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Brandywine Library to Close for Three Months



Summer EBT Pilot Program



Courtside View—Week 5 Boys' Basketball Top 10


TED PFIRMAN PHOTOGRAPHY
LEWES ♦ DELAWARE

photo link: Second Street Players



Headlines

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BY PETER OSBORNE

Sometimes you don't know what you don't know.

Take the lawsuit filed July 7, 2023, by [ACLU Delaware](#) against Attorney General Kathy Jennings and the city of Wilmington over the state's solicitation and loitering statutes and Wilmington's loitering ordinance. The ACLU claims the lack of specificity in the current statutes opens the door to selective enforcement.

At the same time, some businesses and property owners worry the ambiguity of the laws or a decision to stop prosecuting violations of the current statutes, could allow homeless people and others to move within five feet of their front doors to solicit.

Scott Kidner, vice chair of legislative affairs for the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce and a Dover-based lobbyist, said a lack of specificity on this issue could have a significant impact on private property owners, small or large business owners, retailers and even multi-family property owners.

BUSINESSES: ACLU LOITERING LAWSUIT COULD AFFECT OUR SALES

“It is fundamentally wrong to have the control of your private property superseded by the state for individuals who are not customers or residents or with any connection to the property or the business,” Kidner said.

Store owners already battling retail theft and loss of sales to online shopping also worry about customers having to walk through people panhandling or loitering near their store entrance.

Since the suit was filed last July on behalf of Food Not Bombs — with the Delaware Continuum of Care, Friendship House and NAACP Delaware added in October — there has been little movement, says ACLU of Delaware Legal Director Dwayne Bensing.

“At this point, there have been no settlement negotiations,” he said last week. “The Attorney General has denied the allegations and the city has issued a partial motion to dismiss the charges.”

At the heart of it, the ACLU is concerned about selective enforcement of the existing statutes and targeting of minorities and the homeless.

In October when it added the new plaintiffs, the ACLU said the practices are being “carried out primarily by the Operation Safe Streets program [and include] a history of Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment violations such as unreasonable stops, searches and arrests, as well as racially biased policing.”

“The devil is in the details,” Bensing said, conceding that the statutes as they stand today lack specificity.

“It's an easy out for law enforcement to intimidate and harass people who are unhoused or are people of color,” he added. “If the AG was to say the state won't prosecute, that would make our argument moot. I'm disappointed that they've dug in their heels.”

LOITERING RESOLUTIONS

He said there are three ways the issue could be resolved:

- The state and city settle and publicly agree not to enforce the statutes.
- The judge declares the statutes unconstitutional.
- The General Assembly changes the laws.

The General Assembly is considering a so-called Homeless Bill of Rights ([HB55](#)) that provides rights for individuals experiencing homelessness, including protections from discrimination while in public and while seeking access to housing, employment and temporary shelter. The current version of HB55 is silent regarding concerns by businesses and property owners as to whether the legislation could be revised to specifically allow homeless people and others to move even closer to their establishments and properties.

Rep. Sean Lynn, a Democrat who represents the Dover area in District 31, is the lead sponsor of HB55. He did not respond to multiple requests for comment that included specific questions about the issue.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY JAREK RUTZ

Five of Delaware's 19 school districts are asking their residents to head to the polls in 2024 and vote for a local tax increase. They include the Brandywine, Red Clay Consolidated, Colonial, Smyrna and Appoquinimink.

In the First State, districts must hold referendums if they want to increase their local school tax in order to increase local revenue. Schools get funding from both the state and from local residents, and the referenda are for increasing that local stream of money to cover operating or capital expenses, or both.

Operating referenda is for funding that will help the district maintain its day-to-day operations, whether it be transportation expenses, supporting extracurricular programs, updating technology, giving teachers raises, hiring constables or more. An operating referendum is noncontingent on the state. A capital referendum typically is tied directly to state funding.

FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO HOLD TAX HIKE REFERENDA IN 2024

School districts annually submit a certificate of necessity to the state appealing for money for capital projects, including building maintenance. If the state approves the request, it will provide some funding for the projects. This is typically about a 65% state, 35% local share. So, if a capital project costs \$100 million, the state would provide \$65 million while the district needs to muster up the remaining \$35 million with local funds.

The split is sometimes more or less. For example, Colonial School District has a 60% state/40% local divide for its capital projects.

These funds could be for a new school building, a sports facility, playgrounds, parking lots, replacing roofs or HVAC systems or more. The tricky part about capital referenda, however, is the district loses the state money if the district can't come up with a local match. It essentially will go to another district in the next round of requests.

The Appoquinimink School District could be facing that problem.

Its December referendum failed when it sought a tax raise of \$435 to help build three new school buildings at the cost of \$289,841,52.

