment through the Park Mobile app. Motorists can also pay by text. Here's how the text payment option works:

- Text a code to the number provided on the sign or sticker displayed on the kiosk.
- You will immediately receive a text reply.
- Follow the secure link and enter your license plate number.
- Choose your length of stay.
- Enter your payment information.
- Your parking session begins immediately.

Flowbird's generic instructional video can be seen [HERE](#).

[READ MORE HERE](#)



# STATE STARTS NEGOTIATING WIND FARM CABLE LANDING AT SEASHORE PARK

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware will negotiate a deal with US Wind for its two wind farms, including a \$350,000 a year cable landing on Delaware Seashore State Park, as well as energy credits and funding for workforce and environmental projects.

The move comes after years of public controversy over whether wind power is a viable renewable source of energy and will reduce costs for state residents. Many residents were split over whether wind farms and bringing power ashore in Delaware would ruin the pristine nature of the park and beach experience in general.

A working initial [Term Sheet](#) signed Tuesday by Gov. John Carney and US Wind CEO Jeffrey Grybowski discusses the direction of negotiations over a lease at 3Rs Beach at the state park for an underground cable landing to deliver power from the turbines to the regional electrical grid.

“This agreement means Delaware will become an active player in the growing offshore wind industry,” Carney said in the press release announcing the negotiations. “It aligns with other objectives, including our emission reduction targets and meeting the net-zero carbon goal set last year by House Bill 99. Transitioning to clean energy sources is essential to reducing manmade greenhouse gas emissions that are driving climate change, and these wind projects are part of that transition.”

US Wind plans two wind farms, MarWin and Momentum Wind, off the coast near Ocean City, MD.

Opponents of the plan to use wind energy were not surprised at the announcement, but continue to disapprove based on several points, including the high costs of getting going. Danish energy company Ørsted said last month it was dropping two wind farm projects in New Jersey because of supply chain issues, regulatory timelines and increased interest rates.

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“The Carney administration telegraphed its intention to aggressively adopt offshore wind power with the enactment of legislation in June that directed state officials to work with operators of the regional power grid, PJM Interconnection, to issue a report on a process for procuring it,” said Joseph Fulgham, chief of Policy & Communications for the House Republican Caucus. “That study is due to be delivered at the end of this month.”

The Delaware-US Wind term sheet includes plans to ensure “Delaware’s residents, the people, communities and ratepayers of Delaware receive benefits from the development, construction and operation of the projects,” such as:

[READ MORE HERE](#)



photo credit: Rockwood Park & Museum

# Culture

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## SALESIANUM TO HOST 1ST COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS LUNCH MONDAY

BY JAREK RUTZ

A senior from Wilmington's [Salesianum School](#) strongly believed that no one should spend Christmas alone. Lucky for him, his school community shared that same belief and rallied behind him to raise \$30,000 to host its first annual Christmas Day lunch.

On Monday, Christmas Day, Salesianum will open its doors from noon to 3 p.m., welcoming residents from numerous Wilmington Housing Authority locations for an afternoon filled with food, song and cheer.

"Since I was little, homelessness and helping people that don't have a lot is something I always kind of dragged myself towards," said John Casale, the student who created and organized the event. "It was just something I've always been passionate about."

More than 100 [Wilmington Housing Authority](#) residents and hundreds of Salesianum students, families, alumni and friends are expected to attend the lunch.

"The Wilmington Housing Authority is grateful for the support received and partnership with the students and administration of Salesianum High School," said Ray Fitzgerald, executive director of the agency. "The students involved in this effort should be commended. Their commitment to others and support for our elders is an amazing thing to behold. We hope this historic partnership will continue to grow."

Casale said he's had the idea for more than a year and he's always inspired seeing the work of other Salesianum students and the work of nonprofits in Wilmington

who help those in unfortunate circumstances. He emailed Sallies' principal, the Rev. Chris Beretta last summer.

"I told him I just wanted to talk to him," Casale said. "At first he was like, 'Is everything alright?' And I said, yeah, I just want to come in and talk."

When they met, Casale told Beretta he wanted to have a fundraiser and donate to the Ministry of Caring for homelessness. The two came to a consensus that anyone or any school could do, but they wanted to try to do something bigger.

Beretta told Casale about the [Community of Sant' Egidio](#) in Rome, which was founded in 1968 under the leadership of Andrea Riccardi, an Italian historian, professor, politician and activist. It does a lot of social justice, serves the poor and advocates for peace, Beretta said. That includes saying the Church's evening prayer together daily as a stimulus for lending assistance to a whole spectrum of needy persons: lonely and non-self-sufficient elderly, immigrants and homeless people, terminally ill and HIV/AIDS patients, children at risk of deviance and marginalization, nomads and the physically and mentally handicapped, drug addicts, victims of war and prisoners.

"They had started this program where they would make sure on Christmas Day that local people, some not even poor, just those who had no family or had no one to spend the day with, would have a place to spend the day with others," Beretta said. "The idea was that nobody eats alone on Christmas."

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## HAVE YOURSELF A MINI LITTLE CHRISTMAS AT READ HOUSE

BY BETSY PRICE

And, now, for something a little different. And by little, we mean miniature. And by miniature, we mean recreations of period rooms that could fit into shoeboxes, including a “street” depicting four shops mentioned in Jane Austen books.

