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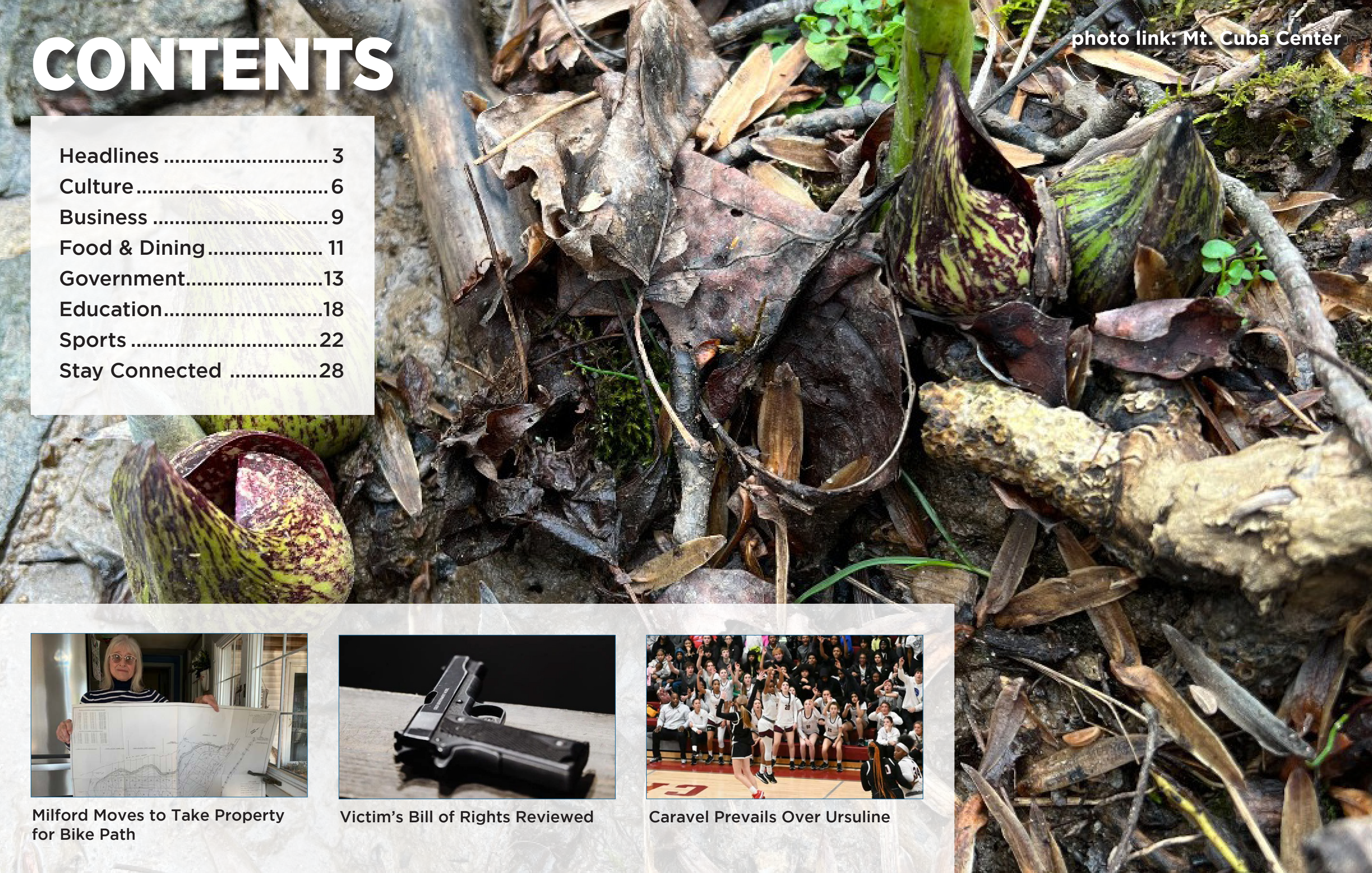


photo link: Milford School District



Headlines

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ECONOMIST PREDICTS MILD 2024 RECESSION, HIT TAYLOR/TRAVIS SONG

BY BETSY PRICE

A Baltimore economist known for his sense of humor left the punchline of his [New Castle County Chamber of Commerce](#) speech Tuesday to the last bit of his presentation:

“It will come nearly a year after I initially anticipated, but recession is coming in 2024,” [Anirban Basu](#) told the 200 people attending the chamber’s sold-out annual State of the Economy luncheon. It will be mild, he said.

Basu cited a variety of reasons as underpinning for that prediction: continued high interest rates; continued high federal debt; an inability of the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates; a lower number of mortgage applications; personal savings depleted by consumer spending; rising mortgage and credit card delinquencies; the lack of affordable housing; and an inversion in the 1-year and 10-year yields on treasury bonds.

“If I’m wrong about that, I’ll predict a recession for 2025,” he joked. “And I’m gonna keep predicting one until I get it right and then I will retire and then people

will say, well, that Basu — he knew how to forecast the economy.”

A recession is likely to hit hardest the people who comprise the bottom 50% of America’s wealth, he said. The top 10% — which controls 30% of the country’s wealth — and those between 51% and 90%, who control another chunk, are unlikely to be affected, Basu said.

The chair of the Maryland Economic Development Commission from 2014-2021, Basu admits he’s a pessimistic guy and looks for reasons to be pessimistic about the economy. He likes to pick a theme for his talks, and this year focused on the Good, the Bad and the Ugly, referencing Clint Eastwood movies. The prediction of a recession was his ugly. But there was a lot of upside in 2023 into 2024, he said.

“On an annualized basis in the current quarter, there are very few signs of a slowing economy,” he said.

One major upside, he insisted, is the very public Taylor Swift-Travis Kelce romance.