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Culture

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WORK TO CLOSE BRANDYWINE LIBRARY FOR THREE MONTHS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The Brandywine Hundred Library is closing for three months to replace its roof and heating, ventilating and cooling system. New Castle County is planning to close the library from Feb. 1 through May 1. During that time, it will open the Claymont and Woodlawn libraries seven days a week, with extended hours.

“This project has been needed for some time,” the county **said**. “BHL’s current HVAC system, which is over two decades old, is no longer capable of providing adequate heating and cooling. The new system is more energy-efficient and will improve airflow throughout the building. Simultaneously, ductwork will be cleaned and removed where necessary to ensure healthier air quality. The project will also encompass roof replacement; areas that have experienced damage from ongoing leaks will be repaired and repainted.”

During the work, the **Claymont Library** will be open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. During the work, the **Woodlawn Library** will be open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Friday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday.

OTHER CHANGES AT THE LIBRARY

Holds filled for Brandywine Hundred patrons after Feb. 1 will automatically be redirected to Claymont or Woodlawn library. Patrons can select a different location at the **Delaware Library Catalog**. From Jan. 24 to May 1, patrons will not be able to select the Brandywine Hundred Library as their hold pickup location.

Brandywine’s book drop will be closed and checked-out materials can be returned to any New Castle County library. Brandywine staff will continue to order new



“

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- URSULINE ACADEMY

materials. These will be housed at other libraries until Brandywine reopens. Brandywine staff will work out of other libraries for programs. Wi-Fi access will still be available in the **parking lot**.

“The Brandywine Hundred Library is a cornerstone of the community,” Diana Brown, the county’s library manager, said in a news release. “While a temporary closure is necessary for these essential upgrades, we are making every effort to minimize disruption for our patrons. We appreciate the community’s understanding and support as we work towards creating an even better library experience for everyone.”





STATE WANTS BEACH TOWNS TO PAY SHARE OF BEACH REPLENISHMENT

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

With beach replenishment expected to be needed more often and rising costs of providing it, DNREC is developing recommendations for local governments to help pay for it. Right now the cost is paid by the state and federal government.

“Nothing we’re doing with this study is going to affect current projects or future planned projects,” said Jesse Hayden, environmental program director for DNREC, during a virtual public forum Thursday. “We are simply trying to get ahead of the problem while we have the opportunity before we actually run out of money and can’t fund a project.”

The study also will try to determine the benefits of beach nourishment. Delaware has spent around \$68 million with another \$142 million contributed by the federal government through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on beach nourishment projects since the 1950s. As climate change accelerates erosion, beach re-

plenishment — usually involving digging up sand that’s further offshore — to rebuild beaches and protect roads, bridges and buildings may need to be repeated more frequently.

Ben Blachly of Industrial Economics Inc., consultants who are advising the state, said Thursday night during the public meeting that costs are rising because of fuel prices and contractor fees.

Delaware now pays for replenishment projects with 1% of the state lodging tax. DNREC expects to spend \$4.1 million for fiscal year 2024, which ends June 30. Additional state funding is provided by bond bill appropriations, with \$3.5 million expected this year. The replenishment study is the first step in exploring the concept of a local cost share.

“Intuitively, that seems like a fair proposal but nothing is changing right now,” Blachly said “There is no timeline for implementing or asking for local cost share.”

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photo link: [Bethany Beach Events & Entertainment](#)

Business

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EDGE GRANTS GIVE DE ENTREPRENEURS MONEY AND ADVICE

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

When businesses run by Kathy Collison and Donny Legans won **EDGE grants** from the Delaware Division of Small Business, they got more than a lot of money. They got a lot of good advice.

“The biggest takeaway is that the application process forces you as a new business owner to think through a lot of things that you didn’t even think about,” Collison said. “Even if we had not won it, it was a win-win. We got five years ahead on our business plan.”

Legans was similar in his praise. “Don’t delay,” he said to other entrepreneurs about the program, which is taking applications for the next cycle from Feb. 1 to March 1. “It was the first domino. Other grants knew we were serious, based on the strength of it.”

Encouraging Development Growth & Expansion is a competitive program that twice a year awards up to \$100,000 to five STEM-based companies and up to

\$50,000 to entrepreneurs. The funds are provided as a \$3 (state) to \$1 (business) match. Businesses must have been in operation for less than seven years, employ 10 people or fewer, be majority-located in Delaware and impress the judges.

Collison and her husband Joe co-own **Pink Electrical Services**, a Clayton-based electrical company. Legans and his wife Kim co-own the **Rail Haus**, a beer garden in downtown Dover.

EDGE AND PINK ELECTRICAL

Joe Collison has been an electrician for more than 25 years, Kathy said, and “he always wanted to be in business for himself. He wanted to have conversations with customers, see their needs, work within their budget and help them make better choices.”