The 20 displays, created by and on loan from the First State Mini Club, are spread throughout the [Read House & Gardens](#) in Historic New Castle and are meant to call attention to the house’s own Archibald Alexander dollhouse, a miniature recreation of a real home.

Read House is raising money to send the dollhouse to the University of Delaware for conservation. The work will be done for free, but the house has to be crated to be moved and that process is spendy.

The miniatures also add interest and cheer to the house’s holiday decorations, which include a ginger-

bread house by Joe Daigle that offers a deconstructed look at the house’s architecture.

This focus on the holidays is part of the efforts of the Read House & Gardens to raise the profile of the historic home, which was the largest in the state for 100 years. It was built from 1797 to 1804 by George Read II. His father signed the Declaration of Independence and Constitution and served as governor, chief justice and U.S. senator in Delaware.

The house on the Delaware River was lavishly appointed for a home for that time. Read II even bought the property across the street from his so that his house would always have an unobstructed view of the river.

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# GUIDE TO CHRISTMAS 2023 IN DELAWARE

BY JAREK RUTZ

If you're hitting the road for Christmas, you're not alone. Nearly a third of the state's population is expected to travel 50 miles or more by car for the year-end holidays. Here's what to know about Christmas in the First State a week away from the holiday.

## TRAVEL

The 330,000 Delawareans traveling is an increase of 2.6% over last year, according to [AAA Mid-Atlantic](#), a regional travel agency. Other than 2019, that's the highest travel volume for the holiday since 2001 in the First State.

Gas prices are the lowest they've been in two years, an extra gift on top of those underneath the Christmas tree. A gallon costs an average of \$2.96 in Delaware compared to \$3.07 nationally, which was also the cost for a gallon of gas in the First State at this time last year.

"Air travel volume is expected to be the highest on record and gas prices are the lowest they've been in more than two years—fueling a holiday travel season of 'hustle and bustle' that continues the strong demand for travel seen throughout 2023," said Jana Tidwell, manager of public and government Affairs for AAA Mid-Atlantic.

Here's what AAA states are the best and worst times to travel for Christmas:

Best and Worst Times to Travel by Car		
Date	Worst Travel Time	Best Travel Time
Saturday, Dec 23	11:00 AM - 7:00 PM	Before 10:00 AM
Sunday, Dec 24	Minimal Traffic Impact Expected	
Monday, Dec 25	Minimal Traffic Impact Expected	
Tuesday, Dec 26	1:00 - 5:00 PM	Before 12:00 PM
Wednesday, Dec 27	1:00 - 7:00 PM	Before 12:00 PM
Thursday, Dec 28	2:00 - 8:00 PM	Before 12:00 PM

While most will be settled into their whereabouts on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, it's best to hit the road in the morning when heading or leaving their destination.

## ROAD SAFETY

As always, those enjoying an alcoholic drink need to plan ahead and make sure they have a sober driver to take them home.

There's also plenty of other options, such as public transportation or ride shares like Uber or Lyft.

With cold temperatures, drivers need to make sure they are not distracted or on their phones when driving, as well as following speed limits, especially as roads become slick at night.

For those taking a nighttime stroll, wear reflective and bright clothing to ensure visibility to drivers.

## WEATHER

It won't be a white Christmas, nor will it be a freezing Christmas, according to the [National Weather Service](#). Both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are supposed to be mostly sunny, with temperatures hovering around 50 degrees. There's no rain in the forecast and temperatures will drop to 30 degrees on both nights.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## HERE'S HOW SCREENING ROOM AT 1313 SNARED 'MAESTRO'

BY BETSY PRICE

If you wanted to see Bradley Cooper's "[Maestro](#)" in Delaware last week, the only place you could was the [Screening Room at 1313](#).

It showed there last weekend—becoming the most popular film yet for the Screening Room, an independent movie theater that opened in the old Hercules building Feb. 17—and will show again this weekend.

About 200 people came to see the biography of legendary music conductor Leonard Bernstein, played by Philly native and regional favorite Cooper. He also wrote and directed the movie, and has been nominated for Golden Globe acting and directing awards.

The movie ended up at the Screening Room, which now has expanded to two screens, through a connec-

tion co-owner Beverly Zimmermann has had in the Boston area for years. He has always told her to call him if she ever ran into trouble getting a film she wanted.

"Maestro," owned by Netflix, wasn't showing in Boston proper, her friend told her, and Netflix was being really picky about who did show it. He was allowed to at Dedham, MA, about an hour from Boston. While Zimmermann had contacts at Netflix, they weren't returning her emails.

He asked if "Maestro" was playing anywhere near her, and she said it was playing in Philly. He said he'd call her back. Two hours later, he called back and told her "Maestro" was hers because it wasn't playing anywhere else in Delaware.

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# RAPPER, ACTOR COMMON TO BRING BOOK TOUR TO WILMINGTON

BY BETSY PRICE

The multi-hyphenate entertainer **Common** will bring his book tour to the Wilmington Public Library Jan. 26 at 6 p.m. He will talk about and sign his book, “And Then We Rise,” which details Common’s journey to wellness as a vital element of his success as a rapper, actor and now author.

A testimony to the benefits of self-care, his book is divided into four sections: “The Food” focuses on nutrition. “The Body” focuses on fitness. “The Mind” focuses on mental health. And “The Soul” focuses on perhaps the most profound thing of all—spiritual well-being.

