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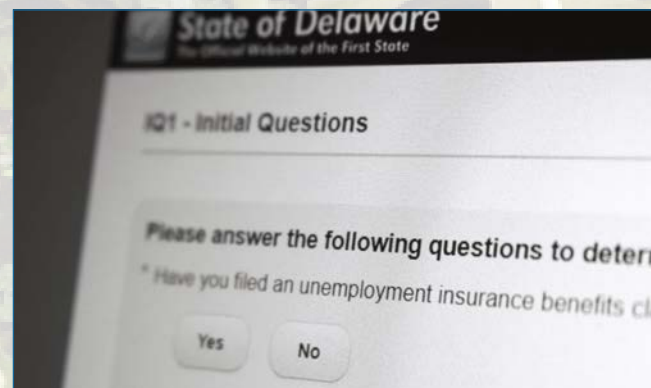
# CONTENTS

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Headlines .....	3
Culture .....	8
Business .....	15
Food & Dining .....	18
Government.....	21
Education.....	24
Sports .....	27
Stay Connected .....	31



Memorial Bridge “Dolphins”  
Designed to Stop Ships



Unauditable Unemployment Fund  
Brings Risk



Shooting Woes Sink Blue Coats

photo link: Marcia Reed



# Headlines

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# MEMORIAL BRIDGE 'DOLPHINS' DESIGNED TO STOP SHIPS LIKE DALI

BY PETER OSBORNE

Could it happen here?

That's the question Delawareans have been asking since watching the horrific images of the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsing after a cargo ship rammed it last month.

There are no guarantees, but efforts have been underway for 10 years to protect the Delaware Memorial Bridge from ships even larger than the Dali, which hit the Key Bridge March 26, and the state has been running bridge loss scenarios for years.

Drivers on and near the Delaware Memorial Bridge connecting Delaware and New Jersey can take some comfort from the huge cranes that are part of a \$95 million project to update the system that protects against ships crashing into one of the spans. Construction work

on the Delaware Memorial Bridge [project](#) began in late July 2023 and is on target to be completed by September 2025. The Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) is installing eight stone- and sand-filled "dolphin" cylinders, each of which measures 80 feet in diameter. Two will be on each side of the bridge's piers.

"This is a \$95M insurance policy," said Delaware River and Bay Authority Public Information Officer James Salmon. "You never think you'll have to use it. You hope it goes untouched, but you will be glad you have it if you need it."

DRBA is a bi-state governmental agency that owns and operates the bridge, five airports and two ferry systems that connect New Jersey and Delaware.

Meanwhile, the Delaware Emergency Management

Agency conducts annual Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments using different scenarios that test how they would impact the region and its options for responding. At least one focused on how the state would handle a collapse of a bridge like the Delaware Memorial Bridge or the large bridges spanning the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal in 2022, said Director and Homeland Security Advisor A.J. Schall.

In January 2017, DRBA had the Center for Homeland Defense and Security conduct a tabletop exercise involving a ship hitting the Delaware Memorial Bridge. The next year, the bridge had to shut down for more than six hours after a leak of ethylene oxide from the neighboring Croda plant on the high-traffic Sunday evening after Thanksgiving.

The C&D Canal is a 14-mile sea-level ship canal connecting the Chesapeake Bay with the Delaware River. It includes six major automobile and railroad crossings, including the Summit Bridge, the St. Georges Bridge and the William V. Roth Jr. Bridge.

Bridges on the C&D Canal are maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers, which did not respond to requests for an interview.

## MEMORIAL BRIDGE DOLPHINS

The Delaware Memorial Bridge project has been in the River and Bay Authority's Capital Improvement Program for 10 years between design, permitting, federal funding and COVID, so planners are much further along than other states responding to what happened in Baltimore. Still ...

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## HOLOGIC HOPES WINNING COOLEST THING TITLE WILL RAISE ITS VISIBILITY

BY BETSY PRICE

A device that helps detect breast cancer has been named the Coolest Thing Made in Delaware. **Hologic Inc.**'s 3Dimensions Mammography System, designed to provide higher quality images and a more comfortable screening procedure for women, won the state's first Coolest Thing contest.

It bested **ILC Dover**'s spacesuit, **Bloom Energy**'s Bloom Energy Servers and **Edgewell**'s Personal Care Playtex Sports Tampons in a contest created by **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce** and the **Delaware Manufacturing Association** to highlight the state's manufacturing sector and promote it as a career path.

While company officials had hoped their life-saving screening machine would do well, they were pleasantly surprised it did ultimately win, considering the massive homegrown competition.

The online contest had more than 40 products from 20 companies nominated for consideration. About 20,000 members of the public voted on their favorites in a March Madness style bracket system. It narrowed the number of contestants to 16, then eight and then a top four, with winners announced last month.

Brian Brooks, senior director of operations for Hologic, and Michael Washko, senior manager of strategic manufacturing, said that when Hologic's name was announced, they turned to look at each other in delight.

"The big thing for me is getting our name out there," said Washko. "We're not a household name right now. We're not a Gore or DuPont where everyone kind of knows who we are, so hopefully we can use this to get our name out there."

And it's a key time for the company to be doing that.

The company has been making the detector—one of three components for its machines—in Delaware for more than a decade. But it recently decided to move all its production lines from Danbury, CT, to Newark. The 3Dimensions Mammography System will be the first to move, and Hologic is looking to fill 120 jobs, from entry-level manufacturing associates and up to chief, AI and research and development engineers. The entry-level jobs are open to high school graduates and up.

"We've got a wide, wide net we're casting for talent, and we've been successful thus far at staffing up, but we've still some way to go as we're rounding out the new work innovation center that we're creating," Brooks said.

### COOLEST THING COMPANY

Hologic was founded in 1985, focusing on improving women's health and well-being through early detection and treatment, and it's been in Delaware for a quarter of a century. In 1999, Hologic bought Digital Radiography Corp., a business that grew out of DuPont's Medical Products Diagnostic Imaging Business.

