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Music School of Delaware Has a New Leader



Virtual Event for Veterans New Benefits



Salesianum Wins 3A State Title



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# Headlines

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# HOPE CENTER PLANS TO FACE BUDGET QUESTIONS WITH FACTS

BY PETER OSBOURNE

As homelessness increases in Delaware and COVID-related support dries up, the New Castle County Hope Center plans to roll out its new long-term sustainability strategy in January. It will include a companion dashboard demonstrating how big a dent in the problem the center has made over the past three years.

New Castle County purchased the former Sheraton Hotel on Airport Road off I-95 in early December 2020 for \$19.5 million from its share of federal CARES Act funding. Two weeks later, it reopened the 192-room hotel as a temporary emergency shelter to protect homeless state residents from winter weather and the coronavirus. But federal COVID support largely went away on Oct. 1, 2022.

Carrie Casey, general manager of the county's Department of Community Services, says funding worries keep her awake at night as she looks to plug gaps in her \$5 million annual budget. New Castle County does not provide operational support.

"We may charge \$50 a night," Casey said, "but the total cost including shuttle transportation, security, building costs and staffing, engineering, maintenance, case management and pet care is about \$80 a night."

Now, the East Coast's largest homeless shelter is helping families find permanent housing by tying the length of their stay to active participation in its programs. Those include seeking employment, attending substance abuse meetings and medical appointments, meeting curfews and treating center employees with respect.



"We have kind of built the airplane in the air," says Casey. But this airplane lacks sufficient onboard data to understand basic metrics.

For example, more than 3,200 people have spent at least one night at the Hope Center, with 325 households finding permanent housing after getting back on track. Casey struggles to provide information on total room nights or how many people have moved into some kind of permanent housing.

During the COVID pandemic, the Hope Center had 450 people in the building at any given point, but today's numbers are closer to 300-350.

[READ MORE HERE](#)





## DNREC FINALIZES EV REGULATIONS, CRITICS ARE NOT IMPRESSED

BY BETSY PRICE

DNREC has finalized state regulations about electric and other zero-emission vehicles it says will help Delaware achieve lower air pollution caused by light- and medium-duty cars. Instead of demanding that by 2035 all new car sales in Delaware must be electric, the program will end in 2032 when sales are expected to hit 82%.

That will address many of the issues opponents complained about, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control said in a press release while patting itself on the back for “taking a significant step to improve air quality and address climate change.” The regulations will not make those opposed happy.

“With over 93% of comments opposed to the Advanced Clean Car II regulations, we know where the public stands,” said Delaware Senate Minority Whip Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown.

“Consumer demand just isn’t there and that fact is

evident by not only the public comments on the ACCII regulations, but also by recent announcements from major auto manufacturers stating they are cutting back on their production and sales goals of electric vehicles,” he said. “This regulation is bad for the availability of affordable, reliable and inexpensive vehicle ownership in Delaware and it should be stopped.”

### REGULATIONS BACKLASH

The subject drew a wide range of backlash with opposition to the higher costs of electric vehicles, the higher weight of those vehicles, the low mileage many of the current models get—especially if you live in a rural area that requires you to drive more compared to urban residents—and the fact that research continues in other areas.

Many also object to the way the regulations came about. Instead of being legislated, they were required in

an executive order from Gov. John Carney asking DNREC to model regulations on a California law.

The regulations require automakers to deliver an increasing amount of zero-emission vehicles—that’s politicized code for electric vehicles—for sale in Delaware. Zero-emission options, including battery-electric, plug-in hybrid electric and fuel cell electric vehicles, will be more accessible across the state.

Under the finalized regulation, starting with model year 2027, 43% of new cars and trucks sent to Delaware for sale will be ZEVs. That percentage is expected to increase to 82% in 2032. The regulations will expire in model year 2033. The changes will be phased in over the period and the regulations do not prohibit the sale or use of internal combustion engine vehicles, the DNREC press release said.

The decision was announced by a [DNREC Secretary’s Order](#) and is set for publication in the Delaware Register of Regulations on Dec. 1, 2023. It was informed by state law, the federal Clean Air Act, information included in the technical response memo and [comments](#) received from the public during the rule-making process.

“By adopting the revised regulation, DNREC aims to protect public health, reduce emissions and align with Delaware’s climate goals—all while providing consumers with cleaner and more sustainable transportation options,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin in the press release. “This decision will result in cleaner air in Delaware and strengthen protections for communities overburdened by exposure to tailpipe pollution.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)





## WILMINGTON CITY, COUNCIL LASH OUT IN FIGHT OVER JOB RESIDENCY

BY PETER OSBOURNE

Mob rule? Or B.S.? A weeks-long debate over Wilmington residency requirements for non-elected city employees has deteriorated into what might generously be described as “frosty” exchanges between Mayor Mike Purzycki and a pair of City Council members.

After a month of bitter debate, the 13-member council on Nov. 16 passed a five-year residency law for new hires that will continue to give preference to hiring city residents. It also allows new hires a year to move into Wilmington (vs. six months previously), and establishes a residency assistance fund to help new hires afford housing. The vote was 8-4, with three members voting “present” and one member failing to attend the vote.

Purzycki had been trying for more than a year to rescind the residency rule based on the City’s ongoing struggles to find qualified candidates willing to move to Wilmington for open positions.