“Is this thing between her and Travis Kelce not the greatest thing ever,” Basu asked, to some laughs. “I think it’s precisely what this nation needs in these troubled times. It’s fabulous.”

Pictures of them kissing on the internet “has the country aglow,” he said. “This is going to end well because they are a very handsome couple, I think we must agree on that, and they are going to produce one very beautiful number-one hit song. When that occurs, and it will occur, the music is going to flow and I for one cannot wait.

THE GOOD

- “Nobody” saw the explosive 4.9% growth in the third quarter of 2023, which helped push the year’s growth to an annualized 2.5%, “That is a far cry from a recession.”
- Consumers were spending aggressively in the first quarter of 2024 on retail sales, capping off a year in which they continued to spend more of the savings they amassed during COVID-19.
- That spending drove up the cost of things like travel and concert tickets (think Taylor Swift and Beyonce). “We just set a record for the most number of people to pass through TSA checkpoints.”
- There’s 9 million job openings in the U.S., and the economy just added another 353,000. Basu said he expected that employers’ biggest problem may be attracting and keeping workers.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



MILFORD MOVES TO CONDEMN WIDOW'S PROPERTY FOR BIKE PATH

BY BETSY PRICE

This report has been updated.

The Milford City Council has voted to condemn eight acres of a widow's property and pay her \$20,000 for it, so the city can access the adjoining acres that it paid her brother more than \$500,000 for. Milford wants the property to build a new park in the southeast off South Rehoboth Boulevard and install bike and pedestrian paths that would help connect the town.

Annette Billings is seeking a lawyer to help her fight. She's due in court Feb. 13.

The city's move stunned her, she said. So did the price the city wants to pay her, she said, staring at legal documents about the property spread out over her farmhouse

kitchen table. A 2007 appraisal of the Sharp family farm's 38 acres — done when the family was thinking about selling lots — put its value at \$1.9 million, or \$50,000 per acre. Billings, 66, doubts her land's value went down as development in the area has soared.

She believes her brother was paid about \$25,000 per acre for landlocked property, which is why the city wanted to reach out to her. The property the city wants to take from her runs along one side of the brother's and then juts right along the water.

A 2021 appraisal done by the city in 2021 by W. R. McCain & Associates valued 17.02 acres at \$26,000 per acre for a total of \$445,520.

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The May 2023 city appraisal, done by Dover Consulting Services Inc., puts the value of three pieces of her property at \$615,000, including the two pieces that lay along wetlands. The appraisal says the most likely use of the property is residential.

At one time, Billings had agreed to talk to Rob Pierce, director of Milford's Planning & Zoning, about a possible purchase and even told him he could have an appraisal done, as long as the city paid for it. Then she backed out, telling Pierce she was not interested and didn't want the appraisal after she saw the 2021 report and realized they wanted all the property.

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photo link: Delaware Ballet

Culture

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BRANDYWINE FLOOD STUDY

BRANDYWINE FLOOD STUDY UPDATE

BY RICH SCHWARTZMAN

The Brandywine Conservancy and the city of Wilmington joined forces to give area residents an update on the flood study prompted by Hurricane Ida. Grant DeCosta, director of community services for the conservancy, was joined by Wilmington's Assistant Water Division Director Bryan Lennon.

DeCosta said Ida was “the catalyst” for the study but that the study won't be finished until this summer. He said the goals are to reduce flooding, develop model flood mitigation strategies, coordinate with Delaware's mitigation efforts and find “implementable projects.” The entire length of the creek, from its headwaters in Honey Brook in Pennsylvania to Wilmington, is included in the study.

“We are not looking to just write a study,” DeCosta said. “We want to do something that's going to be a blueprint for all of us to work cooperatively to move forward. There's going to be implementational recommendations that a whole host of us will be engaged to

help us address this problem.”

The conservancy is one of the co-leads in the study. Other groups and organizations in the study include Chester County Water Resources Authority and the University of Delaware Water Resources Center, among others. He acknowledged the significance of having the University of Delaware and the city of Wilmington involved.

“I'm happy to have that bi-state reflection of our watershed in those that are helping us do this project,” DeCosta said.

Lennon, who referred to himself as Wilmington's “sewer guy,” reminded the attendees that the Brandywine is Wilmington's water source, so helping to protect the water and the health of the creek upstream helps Wilmington, and so the city helps fund projects along the creek in Pennsylvania. “One dollar spent up in the source water saves us \$10 down at our drinking water intake to treat that water,” he said.

In a brief one-on-one interview, Lennon said Ida was a “tremendously impactful storm event,” with thousands of northeast Wilmington residents affected when flood waters of the Brandywine ripped through the area on an otherwise sunny day. He said it took about six hours for the flooding in Pennsylvania to reach Wilmington.

“Residents of northeast Wilmington had to be rescued by Wilmington and the state of Delaware emergency management personnel on fireboats,” he said, adding that the damage covered a 10-to-15 square block area.

FLOOD STUDY FINAL THIS SUMMER

While the flood study won't be final until sometime this summer, Lennon has an idea of what he thinks needs to be done for flood mitigation.

“There was no rainfall happening. It was a beautiful sunny morning, but it was all the water from the upper portion of the watershed. What happened was that those flood waters came down and overtopped the shores of the Brandywine and flooded out the streams, the basements, and the homes of the residents of northeast Wilmington. So, the solution has to be some manner of shoreline protection that can prevent that overtopping of the Brandywine shoreline,” he said.

Flooding from Ida roared through the Brandywine area on Sept. 1, 2021, causing millions of dollars in damage and destroying many homes and other structures from the Downingtown area south through Chadds Ford and down into Wilmington.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



HEADS UP: I-95 NEAR 896 TO CLOSE

BY JAREK RUTZ

First Staters hitting the road in the next 10 days need to be aware of closures to Interstate 95 at State Route 896. This affects traffic in both directions and drivers will be detoured through Newark during the closure.