Books will be available for purchase the day of his appearance. while supplies last.

## COMMON RULES

Seating at Common’s appearance is first-come, first-served. No registration or tickets are required.

The library also will livestream the event. Cameras are allowed, but if you do not have permission by the Wilmington Library director to move around, you must remain seated with your camera. The library asks that attendees do not stand on chairs, in the aisles or in the back of the room in an attempt to record or take photos. That obstructs the view of others, causes a fire hazard and potentially blocks library cameras around the room that will be livestreaming the event.

Patrons who stand also prohibit guests, especially those in wheelchairs, from coming in and out to find a seat or to use the restroom.

All attendees must find a seat and are not allowed to block entrances or exits. Staff members and/or volunteers will help you find a seat if you can not find one.

The library asks that patrons be kind and courteous to one another as well as library staff who work hard to bring you these events.

Common’s appearance is not part of the library’s Black History Month Speaker Series, but the library expects to announced that soon, a press release said.



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# HIT-AND-RUN HOSPITALIZES FAITHFUL FRIENDS FOUNDER, KILLS DOG

BY BETSY PRICE

The founder of **Faithful Friends Animal Society**

is recovering from a hit-and-run accident that hospitalized her and killed her dog, Emma, which she was walking at the time of the accident.

The incident occurred when Jane Pierantozzi was walking her dog Dec. 10 on South Clayton Street in Wilmington near the intersection of South Clayton and Maple Streets in Wilmington. The driver fled the scene.

Faithful Friends, Crime Stoppers and the Wilmington Police Department are seeking information to identify the driver of the vehicle that hit them, the animal society said Dec. 14. The vehicle is believed to be a tan minivan or full-sized SUV which fled south on Clayton Street (traveling in the wrong direction) after hitting Pierantozzi and Emma about 7:45 p.m.

Anyone with information or video is asked to contact Wilmington Police Sgt. Pete Leccia at (302) 571-4414 or [pete.leccia@cj.state.de.us](mailto:pete.leccia@cj.state.de.us); or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-847-3333 or at [Delaware Crime Stoppers](#).

“Our entire organization is shocked and very saddened with the news of Jane’s injury and the loss of Emma’s life,” said Bob Wasserbach, president of the Faithful Friends Board of Directors. “We are thankful to have a

strong and competent team who have banded together to continue our lifesaving work as Jane recovers.”

Faithful Friends is a no-kill shelter and sanctuary serving the state and surrounding communities. It serves 17,000 pets and 24,000 people through rescue, adoption and outreach services including a low-cost veterinary clinic, free pet food bank and the state’s only pet lifeline resource hotline for pet caretakers in crisis.

Since its founding in 2000, the society has advocated for reforms, increasing public funding for spay/neuter, finding loving homes for rescued pets and providing safety-net services aimed at reducing pet relinquishment.

Pierantozzi most recently was quoted in a *Delaware Live* story about how shelters are now focusing on trying to keep pets with their families instead of forcing the family to give up the pet. Pet retention is “modeled after social services and is a better choice than a more expensive and stressful intervention,” she said. “Shelters are necessary, but they’re a place of last resort.”

The owners may need help with food or veterinary expenses, or even just advice on how to handle a certain kind of animal. “All pets deserve a loving home, but some already have them,” she said.



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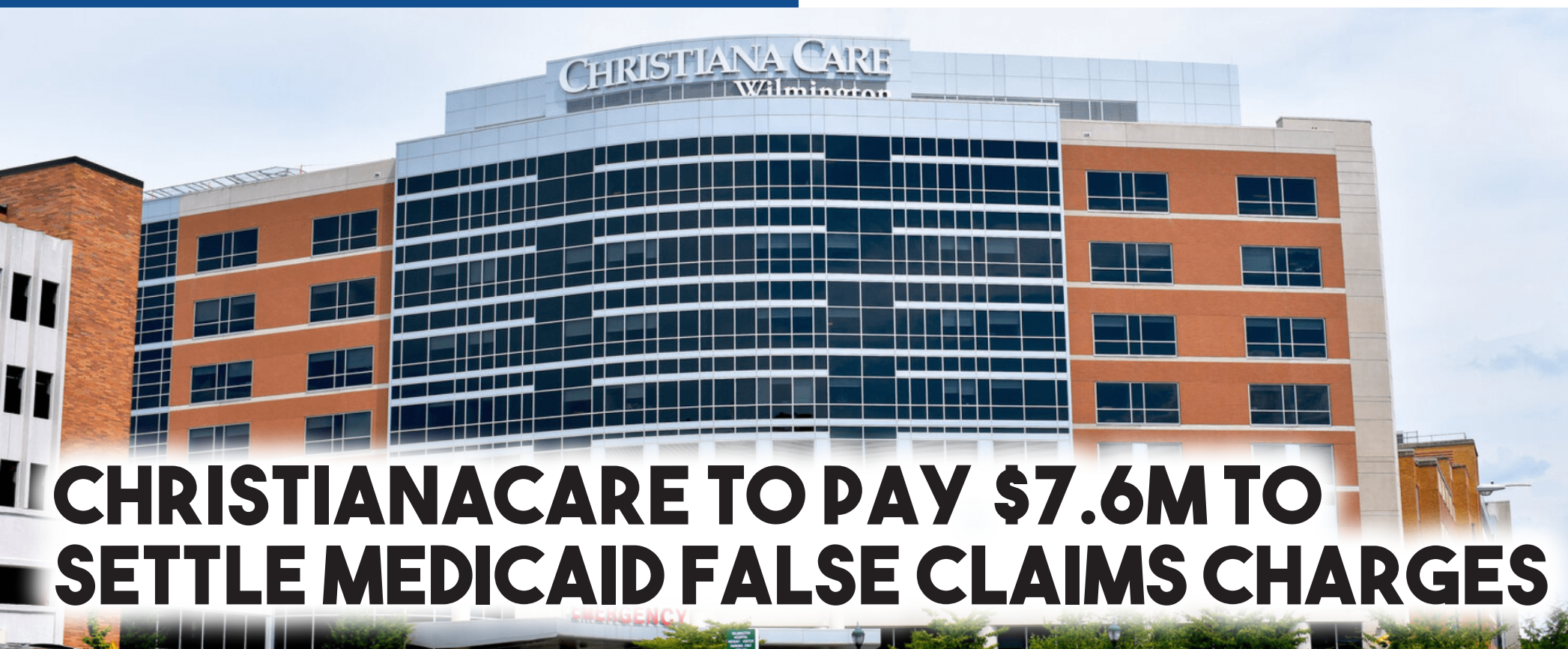