Purzycki issued a scathing 1,328-word [statement](#) Nov. 27 to say that while he would not veto the bill, “the legislative process that unfolded was an embarrassment to this government [featuring] grandstanding, catcalling, badgering and political bullying.”

“There was never a sober debate about the merits of retaining residency,” said Purzycki, who is not running for re-election.

“The compromise ordinance that included New Castle County boundaries never even made it to the floor for a vote when one cowed member of Council failed to vote the ordinance out of committee,” the statement said. “The intimidating and uncontrolled mob that was encouraged to show up at the committee meeting and Council meetings literally scared members of Council into changing their votes.”

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# WLC WILL FOCUS ON TASKS AT HAND, NOT EXPANDING TO OTHER SCHOOLS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The new head of the Wilmington Learning Collaborative pushed back Nov. 28 on suggestions that the new agency expand to include more city elementary schools.

“This is a long journey, this is going to take many years to get our schools where they need to be,” said Laura Burgos, the group’s executive director. That’s not going to happen by adding expansion into the mix now, she said.

“We have so much to do, systems that we need to re-imagine, and we need to look at everything from curriculum to staffing structures to accountability,” she said. “I said it before. Funding alone is not enough without strategy and accountability. We’re going to keep throwing money, throwing money, throwing money and wondering why outcomes aren’t shifting.”

The issue popped up in a meeting devoted mostly to finalizing contracts and budgets with community partners at the governing council’s monthly meeting.

The learning collab was created to help nine elementaries which are in the city, but operated by suburban Red Clay, Brandywine and Christina school districts. Its \$10 million annual budget, plus \$6 million rolled over from last year, is devoted to creating programs dealing with challenges faced by city students.

It hopes to empower city students and families, as well as on-the-ground workers, by giving them a voice in policy making to improve student achievement metrics like test scores, absenteeism and graduation rates.

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# Culture

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# HERE'S HOW LONGWOOD CREATED ITS RETRO CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

BY BETSY PRICE

Longwood Gardens planners kicked around the idea of a retro Christmas display for years before debuting it this holiday season.

“I think everybody’s nostalgic around the holiday season,” said Jim Sutton, Longwood’s display designer. “Christmas is one of those times where it’s sort of a melding between what’s old and what’s new. A lot of people pull things out and they pass them down through the family, so I think it’s one of those things that just resonates with everybody.”

The delay for Longwood came about because planners couldn’t agree on a decade to focus on. “So we kind of picked the 40s, 50s and 60s and made it in that time range without trying to get too specific as far as one decade versus another,” Sutton said.

As with all Longwood [Christmas displays](#), the themes from the decades show up in big and little ways and Longwood used area artisans to provide some of the details. Visitors can see the 40s in the massive tinsel garlands hanging from lamp posts in the conservatory’s show-stopping fern floor display, meant to evoke a small town street scene from the 1940s.

## REMAKING RETRO TINSEL

The swags were made from vintage patterns. “The lending company we work with bought a company in China that used to produce it,” Sutton said. “They had the original plans for it and they had beautiful vintage catalogs. They’re 40-feet long. We had them make six of them to go across the fern floor.”

Guests can also see the 40s in the plastic building blocks used to make bird feeders on the wildlife tree near the lake. The blocks are meant to be reminiscent of Legos, without mentioning them by name. The Danish toys came out in the 30s but were becoming popular in the 40s. The 50s are reflected in bubble lights and ornaments on the trees.

“Lots of ornaments,” Sutton said. Many are vintage, but Longwood staff made a lot of them, too. Some are the ornaments boomers may remember making as kids by attaching crystals, sequins and beads to a styrofoam ball. One gardener made stained glass ornaments and another used pipe cleaners.

## LONGWOOD’S RETRO TRUCK

One item from the 1960s syncs with a popular trend from today. Longwood’s facilities department restored a 1969 International Roadster 1800 pickup truck, including making a new bumper for it. It’s painted a custom paint color called Red Line Red, meant to evoke the red line on a car speedometer when the driver is going too fast. The bed was loaded with wood and a tree and parked outside the Peirce-du Pont House, a prime site for photo ops.

A red pickup carrying a green tree has been popular on all kinds of holiday wares for the last few years.

“If you go to any store now you can see the truck on handbags, towels, pillows and ornaments,” Sutton said. “So we’re right in keeping with the market on that one.” The hand lettering on the driver’s door that says Longwood Gardens was done by [Hot Rod Jen](#), a Pennsylvania woman who specializes in vintage lettering.

[READ MORE HERE](#)





# COMMUNITY COMPOSTING FACILITY STARTING IN BRANDYWINE HUNDRED

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

**Plastic Free Delaware**, a group that formed a decade ago to get rid of environmentally unfriendly single-use bags, is now tackling something that forms a **quarter** of municipal waste: Food scraps. It is creating its first community composting facility in Talley Day Park, behind the Brandywine Hundred Library, and prominently located right across a parking area from the playground.

The facility is for people who “want to compost your kitchen scraps, but don’t want to manage a backyard bin, or cannot for whatever reason, or you just like the social aspects of being in it together with others,” New Castle County Councilwoman Dee Durham wrote in her latest newsletter.

Durham is also on the board of Plastic Free Delaware, and the project is led for the group by Brigid Gregory.