Plan to leave early for destinations, as very heavy traffic is expected on Elkton Road, Christina Parkway (State Route 4) and South College Avenue (State Route 896). Police officers will be stationed along the detour route to help facilitate the flow of traffic.

The following is the closure schedule, which is weather dependent (times subject to change):

- Tuesday, Feb. 13: 9 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- Wednesday, Feb. 14: 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 15: 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.
- Monday, Feb. 19: 10 p.m to 5 a.m.

The closures are due to the following construction projects:

- I-95/SR 896 ramp areas
- Ground improvements
- Bridge foundations
- Drainage work
- Lighting
- SR 72 structure demolition



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Business

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10 DELAWARE COMPANIES WIN STATE EDGE GRANTS

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Ten Delaware companies have received state grants ranging from \$32,000 to \$100,000 to expand and improve their services or products. The biggest awards — four \$100,000 grants — went to companies dealing with science, technology, engineering or math (or all at once).

The EDGE grant, an acronym for the Division of Small Business’s Encouraging Development, Growth and Expansion, are chosen from applicants that can be no more than seven years old and employ no more than 10 workers, or the equivalent.

“The EDGE competition allows our division to do what it was created to do — help small businesses start and grow,” said Division of Small Business Director Regina Mitchell. “The quality of the fall applications was so strong, it made it more challenging to select the finalists. Each EDGE round continues to show progress in terms of the quality of submissions.”

This competition’s winners include a company developing an improved hand/arm prosthetic that’s easier to use, one developing an adapted mobility device for getting into bed, and one looking to purchase cutting edge computers and streaming equipment for its e-sports events and camps.

The first EDGE Grant Competition for 2024 began accepting applications on Feb. 1. They will continue to be accepted until Friday, March 1, at 4:30 p.m. Visit de.gov/edge for access to the application and other resources. EDGE is a matching grant program. The Division of Small Business matches a winning business’s investment on a 3-to-1 basis.

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Food & Dining

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POPULAR DEL PEZ GASTROPUB CROSSES BORDER INTO GLEN MILLS

& Burritos, Savanna Salad Bowls & Sandwiches, both in the Riverfront Market and Mi Ranchito Mexican Market in Newark. Judging by the crowd at the new Del Pez location in Glen Mills, the market is at a sweet spot.

The restaurant is in a former Bertucci's in **Concordville Town Centre**, which has an established Target, Home Depot and Staples and is near Maris Grove, the expansive retirement community, and newly built apartments. So far, the restaurant has been well received, Acuna says.

“In a way, the opening process reminds me a lot of the city of Newark when I opened my first location [Santa Fe Mexican Grill] over 20 years ago,” Acuna said. “Everybody knows each other, and they really work together and want the best for the well-being of the town.”

DEL PEZ'S BEGINNING

More than 20 years ago, Acuna arrived in the United States from Columbia to study industrial engineering. While taking classes at Delaware Technical Community College and Wesley College, he worked in the hospitality industry, steadily progressing through the ranks.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

BY PAM GEORGE

Javier Acuna took a risk in 2016 when he opened **Del Pez Mexican Gastropub** on the Wilmington Riverfront. At the time, customers seeking Latin flavors wanted straightforward tacos, enchiladas and fajitas — the cuisine they ordered at Acuna's **Santa Fe Mexican Grill** in Newark and Wilmington.

But Del Pez is about creative flavors, artful plating and the interplay of ingredients, an approach widely accepted on American, Asian and even Italian menus.

“We went through a lot of growth and change until we found a place where the market demand is where we need it to be,” said Acuna, founder of **Hakuna Hospitality Group**, which also includes La Taqueria Tacos



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Government

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BY KATIE KAZIMIR

A task evaluating Delaware's [Victims' Bill of Rights](#) for the first time since it was established in 1992, will hear recommendations about how to improve it Monday, Feb. 12. The current document is an unwieldy, jumbled mess because of all the hands that have been in the code since then, said Scott Goss, communications director for the Senate Democrats.

The bipartisan [Senate Concurrent Resolution 99](#), passed in June 2023, called for the formation of a bipartisan committee to revise the bill "and make it clear, concise and efficient," Goss said. Since September, subcommittees have focused on updating the bill's definitions, notification procedures, funding and technology.

Victims' rights include being treated with respect and compassion; notified, informed and involved in the criminal justice process; and protected from harm and intimidation. It also includes financial and community support for victims.

Since 1992, the understanding of consent, healthy relationships and victim safety has evolved, as well as the overall understanding of trauma and the cycle of abuse.

"It is critical to ensure that the Victims' Bill of Rights is updated to include best practices for supporting the recovery of all victims, especially victims who experience trauma," said SC99, written by Sen. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Brandywine Hundred.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS TASK FORCE TO HEAR UPDATING, FUNDING IDEAS

VICTIMS' SUBCOMMITTEES

Compensation and Administration Subcommittee Chair Rep. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, said finding ways to increase awareness of the Victims' Compensation Fund is one recommendation that will be presented to the committee Monday. A periodic review by legislators of the funding for the Victims' Compensation Fund's long-term solvency will also be recommended.

Pettyjohn said a solvency review would make sure legislative actions in one area doesn't affect funding for victims. For example, there has been a push to eliminate fines and fees from certain crimes, such as toll violations and tickets from traffic cameras.

"Things like the Victims' Compensation Fund are funded through those types of additional fees," Pettyjohn said. Eliminating the fines and fees would hurt the victims' fund's long-term solvency, he said.

Exploration of the viability and scope of property restitutions will also be suggested. "That could quickly deplete funds just because of the sheer volume of them," Pettyjohn said.