photo link: Delaware Division of Small Business

# Business

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# CHRISTIANACARE TO PAY \$7.6M TO SETTLE MEDICAID FALSE CLAIMS CHARGES

BY BETSY PRICE

Attorney General Kathy Jennings announced Friday that **ChristianaCare** Health System will pay \$7,666,379 to Delaware's Medicaid program to settle federal and Delaware false claim allegations.

The case, which was initiated by a whistleblower, alleges that ChristianaCare provided free or below-market value support services to non-employee doctors, who then referred patients to the health system. These referrals in turn led to ChristianaCare billing Medicaid.

State and federal authorities said providing free or below-market value support services induced referrals in violation of Delaware's Patient Brokering and Anti-Kickback laws. Because the inducements were unlawful, any resulting billing to Medicaid was a false or fraudulent claim and illegal under the federal and state rules.

"Kickbacks harm us all by inducing improper billing to the state's Medicaid program," Jennings said.

The settlement does not include admission of liability, said Shane Hoffman, ChristianaCare communications director. "Following a favorable judgement by the court, which dismissed a portion of the claims, we are pleased to settle this matter as we focus forward on meeting the evolving health needs of the diverse communities we serve," he said. "Our number-one priority is to provide the best possible care to every patient we serve."

The use of advanced-practice clinicians to coordinate and provide continuity of care is essential to high-quality, safe care that Christiana provides, he said. The health system will continue to ensure its use of those clinicians to support quality and safety in accordance with all current guidance and requirements.

"As a nonprofit health care organization with a mission of service to our community, we are committed to providing high-quality, safe care to everyone we serve, especially for critically ill newborns in our NICU," he said.

## CHRISTIANACARE ALLEGATIONS

The settlement resolves allegations that ChristianaCare submitted, or caused the submission of, false claims to Medicaid by providing support services from health system nurse practitioners, hospitalists and physician assistants to non-system physicians at no cost or below fair market value.

The alleged false claims occurred in the ChristianaCare neonatology department between April 1, 2011, and Sept. 30, 2013, and in cardiovascular surgery, urology, neurology, and ear nose and throat departments between April 1, 2011, and April 14, 2017.

This settlement arises from a qui tam action—which allows individuals to sue on behalf of the government—filed in April 2017 in the United States District Court for the District of Delaware.

The Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit receives 75 percent of its funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under a grant award totaling \$2.2 million for Federal fiscal year 2024. The remaining 25 percent, totaling \$727,990 for FY 2023, is funded by the state of Delaware.





photo credit: cottonbro studio / Pexels



# Food & Dining

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# DELAWARE FOOD TRUCK PUTS PIZZA IN A CONE

BY PAM GEORGE

Tom Craft doesn't stray far from the kitchen. The co-founder of **2 Fat Guys American Grill** in Hockessin is a full-time culinary arts instructor at Delcastle Technical High School. Consequently, he has summers off.

Since partner Jeff Cook handles the restaurant's on-site operations, Craft wanted a productive part-time gig, which, of course, involves food. Introducing a surprising twist on the traditional slice.

The food trailer hit the road last summer and Craft is already booking 2024 events, community appearances and private parties. Admittedly, it's hard to wrap one's mind around a pizza cone. Is it a slice folded into a cone shape?

Nope.

Craft makes a dough cone and fills it with pizza-style toppings, sauce and cheese. Most would agree that the pizza cone stands out in a sea of ice cream, taco, barbecue and burger trucks.

## PET PROJECT

Craft and Cook started 2 Fat Guys in 2005 and expanded to Greenville and Concord Pike. After those two locations closed, Craft took the teaching job and ran the restaurant's back office from home. He said this time, he wanted to do something on his own. He initially thought of pizza because **Bivouac Pizza** rents 2 Fat Guys' kitchen as a commissary and he could pick the food truck owner's brain.