They met through the Delaware Recycling Public Advisory Committee. Gregory and her husband, Andrew Trites, returned to Delaware in 2019. She has the education (a bachelor of science in energy, business and finance, with a minor in environmental inquiry, and a master of business administration in sustainability studies), the career background (four years at Johns Hopkins as the waste reduction and recycling coordinator) and the personal interest (a vermicomposting bin in a closet and a small composting tumbler in the backyard).

“Dee and I noticed a need for a community composting facility in Delaware,” she said. That realization led to “a lot of research into what might work and what is legal.” Homeowners can easily compost on their property, but it took a year for the group to clear the \$3,000

Talley Day facility with New Castle County and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

The **Delaware Community Composting Initiative** has received funding—\$27,000 the first year and \$50,000 this year—from the New Castle County Conservation District, DNREC and the Delaware Solid Waste Authority, plus honorariums from speaking at events and in-kind donations. This funding goes toward infrastructure, member training materials, outreach and educational materials on food waste reduction and diversion, resources to help schools improve their waste reduction and diversion programs and Gregory’s contracted time. “I’m currently working with Wilmington Charter High School and Booker T. Washington Elementary on waste reduction pilot programs,” she said.

Plastic Free Delaware is also working to develop similar facilities at the Nest Play Cafe in Middletown, Wilmington Friends School in Alapocas and Frear Elementary near Camden.

“Composting is work to do well,” Gregory said. That’s why members will start out with an hour of training and they are asked to volunteer 1.5 hours a month at the facility to use a shovel to mix the materials, record pile temperatures, water the piles and handle other tasks. Or they can pay \$47.70 a month to belong. There’s an **online form** to apply. The facility is expected to open by early January.

There are limits on what is accepted: “only uncooked fruit and vegetable scraps, clean eggshells, coffee grinds with filters, untreated grass and plant material, straw, leaves, wood chips and broken-down sticks.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)





# THE MUSIC SCHOOL OF DELAWARE HAS NEW LEADER AFTER 24 YEARS

BY JAREK RUTZ

After a quarter century, **The Music School of Delaware** has a new leader. Stephen Beaudoin, who's had decades of work in music, education, business

and social impact, has been picked as the school's new president and chief executive officer.

"This opportunity feels very alive to me and very aligned with my values and the kind of impact I hope to make in the world today," Beaudoin said, "leveraging music and creativity to connect communities and support people in realizing their fullest potential."

Beaudoin was selected after a national search, in partnership with **Aspen Leadership Group**, to replace the school's longstanding leader, Kate Ransom.

"The Music School Board, staff and faculty have spent the past two decades building upon the school's heritage of excellence, expanding to become a statewide and regional presence and the primary local resource for music education for everyone," Ransom said.

The upcoming centennial, she said, is a supreme opportunity to place the school's reputation and service track record in a bright light, broaden awareness and garner the support needed to sustain and advance the school. She said Beaudoin's background, as well as his

core values, position him to be an excellent replacement to ensure the school's future success.

"As the Music School celebrates 100 years of impact and turns our eyes to the next 100 years, we have some big, important questions to consider," Beaudoin said. "'Music has changed so much over the last 100 years and continues to evolve. The needs of students, families and our communities across Delaware continue to evolve.'"

## MUSIC SCHOOL'S EVOLUTION

Part of this evolution, he says, is asking questions like:

- How will The Music School understand and respond to these changing needs and conditions?
- How will we define 'music' in this context and for whom?
- What is our statewide call for engagement and impact?

"I look forward to collaborating with all our stakeholders to explore these questions and together find the answers that will allow us to make the most meaningful difference for and with our regional community," he said. Beaudoin will start his new endeavor Feb. 5, 2024.

"I look forward to working with the entire community—faculty, board, staff, supporters and community partners, as well as all the new friends we'll make in the months and years to come—to help steward the Music School into its next century of positive impact," he said.

Throughout his 20 years of experience in music and social work, Beaudoin has been recognized by **Musical America** magazine as one of the music industry's "Top Movers and Shapers," and by the **Portland Business Journal** as a "noted nonprofit leader."

"Stephen brings a wealth of experience and dedication that will position the school for another 100 years of success," said Richard Facciolo, chair of the Music School's board of directors. "The entire school community is very excited to have such talent join the school and share in continuing our mission."

Beaudoin comes to The Music School of Delaware after serving as the executive director of South Orange Performing Arts Center in northern New Jersey, where he helped fulfill a new strategic plan, managed the institution's commitment to new core values, developed a new community-based programs model and presented marquee musical artists and acts.

Beaudoin also served as executive director of the Washington Chorus, executive director of the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, executive director of PHAME (Oregon nonprofit providing arts education), and has been on the boards of TEDxPortland, the Nonprofit Association of Oregon and Oregon Humanities.





# 'NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS' BICENTENNIAL DRAWS CELEBRITIES TO ODESSA

BY BETSY PRICE

The [Historic Odessa Foundation](#)'s celebration of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" on its 200th birthday brought two holiday celebrities to Delaware Friday, Dec. 1, to mark the anniversary.

The use of the Clement Clark Moore poem to decorate the Odessa's 249-year-old Corbit-Sharp House caught the attention of author Pamela McColl, who has written a book tracing the art and history of the Moore's classic poem, and "Mr. Christmas" Benjamin Bradley, who hosts Netflix's "Holiday Home Makeover." They'll be in Odessa to celebrate the bicentennial of "Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas," which is the real title of the enduring poem published anonymously in 1823.