Since that time, the Newark site has been manufacturing mammography imaging detectors, utilizing a sophisticated glass-coating process. Its 3Dimensions Mammography System was introduced in 2011 and can be found around the globe. The company estimates it saves the lives of around 27,300 women per year. That equates to one life for every 250 women screened on their systems.

The system it uses is called tomosynthesis, and it offers the highest resolution detection capabilities on the market, Brooks said.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY JAREK RUTZ

The back-to-back scholastic poetry champion won her most recent crown with a poem she says was way out of her comfort zone, but served as the perfect finale.

A proud Palestinian, a powerful performer and a hopeful dentist with blooming curiosity, Hodgson Vo-Tech senior Maiss Hussein's victory this year in the state **Poetry Out Loud** competition was just as sweet as her first-place finish in 2023.

Hussein's third-round and final poem in this year's contest was "Hope is the thing with feathers" by Emily Dickinson, which captures the theme of hope metaphorically inside a strong bird that lives within the human soul.

## GET TO KNOW DELAWARE'S 2X POETRY QUEEN, MAISS HUSSEIN

"When I was first reading through it, it just was a feeling that I knew this is the one, that if I were to make it to the third round, that's how I would want to end it off," she said. "It put the icing on the cake and it talks about hope and what hope is supposed to feel like, and even when you don't ask for hope, it's just always there in the air, and I really resonated with that."

Her round one poem was "**Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear**" by Mosab Abu Toha, and her round two poem was "**If They Should Come for Us**" by Fatimah Asghar.

"Dickinson's poem took both of the ideas of poem one and two, and I thought it kind of mixed them together and said 'This is what my poems are and this is what they mean to me,'" Hussein said. "And that's why I absolutely love that poem by Emily Dickinson. She really rounded it off and put it to a nice ending with the other two."

"Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear" is about what is lost in war and what is preserved, both tangible and intangible. Its author, Mosab Abu Toha, is Hussein's favorite poet.

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# Schoolboard

## Election

### 19 TO COMPETE FOR EIGHT SEATS IN SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

BY JAREK RUTZ

In a light year for school board races, 19 candidates are vying for eight open seats across eight of the state's 19 school districts. This year's election is Tuesday, May 14, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Last year, 43 candidates ran for 23 vacancies across 16 school districts. In 2022, 42 candidates competed for 19 open seats in 16 districts. This year, a number of districts have board members whose terms are up, but there won't be an election because of lack of competition. Delaware Code states that no elections will be held if there's only one person running for a seat.

For example, in Brandywine School District there are technically two open seats, but Shawn Jegede is the incumbent and only one running for the District E seat, and incumbent Vice President Jason Heller faces no counterpart in the District G race. Thus, no election.

That's also the case for eight other districts: Caesar Rodney, Capital, Milford, Smyrna, Cape Henlopen, Laurel, Seaford, and District 1, 3 and 5 in Indian River.

"The low turnout in the 2024 school board races is concerning," stated [First State Educate](#), a state education advocacy group focused on improving outcomes for Delaware's youth.

While these positions might not have the national spotlight, school boards are the bedrock of the education system, the group stated.

"They make critical decisions that directly impact the daily lives of students, teachers and families," the group stated. "Serving on a school board requires a significant time commitment. It's a true act of service and Delaware needs dedicated individuals willing to make those sacrifices."

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# Culture

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# APRIL 8 SOLAR ECLIPSE: VISIBILITY, SAFETY AND WATCH PARTIES

BY JAREK RUTZ

A university expert on astronomy has had an upcoming phenomenon circled on his calendar since the last time it happened in 2017, which garnered widespread public interest.

“These are really dramatic events because the sun touches every part of our life, it really does,” said Bennett Maruca, an associate professor of physics and astronomy at the [University of Delaware](#). On April 8, a large portion of America will be able to witness a total solar eclipse, which last occurred in August 2017.

“I mean, if you think about it, all our food directly or indirectly comes from the sun,” Maruca said. “It provides us with warmth, it drives our weather, it provides us light, the vast majority of our energy.”

Usually there are a couple of solar eclipses per year, but most are partial and it’s rare for the sun and moon

to align perfectly for a total eclipse. In October 2023, there was a “Ring of Fire” eclipse, in which the moon covered the sun in a way that allowed the perimeter of the sun to shine through, creating a visual resembling a circle of light.

“You still had some of the sun’s photosphere, its ‘surface’ shining through,” Maruca said. “Here, the moon is going to be a little bit bigger than the sun, as viewed from Earth...so the moon will completely block out the sun’s surface.” It’s a fluke of nature, he said, that it just so happens that the moon and the sun appear to be about the same size in the sky as viewed from Earth.

While October’s eclipse was drowned out by a cloudy day, the total solar eclipse on Monday is expected to be visible. The “totality” of the eclipse—which is when the moon completely covers the sun—will only be about

four to five minutes, according to [NASA](#). But, the moon will be covering some portion of the sun for a few hours.

Maruca joked that even though the exciting part is only a couple minutes, one of his sisters lives near Louisville, KY, and everyone gets excited and spends a month hyping up the Kentucky Derby every year, which lasts two minutes.

While the view in Delaware will be about 80% coverage, which Maruca says is a lot and definitely noticeable, the closest place to Delaware with totality (complete coverage) will be around Erie, PA. Delawareans will be able to see the eclipse from about 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Besides the visual sensation, people watching will experience a sharp decline in temperature. The cooling is typically up to about 10 degrees Fahrenheit.

“If you were in the International Space Station looking down on Earth, what you would see is a sort of an elliptical shadow that the moon is casting on the Earth, so at any one moment, maybe a few 10s of miles across is actually experiencing totality.”

## VIEWING SAFETY

No, putting 20 layers of sunglasses on will not prevent damage to the eyes. Special glasses are needed, which can be ordered on various websites, just make sure not to buy some of the fake ones that have been circulating around that are simply tinted.