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photo credit: Delaware State Police

# Government



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# DOVER POLICE 2023 RECRUITMENT VIDEO NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Dover Police Department's Recruitment video has been named as one of the "Top Police Recruitment Videos of 2023." **Police1** ranked its top eight recruitment videos of 2023 as police departments nationwide try to attract recruits and lateral officers to join their force.

Dover's video is part of an ongoing effort to attract an increased quantity and diverse pool of police applicants. The department partnered with **Epic Marketing Consultants Corporation** to develop the recruitment video prior to the 2023 testing process.

Delaware's police departments have struggled in recent years to maintain a high level of recruits, leading to legislation for more marketing and advertising money.

The four minute and 22 second video features some of the many bright personalities in the Dover Police

Department as they discuss the joys of serving the Dover community, the exciting opportunities within the agency and the fast-paced and adventurous working environment of the Dover Police Department.

The public can vote for the Dover Police Department at the bottom of **Police1's** article. The other nominees are the Arlington Police Department (Texas), the Coral Gables Police Department (Florida), the Eustis Police Department (Florida), the L.A. Port Police, the San Francisco Police Department, the Trussville Police Department (Alabama) and the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. Voting ends Dec. 28.



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# A REPUBLICAN WOMAN RETURNS TO 37TH DISTRICT HOUSE SEAT

BY JAREK RUTZ

Thursday's election to replace Representative Ruth Briggs King—the only Republican woman in the Delaware General Assembly—and fill the seat of the 37th district, has been decided. Republican Valerie Jones Giltner has defeated Democrat Jane Hovington.


Here are the results:

(R) Valerie Jones Giltner: 1,805

(D) Jane Hovington: 1,068

Briggs King resigned from her seat in mid-November. The seat represents Georgetown and Millsboro in Sussex County. Per Delaware Code, a writ of election must be issued within 10 days of the vacancy occurring and the special election is required to take place between 30-35 days from when the writ is issued.



  
**State of Delaware**  
**Department of Elections**

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**December 21, 2023**  
**2023 Special Election – Representative District 37**  
**Unofficial Results**

	DEM Jane Hovington	REP Valerie Jones Giltner	Write-in: John Randolph	Total Votes Cast	*Overvotes	**Undervotes	Contest Total
Cool Spring Presbyterian Church	37	67	0	104	0	0	104
Georgetown Elementary School	75	209	2	286	0	0	286
Howard T. Ennis	10	29	0	39	0	0	39
Lighthouse Baptist Church	131	184	1	316	0	2	318
New Life Bible Fellowship Church	72	122	1	195	0	0	195
North Georgetown Elementary School	84	115	0	199	0	0	199
Sports at the Beach	14	46	0	60	0	0	60
Sussex Central High School	84	193	0	277	0	0	277
Sussex Tech High School	1	21	0	22	0	0	22
Zoar Church Hall	34	147	0	181	0	1	182
Absentee	192	85	0	277	0	8	285
Early Voting	334	587	0	921	0	3	924
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,068</b>	<b>1,805</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2,877</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2,891</b>





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# NEW BILL WOULD EXPAND ACCESS TO MEDICAL MARIJUANA CARDS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware Democrats filed new legislation Dec. 14 that would enhance patient access to medical marijuana and revamp the framework of the Delaware Medical Marijuana Act. **House Bill 285**, sponsored by Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Newark, would remove the requirement that a patient must have a debilitating medical condition to qualify for a registry identification card.

Instead, health-care providers would determine whether a patient has a diagnosed medical condition that would benefit therapeutically or palliatively from the use of medical marijuana.

In a statement, Osienski said this bill is a result of conversations and feedback from medical marijuana patients.

“Drawing from their insights, we identified numerous ways to improve our medical marijuana program,” he said. The bill would modify the issuance process of medi-

cal marijuana registry identification cards, which facilitate the acquisition, delivery, possession or transfer of medical marijuana. These cards are authorized documents granted to eligible adult patients, registered designated caregivers assisting adult patients or registered designated caregivers for pediatric patients.

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said the bill doesn’t go far enough. “Our federal government has yet to recognize the medicinal value of marijuana when prescribed by a doctor to deal with things like post-traumatic stress disorder and depression along with pain management evidence,” he said, “by the fact that medical card holders are not covered by their insurance providers and pay cash for their prescription because the federal government has scheduled medicinal marijuana at a level equal to crystal meth, fentanyl and heroin. It makes no sense.”

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# Education

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# WLC LEADER DETAILS INITIAL WORK, SCHOOL REPORTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Data on some of the high-needs and underperforming schools of the city of Wilmington was shared Wednesday night. In the [Red Clay Consolidated School District](#)'s monthly board meeting, Laura Burgos, executive director of the Wilmington Learning Collaborative, presented assessment highlights on the nine schools involved in the agency.

The [Wilmington Learning Collaborative](#), a state agency created in November 2022 with millions of dollars in funding, has the goal of improving educational and societal outcomes for children in nine city elementary schools across [Brandywine](#), Red Clay and [Christina](#) school districts.

Burgos shared some English language arts testing data from the nine schools in the collaborative. The green represents the percentage of students who are on grade-level. The yellow represents tier-two students

who are a year below grade-level. The red represents tier-three students that are more than a year below grade-level. Burgos pointed out how as students climb the ladder of grades, they seem to become less and less proficient, which is apparent when comparing the kindergarten data to grade three and grade eight data.