His committee will recommend assessing the administration of the [Victims' Compensation Assistance Program](#) to determine if there is enough staff to process victim applications in a timely manner. With only two staff members, "it is a very leanly staffed unit in the attorney general's office," Pettyjohn said.

His committee also will recommend asking the executive branch to appoint members to the Victims' Compensation Advisory Council. "All of the members' terms have expired without new people put on the council," Pettyjohn said.

A stricter formula to assess the value of lost wages is needed, Pettyjohn said. Currently, the executive director of the Victims' Compensation Fund decides the value of lost wages on a case by case basis. His committee believes a flat rate definition should be used instead.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



MARIJUANA LAWS COME WITH PRICE TAG FOR TWO STATE DEPARTMENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Marijuana and the implications of its legalization in Delaware on certain state agencies, was part of the discussion in the Jan. 31 Joint Finance Committee hearings.

The Department of Safety and Homeland Security is set to receive a little over \$5 million of the total request specifically in response to the marijuana legislation. The Department of Justice, which also had its JFC hearing Feb. 1, asked for \$356,000 to reallocate positions relating to the marijuana control act.

The finance committee is responsible for setting the fiscal year 2025 state budget which starts July 1, and allocating funding to different programs and organizations throughout Delaware. It uses Gov. John Carney's proposed budget as one of the touchstones for decisions.

Its members had questions on how the recent marijuana legislation would affect staffing and finances.

MARIJUANA AND JOBS

In addition to Homeland Security's nearly \$227 million in Gov. John Carney's recommended budget for next year, the department asked the committee for an additional \$175,900 for uniforms, supplies and other start-up needs for the capitol police officers at the Sussex County Family Courthouse. The extra ask would also cover the cost of handguns for capitol police.

The fiscal note on the bill that authorized the state to set up and oversee the growth and sale of marijuana said the state would need \$4,765,969 in total state cost for fiscal year 2025.

The marijuana money would go to:

- Office of the Marijuana Commissioner: Funds would purchase a software application that can track marijuana "seed to sale." The program provides compli-

ance oversight, process guidance, product tracking, guidelines and support to licensed businesses in the cultivation, processing and selling of marijuana.

- Marijuana Control Act Structural Changes: Funds would be used for reallocation of positions in the Attorney General Office and the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement, as well as other agencies to reflect structural changes.

When marijuana is sold, Robert Coupe, a former Delaware State Police superintendent who is the state's first marijuana commissioner, said there will be a 50% sales tax on marijuana products. "It will create the implementation of over 34 state positions," Coupe said. "Only five of those positions are actually in existence."

Coupe pointed out that applications will start rolling in this year and the state must determine how it charges applicants for a license. He said if each license cost \$50,000, it would generate a few million dollars for the state. Or, they could come up with some formula, like [New Jersey](#) has, which weighs factors such as the size of the business, for example.

He also said the commission projects about 85,000 customers, which will generate about \$42 million in tax revenue each year.

Also in committee hearing, Sen. Laura Sturgeon D-Hockessin, and others, including public commenters, wanted to make sure there was set funding for victim specialists in both departments to engage with those who have suffered from domestic and other types of abuse.





BILL WOULD BLOCK INSURANCE COMPANIES FROM USING GENETIC TESTS

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

For decades, public health officials have fretted about insurance companies having access to genetic testing and using the results to deny coverage or set higher rates for people likely to get certain diseases. That was true even before people could casually send in a swab to a company like 23andme, AncestryDNA or FamilyTreeDNA, to be tested. Those results end up in huge databases and can be purchased by other businesses.

If [House Bill 286](#) passes in the General Assembly this year, it will forbid insurance companies from using that kind of genetic testing results as a basis for life insurance company rates.

“The knowledge that you’ve gained from a recreational genetic product could have a financial impact on your life insurance,” warned Rep. Jeff Spiegelman, R-Clay-

ton, the primary sponsor of the bill. Those impacts could include higher premium rates, denying coverage or terminating policies based on what Spiegelman said is private data.

Ancestry.com and 23andMe both include a disclaimer that consumers’ results may affect life insurance, but many users don’t realize it, Spiegelman pointed out.

“I thought that wasn’t fair,” he said. “And I didn’t think that was fair for Delawareans.” At the same time, he said, “I don’t want people kept in the dark about potentially serious health issues because they are worried about the financial implications of the results. This is a deterrent to wellness that we should eliminate.”

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NEW LEGISLATION LOOKS TO PROTECT BEACH ECONOMY AND NATURE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Two Delaware Republicans are working on a resolution to protect the state’s beach economy and environment. Senate Republican Leader Gerald Hocker, R-Ocean View, and Rep. Ron Gray, R-Selbyville, announced legislation Friday that would require irrevocable pre-construction decommissioning bonds be posted.

Their resolution would also mandate that wind farm developers commit to recycling or disposing of decommissioned turbine components in Maryland and Aircraft Detection Lighting Systems be deployed for any offshore wind project with power transmission lines coming ashore in Delaware’s Coastal Zone as a condition of permit approval.