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FOOD BANK OF DELAWARE OFFICIALLY OPENS NEW FACILITY IN MILFORD

BY TERRY ROGERS

The Food Bank of Delaware marked the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service holiday by officially cutting the ribbon on its new 70,000-square-foot facility in Milford this morning. The ceremony culminated an almost three-year project to build a new facility to enhance services to residents of Kent and Sussex counties.

“It’s hard to believe we were here just a little over a year ago for our official groundbreaking ceremony and how far we’ve come. It’s incredible to watch this project come to life,” Steve Thompson, chairman of the board for the Food Bank, said. “Most importantly, the ability to open this facility that will really change lives and transform lives in southern part of the state. Changing lives would not have been possible without all of you, our generous donors, our volunteers, the partners that

we work with every day advocates, friends and elected officials that share our vision.”

Thompson thanked the many state and local officials, dignitaries and others in attendance on the cold, blustery day. Sen. Tom Carper spoke, telling a story about a young boy in Alaska whose mother continually sent him outside to play until the boy told his mother he was freezing.

“I know you are all freezing today, but are here to celebrate this glorious, glorious day. I just come from celebrating this day with some of our other elected officials as well, celebrating the life of Martin Luther King Jr.,” Sen. Carper said. “I never met Dr. King, but I believe one of his favorite scripture verses was actually Matthew 25. ...

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Government

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WILMINGTON COUNCIL REJECTS VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN MAYOR

BY JAREK RUTZ

A resolution for a vote of no confidence in Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki led to some strong words from the public and city council Thursday night, but it didn't pass. The discussion in city council meeting was in response to public comments Purzycki made describing the council's new law to keep city jobs open to only city residents as "mob rule".

Purzycki, who is in the last year of his second term, announced in fall 2023 that the city would no longer enforce city residency for current and newly hired city employees. Council members and others immediately pushed back, saying living local offers enough home-grown talent and also means accountability and responsiveness. They were angry for the timing of Purzycki's decision, which was made just hours after he announced he would not be seeking re-election. It's widely believed

outgoing Gov. John Carney will run for the mayor's job.

A motion or vote of no confidence is a formal expression by a government body that an officeholder is unfit to occupy their office.

The council made the residency requirement a law in November 2023 after the public strongly supported it during hearings. Purzycki then released a [statement](#) that said "mob rule" replaced civil debate.

In Thursday's hearing, several members of the public condemned the mayor's comments.

"When he described it as a mob rule situation, he used a trigger word or what we call a dog whistle word, that says to the general public that a lawless activity is taking place, that possibly intimidating activity is taking place," said The Rev. Derrick Johnson, pastor at [Joshua Harvest Church](#) in Wilmington.

He said those comments were not mistakenly placed, but rather strategically placed in a spirit that has captured American politics.

"It is a virus, a divisive virus strategy that's been used all over our democracy that demeans and diminishes the people's trust in the democratic process," he said. Rev. Johnson said it was meant to send a message to Wilmington citizens that democracy did not take place, but lawless intimidation did.

Another man said when "five Whites get together it's a group, but when five Blacks get together it's a mob." "The mayor harbors the exact same sentiment," he said. "When a group of Whites get together talking about nothing, it is acceptable, but when Blacks get together talking about something, it is unacceptable."

A woman said the people talked and the council voted democratically, and the mayor wrongly said "mob rule" out of disappointment. Even so, she said, Purzycki has done a lot for the city.

The no confidence resolution ultimately failed with just two 'yes' votes — from District 2 Councilwoman Shané Darby, the sponsor of the resolution, and Ernest "Trippi" Congo, president of Wilmington City Council. The majority of council members said they were hurt, felt attacked and were opposed to the "mob" comment, but said there were other problems the council must deal with.

"We need to continue to move forward as a city, work on this budget, continuing on housing and EMS services," said District 7 Councilman Chris Johnson. "I don't condone his behavior, his statement."

[READ MORE HERE](#)

DELAWARE PART OF NATIONAL PILOT OF SUMMER FOOD STAMPS PROGRAM



BY JAREK RUTZ

About 80,000 Delaware children are eligible to receive \$120 extra in federal food benefits this summer to replace free lunches at school. Students who will get the benefit must come from families who are already qualified for the benefits, or meet income guidelines and qualify before summer.

The state's cost for the program will be about \$1.5 million to administer, according to Tim Mastro, deputy director of communications at the [Delaware Department of Health and Social Services](#). The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) will pay \$120 for each child as part of the pilot program. If the expected 80,000 children take advantage of the program, the total cost will be \$9.6 million.

“Benefits for Summer EBT are 100% federally funded,” Mastro said. “Administrative costs for Summer EBT are covered 50% by federal funds and 50% by state funds.”

Children are automatically certified for Summer EBT if:

- The child is eligible for free or reduced price meals through an application with their school, or
- The child receives SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid.