“You definitely want to make sure that you get ISO certified glasses,” Maruca said. “NASA and the [AAS](#) have put out on their websites lists vendors that are selling approved glasses. There have been a few cases of unscrupulous vendors selling glasses that are just regular tinted and that’s not going to work because it’s not nearly enough protection.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## HOW CITY THEATER GROUNDS 'DANCING AT LUGHNASA' IN IRELAND

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

For Michael P. Toner, the vocal coach in the [City Theater Company](#) production of “Dancing at Lughnasa,” two of the most important things he offered coaching on were “dancing” and “lughnasa.” “Dancing” was important because it’s pronounced differently in Ireland, where the play is set. Think of a broad “a,” as in family or random, he explained, contrasting it with the flat “a” in the Philadelphia accent that he grew up with (and shed).

Dancing also represents a thematic motif in Brian Friel’s memory play revolving around the lives and loves of five sisters in a small Irish town. “They want to break out of their boredom and monotony through dancing, even if it’s only momentarily,” he said. “It’s quite magical.”

“Lughnasa” is a pre-Christian harvest festival that also represents a time for men and women to find potential spouses, he explained. And it’s pronounced LOON-uh-sah. City Theater closes its 30th season with the play, April 19-27, at The Delaware Contemporary on the Wilmington Riverfront.

The autobiographical drama, dedicated to Friel’s mother and aunts, plays out through the memories of its narrator, who recounts the events of a single summer from his childhood in 1936 Ireland. It debuted in Ireland in 1990, won three Tonys in 1992 and was filmed with Meryl Streep in 1998.

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BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The 2024-25 Delaware Theatre Company **season** features a world premiere musical, a Tony-winning musical, a play produced by DTC in 2005 but is newly relevant, a one-man show and a new holiday revue, plus multiple ways to create conversations and connect with the community. The season includes “Kinky Boots,” “Every Brilliant Thing,” “Home for the Holidays in the 302,” “Tuesdays With Morrie” and “Stompin’ at the Savoy.”

Matt Silva, the nonprofit’s executive and artistic director, used the words “conversation” and “community” a dozen times during an interview about the season. Consider the opener, “Kinky Boots,” a feel-good musical by Cyndi Lauper and Harvey Fierstein about a down-at-heels (!) shoe firm that revives its business by making footwear for drag performers. It’s being produced as part of a new theatrical partnership

## DELAWARE THEATRE CO. UNVEILS FUN, THOUGHTFUL '24-25 SEASON

with **New Light Theatre**. It involves a community partnership with the United Way Pride Council, interested in spreading the show’s “message of acceptance and celebration of identity,” Silva said.

New Light bakes the community and the conversation into its mission, which calls for “improving the human condition by partnering each production with thematically connected charitable causes” and “deepening our empathy and connection with one another through meaningful artistic work.” Silva believes that the only way that a regional theater like DTC, founded in 1979, can exist is with partnerships, such as the the one with New Light, founded in 2018. New Light co-founder Lena Mucchetti is directing “Kinky Boots,” which runs Sept. 25-Oct. 13.

In December, DTC is creating a revue that celebrates all the holidays of that time of year with “song, dance and cheer”. The publicity calls it “‘White Christmas’ meets ‘The Ed Sullivan Show.’”

“Home for the Holidays in the 302” will include local choirs and celebrities with special talents. “Everything will connect us to the sense of nostalgia,” Silva said, “when you come home for the holidays.”

One thing that isn’t in the season is a play by Layon Gray. DTC produced his “Kings of Harlem” this season and “Black Angels Over Tuskegee” the season before. Silva recently saw Gray’s “Cowboy,” about the first black U.S. deputy marshal, but felt it “doesn’t have any sort of historical overlap with things here” so it doesn’t speak to the Wilmington area. He is interested in Gray’s “The Girls of Summer,” which uses baseball to consider “the complexities of racism, deception and betrayal,” Gray said. It received raves this year in Miami.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



# HOW CANDLELIGHT PREPARES FOR ALL THOSE ENDINGS OF 'DROOD'

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

“**The Mystery Edwin Drood**” poses an unusual mystery. It’s not because the musical has a complex plot that challenges the audience to outwit the playwright. It’s because the audience decides the ending. Director Jeff Reim figures there are about 480 endings, and each one deserved time and attention during rehearsals for the production at The Candlelight Theatre in **Ardentown** through April 21.

“Drood” is a 1985 musical by Rupert Holmes, based on the 1870 novel by Dickens. Dickens died before finishing the work, so Holmes, a prolific writer across multiple media, finished it for him.

“You never know what the audience is going to select and you have to be prepared for any of them,” Reim said of the various endings. The audience votes on three things:

- \* Which character is playing detective Dick Datchery? The audience gets five choices and the winner gets his or her own solo.
- Who killed Drood? Eight suspects are possible, but that number is immediately cut down to seven once the Datchery portrayer is picked. And the winner, once again, gets his or her own solo.
- And since the chairman (a character functioning as the narrator, played by Bob Gatchel) notes “we’re all entitled to a happy ending”. Which of three female characters is matched with which of six male characters to sing a happy duet?

The math averages out to 480 variations, Reim said, when all three votes are considered.

“There are a few choices that are more popular than others, probably because of the investment the audience



“

We saw a boost in website referrals from Delaware LIVE during our admission season.

- URSULINE ACADEMY

has made in those characters,” he said. “They were particularly funny or particularly creepy or sympathetic or whatever.”

“Holmes provides copious notes in the back of the script to make it less likely they’ll pick the same one each time,” he said.

## WHAT CANDLELIGHT DOES

One simple technique is varying the order of the characters when they’re lined up on the edge of the stage for the vote. That’s because audience members seem to start out a little shy at first when voting with their applause, and are more boisterous later, he said.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

# EXCLUSIVE: 30-ACRE PARK OFF HERCULES ROAD IN THE WORKS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

New Castle County is on its way to being given 30 acres for a park in the Mill Creek area. The land is part of a country club known as Hercules when it opened in 1937 (that's why the road it's on is called Hercules Road) and then Delaware National before being sold, with housing planned.

"The project was approved in 2000 for 258 homes," said Gregory Pettinaro, CEO of Pettinaro Management. "The west side on the other side of Hercules Road is 30 acres and is approved for 19 large estate homes. Through discussions with the neighbors and the local councilwoman, we decided to donate that 30 acres to NCC as open space parkland, eliminating 19 homes on the parcel. This will allow the interconnection of the trail system NCC has been working towards. In addition, we will donate \$50,000 towards future maintenance."