McColl, a historian and author of "[Twas The Night: The Art and History of the Classic Christmas Poem](#)," was introduced by Bradley at 4:30 p.m. in the Corbit-Sharp House for her lecture about the book and research. She will sign books after her talk. The event was expected to end by 7:30 p.m.

McColl's book traces the evolution of the holiday and shows how the historic figure of Saint Nicholas evolves into the central character in the story. It also talks about how characteristics of today's Santa Claus originated with Clement Clark Moore. She uses dozens of vintage illustrations from the thousands of editions published over the last 200 years in her presentation.

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# Business

photo link: Delaware Division of Small Business

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# EXCLUSIVE: 24-HOUR WALGREENS PHARMACIES RETURNING TO DELAWARE

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Good news for Delawareans who need prescriptions overnight: Walgreens has reopened its 24-hour pharmacy in Bear. And its “Seaford and Lewes locations are planned to return to 24-hour Rx services,” said Samantha Stansberry, manager of retail merchandising and marketing communications. DelawareLive.com is the first media outlet to report the news.

The **Bear** store is at 1120 Pulaski Highway (Route 40) and will be open 24 hours Monday through Friday, but only 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends. The pharmacy closes 1:30-2 a.m. for lunch.

The **Seaford** store, 22898 Seaford Highway (Route 13), is already open 24 hours and the pharmacy is now open until 10 p.m.

The **Lewes** store, 17239 Five Points Square (on Savannah Road/Route 9) is already open 24 hours and the

pharmacy is now open until 10 p.m.

“At this time, there are no plans to move other locations to 24-hour operations in Delaware, but operating hours are reviewed on a regular basis,” Stansberry added.

A Walgreens at 4098 Edgmont Ave. (Route 352). **Brookhaven**, PA, also has a 24-hour pharmacy (closed for lunch 1:30-2 a.m.) and is near Delawareans in the Claymont area.

## WALGREENS CHANGES

It’s good news, considering Delaware **had** lost all its 24-hour pharmacies and chances of them returning seemed bleak. That was especially a problem for people who ended up in urgent cares or emergency rooms late in the afternoon or evening and couldn’t find a place to get prescriptions like steroids, inhalers, pain meds or antibiotics filled for another 12 hours.

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Complicating the loss of the pharmacies were labor shortages and other industry ills.

Rite Aid filed for bankruptcy in October, **closing** stores in Chestnut Hill Plaza near Newark and at 3209 Kirkwood Highway, near Prices Corner. And then a few weeks later it suddenly closed another store in Claymont. Pharmacies trying to surmount national staffing shortages and burnout tried **cutting** store hours, buying **robots** to sort meds, using **remote** pharmacists, offering **bonuses** as high as \$75,000 and changing how pharmacists are **evaluated**.

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# OHIO CHEMICALS SETTLEMENT GIVES \$25 MILLION TO DELAWARE

**BY JAREK RUTZ**

The First State is getting \$25 million from a newly settled **lawsuit** in Ohio that triggered a contingency payment to Delaware. Chemours, DuPont and Corteva reached a \$110 million settlement in Ohio over “forever chemicals,” which refer to the release of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances from the facilities of those companies.

The substances, known as PFAS, have negative environmental impacts. They do not break down in the environment, can move through soils and contaminate drinking water sources, and can build up in fish and wildlife. Dozens of companies have faced thousands of lawsuits in recent years due to alleged contamination.

In 2021, Delaware settled with E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, The Chemours Company, DuPont de Nemours, Inc. and Corteva, Inc. The settlement was for

\$50 million, which went towards environmental restoration, improvement, sampling and analysis, community environmental justice and equity grants, and other natural resource needs. Part of the 2021 settlement stated that the companies will fund up to an additional \$25 million if they settle similar claims with other states for more than \$50 million.

“We are thrilled that our forward-thinking settlement with DuPont and others is now \$25 million more valuable to the state of Delaware,” said Kathy Jennings, Delaware’s attorney general. “That’s 50% more to restore our natural resources, to support public health initiatives in impacted communities and to keep our neighbors healthy.”





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# Food & Dining

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# TAKE A LOOK AT THESE 10 DELAWARE HOLIDAY POP-UP BARS

BY PAM GEORGE

It's holiday pop-up season, and celebrants can never get enough holly, bells and elves. But festive décor is no longer limited to malls and retail stores. Restaurants are also sprinkling holiday cheer in their communities.

## JINGLE BAR AT GRAIN CRAFT BAR + KITCHEN

Last year, the holiday theme was limited to the Delaware Avenue restaurant's rear patio, which has an outdoor bar. However, the holiday pop-up was so well-loved that the entire restaurant is participating this year. "The team went all out this time," said co-owner Lee Mikles.

The drink menu includes The Glittery Grinch (white wine, Patron Citronge, fresh fruit, white cranberry juice and ginger ale) and Rudolph's Nightcap (1792 Bourbon, maple syrup, Angostura bitters and cinnamon). The hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.