These children will receive Summer EBT benefits automatically and no other action is required by the family.

Families with children who do not qualify through a school meals application, SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid must complete a Summer EBT application to determine their eligibility for the program.

Delaware joins 43 other states in launching a Permanent Summer EBT Program this year, with more states expected to join in 2025. The department of agriculture expects this year's program to serve close to 21 million children, providing a total of nearly \$2.5 billion in grocery benefits. This is around 70% of the total population of children eligible for Summer EBT.

EBT means Electronic Benefit Transfer and is a benefit delivery system that provides public assistance recipients with electronic access to their cash and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. SNAP benefits are also referred to as food stamps.

Through the new program, states will provide families with \$120 per eligible child for the summer to buy food at grocery stores, farmers markets or other authorized retailers, similar to how SNAP benefits are used.

The funds are divided into \$40 a month allotments for June, July and August. If 80,000 Delaware children benefit from the \$120, it will have a total cost of \$9.6 million.

The Depart. of Agriculture [cited](#) several evaluations of a multi-year demonstration project that showed providing summer EBT reduced child hunger and improved diet quality. The research also shows that summer grocery benefits decreased the number of children with very low food security by about one-third and supported healthier diets featuring more fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

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DELDOT HAS NO PLANS TO END ITS HUMOROUS ROAD SIGNS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

It wasn't considered funny when the feds told the states that their road signs can no longer be humorous. The new standard, described on page 519 of the 11th edition of the [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways](#), made the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* on Jan. 11. Ever since, writers have generally been asking "Can't they take a joke?"

No.

Here's how the rule reads: "A CMS should not be used to display a traffic safety campaign message if doing so could adversely affect respect for the sign. Messages with obscure or secondary meanings, such as those with popular culture references, unconventional sign legend syntax, or that are intended to be humorous, should not be used as they might be misunderstood or understood only by a limited segment of road users and require greater time to process and understand."

Say what?

They're talking about the changeable message road signs that riff off of movies and other elements of pop culture, use puns or crack dad jokes to draw attention to messages about safe driving.

"The Federal Highway Administration declined to comment on specific road signs and whether they pass muster," *The Wall Street Journal* wrote.

"A spokeswoman for the agency said in a written statement that states should follow five principles. Traffic-safety messages should 'fulfill a need; command attention; convey a clear, simple message; command respect; and provide adequate time for proper response.'"

The Delaware Department of Transportation gave this response to [WDEL](#) about the new rule: "Our position is that the messaging we use has a safety theme and therefore is appropriate for use."

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BILL WOULD NEARLY DOUBLE STATE BENEFITS IN LINE OF DUTY DEATHS

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

A bill to raise death benefits from \$200,000 to \$375,000 for families of first responders who die in the line of duty passed its first committee hearing this week. **Senate Bill 202** would bring Delaware's benefits closer to the federal payout for public safety officers of \$437,503.

If passed into law, SB 202 would be retroactive to July 1, 2023, and money would be paid to a family at the rate of no more than \$50,000 a year, according to the bill.

"While this is no consolation should they lose their person who passed, it at least compensates the family a little bit more fairly," said Sen. Russell Huxtable, D-Lewes, the bill's primary sponsor, in Wednesday's Senate Banking, Business, Insurance and Technology Committee.

Those who receive the benefits include police officers, firefighters, auxiliary and volunteer ambulance and

rescue company members, paramedics, and others.

The bill received no opposition from the six committee members in attendance. It's also sponsored by a wide number of Democrats and Republicans.

APPROVAL OF BENEFITS

The same approval was not true in a Wednesday House committee meeting considering whether to allow overtime work hours incurred by police officers and firefighters to be **counted** toward their pensions in county and municipal plans.

One member of the Wilmington Fire Department said he was against **House Bill 39** because of the serious fiscal and operational impact it would have on the department. The fiscal note accompanying the death benefits bill said that claims are usually paid over five years. It's expected to cost the state an additional

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\$40,000 in fiscal 2025, which starts July 1, for pending and two new claims; \$60,000 in 2026 for two new claims and those occurred in 2024-2026; and \$80,000 in fiscal 2027 for two new claims and new claims from 2024 through 2026. Debra Lawhead, Delaware's Insurance Coverage Administrator, said the state has two claims for deaths that occurred since July 1, 2023.

"We are waiting for background information to adjudicate those claims and then they go to a hearing in front of the insurance commissioner to accept or deny them" she said.

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STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS DELAYED

BY JAREK RUTZ

The annual State of the State Address from Delaware Gov. John Carney has been postponed due to Carney being sick. A statement from the Governor's Office says that Carney "has a fever and mild symptoms, but is in good spirits." The address will be rescheduled at a later date, to be determined.