The donation was on the agenda of the county Board of Adjustment on March 28, and Pat Burns Carlozzi **wrote** "IT PASSED!" on the Millcreek Neighbors for Safer Pathways Facebook group.

"Nothing official yet!" county spokesman Brian Cunningham said March 29 when asked for comment. "Still waiting for some more details. Stay tuned."

"Per the county, the site has already gone through the required environmental remediation," she continued. Thanks to all of you who have been advocating for more open space and more trails. We are making an impact and changing the way planners and builders are doing business!"

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\*Students must meet eligibility requirements. Course fees and books are not covered by the SEED Scholarship.

# PLANT SHOOTS THROUGH THE ROOF OF LONGWOOD CONSERVATORY

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

A plant that's towering over its landscape as its flowering has made Longwood Gardens remove a pane of glass from the conservatory roof of its Silver Garden to give it room to grow—and grow and grow. It's called the century plant (*Agave americana*).

Though once believed a century-long wait was needed for flowering, *Agave americana* typically blooms after 10 to 25 years. When it does, a single flowering stalk emerges from the center of its leaves, adorned with greenish-yellow flowers in branched clusters, towering to heights of 15 to 30 feet or more.

Staff members removed the pane of glass to ensure optimal conditions for the flowers to develop and bloom over the span of four to five months.

This perennial succulent is monocarpic, meaning it only blooms once before it dies. Following the bloom, the main plant will be removed, making way for another specimen to take its place. Two century plants have previously bloomed at Longwood Gardens, in 1997 and 2007.

“Many visitors like me came just to see and photograph this rare blossoming,” fan Roger Walck **recalled** a few years after seeing the 2007 event.

Horticulturists at Longwood typically take the mature size of plants into consideration when adding them to a permanent display. Since *Agave americana* blooms so seldomly and only for a short time, Longwood accommodates it by removing a panel of glass in the roof.

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## NEW HOMES FOR SOME PLANTS

In 2021, Longwood relocated 55 plants from their previous West Conservatory locations to Main and East Conservatory display spaces in preparation for **Longwood Reimagined**. One plant that made its way to its new Longwood East Conservatory home is a rabbit's-foot fern (*Davallia fejeensis* 'Major'), which has been part of the collection for nearly 70 years and weighed 1,380-pounds at the time. It required a very carefully planned and implemented move from the Tropical Terrace to the Camellia House. A **blog post** offers fascinating details and photos.



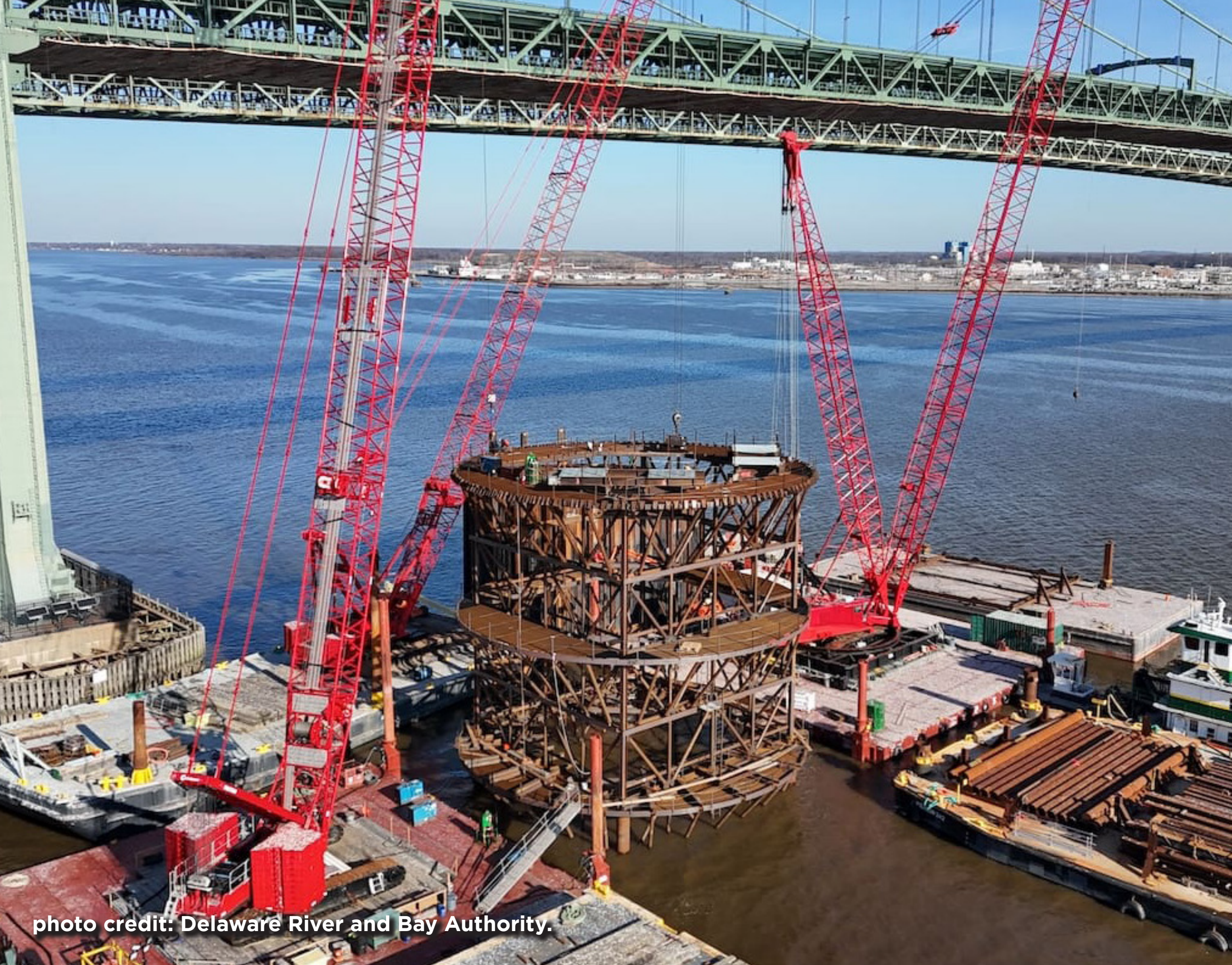


photo credit: Delaware River and Bay Authority.