## BLITZEN HOLIDAY POP-UP

The seasonal pop-up at 220 W. Ninth St.— Pochi's old space in downtown Wilmington—is owned by Mike

Day, who also has [The Farmer & the Cow](#) on Market Street. Delaware uber-designer Dallas Shaw decorated the pop-up as a fashionable abode for Santa's head reindeer. This year, Blitzen has a full kitchen to turn out noshes. "Small bites, nothing crazy," Day explained.

Enjoy Blitzen while you can. Eventually, Day would like to put a permanent concept in the space. The hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 4 p.m. to midnight until Dec. 23. After that date, many people spend time with family, Day said.

## THE NAUGHTY LIST AT MAKER'S ALLEY

Through December, Maker's Alley in downtown Wilmington and its signature Airstream kitchen will dress up for the holidays. Along with lights, the outdoor eatery will salute the holiday's loveable anti-heroes, including the Grinch and Buddy the Elf.

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# Government

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# NEW CASTLE COUNTY CREATES ARTS COMMISSION, WILL SEEK FUNDING

BY JAREK RUTZ

New Castle County is taking a page out of the city of Brotherly Love's playbook in an effort to add art and creativity to its streets and neighborhoods. The County Council this week unanimously passed Councilwoman Dee Durham's [Ordinance 23-160](#) to create a Public Arts Commission. The legislation took inspiration from Philadelphia's [1% for Art](#) program, which requires new city construction or major renovation projects to include site-specific public art in the amount of up to 1% of the total budget.

Each member of a new nine-person Public Arts Commission will come from museums, foundations, universities or will be artists themselves, and will have a strong interest to bring more art into public spaces, according to Ken Hemphill, Durham's legislative assistant.

Although there is no funding element attached to the

commission, Hemphill said the County Council will be working with New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer to phase in several steps which will provide funding and opportunities for public art. "The creation of the Public Arts Commission was the first step," he said.

The board members would be unpaid, he said, but there is a proposal by several council members to pay all county boards and commission members.

The commission will:

- Serve as an advisory body for the procurement and location of visual public art on county property
- Acquire works of art for public spaces by the county
- Review conservation and relocation plans for county-owned sculptures and public works of art, installations and exhibitions
- Play a significant role in shaping policies and strate-

gies to integrate permanent and semi-permanent visual arts into county community spaces and development projects.

Five of the commission's members will be appointed by the County Council with the advice and consent of Meyer. The executive will appoint the other four members with the advice and consent of the County Council. Specifically, the commission will consist of:

- At least one representative from visual arts organizations, including art museums within the county
- At least two county residents who are visual artists or who have a demonstrated involvement in public art
- At least one seat from the faculty/governing body of an institution with art or architecture programs
- At least one representative from a non-profit organization engaged in supporting the visual arts
- At least one registered landscape architect
- The director of the Delaware Art Museum or their designee

"By encouraging public art, the commission will serve as a civic catalyst, create a welcoming sense of place and enhance the quality of life of all community members, especially underserved populations," Durham said. "By equitably engaging in the development and promotion of public art activities, the commission will stimulate neighborhood revitalization while helping to address social and economic inequalities in our communities."

Hemphill said that "public art" refers to permanent and semi-permanent types of pieces such as murals, statues, sculptures, paintings, installations and more, displayed in or on government buildings, properties, parks, libraries and new developments where feasible.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



# WILMINGTON MAILS SURVEYS TO HELP IDENTIFY LEAD WATER CONTAMINATION

**BY JAREK RUTZ**

The city of Wilmington is asking the public to help crack down on lead contamination in water. City water customers in Wilmington and New Castle County will be receiving a postcard with a QR code that links them to the survey to help identify and report lead water service lines on their private properties or inside their homes and businesses. For those eager to report and have not received the mailed survey quite yet, they can participate in the survey [online](#).

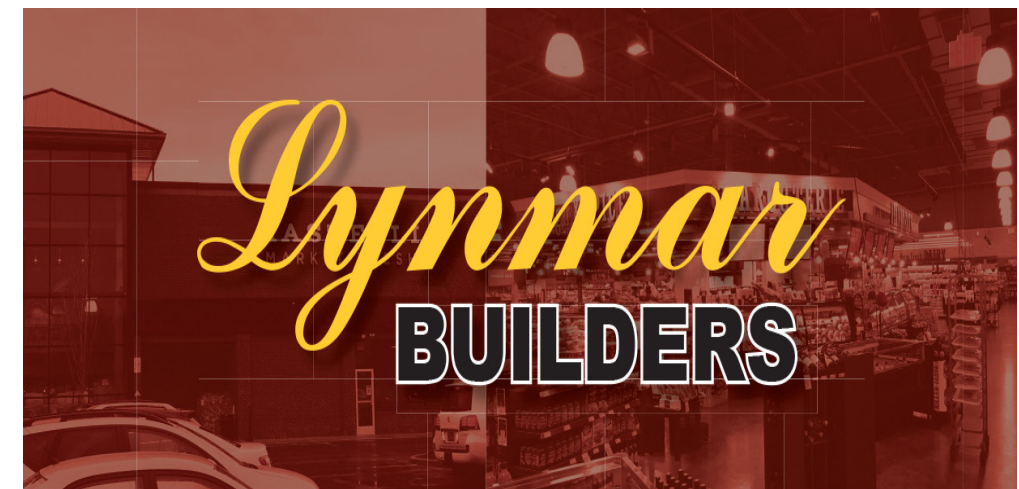
The survey has information to help residents distinguish the type of metal their pipes are made from (lead, copper, galvanized steel or plastic), as well as facts on why lead is harmful and how it's historically been used in plumbing materials, how lead contamination ends up in water, the contamination levels that are healthy and dangerous to drink, and more. The survey also tells

parents how they can protect their children. Young children are especially susceptible to lead poisoning, which can have terrible effects on their cognitive development.