The House hearing Thursday was also cancelled, but the Senate will meet at 1:30 p.m. The Joint Capital Improvement Committee meeting will take place and will allow the committee to draft the Mini Bond Bill. The Mini Bond Bill does not authorize any new funding, but clarifies or transfers existing appropriations.



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FINANCIAL BURDENS CAUSE OPPOSITION TO PENSION BILL

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that would adjust the pension calculations for Delaware's police officers and firefighters faced opposition from those very groups in Wednesday's House Judiciary Committee meeting.

House Bill 266, sponsored by Rep. Cyndie Romer, D-Newark, would add wages earned as a result of required additional work hours to the definition of "compensation" for purposes of calculating pensions in the county and municipal police and firefighter pension plan. Under the current system, mandatory overtime earnings are not included in the pension calculation. Romer clarified that this would not take into consideration volunteer time.

"When a firefighter or police officer volunteers for overtime...that pay does not go towards their pension plan and that does not change with this bill," she said. "However, there are times when they are ordered to work due to lack of staffing, and if they refuse, they are

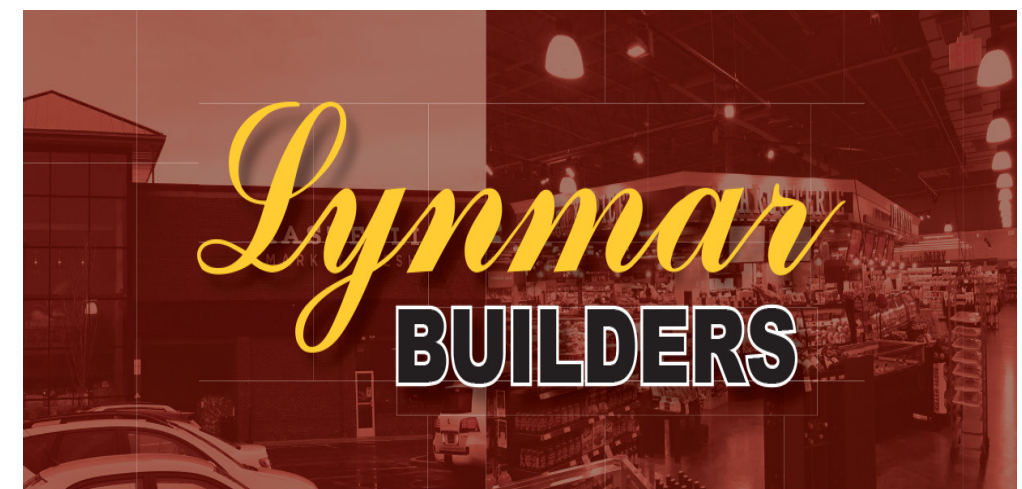
subject to disciplinary action and could be terminated. So this is not optional work, but it is also not paying into their pension plan."

Nationally, police departments have been hit with staffing shortages. Last year, **House Bill 39** was introduced. It would pump an extra \$20 million into local police departments, and several officers testified that it would help with their marketing and advertising initiatives to help recruit more officers. That bill is awaiting consideration in the House Appropriations Committee.

In Wednesday's hearing, Romer also explained that the final average compensation rate for pensions is calculated by taking the average of the highest paid 36th consecutive month of a person's career to determine the base pay.

"There is no cost to the state because this is not a state plan," she said. "We just administer it, but the cost will be shared across the agencies."

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Education

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BY JAREK RUTZ

The **Sanford School** has just received the largest individual gift in its 93-year history. The private school in Hockessin will use the \$1.5 million donation from alumni Kenny Mitchell, a 1993 graduate and current trustee, and his wife Heather, to launch the Mitchell Family Scholars Program. Mitchell is the global chief marketing officer at **Levi Strauss & Co.**

The scholarship fund is designed to advance the school's commitment to affordability and diversity.

"We are a school that supports all kinds of families and we readily recognize that affording an independent school tuition like ours isn't easy for a lot of families," said Mark Anderson, head of the school, which serves pre-K through grade 12.

The scholarship will be awarded to one student each year and will pay for all four years of their Upper School experience. Tuition for the Upper School is \$31,000 per year. Anderson pointed out that the school offers a **variety** of merit-based scholarships and financial aid.

SANFORD USES GIFT TO CREATE 4-YEAR SCHOLARSHIP

The first Mitchell Family Scholar was admitted to Sanford's class of 2027 in the fall and a new scholar will join Sanford's Upper School each of the next three years. The school declined to name the recipient.

The spread of the scholarships will ensure that Sanford's Upper School will perpetually host four Mitchell Scholars, creating a lasting legacy of the Mitchell family's generosity while changing the lives of generations of future Sanford students.

"Because we have a robust group of candidates in any given year who are coming to us through our own financial assistance programs, we're identifying potential scholars through that group," Anderson said. "We offer over \$5 million in financial assistance school-wide, and that's in grades preschool through 12."