# Business

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# FROM MCDONALD'S TO MEDICINE: A PATH OF OPPORTUNITY



BY JAREK RUTZ

Thanks to an opportunity program that helps people earn their high school diploma, Quontisha Chisholm went from working at a McDonald's in Millsboro to a medical assistant at one of the largest integrated pediatric health systems in the country.

“My journey wasn't an easy one, but everything that I went through was worth it,” Chisholm said. “I'm just excited to see where it takes me next, and without getting my high school diploma through the McDonald's [Archways to Opportunity](#) and without Nemours offering me a job—I got my foot in and I don't know where I would have been, but it's been a life changer for me and my children.”

Chisholm gave birth to her first child at 15 so she left high school to provide for him and while she experienced many hardships growing up and was raised by family members, this fueled her passion for finding a stable job to provide for her child. She moved in and out of jobs until she found McDonald's in Millsboro in 2009.

After transitioning to a job at Perdue Farms for a few years, the physical work took its toll. During her time at Perdue, she learned how to supervise and train other employees, so when she went looking for a new job, she went back to McDonald's, this time in Milford, and got into management. One thing was still absent though: her high school diploma.

“It opened up a lot of job opportunities having a high school diploma, because you can't even really be a janitor without them requesting you to have a high school diploma,” she said.

She kept hearing about McDonald's Archways to Opportunity which offered a chance to obtain a high school diploma for free, so she took the chance. With her new diploma, she switched her careers and went into the daycare field just two months later.

“When I got my high school diploma, I didn't know where that was going to take me,” she said.

The McDonald's program was established in April 2015 and offers help and training for employees to improve English skills, earn a high school diploma, work toward a college degree, get help making an education

and career plan with advisors and more. More than 82,500 restaurant employees in the U.S. have enrolled in a program.

The Meoli Companies is a local franchise organization which owns and operates 25 McDonald's restaurants across the Delmarva Peninsula. It recently made a contribution to Nemours, and on the way out of the building after taking a tour, Chisholm ran into Mike Meoli, president and owner of Meoli Companies. She told him: “If it wasn't for you and the McDonald's high school diploma program, I wouldn't be here right now.”

Meoli said this interaction was heartwarming. “By all accounts, she seems very happy, very affirmed in what she's doing,” he said, “and I'm proud to have supported that in some way.”

The McDonald's Corporation and individual operator split the cost 50/50 for an employee to enroll in the Archways to Opportunity program. Of the 1,500 employees across all his restaurants, Meoli said 28 are in the program.

After two years of work, Chisholm earned her diploma. The curriculum includes general coursework in various subjects.

“It's virtual but you have a coach that checks in, provides feedback and keeps you updated on coursework,” she said. “You can't slack because they checked on you all the time.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)





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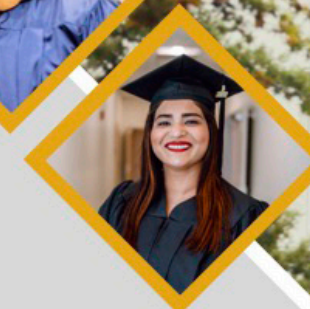
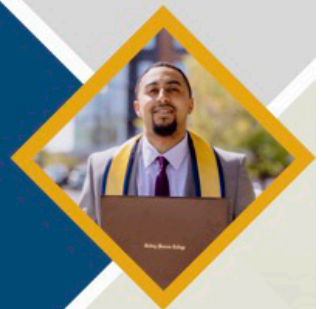
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# Food & Dining

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BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Chef Robert Lhulier is leaving **Snuff Mill Restaurant, Butchery & Wine Bar**, the Brandywine Hundred establishment that *Delaware Today* **said** in 2022 is “staking its claim as Delaware’s hottest new eatery.” He is looking for space for a restaurant that he can run, ideally in northern Delaware. “Creatives need to create,” said Lhulier, who majored in art at the University of Delaware.

“There is a large population of sophisticated diners in this area who support independent restaurants. We witnessed the demand at Snuff Mill and people want more options.

“I was a minority partner at Snuff Mill and that was fine. I learned so much and forged strong friendships.

# CHEF LHULIER LEAVING SNUFF MILL, SEEKS TO OPEN NEW EATERY

Now it’s time to move to the next step.”

Lhulier, Bill Irvin, and David and Joanne Govatos opened Snuff Mill in 2021, and the steak-centric restaurant was a hit from the start.

“Our guests appreciated the high-quality ingredients, the service and the attention to detail,” he said. “They trusted us to deliver on our promises.”

The Govatoses left the restaurant in 2022 to concentrate on Swigg, their boutique wine store across the Independence Mall parking lot from Snuff Mill.

## LHULIER’S EXPERIENCE BEYOND SNUFF MILL

Lhulier, a 57-year-old Delaware native, has cooked in multiple restaurants, with one of his first jobs after college at Air Transport Command near the New Castle airport, “a kitschy concept built around a World War II theme,” *Out & About* **reported**.

He later worked in places with finer cuisine, such as The Green Room in the Hotel du Pont and Piccolina Toscana in Trolley Square. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America, he was the opening chef of Deep Blue Bar & Grill in downtown Wilmington.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



# DELAWARE'S MATT KERN OF ONE COASTAL IS A JAMES BEARD FINALIST

BY PAM GEORGE

When Matt Kern was growing up in the Bethlehem, PA, area, he often felt like he didn't belong. That changed when he was 14 and started working in a restaurant kitchen. "I immediately felt comfortable," recalled Kern, who couldn't afford culinary school tuition.