Wilmington's Water Division is currently conducting an inventory of its municipal water service system, looking for lead lines and will report the results to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) by Oct. 16, 2024.

The issue of lead contamination is not new in the First State. In October 2022, dozens of schools were identified as having dangerous amounts of lead in their water. This was the result of a \$209,000 federal grant that allowed the Department of Education to begin a sampling initiative in 2020 to identify the levels of lead within drinking water at schools.

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# CIGARETTE THIEF SENT BACK TO PRISON, WHERE HE CAN'T SMOKE

BY BETSY PRICE

A New Castle man who robbed a string of tobacco stores over 10 days in spring 2022 has been sentenced to federal prison for 160 days for each of those 10. Donald Gladden, 57, will spend 53 months—or nearly four and one-half years—back in prison after being sentenced by Judge Colm F. Connolly of the [U.S. District Court](#) for the District of Delaware.

Gladden used a fake gun that looked real when he robbed stores on May 27, May 31 and June 5, 2022, demanding cash and Newport cigarettes. He stole more than \$10,000 in cash and cigarettes. He also was on supervised release, a form of federal probation, for a series of robberies he committed in Maryland. Twelve months of his sentence were specifically for violation of his probation and 41 months were because of the robberies.

Federal prisons do not allow inmates to smoke or use any form of tobacco.

“Mr. Gladden’s use of a fake gun to commit these violent acts does not minimize the terror his victims suffered,” said U.S. Attorney David C. Weiss of the District of Delaware. “His sentence serves as a warning to others that my office will continue to seek stiff prison sentences for those, like Mr. Gladden, who prey upon Delaware citizens.”

“The heinous acts of Mr. Gladden are not reduced by an inoperable firearm, as it inflicted the same level of fear to those in the community who expect to remain safe from harm,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge Ryeshia Holley of the FBI’s Baltimore Field Office.

This case was investigated by the Delaware State Police Robbery Unit out of Troop 2 in Bear, and the FBI’s Delaware Violent Crime and Safe Streets Task Force. Assistant U.S. Attorney Eli H. Klein prosecuted the case.



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## VIRTUAL EVENT TO CONNECT VETERANS TO NEW BENEFITS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Military families will have a three-day opportunity to explore Veterans benefits and new eligibility requirements at a one-stop-virtual-shop. From Dec. 12–14, between the hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Delaware vets can take advantage of 1-on-1 assistance and can connect with Veterans Affairs, state and community partners to obtain claim status updates, file claims, enroll in VA health care, schedule appointments and explore military transition services. They can also check if they have new benefit eligibility through the federal Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act.

That law was passed in summer 2022 and expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances.

The PACT Act also:

- Expanded and extended eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War and post-9/11 eras.

- Added more than 20 presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic exposures.
- Added more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation.
- Requires a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA healthcare.
- Helped the agency improve research, staff education and treatment related to toxic exposures.

When registering, participants will have the option to schedule a virtual appointment that best fits their availability and a VA representative will call the Veteran during the scheduled time to provide assistance.

Appointment availability is limited, and Vets **must register** before Dec. 10. The event is only for residents of Delaware and the New Jersey counties of Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem.



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# COLONIAL, RED CLAY BIGGEST WINNERS IN STATE FUNDING REQUESTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The state [Department of Education](#) has made some school districts very happy by deeming their requests for state funding necessary to fulfill building projects. For fiscal year 2025, the department approved 50 certificate of necessity requests, 44 of which involved state funding. They were concentrated in six districts.

Districts submit certificates of necessity each year to the department, typically asking for state money for capital projects and deferred maintenance on buildings that districts lack the local funds to address. The department then determines if the money is in fact needed.

Sometimes, the certificate of necessity includes a smaller percentage of local funds. This often pushes the district to referendum, where district residents must approve a local tax increase to boost local revenue and fulfill the local share of the agreement with the state.

The local/state split is different for every district, but usually hovers around 65% state/35% district.

For example, in Colonial and Red Clay Consolidated school districts, the state pays 60% for these projects while the district pays for the other 40% in local funds. For the Polytech School District, however, the state ponies up 71% of the funds and the local share is just 29%.

The state approves certificates of necessity even if there is no state funding involved. This is because the certificate of necessity provides the legal authorization for districts to hold a local referendum, said Alison May, public information officer at the Department of Education.

For this year's cycle of requests, Red Clay—which hasn't been approved in a decade—and Colonial were big winners.

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# DELAWAREANS INCLUDED IN \$30M PREHIRED STUDENT LOAN SETTLEMENT

BY JAREK RUTZ

The First State is one of 12 involved in a national \$30 million order against a student lender for malpractice. Attorney General Kathy Jennings’ office worked with the federal Consumer Protection Financial Bureau and 11 other states to crack down on the bankrupt student lender Prehired.

A Delaware bankruptcy court approved a stipulated judgment that requires Prehired to pay more than \$30 million in relief to student borrowers nationwide for making false promises of job placement, trapping students with income share loans that violated the law and resorting to abusive debt collection practices when borrowers could not pay.