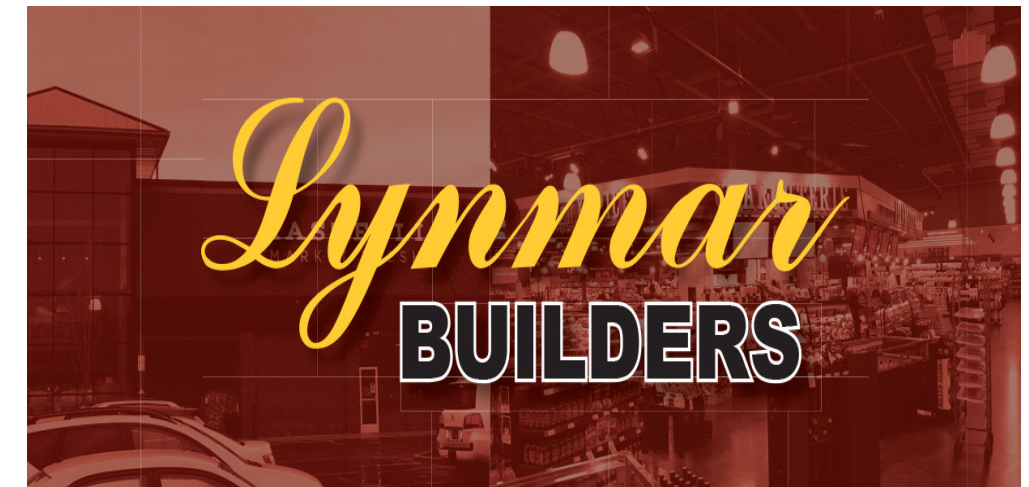
“The Delaware Tourism Bureau reports that Sussex County tourism contributed \$2.7 billion to the state’s economy in 2021,” Hocker said in a statement. “Experts estimate that offshore wind turbines could severely harm

Delaware’s tourist industry resulting in \$65 million in lost taxes, eliminate over 5,000 jobs and deal a huge hit to coastal small businesses by losing upwards of \$640 million in tourist spending.”

If any of the individual conditions of the resolution are not met, a permit would be automatically nullified.

“The permitting process is the only way Delaware can ensure wind projects approved by other states, such as Maryland, include maximum protection for our state’s beach communities,” Gray said in a statement. “We must do all we can to protect our coastal economy and environment.”

The lawmakers’ resolution follows Gov. John Carney’s announcement that negotiations will begin between **US Wind** and Delaware pertaining to two planned offshore wind projects.



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Education

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SANFORD STUDENT WINS \$25,000 AS SCIENCE COMPETITION FINALIST

BY JAREK RUTZ

A student from the Sanford School has been awarded \$25,000 with a chance to win up to an additional \$250,000 for his project in a Regeneron and **Society for Science**'s national competition.

Rai Kahlon, a senior on his way to the University of Pennsylvania in the fall, is one of 40 students **named** as finalists in the Regeneron **Science Talent Search 2024**, the nation's oldest and most prestigious science and math competition for high school seniors.

From March 6 to March 13, the finalists will participate in a week-long competition where they will undergo a rigorous judging process to compete for more than \$1.8 million in awards. Each finalist, selected from 2,162 entrants, receives \$25,000, and the top 10 awards, which will be announced during an awards ceremony on March 12, range from \$40,000 to \$250,000.

This year marks the largest pool of applicants the competition has seen since the 1960s, which the two organizations state is indicative of the increasing importance of scientific exploration, as well as the outreach and equity programs dedicated to supporting scientific literacy and preparation for competitions.

This year marks the largest pool of applicants the competition has seen since the 1960s, which the two organizations state is indicative of the increasing importance of scientific exploration, as well as the outreach and equity programs dedicated to supporting scientific literacy and preparation for competitions.

Mark Anderson, head of school, called the achievement a phenomenal cap to Kahlon's successful Sanford career. "We are proud of the student and leader Rai is today and Sanford teachers are certain he will only continue to excel in the coming years at Penn," he said.

Kahlon is undecided but wants to pursue a career in the medical field. The name of his project was "Enhancing Wearable Gait-Monitoring Systems: Identifying Optimal Kinematic Inputs in Typical Adolescents."

His work sought to improve assistive walking technology by identifying which wearable sensor signals can be used to identify patients' walking gait. He identified two specific signals that could help train machine learning models that address gait problems in conditions such as cerebral palsy. The whole process took him a couple years to complete. He started as a sophomore, inspired by a friend that has cerebral palsy.

Liz Brown, the co-chair of Sanford's science department, said Kahlon represents the best that the school and science department have to offer.

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ODYSSEY CELEBRATES GREEK PROGRAM, \$500,000 NATIONAL AWARD

BY JAREK RUTZ

This week, **Odyssey Charter School** in Wilmington celebrated civic engagement, its Greek immersion program, and a national recognition that won the school \$500,000. Oli Mazi Day, also known as the Together We Stand Festival, included everything from Red Hot Chili Pepper covers, to Greek poetry, to an open dialogue between students, staff, and a panel of education leaders and state legislators about public policy and advocacy surrounding the state’s outdated school funding formula.

“The concept here was to demonstrate what we as a community can do when we’re working together as partners,” said Elias Pappas, Odyssey’s head of school.

The series of events, which took place Monday, showed off what the school is capable of and was full of entertainment from student-based productions, said Salman Choudhury, a senior at the school.

“It was just kind of like a nice extension of how you treat family,” he said.

YASS PRIZE NOMINATION

Odyssey was also celebrating a significant recognition — being named a finalist for the Yass Prize, which is often called the Pulitzer Award of Education. It’s an accolade recognizing excellence in sustainable, transformational, outstanding and permissionless education.

The organization defines “permissionless education” as education that is free to exist and thrive without depending on regulatory bodies.

“It means the ability to make decisions about what you do, and how you do it whether you’re a founder, teacher, parent, or student, without asking for permission,” its website states. “Providers that are true to the concept of permissionless education boldly execute on what they know to be right, rather than waiting for a green light from a person or entity.”

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BY JAREK RUTZ

Cape Henlopen School District is the sixth district in Delaware to have a referendum this year in which residents will vote whether or not to raise local taxes. In total, the district is seeking a total of \$83,647,000 of additional local revenue. This year's referendum will take place Tuesday, March 26, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The district states it is a debt service and operating expense referendum to propose a new tax rate as a way to generate local revenue.

“The revenue generated from the approved tax increase will help the District address expenditures due to the increasing enrollment,” read a statement. “Enrollment issues continue to be the main reason more funds are needed.”