His sense of belonging has reached a new level. This morning, the [James Beard Foundation](#) released the Restaurant and Chef Award nominees and Kern is in the running for Best Chef Mid-Atlantic. Kern, chef/owner of [One Coastal](#) in Fenwick Island, learned he was a semi-finalist in January.

Winners will be celebrated at the James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards ceremony on Monday, June 10, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

## THIRD TIME IS A CHARM

Kern is no stranger to the nomination process; he was a semifinalist in 2019 and 2020 while working at Heirloom in Lewes. But being a restaurateur sweetens the honor, he said in January.

"I have put everything I have into this tiny 50-seat strip mall restaurant—everything. I've spent God knows how many hours believing in this place—painting, struggling, failing, thriving, teaching and believing in my staff—just to be able to do this on my own terms," he explained at the time.

He says past recipients helped whittle down the semi-finalist list by dining at the nominated restaurants. "There would have been handful of people that dined here under the radar," he noted.

## LOCAVORE LORE

Although One Coastal is small, Kern did not recognize any of the diners as past James Beard Award honorees. Sam Calagione, for instance, wasn't a recent guest. Calagione, founder of [Dogfish Head Craft Brewery](#), received the Outstanding Wine, Beer or Spirits Professional award in 2017. The company's [Chesapeake & Maine](#) restaurant in Rehoboth has received semifinalist honors for the bar program.

But those who did eat at the restaurant undoubtedly tasted Kern's dedication to using local ingredients and supporting area vendors.

While Kern adapted that philosophy on his own, purchasing One Coastal in 2022 emphasized his mission. Original owners Scott and Carlie Carey opened the restaurant as an extension of their small farm. They sold the restaurant to focus on their young family.

Kern's dishes have included corn-fried wild blue catfish, an invasive species in the Chesapeake Bay, with stewed Sea Island red peas in adobo and Anson Mills Carolina gold rice. He's also featured beef from Virginia and sunchokes from Chesterfield, MD.

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photo link: Governor John Carney

# Government

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## COUNCIL APPROVES \$363K FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ON COP RESPONSES

BY JAREK RUTZ

The [Wilmington City Council](#) approved a resolution Thursday night that pairs mental health clinicians with police officers to respond to calls for service to support individuals experiencing a crisis. [Resolution 0413](#), sponsored by Councilwoman Yolanda McCoy, District 6, authorizes the [Wilmington Police Department's](#) grant application to the [Delaware Criminal Justice Council](#) in the amount of \$363,000.

The funds will be used to support the police department's [Partners in Care Co-responder Program](#). The program is a collaborative effort with [ChristianaCare](#), which will supply two mental health professionals and a community health liaison to work alongside police officers. Funding will support the continuation of the city's contract with ChristianaCare Health Systems,

as well as training for program staff, the purchase of equipment and other expenses related to this program.

"I do want the public and my colleagues here to understand how we are in front of this," said Councilwoman Maria Cabrera, At-Large. "The benefits of having a mental health specialist, having someone there for certain police calls...I believe we will see a difference in the outcomes of those interactions between police and community members, which has also been a concern across the country with some of the behaviors we have seen."

Councilman Chris Johnson, District 7, said this is one of the moments in which he's honored and privileged to serve on council.

"This is actually emotional for me because we have worked with Councilmember McCoy, Councilmember

Oliver, went up to Newark, NJ, years ago and talked about CPS," Johnson said. "I talked about all this and to finally see this in action, really makes it worth it."

He said regardless of the negative press the council sometimes gets, it is doing a lot to move the city of Wilmington forward, and prioritizing and understanding the importance of mental health is crucial.

Cabrera said this resolution shows how Wilmington is more progressive than many other cities.

"This is a council working together to solve large problems," Johnson said. "This is one of my proudest moments on council."

Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver, District 3, gave kudos to ChristianaCare for being open to the partnership.

"You know, it's an addiction, it's a mental problem that people just don't like to discuss, but it's relevant," she said, "so I'm just glad."

Several other council members said they were proud to be able to invest in this mental health service.

"We have a lot of people who are really having issues, and this program is going to be essential to be a little bit more proactive about those types of things," McCoy said.

On the Wilmington Police Department's website, Chief Wilfredo Campos stated that on a daily basis, his police officers encounter individuals suffering from mental and behavioral health challenges who require assistance beyond the scope of a traditional law enforcement response.

"Our new Partners in Care Program will help connect individuals in need with resources that are better tailored to address their needs," he said.



# EXPERTS: 'UNAUDITABLE' DELAWARE UNEMPLOYMENT FUND BRINGS RISK

BY KARL BAKER

Delaware's hefty unemployment insurance fund appears to be poorly managed, in need of more staff and may not be able to track companies that fail to pay into the system, according to a panel of national accounting experts. But it does not appear to be at risk of failing to pay jobless claims into the near future.

*Spotlight Delaware* interviewed three accounting professors to gauge their reactions to a **report** last week from Delaware's auditor that called the state's unemployment insurance fund—currently estimated at \$344 million—"unauditable."

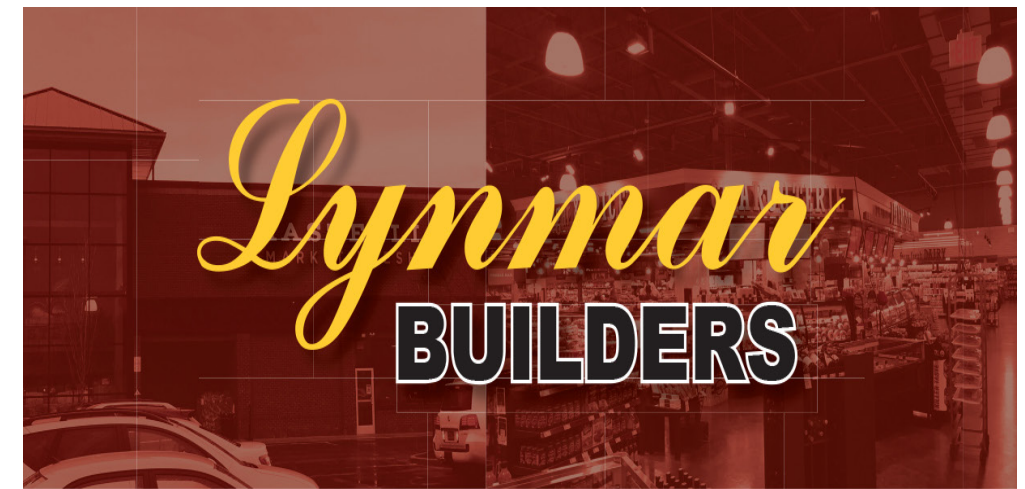
It was a grave report card for a key part of the government that serves as a financial backstop for tens of thousands of workers in the state. The report, which relied on an investigation from an outside accounting

firm, concluded that officials within the Delaware Division of Unemployment Insurance couldn't verify how certain dollars had flowed through the fund, and had even stopped their own internal audits on parts of the system last year.