The order, approved by a federal bankruptcy court, requires Prehired to cease all operations, as well as permitting the potential payment of \$4.2 million in redress to consumers that were affected by the malpractice.

“The number of borrowers in Delaware is still being determined and I can’t speculate as to how much they

might receive,” said Mat Marshall, communications director at the Delaware Department of Justice. “The state of Delaware—i.e., the DOJ or any other government agency—will not receive any funds as part of the settlement. This money is for consumers, not the government.”

The order also voids all of its outstanding income share loans, valued by Prehired at nearly \$27 million.

“Through an effort that grew to include 11 other states and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, we are pleased to announce this resolution that will provide real relief to borrowers around the country,” Jennings said.

Prehired operated a 12-week online training program claiming to prepare students for entry-level positions as software sales development representatives with “six-figure salaries” and a “job guarantee.” The company offered students “income share” loans to help finance the costs of the program.

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photo credit: Nick Halliday





## THIRD QUARTER SURGE PROPELS SALESIANUM TO 3A STATE TITLE

BY BENNY MITCHELL

Cape Henlopen and Salesianum came into the DIAA Class AAA championship game statistically even. After the first half the two were tied 10-10. Then Salesianum erupted for 21 unanswered points in the third quarter on its way to a 45-17 victory, winning its first Class AAA state championship and its eighth overall title. It was also the first title for first-year Salesianum head coach Gene Delle-Donne.

“I’m speechless, so happy for the community and the boys. They deserve it for all the hard work they have put in since January,” Delle-Donne said.

The game didn’t start out on a positive note for Salesianum. After forcing Cape Henlopen to punt on the opening possession, Salesianum took over at the Cape

47. On the first play, B.J. Alleyne took a direct snap and rolled out to the right and was hit by Jukai Payn, forcing a fumble that was recovered by the Vikings at the Salesianum 44-yard line. Six plays later, Jameson Tingle connected with Maurki James on a swing pattern for a four-yard touchdown pass. Wilson Ingerski added the kick as Cape Henlopen took a 7-0 lead with 3:21 to play in the first quarter.

“Watching film on Cape’s season, we saw that they like to come out fast and are well prepared and come out smoking, and they did that tonight and we had to temper that. We were lucky enough to do that and get the win,” Delle-Donne said.

Salesianum forced another Cape Henlopen punt in the second quarter at midfield. Salesianum capped off the scoring drive with a nine-yard touchdown pass from Brady McBride to Will Neumann. Collin Maradick added the kick as Salesianum tied the game at 7-7.

A second Salesianum fumble, this time a muffed punt, giving the Vikings the ball at the Salesianum 18-yard line. Ingerski hit a 38-yard field goal to put Cape Henlopen up 10-7 with 2:27 to play in the first half.

Salesianum took over at their 25 and drove to the Cape Henlopen seven-yard line, where Maradick kicked a 24-yard field goal to tie the game at 10-10 at halftime.

Salesianum opened up the second half on a third and 11 when McBride connected with Benjamin Anton in stride for a 73-yard touchdown pass. Maradick’s kick gave Salesianum their first lead of the game at 17-10.

The third quarter surge continued when L.J. Smith intercepted a Tingle pass and returned it nine yards for a touchdown and then Alleyne added a 24-yard touchdown run as Salesianum extended its lead to 31-10 midway through the third quarter.

Alleyne added two more touchdowns in the fourth quarter. A two-yard run and a 57-yard run sandwiching a three-yard touchdown pass from Tingle to Lucas Stevenson for Cape Henlopen. Alleyne led Salesianum with 197 yards rushing on 20 carries and three touchdowns.

“B.J. is an amazing kid, he’s been a well-oiled machine, he has been the Secretariat that we rode all week,” Delle-Donne said.







BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association Division 1A football state championship featured two teams who have never won a football state championship nor competed for one. The Tatnall Hornets and Wilmington Charter Force faced off Saturday afternoon in both teams' first-ever football championship competition. Which meant one of these teams was gonna be crowned a state champion.

The Tatnall Hornets defeated The Force to win their first football state championship. The Hornets were led by their all-star quarterback RahShon LaMons as well as their stingy defense that locked down The Force.

LaMons, even though he was hampered by an ankle injury, was able to affect the game in other ways than just using his running abilities like usual. LaMons was 8-of-9 on passing attempts for 149 yards and two touchdowns. Normally he diced up defenses with the run, but showed off his passing abilities when it counted most.

# TATNALL WINS FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

He did rush the ball 15 times for 66 yards, but was mainly used on first down opportunities.

On the receiving end of LaMons passes, Micah Stamper led all receivers catching all four of his targets for 88 yards and two touchdowns. Stamper made some amazing catches, especially in the fourth quarter, as LaMons hit him in the corner of the end zone for a 19-0 Tatnall lead. Jayden Minor and Chris Gordon each caught two passes well for Tatnall.

The Tatnall defense was throwing a shutout for 45 minutes until about three minutes left in the game when The Force were able to score on a two-yard rush from their quarterback Roman Paoli. Tatnall held The Force to just 92 total yards in the game 63 passing yards, and 29 passing yards. They were able to hold them to just 1-of-8 on third down conversions which played a pivotal role in the victory. Lineman Justin Smith was the anchor for the defense totaling five tackles with four of them being solo.