Cape Henlopen School District enrollment has grown from 4,150 students in 2001 to 6,587 this school year, and population studies show that the enrollment will continue to increase significantly over the next 10 years.

CAPE HENLOPEN 6TH DISTRICT TO HOLD TAX HIKE VOTE

The last three referendums in the district were all successful, in 2014, 2016 and 2018, which collectively increased the tax rate by 37 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. Cape Henlopen has the second-lowest annual property tax rates in Sussex County with \$4.0282 per \$100 of value. Only Indian River residents pay less.

If passed, the impact on the average homeowner would be \$153.75 more a month, or \$12.81 a month.

Some of the main budget concerns the district has are:

- Safety & Security Needs
 - SRO's/Constables
- Staffing/Personnel Costs
 - Salary/Benefits
 - Hire All Positions Earned
 - Highly Qualified Teachers/Staff
- Unit Count Growth Outpacing Revenue Growth
 - +\$1,000,000 per Pay Cycle
 - +\$30,000 - Local Cost
- Other Personnel Costs
 - Substitute Teachers/Employees
- State Budget Cuts and Less Discretionary Funding
- Ongoing Athletic Facility and Facility Maintenance Costs
- Ongoing Support for Energy and Utilities
- Support for Strategic Priorities
- Inadequate Reserve Funding
- Investment in Our Future
 - Ongoing Technology Funding Needs
 - Ongoing Curriculum Needs
- Finite Resources

The district has stated that land purchase for future expansion is its top priority, which includes a district office relocation so that the high school can expand. It is looking to purchase up to 102.429 acres.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



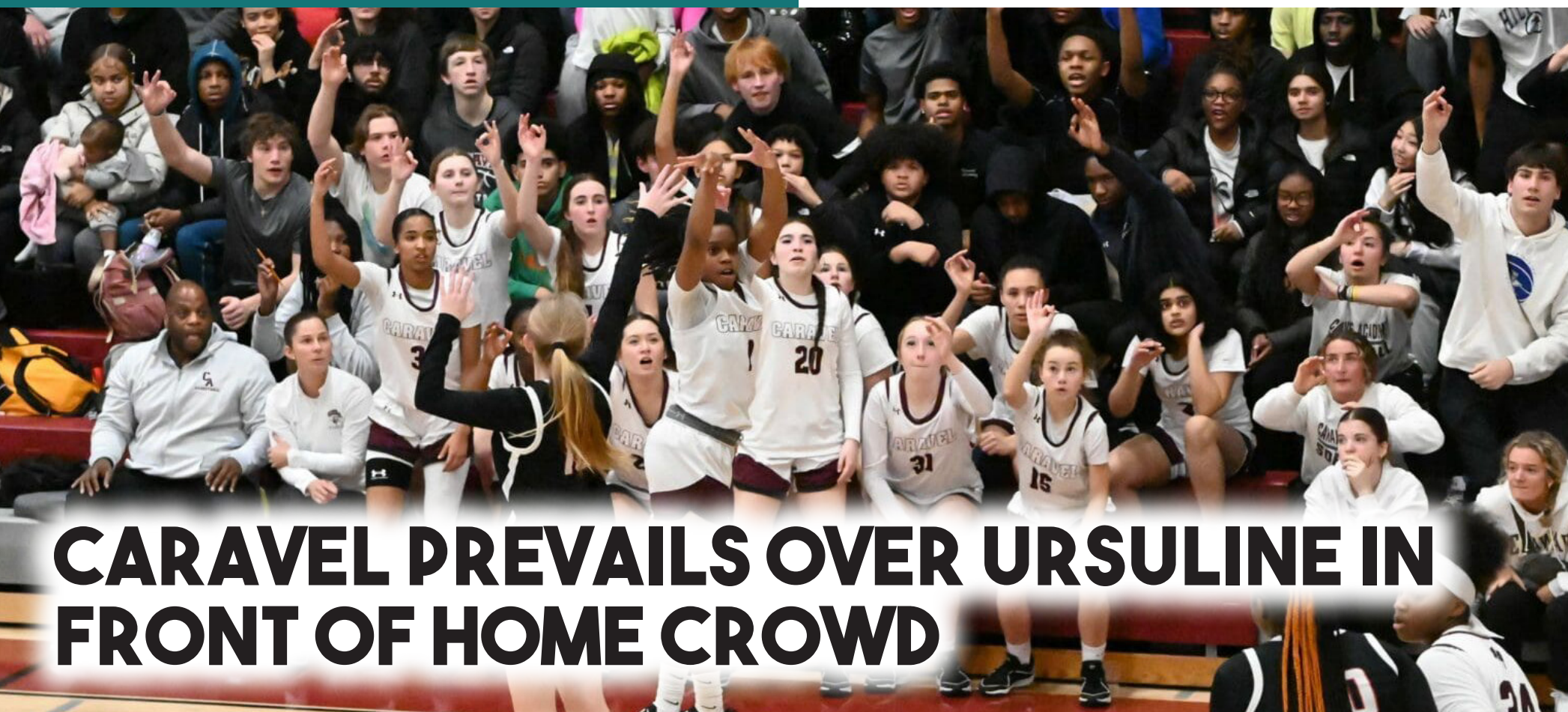
Sports

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CARAVEL PREVAILS OVER URSULINE IN FRONT OF HOME CROWD

BY NICK HALLIDAY

No. 1 Ursuline Academy's Raiders visited No. 2 Caravel Buccaneers to face off in what could be a state championship preview in girls' basketball Thursday night. This game certainly had a postseason feel leading up to the game as Caravel's gymnasium was filled an hour before tipoff, with fans waiting outside in case anyone left since they were at full capacity. The on-court action that followed definitely did not disappoint either, as the two teams battled for 32 minutes.