Those problems followed others identified in previous years within the unemployment division, and came even as the state had been paying consultants to reform how the multi-million-dollar pot of money is managed.

The auditor's report also came amid a series of notices about other administrative blunders within the state government. In late March, a federal watchdog stated that Delaware's Medicaid office had paid monthly premiums to health care companies on behalf of people who had already died.

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# Education

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# DE DOE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT, COACHING FOR COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID

BY JAREK RUTZ

College is more expensive than it's ever been, but a state agency is trying to financially ease the burden for Delaware students looking to advance their education post-high school. The **Delaware Department of Education** announced Thursday that it's offering support to students applying for financial aid for college who have been affected by delayed federal financial aid determinations.

"We will continue to look for ways to remove hurdles and provide direct support to help students interested in pursuing their education after high school find the resources and assistance they need to succeed," said Mark Holodick, Delaware Secretary of Education.

The **U.S. Department of Education** recently transformed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. The newer FAFSA reflects changes to processes that were 40 years old, including changes to

the length of the form and eligibility calculations. These changes ultimately will benefit more than seven million students who will be eligible to receive a Pell Grant, which provides a maximum of \$7,395 a year for low-income families.

However, the new FAFSA roll out has had challenges, including a three-month delay in the opening of the 2024-25 FAFSA application and delayed responses. As of March 1, 2024, 32 percent fewer Delaware high school seniors have filed a 2024-2025 FAFSA than last year, reflective of the national trend. Regionally, 35.7 percent fewer students have filed a FAFSA.

Both the state's SEED and Inspire scholarships require FAFSA completion so it is imperative that students complete the FAFSA before the fall 2024-25 semester begins.

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# WILMINGTON FRIENDS: 27,500 FREE MEALS TO CELEBRATE 275TH YEAR

BY JAREK RUTZ

**Wilmington Friends School**, celebrating its 275th anniversary this year, will dig into its Quaker roots with a massive meal drive Saturday. On April 6, the culminating community service project for Wilmington Friends will play off the 275 years and aim to packaging 27,500 shelf-stable meals for families throughout Delaware.

“Food security is a basic human right that is incredibly important to us, both as a school and as a Quaker institution that values every individual,” said Head of School Ken Aldridge.

Students, parents, staff, alumni and community members will all partake in the event. Part of the school’s mission states that: “Wilmington Friends, a Quaker school with high standards for academic achievement, challenges students to seek truth, to value justice and

peace, and to act as creative, independent thinkers with a conscious responsibility to the good of all.”

Due to the large number of meals, the private Quaker school has partnered with **The Outreach Program**, a nonprofit whose mission is to provide safe water, food, medical care and education to children and those in need, at home and abroad. The Outreach Program will provide packaging supplies, packaging equipment, certified Food Safe Event Coordinators and training for the assembly line-style drive. Wilmington Friends will purchase all necessary meal ingredients—some of the shelf-stable meals include macaroni and cheese dinners and apple cinnamon oatmeal.

To ensure the 27,500 meals reach homes, the school is also partnering with **The Food Bank of Delaware** for distribution. The Food Bank solicits, warehouses and



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distributes food through a state-wide network of hunger-relief partners, including food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters and other community food providers.

The school stated that it’s already fully-booked for volunteers, a good problem to have. However, it encourages people to donate to The Food Bank of Delaware.

“Joining together to assemble 27,500 meals for the greater Wilmington community helps us connect with one another in honor of our 275th anniversary while contributing to this important cause,” Aldridge said.





# Sports

photo credit: Delaware Blue Coats

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# SHOOTING WOES SINK BLUE COATS IN SEASON FINALE

BY PATRICK GARYANTES

The Blue Coats closed their season out on March 30 as the Oklahoma City Blue visited the Chase Fieldhouse. The Blue entered the game with a 20-13 record and a handful of NBA prospects on their roster led by Ousmane Dieng (11th overall pick in 2024 draft).

The length of OKC caused Delaware fits all night as they shot an abysmal 3-of-35 from the three-point line and before a hot fourth quarter were shooting 22-for-77 from the field overall (28.6%). The Blue also dominated the glass, outrebounding Delaware 59-32. These two factors helped OKC earn their 21st victory on the season, 121-95.

With the prolonged scoring drought, the Blue Coats only had four players in double figure, a number that

doubled during their 34-point outburst in the final quarter. Jeff Downtin led the way with 19, while Ricky Council netted 18, Jarron Cumberland added 19 and Melvin Frazier Jr. rounded out the double figure scoring with 14.

The Blue were led by their starting five primarily, as all of them netted double-figure points. Keyontae Johnson finished with 12, Adam Flagler with 11, Lindy Waters III with 15, Dieng with 19 and Olivier Sarr led the way with 21. Hunter Maldonado wasn't too shabby either, as he scored 17 off the bench.

While Delaware struggled to shoot, OKC shot 51-for-94 from the field with a ton of shots at the rim. They would also outshoot the Blue Coats from deep, shoot-

ing 11-of-34.

The Blue Coats finish the season on a bit of a slide falling to 19-15 on the season and earning the sixth and final seed in the Eastern Conference Playoff picture. The Blue earned the 3-seed out West.