“So you see the dramatic shift and when I look at this data, it’s clear that our students are entering our schools ready to learn,” she said, “and then we see what happens over time where we arrive at the eighth grade with students who are going to experience significant challenges making that transition to high school.”

This past month, all nine WLC schools completed site visits and are in the process of completing the final data submissions which includes student surveys, family and staff surveys and more.

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# Charter School

## CHARTER SCHOOLS HOPE REPORT SPARKS MORE TRANSPARENT FUNDING

BY JAREK RUTZ

Although they are not traditional district schools, Delaware's charter schools are still public, which means they will be affected by any changes from the long-awaited funding assessment released last week. The \$700,000 report by the [American Institutes for Research](#) was required as part of a settlement of a lawsuit charging the state was not adequately or fairly educating children.

Now the state must consider the overarching recommendation to pump between \$590 million to \$1 billion more into public education. Although presenters at the release event barely talked about the 200-page [report's](#) impact on the state's 23 charter schools, Kendall Massett, executive director of the [Delaware Charter Schools Network](#), has some thoughts.

"Charter schools do not want to be charter schools to get rid of district schools," she said. "That it is not our intention that every school be a charter school. We are part of the public school landscape and if this formula is good for all public schools, we're in."

She said last week's report release was encouraging because it acknowledged that charter schools do not receive the same amount of funding as district schools.

### FUNDING FOR CHARTERS

Charters do not receive capital funding and the amount of local funding they receive is based on the home district of their students, not the location of the school itself. In addition, that allotment is based on how much local funds the district spent the prior year.

If a student resides in Cape Henlopen School District, but attends Newark Charter, Newark Charter receives an allotment this year based on how much Cape Henlopen spent locally last year. And that funding would be different from a student who lives within Christina School District but attends Newark Charter.

Essentially, the funding charters get is a cumulative amount based on the spending of each student's residential district.

This creates problems.

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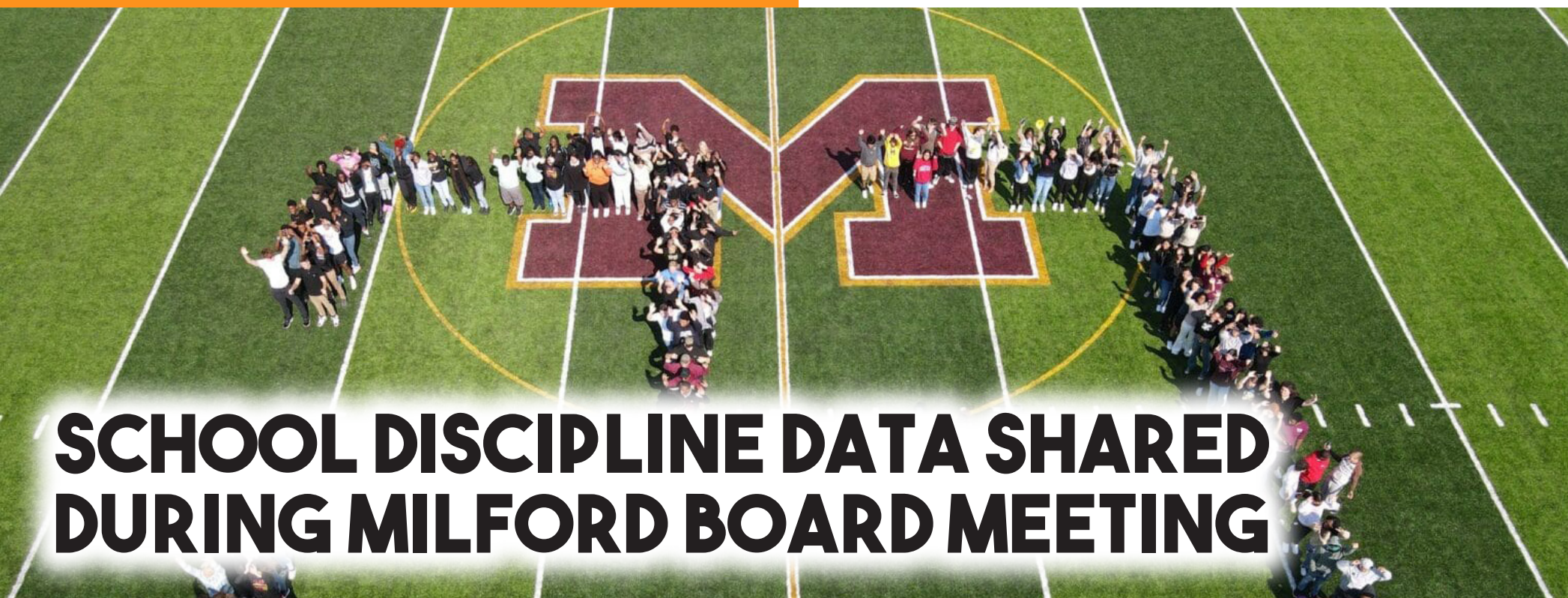
- URSULINE ACADEMY

In the prior example, if Cape Henlopen spends a ton of local money one year, but then cuts their spending of local funds the next, Newark Charter would have to prepare their school year knowing, on relatively short notice, that their funding will drop.

"You have to move things around," Massett said. "If you had a capital project that you had been saving up for, that gets pushed off."