Kenny Mitchell said in a press release that if it were not for the generosity of the Sanford School, he would not have been able to afford an education there, and he's grateful to be able to pay that forward. Mitchell said attending Sanford helped form his personal and professional lives.

"I look back at my time as a Sanford student with tremendous gratitude for the educators, coaches, staff, parents and Sanford community members who encouraged and fostered my early talents as a student, athlete and leader," he said.



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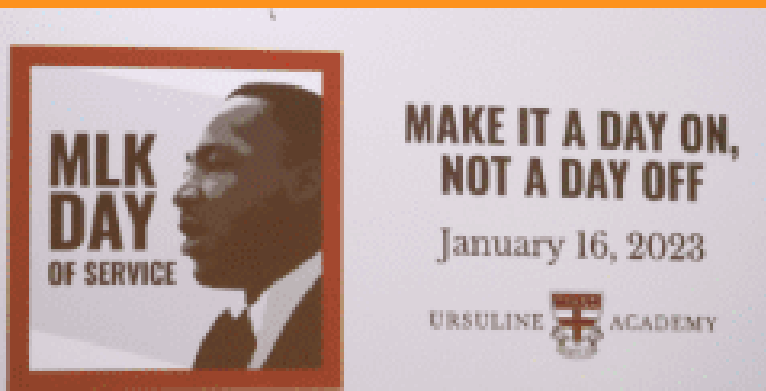


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URSULINE HONORS MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WITH DAY OF SERVICE

BY JAREK RUTZ

More than 100 parents and students of [Ursuline Academy](#) spent their day off Monday volunteering in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This is the fifth year the Wilmington private Catholic school has organized a day of service to honor MLK Day.

“I feel like since our motto is ‘Serviam’ [I will serve], today’s volunteering connects our values with his [Martin Luther King Jr.],” said Elena Matthews, an eighth grade student.

After a morning song and prayer that lasted about 10 minutes, school leadership made remarks about the intersection of Dr. King’s community service, driven through his faith in God and Ursuline’s commitment to Christ and contributing positively to society. Then the students, parents and several employees broke off into stations to volunteer for about two hours.

The stations included making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the [Emmanuel Dining Room](#), which

provides Delaware’s hungry with free meals. Participants gloved up and got to work smothering jelly and peanut butter onto bread while others prepared the brown paper bags with trail mix, fruit and water bottles.

Back in the kitchen, the smells of fresh pasta dough and sauce would make any Italian grandmother proud, as volunteers prepared a lasagna dinner for residents of [Sojourner’s Place](#), a homeless shelter in Wilmington.

A few were able to bear the freezing temperatures and participated in a park clean-up at the nearby reservoir. Others made handmade cards for cancer patients to be delivered on Valentine’s Day via [Send a Smile Today](#).

There was also a place to make and design wreaths as well as a grave blanket assembly to lay out at the grave sites of Veterans to show respect and gratitude for those who served. Another station included packing pet treats to deliver to the local [SPCA](#).

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Celebrating National School Choice Week

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LAW WOULD CREATE FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS TO HAVE ATHLETIC TRAINER

BY JAREK RUTZ

Extracurriculars ruled the day in Wednesday’s House Education Committee meeting. [House Bill 244](#), sponsored by Rep. Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek, would provide funding for every public high school in the state to have a full-time athletic trainer. The funding would be phased over the next three fiscal years. Both the state and local districts would allocate money for the athletic trainer. Here’s the cost split:

Cost:	State Cost	Local Cost	Total Costs
Fiscal Year 2025:	\$673,459	\$220,971	\$894,429
Fiscal Year 2026:	\$1,373,855	\$450,780	\$1,824,636
Fiscal Year 2027:	\$4,593,257	\$1,507,109	\$6,100,366

“They promote student safety and wellness, they enhance the entire school community,” Smith said. “They bring health equity and cost reduction, they increase improvement and retention, with this bill, to keep folks in our state who are trained in our state.

Smith also pointed out athletic trainers can save families money from trips to the hospital. They also promote and can walk students through ways to be mentally healthy, he said.

“One shared with me that he has not only treated athletes’ physical ailments, but has also been there for their mental health needs as well as guidance in preventing substance abuse issues,” Smith said. “That’s why you also see a lot of colleges going to sports psychologists and hiring them to help.”

Several legislators gave personal anecdotes of either themselves or their children participating in athletic events and needing the expertise and availability of an athletic trainer.

Smith also pointed to two recent incidents in sports, in which Buffalo Bills’ safety Damar Hamlin collapsed last year due to cardiac arrest in the middle of a nation-

ally-televised Monday Night Football game. Smith also cited Bronny James, the son of basketball legend LeBron James, who also suffered a cardiac arrest in the middle of a practice late last year. Both Hamlin and James have credited the athletic trainers several times for caring for them and bringing them back to health during an emergency that could have ended their lives.

