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Carney Veto Overridden



State Moves to Take Christina School District Out of City



Abby Mace C2C Female Athlete of the Year



photo link: Children's Learning Garden



Headlines

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GREENVILLE'S FAVORITE MAILMAN HONORED WITH EPIC SEND-OFF

BY BETSY PRICE

It may not be quite as renowned as Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, but Eric Garofalo is rocking his Beloved Mailman Farewell Tour in Greenville. Festivities have included parties thrown by neighborhoods, a shower of gifts and cards, and even few bittersweet au revoirs at mail boxes along the route of a man whose presence customers say is so much a part of the community he is like extended family.

Garofalo has been the guest of honor at parties in Sedgely Farms, Angelesy, Limerick and finally Stonewold, where 60 people turned out Wednesday night in 90-degree heat to wish him well. His wife, Annette, told one group, "It's so sweet that you guys love him and he loves you, but this is not normal with your mailman."

Garofalo has been the letter carrier for two decades in

some of those neighborhoods, a primo route and one he spent years working to achieve. He's blessed with the gift of gab and a knack of finding commonality with other people. People describe him as gregarious, but he thinks of it as making himself available to others.

"I'm a people person," he said. "I mean, the only thing I ever won in high school was Best Personality."

Garofalo also has a true civil servant's heart and no problem going above and beyond the call of duty to help those to whom he makes 415 deliveries a day, six days a week and usually 10 hours a day. He can reel off their addresses by memory and has most of their cell phone numbers, and they have his. He's even taken calls from a beach while on vacation if one of them needed help.

Garofalo also has many of their garage door codes. If

he arrives at a house and sees packages delivered by other services sitting around, he'll push them into garages to try to foil porch pirates. It's not really a part of his job, he said.

"But you know, I always say there are postal rules and then there's my rules that I do on my route," Garofalo says.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The Newark resident started casually mentioning to customers two years ago that he likely would retire soon.

Stonewold resident Cathy Andriadis walks in the neighborhood every morning with a friend. Garofalo's name often came up when they stopped to chat with other residents. Inevitably, Andriadis said, whoever they were talking to would say they didn't want Garofalo to retire. That's no slight to the [U.S. Post Office](#), she said.

"But we developed such a great relationship with him, and as I said he was like extended family," she said. "He was a part of the neighborhood."

Garofalo paid attention to what was going on in the neighborhood and with families. He delivers packages to the front door of the Andriadis house to make it easier for her husband, who uses a cane. He does the same for others.

"He's a pillar of the community and looks out for each and every neighbor and does special touches for all of us," said Christy Fleming, whose family lives along Garofalo's route.

Garofalo noticed when her son's high school team won the state tennis championship and asked how her son, James, did in his match. When he realized the family was planning a wedding, he offered congratulations to Barbara, the bride.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

WITH SENATE VOTE, CARNEY VETO OVERRIDDEN; FIRST TIME IN 47 YEARS

LEGISLATIVE HALL

BY JAREK RUTZ

It's official—the Delaware General Assembly has overridden a veto by Gov. John Carney. And [House Bill 282](#), sponsored by Paul Baumbach, D-Newark, has become state law. It will go into effect Jan. 1, 2025, altering the membership, leadership, structure and procedures of the [State Employee Benefits Committee](#), which controls health insurance and more for employees and retirees.

Carney on Tuesday vetoed the bill, which unanimously had passed both chambers of the legislature. On Wednesday, the House again voted unanimously to pass the bill, which is step one of overriding a veto. Thursday, in the second to last day of this year's legislative session, the Senate completed the first veto override in nearly 50

years by unanimously passing the bill again.

"This vote was not about us and it was not about Gov. John Carney," the House's Democratic leadership said in a statement they released after the vote. "This was a vote of confidence in our state workers and the labor unions who fight for their interests each and every day, said Senate President Pro Tempore Dave Sokola, D-Newark, Senate Majority Leader Bryan Townsend, D-Newark, and Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth "Tizzy" Lockman D-Wilmington.

Carney wasn't pleased.

"For eight years, I've been focused on getting our fiscal house in order and protecting the interests of all Delaware taxpayers," he said in a statement after the vote.

"I'm proud that we'll leave our budget in strong shape for the next administration. In fact, we were able to turn a \$400 million deficit when I took office into \$400 million in additional reserves above the required Rainy Day Fund. As a result, we'll be able to keep taxes low, prevent painful budget cuts and continue to fund important priorities for Delaware families.

"Unfortunately, House Bill 282 runs counter to those efforts."

The governor repeated what he had said about his veto: "This bill will make it harder for state leaders to manage over \$1 billion in health care expenses—roughly one sixth of our state budget.

"That's not smart public policy. It puts the interests of Delaware taxpayers at risk. It could lead to higher taxes and limit our ability to give pay raises to teachers, active state employees and pensioners, as we've done the last several years."

Even so, he said, "Sometimes we have disagreements with members of the General Assembly. This is one of those times. I look forward to finishing this session by working together with legislators and doing as much good as we can for the people we're fortunate enough to serve."

House Bill 282 was driven by a year of discussions and meetings after the Benefits Committee announced it was going to change state retiree benefits from the premium plan they have to Medicare Advantage plans.