The Hornets defeated The Force by a score of 26-7. The reclassification of division has been a great thing for high school football, making the games more competitive as well as giving more schools the opportunity to compete for a state championship as you see the evidence in this game for the Tatnall Hornets.



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# UD WILL PAY \$6 MILLION TO JUMP TO CONFERENCE USA IN 2025

BY NICK ALESSANDRINI

The University of Delaware will jump to Division 1 play in 2025 when it **ditches** its current conference to join Conference USA. The Blue Hens will become the 11th full-time member of the conference, following Georgia's Kennesaw State as No. 10 when it joins at the beginning of the 2024 season.

The University of Delaware will also become the first FCS program to pay the new \$5 million reclassification fee inserted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association this year. The fee was \$5,000 in previous years but was raised in 2023, which many believe is designed to “prevent teams from making the jump.”

Delaware also will have to pay the \$1 million exit fee for the Colonial Athletic Association.

In doing so, though, the Blue Hens football will transition to the Division I Football Bowl Subdivision, the sport's highest level of competition in the NCAA.

## CONFERENCE USA TEAMS

**Conference USA's** other members consist of Sam Houston State, University of Texas El Paso, New Mexico State, Louisiana Tech, Jacksonville State in Alabama, Florida International, Middle Tennessee, Western Kentucky and Liberty in Virginia.

The Blue Hens will play the conference in baseball, softball, men and women's basketball, men and women's golf, women's soccer, men and women's tennis, women's cross-country, women's indoor and outdoor track and field, and volleyball. The other seven teams are unsure of their placement within the conference.

“We are thrilled to be joining Conference USA and stepping up to the highest level of Division I football competition, which will elevate the reputation and visibility of our entire Blue Hen Athletics program and galvanize our loyal alumni and fans,” UD President Dennis Assanis said.

All UD varsity programs will remain in the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) through their 2024-25 seasons, with all sports except football next season maintaining eligibility to compete for conference championships and NCAA postseason play.

The Blue Hens, who played their first football games in 1889, have won six national championships. The program ranks seventh in wins among current Football Championship Subdivision programs and 34th among all Division I programs.

“The opportunity to join Conference USA is a very proud moment for our entire university,” said Chrissi Rawak, director of athletics, community and campus recreation. “With this step forward, we will continue to offer an incredible student-athlete experience and elevate the visibility of all that is remarkable about UD. We couldn't be more excited for the entire state of Delaware.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)





BY PATRICK GARYANTES

The Blue Coats entered their game with the Long Island Nets Nov. 29 on the seasonal see-saw at 3-3. Despite the cold weather finally hitting the Wilmington area this week, the Blue Coats brought the heat with a 14-0 run to start the fourth quarter en route to a 119-104 victory on Wednesday night.

# BLUE COATS' 4TH QUARTER RUN LIFTS THEM OVER NETS

After a back and forth first three quarters, Delaware took an 82-77 lead into the fourth quarter and that's when they erupted. There were threes by Terquavion Smith and Javonte Smart, fast-break layups off great defense, beautiful half-court offense leading to a layup by Melvin Frazier Jr., and a tough fade away jumper on the baseline by Smith as the Blue Coats went on a 14-0 run.

The run kicked off what was an elite fourth quarter by the Coats. The defensive intensity rose, forcing six Nets turnovers in the fourth quarter. For reference, Long Island only turned the ball over seven times in the first three quarters. This entire run was even more impressive because it was while a hot Ricky Council was on the bench. Council had himself a career night with 32 points, half of which happened in the second quarter when the Blue Coats were in need of a spark. Delaware trailed by as many as 14 points in the first half before Council took over. Most of his points were accumulated by tough drives through the lane and finding a way of finishing within three feet of the rim through contact and tough defense. Council shot 14-of-20 on the night, including a cold 1-of-5 from three-point range.

David Duke also had himself a night, scoring 23. The former Providence guard hit 3-of-7 from deep on the night, 8-of-18 overall while adding four rebounds, three assists, and two steals. Former LSU guard Smart continued to shine as well, with 23 points of his own. With only two points at the break on 1-of-6 shooting,

Smart would score eight points in the last four and a half minutes of the third quarter to get himself going. Smart also finished with eight assists on the night, setting his teammates up with great passes all night.

Frazier (17 points, 13 rebounds) and Smith (16 points) also contributed in double figures. It was the first poor shooting night for Smith in the Chase Fieldhouse, who only connected on two of nine shots from three-point range.

The 22nd overall pick in this year's NBA Draft, Dariq Whitehead (Duke) got a start for the Nets as he recovers from a second surgery from a nagging foot injury. He played 14 minutes and contributed six points.

Long Island had five players score in double figures, led by second year guard Kennedy Chandler (Tennessee and Memphis Grizzlies). Chandler shot 8-of-11 overall, including 5-of-8 from deep for his team-high 21 points. Nets 2023 second round pick, Jalen Wilson (Kansas) also impressed with 19 points and eight rebounds, while 2021 first round pick, Keon Johnson (Tennessee) added 17 points, eight rebounds and six assists.

The Blue Coats now sit at 4-3 on the season and played Saturday, as they welcomed the Greensboro Swarm (Charlotte Hornets Affiliate) into the Chase Fieldhouse.





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