The Raiders jumped out to an 11-0 lead, with the two star freshmen, Jezelle "GG" Banks and Taylor Brown doing all the scoring. Of the 11 points, eight came on layups; the other three were courtesy of a Banks step-back three-pointer that wowed the crowd.

Anaya Price got Caravel on the board with 5:20 remaining in the first with a three-point shot from the corner and that got the Buccaneers going. Ursuline finished the first with an 18-9 lead, but the second quarter was a different story.

Caravel's Chastity "Speedy" Wilson opened the scoring with a layup and a follow shot from Jordin Tate quickly closed the gap to five. The Bucs asserted themselves on the boards, turning those second and third chances into points. Price connected from three to get Caravel to within a pair at 20-18, and Cherish Bryant tied it up shortly thereafter.

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MIDDLETOWN BREAKS OPEN A CLOSE GAME FOR DECISIVE WIN

BY GLENN FRAZER

The third-ranked Middletown Cavaliers outscored Odessa 23-5 in the final quarter to get the intra-district win Tuesday night 63-39 in boys' basketball. The Ducks were down by just six points as Henry Nyasagare buried a corner "three" late in the third quarter to make the score 40-34 heading to the final eight minutes. Middletown turned up the half-court defense and controlled that final quarter to gain the Flight A victory.

Odessa opened the game with a quick 5-0 advantage, but the Cavs fought back to grab the lead at 7-5. The two teams traded baskets the rest of the first quarter as Middletown led 12-10. The second quarter was also competitive with the Cavaliers taking a lead of 22-18 into halftime.

The visiting Ducks took their only lead of the second half at 26-24 when Jaylen Bernikow connected twice from beyond the arc on consecutive possessions. The lead was brief as Middletown went on a 14-2 run to go up 38-28 late in the third quarter. The Cavs held a six-point advantage at the start of the fourth quarter and built the lead quickly into double digits.

Middletown coach Azeez Ali told us how his team pulled away late. "We stayed the course. We try to get up by two possessions and build on it. We hang our hats on our defense and rebounding, and we controlled the pace. Odessa is good in the open court and we did a good job of keeping them in half-court mode."

The Cavaliers were led by point guard Clyde Frasier



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and Aviyon Matthews, with 15 points each. Nine different players scored points in the game for coach Ali. They play seven more games in the regular season that ends on Feb. 21. The Cavaliers will face another district rival Saturday as they travel across town to face Appoquinimink.

Odessa was paced by Bernikow with 10 points, while Jordan Earl and Tyshawn Wilborn both added nine points. The Ducks are now a very respectable 11-4 under first-year head coach Andre Wilburn. They have five games remaining in their quest for a tournament berth. It would be the first in the school's brief history.

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COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 7 GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The girls' basketball season ends on Feb. 21, so there are 15 days left in the regular season. The teams will make their final push to see if they can qualify for the state tournament at the end of the month.

The regular season game that everyone has been waiting for since early December was Thursday night, as No. 1 Ursuline traveled to No. 2 Caravel. Both teams are undefeated in state play as both have lost games to out-of-state teams that are ranked high in the east region.

The SL 24 Unlock the Light tournament saw three girls' games this weekend including a great matchup on Friday night as Padua faced Saint Mark's. The Pandas took home a 52-49 win to get their 11th win of the season.

The conference schedule is winding down and here are the current leaders as they look to lock up the conference championship in the next two weeks. Appoquinimink leads Blue Hen Flight A, while A.I. DuPont leads Flight B. St. Elizabeth leads Diamond State and the Independent. Dover is the current leader in the Henlopen North while Woodbridge leads the South.

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

No. 1 Ursuline (11-3) (LW No. 1) The Raiders won against Imhotep Charter (PA) last week. They traveled to Caravel on Thursday and Woodbridge on Saturday.

No. 2 Caravel (13-2) (LW No. 2) The Bucs beat A.I. DuPont last week. They hosted Ursuline on Thursday.

No. 3 Sanford (9-5) (LW No. 3) The Warriors beat St. Elizabeth last week. They traveled to St. Andrew's on Tuesday and were at Howard on Friday.

No. 4 St. Elizabeth (12-3) (LW No. 4) The Vikings went 1-1 last week with a win over Archmere and a loss to Sanford. The Vikings had three road games in three straight days — Howard on Tuesday, Tower Hill on Wednesday and DMA on Thursday.

No. 5 A.I. DuPont (12-4) (LW No. 5) The Tigers lost to Caravel last week. They traveled to Padua on Tuesday and Tower Hill Wednesday.

No. 6 Padua (11-4) (LW No. 6) The Pandas beat Saint Mark's last week. They hosted A.I. DuPont on Tuesday and traveled to Hodgson on Friday.

No. 7 Dover (13-2) (LW No. 7) The Senators enjoyed some time off last week. They traveled to Sussex Tech on Tuesday, hosted Kent Island (MD) on Thursday and traveled the Old North Road to face Caesar Rodney on Saturday.

No. 8 Cape Henlopen (8-5) (LW No. 9) The Vikings won a pair of conference games over Sussex Central and Sussex Tech last week. They hosted Milford on Tuesday and Sussex Central on Thursday.

No. 9 Delmarva Christian (14-1) (LW No. 10) Delmarva went 2-0 last week and had a busy week this week. They hosted Sts. Peter & Paul on Tuesday and traveled to The Salisbury School on Thursday and Middletown on Friday.

No. 10 Howard (9-5) (LW Unrank). The Wildcats went 2-0 last week with wins over Odessa and Smyrna. They hosted two games this week — St. Elizabeth on Tuesday and Sanford on Friday.

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COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 7 BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY GLENN FRAZER

The boys' basketball season ends on Feb. 21, so there are 15 days left in the regular season. The teams will make their final push to see if they can qualify for the state tournament at the end of the month.