There were some questions around what schools would get the first round of funding, since the bill says nine schools will get funds in year one of the rollout.

Smith said that the schools with the highest participation in sports would get preference. This means the actual number of students participating in a sport, not just the number of sports programs a school has.

Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Newark, suggested the bill clarifies that all students can take advantage of the athletic trainer’s services, not just athletes. For example, if a student in marching band tears a ligament, that individual would be able to consult with the trainer.

The bill was voted for unanimously and was released by committee. It now heads to the full House floor for consideration.

Sticking to the theme of extracurriculars, [House Bill 263](#), sponsored by Rep. Sherry Dorsey Walker, D-Wilmington, would ban schools from suspending students from school-sponsored extracurricular activities on the basis of an outstanding debt for unpaid school meals. The bill lists extracurriculars as: band, clubs, homecoming, interscholastic sports, prom and student government.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



photo credit: Sanford Athletics on Instagram

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COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 5 GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The girls' basketball season saw a strange week as games were postponed due to a storm that provided heavy rain and winds. The forecast this week is for snow and very frigid temps so check the schedules before heading to the gyms.

The Ursuline Raiders and Caravel Bucs continue to succeed against some of the better out of state competition they are facing. These two teams will meet at Caravel in February, but in the meantime they both have some tough games coming up.

The conference races are heating up and that includes the Diamond State that has four teams in a tight battle for the championship. Archmere, DMA, Conrad and St. Elizabeth will start facing each other in the coming weeks. St. Elizabeth beat Conrad.

The Independent Conference has a pair of young teams that are looking to make a run to the state tournament in Tower Hill and Wilmington Friends. Both teams met on Friday night in a rare prime time game.

Here are the top 10 for this week voted by our Delaware Live Crew.

No. 1 Ursuline (9-1) (LW No. 1) The Raiders defeated AI DuPont. They faced Saint Mark's on Thursday.

No. 2 Caravel (9-1) (LW No. 2) The Bucs picked up a pair of wins against out of state teams. They play at Paul VI (NJ) on Sunday.

No. 3 Sanford (4-4) (LW No. 3) The Warriors faced Tower Hill on Wednesday.

No. 4 St. Elizabeth (7-1) (LW No. 4) The Vikings defeated Conrad last week. They hosted Wilmington Charter on Thursday

No. 5 A.I. DuPont (9-3) (LW No. 6) The Tigers went 1-1 last week, losing to No. 1 Ursuline. They were at Glasgow on Thursday..

No. 6 Dover (8-1) (LW No. 5) The Senators beat Sussex Tech last week. They traveled to Milford on Thursday and to No. 7 Padua on Saturday.

No. 7 Padua (7-2) (LW No. 8) The Pandas beat Saint Mark's last week. They traveled to Wilmington Friends on Wednesday and hosted Dover on Saturday.

No. 8 Saint Mark's (8-2) (LW No. 7) The Spartans went 1-1 last week with a win over Red Lion and a loss to Padua. They hosted No. 1 Ursuline on Thursday and traveled to No. 10 DMA on Saturday.

No. 9 Cape Henlopen (4-4) (LW No. 9) The Vikings defeated Milford last week. They hosted Polytech on Thursday night.

No. 10 DMA (6-3) (LW 10) The Seahawks won a conference game against Newark Charter. They hosted Archmere on Thursday and Saint Mark's on Saturday.

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COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 5 BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

Last week saw a couple days of games canceled due to heavy winds and rain. This week has potential for some snow, so make sure to check the schedule before you head to the gym.

The Smyrna Eagles defeated Caesar Rodney last week in a matchup of much-improved Henlopen North teams. The Eagles improved to 4-0 at home and 7-2 overall. The Riders are at 6-4 on the season.

Dover has a pair of tough road games this week in Smyrna and St. Elizabeth. The Senators tough non-conference schedule this year has them on the road to three teams ranked in the top 10, and this week it takes them to top-ranked St. Elizabeth.

We have a battle of unbeatens as 8-0 Lake Forest travels to 8-0 Seaford on Tuesday in a big Henlopen South game. Seaford is averaging 71.5 PPG while Lake Forest is averaging 67.9. Get to Seaford early.

Here are the top 10 for this week voted by our Delaware Live Crew.

No. 1 St. Elizabeth (8-0)(LW No. 1) The Vikings beat Conrad in conference play. They travel to Saint Mark's on Tuesday and Wilmington Charter on Thursday. They hosted No. 3 Dover on Saturday.

No. 2 Sallies (5-5)(LW No. 2) The Sals beat William Penn in their first home game in 35 days. They hosted Howard on Tuesday then traveled to Washington, DC, to take part in a tournament hosted by the Washington

Wizards over the weekend.