For bigger projects, she said, like a school upgrading its HVAC system, charters don't get state funding, so they have to save money. That's difficult when the charters budget fluctuates year to year and is dependent on the spending of other districts a year prior.

READ MORE HERE



# SCHOOL DISCIPLINE DATA SHARED DURING MILFORD BOARD MEETING

BY JAREK RUTZ

School discipline—a hot topic that has brought parents out to school district meetings to share their child’s experiences—came up again Monday night in Milford. This time, the conversation focused on discipline data from this school year that was reviewed during the monthly board meeting. As expected, there have been many more incidents at the secondary level than the elementary level.

So far this year, there’s been 1,717 disciplinary referrals at the high school level, with the top three violations being dress code (511), skipping class (476) and tardiness (441). Tardiness referrals are given every third time a student is late. Milford’s dress code has been discussed a lot over the past two years, with parents even petitioning to have it banned due to a financial burden and inconsistency of its enforcement.

The top three consequences for secondary students have been detention (746), one-day in-school-suspensions (707) and reprimands (226).

For elementary students, there’s been 368 disciplinary referrals this year. The top three reasons are for inappropriate behavior—careless/reckless behavior (75), failure to obey safety process (27) and disruption of educational process (25). Most common punishments have been a 30-minute timeout (61), a 60-minute timeout (41) and a verbal warning (37).

“One thing I want to note, because I know it is a conversation for many families and our board and community, only 2% of our high school students and 1.9% of our Central Academy students have been disciplined for fighting or disorderly conduct,” said Jessica Weller, supervisor of school climate and safety.

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# Sports

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## COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 2 GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The girls' basketball season enters the final week before the Christmas holiday and the holiday tournaments start next week. I am looking forward to seeing how these teams fare before they get into their conference schedule in January.

Ursuline freshmen Jezelle Banks scored a career high 29 points in their 79-67 win over Bonita Vista High (CA) over the weekend. Banks had a great season last year as an eighth grader and continues to shine in the Raiders first six games this season.

The Conrad Red Wolves are off to a 4-0 start after a pair of wins last week. Junior Eva Walker is averaging 14 points a game to start the season. They faced their toughest test this year when they traveled to Saint Mark's on Tuesday night.

Here is the first new top 10 of the basketball season for our *Delaware Live* crew.

**No. 1 Ursuline** (5-1)(LW No. 1) The Raiders went 2-0 last week including a win over a California team. They are off this week before playing in the Diamond State Classic.

**No. 2 Caravel** (4-1)(LW No. 2) The Bucs are off till the Diamond State Classic on Dec. 28.

**No. 3 Sanford** (2-3)(LW No. 3) The Warriors lost a pair of games over the weekend in the She Got Game Classic to tough out of state teams. They play in the Governors Challenge after Christmas.

**No. 4 Cape Henlopen** (2-2)(LW No. 4) The Vikings went 1-1 over the weekend in the She Got Game tournament. They played at Dover on Tuesday and were home vs. Sussex Central on Thursday.

**No. 5 St. Elizabeth's** (3-1)(LW No. 5) The Vikings picked up a road win over Appoquinimink last week. They are off till the Viking Invitational after Christmas.

**No. 6 AI Dupont** (5-2)(LW No. 6) The Tigers split a pair of games in the She Got Game Classic. They played at Mount Pleasant on Tuesday and hosted Christiana on Thursday.