The SL 24 Unlock the Light tournament saw six boys games over the weekend including a big Blue Hen Flight A game between Appoquinimink and Odessa. The Ducks had a late lead until Riley Buzby hit a three-pointer with over 20 seconds left. The Jags' defense held the Ducks off the scoreboard in the final seconds to pull off the win.

The conference leaders head into the final two weeks of the season. Middletown leads Blue Hen Flight A Conference while Howard Flight B. Sanford leads the Independent Conference, while St. Elizabeth leads the Diamond State. Dover leads Henlopen North while Seaford and Lake Forest are tied for the South lead.

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

No. 1 St. Elizabeth (14-0)(LW No. 1) The Vikings beat Archmere and Howard last week. They hosted DMA on Thursday and travel to Saint Mark's on Sunday.

No. 2 Dover (12-2)(LW No. 2) The Senators beat Sussex Central last week. They hosted Sussex Tech on Tuesday and traveled to Caesar Rodney on Saturday.

No. 3 Middletown (9-3)(LW No. 3) The Cavs defeated William Penn last week. They hosted Odessa on Tuesday and Tri State Christian Academy (MD) on Thurs-

day. They traveled to Appoquinimink on Saturday.

No. 4 Sallies (8-7)(LW No. 4) The Sals beat Smyrna and Sanford. They hosted Howard on Tuesday and traveled to Saint Mark's on Thursday.

No. 5 William Penn (8-4)(LW No. 5) They lost to Middletown last week. They hosted Newark on Tuesday and entertained Howard on Saturday. They traveled to Christiana on Thursday.

No. 6 Sanford (11-4)(LW No. 6) The Warriors beat Howard and lost to Sallies. They hosted St. Andrew's on Tuesday.

No. 7 Appoquinimink (9-4)(LW Unranked) The Jags won both conference games last week. They hosted St. Georges Tech, then Newark on Thursday and Middletown on Saturday.

No. 8 Howard (9-4)(LW Unranked) The Wildcats lost to St. Elizabeth last week. They traveled to Sallies on Tuesday, McKean on Wednesday and William Penn on Saturday.

No. 9 Saint Mark's (13-2)(LW Unranked) The Spartans beat DMA last week. They hosted Sallies on Thursday and host St. Elizabeth on Super Bowl Sunday.

No. 10 Seaford (13-1)(LW No. 7) Seaford suffered its first loss of the season on Feb. 3, 65-63 to Lake Forest. They hosted Woodbridge on Tuesday and then Sussex Academy on Thursday.

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BY BENNY MITCHELL

It brought back memories of over a decade ago when Caesar Rodney and Saint Mark's battled year in and year out for prominence on the mat in Delaware. The resurgence of the Spartans' wrestling program this year has them ranked number one in Division II in the Delaware Live Sports wrestling rankings, while the Riders are the number four team in Division I.

Caesar Rodney picked up wins in some hotly contested bouts and kept other ones close as they upset Saint Mark's 37-31 in front of a large and loud home crowd on Friday night.

"Tonight was what I grew up watching as a kid between Saint Mark's and CR. Saint Mark's is a great team and well coached. It was fun to be a part of this rivalry as a wrestler and was fun tonight as a coach, maybe just

CAESAR RODNEY UPSETS SAINT MARK'S IN WRESTLING SHOWDOWN

a bit more stressful," Caesar Rodney head coach Trey Mitchell said.

The Riders' Lily Moffett received a forfeit at 106 pounds as the beginning of the match went back and forth with Saint Mark's Clif Bakhsh winning a 9-1 major decision over Ben Donato at 113 pounds. Cole Moffett got the Riders back in the win column pinning James Holmes in 51 seconds giving Caesar Rodney a 12-4 lead.

A much anticipated 126-pound match featured the top two ranked wrestlers in the state at that weight with the Riders' Trevor Copes ranked number one and the Spartans number two ranked Aaron Menickella. Copes scored an early takedown and then slowly built an 8-0 major decision putting Caesar Rodney ahead 18-4.

"The early takedown for me was important. I was able to relax a little more in the match. He (Menickella) is tough so I took a more cautious approach early on with him," Copes said.

The match continued to swing back and forth through the next several bouts. Chris Foster got the Spartans back in the match pinning Alex Batton in 56 seconds at 132 pounds. The Riders' Braedon Bole got an escape with just 10 seconds left in the 138 pounds to earn a 5-4 decision over Jack MacDonald. Alec Baxley answered for Saint Mark's with a 6-0 decision over Jamisen Dean at 144 pounds.

Caesar Rodney got back to back pins in the next two

bouts as Craig Dixon pinned Braden Carroll in 28 seconds at 150 pounds and Miguel Sigaran pinned Andrew Bailey in 57 seconds at 157 pounds to stretch the Caesar Rodney lead to 33-13.

"Braedon Bole and Miguel Sigaran came up big for us tonight. Braedon has been up and down this year, but the past two matches he is starting to find his style of wrestling and has pulled out a couple of wins here late in the season," Mitchell said.

"Miguel was put in a different role tonight filling in for us, we asked a lot tonight to go out and get a win and he answered," Mitchell added.

Saint Mark's got a pair of pins to tighten the match with Vincent Hurst pinning Logan Heffington in 2:18 at 165 pounds and Jacob Ebaugh pinning Jaden Raza in 39 seconds to cut the Riders lead to 33-25.

Caesar Rodney bumped their next two wrestlers up a weight class to hopefully get better matchups. The move worked out for the Riders as Owen Dixon won a 6-1 decision over Finn Hanna at 190 pounds and Owyn Meister decisioned Scott McKelvey 8-2 at 215 pounds.

"The Owens' did a great job closing the match for us, both wrestled well and wrestled smart," Mitchell said.

Aidan Zellman closed out the match with a pin over Caleb Kellum in 2:11 as Caesar Rodney prevailed with a 37-31 win.

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