The G-League playoffs were set to kick off on April 2 with opening round games. The way the playoffs are set up, the top two seeds in each conference earn a first round bye. The opening three rounds of the tournament are single elimination, with a three-game series in the final. The Blue Coats opened the tournament with a visit to Indiana to take on the Mad Ants.

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# QUICK STICK: WEEK 2 GIRLS SOCCER TOP 10

BY JASON WINCHELL

The weather doesn't look good again this week, but the good news is there are only five matches on the schedule this week as most schools are on their holiday break.

The beauty of soccer is sometimes the final score doesn't tell the whole story. The No. 3 Quakers played Wilmington Christian last week and fell 1-0 in the match where they outshot them 16-2. The Quakers also had a 10-0 advantage on corner kicks. Sophomore Leah Matthews had 16 saves including a bunch of 10 bell saves. Matthew's had 24 saves against ranked teams last week.

The Saint Mark's Spartans beat Appoquinimink 2-1 last week in a battle of No. 2 teams. The Division 2 No. 2 Spartans scored a goal in the first half to take a 1-0 lead into intermission over Division 1 No. 2 Appoquinimink. Both teams scored in the second half as the Spartans held on for the key non-conference win.

Here is the week two Delaware Live rankings after the second week of competition. A light schedule this week.

## DIVISION 1

**No. 1 Middletown (3-0)(LW No. 1)** The defending champs went 2-0 last week with a 7-0 win over Odessa and a 5-0 win over then No. 3 Smyrna.

**No. 2 Appoquinimink (3-1)(LW No. 2)** The Jags went 1-1 last week with a 2-1 loss against Division 2 No. 2 Saint Mark's and a win over Mount Pleasant.

**No. 3 Wilmington Charter (3-1)(LW No. 4)** The Force defeated Division 2 No. 5 DMA 1-0 last week.

**No. 4 Polytech (3-0-1)(LW No. 5)** The Panthers defeated Dover and Red Lion last week.

**No. 5 Sussex Tech (3-0-1)(LW Unranked)** The Ravens went 2-0 last week with a 3-2 win over then No. 8 Cape Henlopen and a 1-0 win over Milford.

**No. 6 Smyrna (1-2)(LW No. 3)** The Eagles went 1-1 last week with a 3-1 win over Cape Henlopen and a 5-0 loss to No. 1 Middletown.

**No. 7 Padua (0-2)(LW No. 7)** The Pandas got in the win column with a 4-3 win over Sanford last week.

**No. 8 Odessa (2-1-1)(LW No. 6)** The Ducks went 1-1 last week with a win over Odyssey Charter and a loss to No. 1 Middletown.

**No. 9 Delcastle (2-1)(LW No. 9)** The Cougars won over McKean last week.

**No. 10 Caesar Rodney (3-1)(LW Unranked)** The Riders beat Sussex Central and Lake Forest last week.

## DIVISION 2

**No. 1 Caravel (3-0)(LW No.1)** The Bucs defeated St. Andrews and Newark Charter last week. Both were by 1-0 scores.

**No. 2 Saint Mark's (2-0)(LW No. 2)** The Spartans defeated Division 1 No. 2 Appoquinimink 2-1 last week.

**No. 3 Archmere (2-0)(LW No. 4)** The Auks defeated Newark Charter 2-0,

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY NICK HALLIDAY

Another week of baseball and another week of uncooperative weather. Had some rainouts last week as well as some games played in tornado-like winds—well for baseball it seemed like tornadoes with dirt funnels cutting through infields. However, there were some good games played between some of our top teams.

No. 1 DMA has yet to take the field this season. Cape, Sussex Tech, Sussex Central, Saint Mark's and Sanford

# CLUBHOUSE TALK: WEEK 2 BASEBALL TOP 10

are all still undefeated. We had two top 10 games last week as Caravel defeated Salesianum and William Penn defeated St. Georges. We have some top 10 matchups that could shake up our rankings. Let's take a look at this week's top 10 rankings.

**No. 1 Delaware Military Seahawks** (DMA) the defending state champs were idle again this week. They took the field for the first time Thursday as they hosted Conrad, a rematch from last year's state championship which will be live streamed on our channel. Then they traveled to play Caesar Rodney on Saturday. We will see how DMA handles its first couple games to remain at No. 1.

**No. 2 Cape Henlopen** added another win last week and their second consecutive shutout. They blanked Caesar Rodney by a score of 7-0. Transfer Brad Marks got his second win for the Vikings. Cape hosted Dover on Thursday and Appoquinimink on Saturday. Let's see how the week shakes up for them.

**No. 3 Caravel Buccaneers** got a big win last week as they hosted No. 8 Salesianum. Ace pitcher Tim Tyler pitched a gem for the Buccaneers, going five and two thirds innings, allowing one run on two hits in the victory. Caravel traveled to Laurel on Tuesday, then hosted Shipley School (PA) on Saturday.

**No. 4 Sussex Central Golden Knights** defeated Laurel last week with a 10-0 score. Joaquin Rodriguez got his second win of the season for the Golden Knights while

the offense continued to stay hot. Central has three games this week. They hosted Appoquinimink on Monday, Milford on Thursday and No. 8 Salesianum on Saturday. They aren't going to get much rest from their starters this week, so we will see how they handle this tough schedule.

**No. 5 Sussex Tech Ravens** defeated Lake Forest 5-1 to continue their winning streak and improve to 3-0. This week, they hosted Smyrna on Thursday and Queen Anne's County (MD) on Saturday. This week shouldn't be too much of a problem for the Ravens, who should prevail in both games.

**No. 6 Sanford Warriors** went 3-0 in the first week of play, but were idle last week. They have three games this week and hosted all three teams—St. Elizabeth on Tuesday, Tower Hill on Thursday and Brandywine on Saturday. Having all three games at home is an advantage for the Warriors. Let's see how they defend their home field.

**No. 7 Saint Mark's Spartans** won their only game last week as they defeated St. Elizabeth 6-1 at home. This week they will hit the road for three straight games. They traveled to Archmere on Tuesday, Appoquinimink on Thursday and Delmar on Saturday. This is a tough week for the Spartans being on the road for three games. It's a good test for them.

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