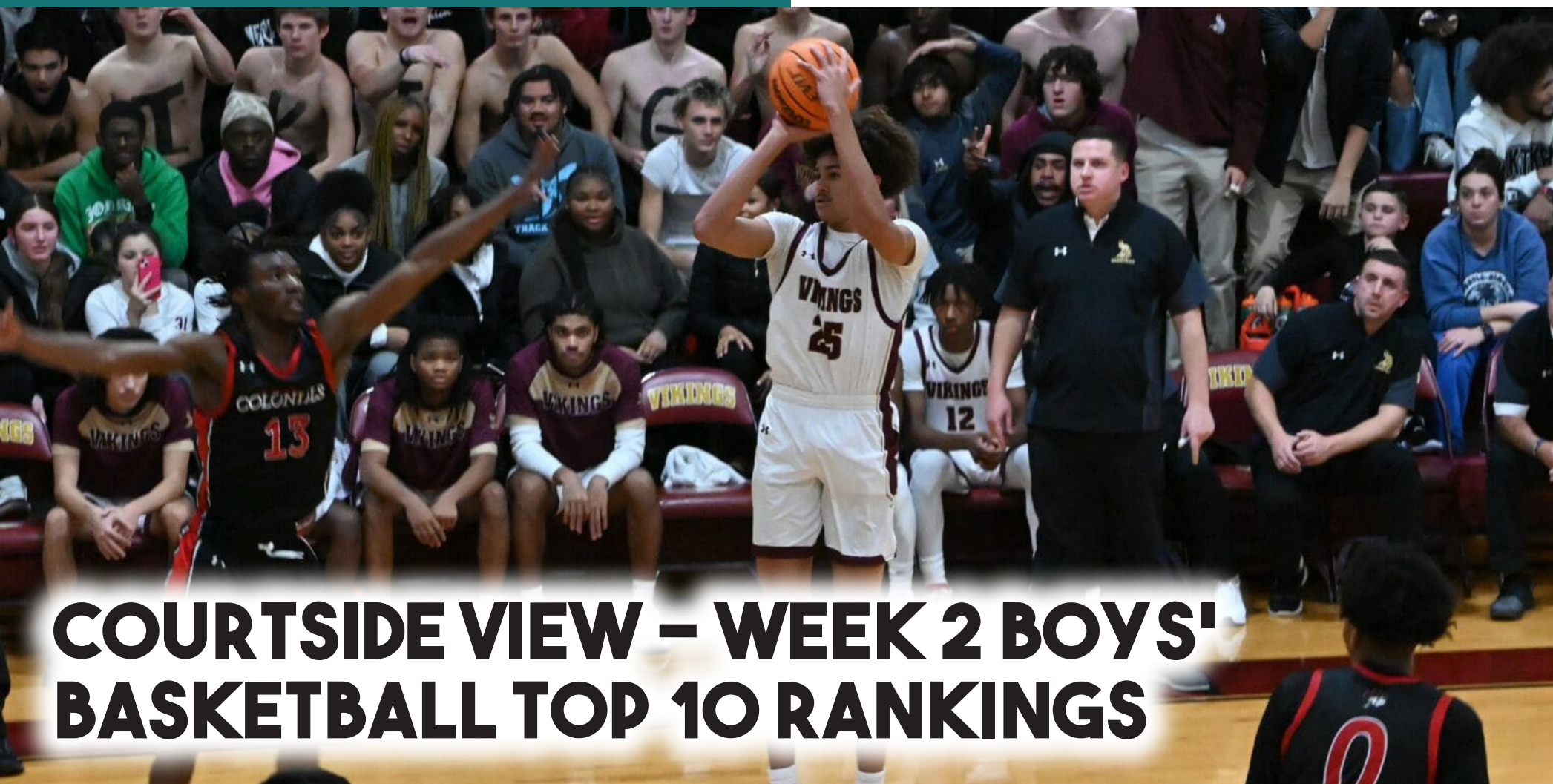
**No. 7 Saint Mark's** (3-1)(LW No. 7) The Spartans defeated Wilmington Charter last week. They hosted Conrad on Tuesday night.

**No. 8 Padua** (3-2)(LW No. 8) The Pandas picked up a win over Sts. Peter and Paul last week. They play in a tournament in Wildwood (NJ) after Christmas.

**No. 9 Middletown** (4-0)(LW No. 9) They hosted Newark Charter on Monday and then DMA on Thursday night.

**No. 10 DMA** (3-0)(LW Unrank) The Seahawks defeated Odyssey Charter last week. They played at No. 9 Middletown on Thursday.

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## COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 2 BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The boys' basketball season enters the final week before the Christmas holiday and the holiday tournaments start next week. I am looking forward to seeing how these teams fare before they get into their conference schedule in January.

The Henlopen North and South both kicked off their conference schedule last week as they play each team in the conference twice. Seaford, the defending Henlopen South champions, picked up a pair of wins over ECHS and Sussex Academy.

Saint Mark's is off to a 5-0 start this season as coach Lonny Wright has his team clicking on all cylinders

They are averaging 67.2 points per game while only giving up 43.4 points per game. They play at Red Lion this week before heading to Florida over the Christmas break.

There are four teams at 5-0—Mckean, Saint Mark's, MOT Charter and Odessa. Last year these teams had a combined 33-47.

Here is the final top 10 before the New Year.

**No. 1 Sallies** (1-2)(LW No. 1) The Sals fell to Archbishop Wood (PA) on Saturday night. They traveled to Appoquinimink on Wednesday before they head to Lewes for the Slam Dunk to the Beach tournament.

**No. 2 Middletown** (1-1)(LW No. 3) The Cavs beat Sanford last week. They have a pair of top out of state teams over the holiday break.

**No. 3 St Elizabeth's** (2-0)(LW No. 5) The Vikings defeated then No. 2 William Penn 86-67 last week. They traveled to St. Georges Tech on Thursday.

**No. 4 Dover** (1-0)(LW No. 4) The Senators defeated Caesar Rodney last week to kick off their season. They traveled to Cape Henlopen on Tuesday and hosted New Town (MD) on Saturday.

**No. 5 William Penn** (1-1)(LW No. 2) The Colonials went 1-1 last week with a win over St. Andrews and a loss to St. Elizabeth's. They will participate in the Governor's Challenge next week.

**No. 6 Sanford** (2-1)(LW No. 6) The Warriors lost to No. 3 Middletown 53-51 last week. They hosted Delcastle on Tuesday.

**No. 7 Howard** (2-0)(LW No. 7) The Wildcats went 2-0 last week with wins over Hodgson and St. Georges Tech. They traveled to Newark on Thursday.

**No. 8 Appoquinimink** (2-0)(LW No. 9) The Jags hosted No. 1 Sallies on Wednesday night on Delaware Live Sports.

**No. 9 Odessa** (5-0)(LW No. 10) The Ducks won a pair of games against Concord and Newark Charter last week. They played at DMA on Tuesday and then Caesar Rodney on Thursday night.

**No. 10 Cape Henlopen** (3-0)(LW Unrank) The Vikings defeated Sussex Central 48-47 last week. They hosted Dover on Tuesday and then Lake Forest on Thursday.



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