No. 3 Dover (7-1)(LW No. 3) The Senators defeated Sussex Tech last week. They traveled to Smyrna on Tuesday, hosted Milford on Thursday, and traveled to No. 1 St. Elizabeth on Saturday.

No. 4 Middletown (5-3)(LW No. 4) The Cavs defeated Newark last week. They traveled to Appoquinimink on Friday.

No. 5 William Penn (4-3)(LW No. 5) They lost to No. 2 Sallies last week. They hosted Hodgson on Tuesday and Mount Pleasant on Friday.

No. 6 Sanford (6-3)(LW No. 6) The Warriors picked up a pair of conference wins over St. Andrew's and Tower Hill. They hosted Wilmington Christian on Friday.

No. 7 Odessa (9-0)(LW No. 7) The Ducks defeated Christiana last week. They hosted Wilmington Charter on Tuesday, traveled to Red Lion on Thursday and Delcastle on Friday.

No. 8 Lake Forest (8-0)(LW No. 8) The Spartans beat ECHS last week to remain unbeaten. They had three road games this week: Seaford on Tuesday, Laurel on Thursday, and Archmere on Saturday.

No. 9 Mount Pleasant (9-2)(LW No. 9) The Green Knights defeated St. Georges Tech last week. They hosted Appoquinimink on Tuesday and traveled to William Penn on Friday.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



SMYRNA VOLLEYBALL TEAM IS DSBA TEAM OF THE YEAR

BY GLENN FRAZER

The Smyrna high school volleyball team has been selected as the Delaware Sportswriters and Broadcasters (DSBA) “Team of the Year” for 2023.

Head coach Daniel Wandless guided the Eagles to the state championship at the Bob Carpenter Center in November. Wandless has coached the team since its inception 19 years ago. He told Delaware Live, “We are extremely proud and honored to be selected for the DSBA team of the year.”

The trail-blazing title is the first for any program south of the canal, first ever for a Henlopen Conference team, and the first for a traditional public school since Concord in 1992.

Smyrna Athletic Director Bill Schultz said the varsity volleyball program and the Athletic department are very exciting by the award. “It is great to see the athletes and coaches be honored by the DSBA Team of the Year award. The players and coaches worked extremely hard

and it was fun for our community to enjoy the first ever volleyball championship for Smyrna High School and the Henlopen Conference.”

The Eagles recorded an overall record of 19-1, including 14 match “sweeps”, dropping just 10 sets all year! Their tournament run featured 3-0 matches against Delmarva Christian, Newark Charter and Caesar Rodney before winning the title three sets to one against Ursuline. The team featured three DIAA All State players in Elise Carter, Eliza Schneider and Delaware player-of-the-year Anna Richardson.

Smyrna’s team will be honored at the annual DSBA banquet and luncheon on Presidents Day, Feb. 19, at the Riverfront Events Center. The Center is located at the Hyatt Hotel, 760 Justison Street in Wilmington. Tickets may be purchased [HERE](#).





BY NICK ALESSANDRINI

On Wednesday morning, the University of Delaware football program along with the CAA (Coastal Athletic Conference) announced the 2024 schedule for the upcoming season. This will be the final year that Delaware will be in the Coastal Athletic Conference, formerly the Colonial Athletic Conference, which it joined back before the 2001-2002 school year.

2024 Delaware Football Schedule

8/29 – Bryant

9/14 – at NC A&T *

9/21 – Penn

9/28 – Sacred Heart (Parents & Family Weekend)

10/5 – at Monmouth *

10/12 – Maine *

DELAWARE TO PLAY AN ENTIRE FCS FOOTBALL SCHEDULE IN 2024

10/19 – at Richmond *

10/26 – UAlbany * (Homecoming)

11/9 – Rhode Island *

11/16 – Campbell *

11/23 – at Villanova *

The 2024 schedule will feature seven home games at Delaware Stadium and just four away contests. The season will begin on a Thursday night, Aug. 29, in Newark, as the Blue Hens will welcome in the Bryant Bulldogs, a team slated to join the CAA in the upcoming year. Delaware will play eight conference game, but none of the games will count for the Hens toward the CAA standings due to jump to FBS next season. Though the games will count for their opponents. Delaware officials also said they would be open to adding a 12th game, as the schedule allows if the right opportunity surfaces. If not, the team will have off weeks on Sept. 7 and Nov. 2 this season. Delaware will be ineligible for a conference championship or playoff opportunity in the 2024 season due to the impending jump to FBS and Conference USA. Delaware is coming off back-to-back trips to the round of 16 in the FCS playoffs under head coach Ryan Carty.

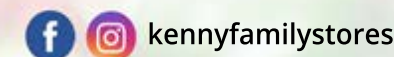
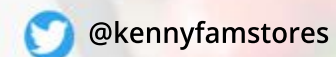
*CAA game



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