Many retirees were angered by this and sued, winning a court judgment that the move was illegal because of the way the retiree benefits were set up.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY BETSY PRICE

The [Delaware Supreme Court](#) has thrown out a lower court ruling on absentee ballots in a unanimous vote, saying neither of the plaintiffs had standing to sue. While Democrats celebrated the decision, Republicans pointed out that the decision said nothing about the merits of the case, which focused on whether the state director of elections could choose voting by machine or paper ballots.

Jane Brady, who sued on behalf of Rep. Gerald Hocker, R-Ocean View, as a candidate and Michael Mennella as an elections poll worker, said she was “a little” surprised

DELAWARE SUPREME COURT VACATES LOWER COURT ABSENTEE BALLOT RULING

at the ruling. The decision cannot be appealed. If another suit is filed, it would have to start from scratch, Brady said.

The ruling comes with only one day left in the 2024 session of the Delaware General Assembly. The House and Senate will meet Sunday at 2 p.m. and will sign off for the year sometime that day.

The case rose from a law promulgated by Democrats in the General Assembly. They contended absentee ballots and other measures like early voting helped people who Republicans argued that absentee ballots and things like on-site voter registration were not secure, could lead to fraud and should be more stringently confirmed if used.

A Superior Court judge [ruled](#) in February that the new law was unconstitutional, setting up an appeal.

A press release from the Delaware Department of Elections said permanent absentee voting and early voting will be offered for the upcoming Sept. 10 state primary and Nov. 5 general elections.

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photo link: The Delaware Contemporary

Culture

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FIREWORKS AND SO FORTH TO CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE DAY IN DE

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Most Delaware places known for Fourth of July fireworks and other Independence Day activities have announced their plans. Organizers consistently ask for people to arrive early and leave late, and the Delaware Department of Transportation warns that many events close roads, too. In other words, traffic could be bad.

Organizers also often ask for contributions to support the celebrations. Go Fourth Lewes, for instance, says the fireworks cost \$85,000.

Dusk is about 9:05 p.m. on Thursday, the Fourth, but fireworks could start as late as 9:30. Here's a lineup:

FIREWORKS ON (OR NEAR) THE FOURTH

Bethany Beach calls its holiday celebration “our biggest party of the year.” The fun starts with a 5K run/walk on June 30. On the Fourth, there's a parade at noon

featuring floats (the theme is “Celebrating 40 years”), bands, motor vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians. Parade awards will be announced at the bandstand at 7:15 p.m., followed by a concert by The 1974 at 7:30 and the fireworks at dusk.

Dewey Beach gets fireworks on the Fourth, thanks to businessman Alex Pires.

The **Dover** Fourth of July Celebration starts at 10 a.m. with working tours of the First State Heritage park, with the declaration read at 2 p.m., near the spot where the document was first read in 1776. Artisans and food vendors will be operating by 4 p.m. A parade starts at 6 p.m. on Hazel Street, and it heads south on State Street and terminates at Water Street. It's organized by American Legion Walter L. Fox Post No. 2. Fireworks are at 9:15 p.m.

The **Hockessin** Fourth of July Festival and Fireworks include neighborhood relays in the morning, a parade in the afternoon and the fireworks at dusk on July 4. The fireworks can be seen all over Hockessin, the website says, with the main viewing from Swift Park, Piedmont Baseball Fields, Hockessin Library and Artesian Soccer Fields.

Laurel's 30th annual 4th of July Celebration is mostly at Janosik Park on Front Street. Events includes a car and truck show 4-8 p.m., a cornhole tournament at 5:30 p.m., live bands, a parade at 7 p.m (Evergreen Drive, Central Avenue, Market Street, Maryland Avenue) and fireworks at dusk.

Lewes' Go Fourth fireworks starts at dusk on July 4. There are “events all day long, all run by different groups of volunteers,” Go Fourth Lewes says. Old-fashioned children's games run 9 a.m. to noon on Second Street. The 28th annual July 4th Celebration and Car Show runs noon to 3 p.m. at Trinity Faith Christian Center, 15516 New Road. The decorated boat parade on the canal departs at 1:30 p.m. from the inlet and makes its way to the bridge. Winners will be announced at the Overfalls at 3:30. It's organized by the Overfalls and the Lewes-Rehoboth Beach Rotary Club and sponsored by the Freedom Boat Club. The Doo-Dah Parade leaves from Manila Avenue “when organizers are ready to Doo-Dah...usually in the 4:30ish to 5 time frame.”

Newark's Liberty Day and Fourth of July Fireworks runs 6-10 p.m. July 4 at the University of Delaware athletic complex on South College Avenue.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

DELABEAR EULOGIZED IN RESOLUTION URGING WILDLIFE AWARENESS



BY BETSY PRICE

Delabear, the black bear spotted in Newark Saturday and **killed** Tuesday night on Route 1 in New Castle, was memorialized Thursday in resolution which urged drivers to be on the lookout for wildlife.

House Resolution 33, sponsored by Rep. Sophie Phillips, D-Christiana, and Speaker of the House Valerie Longhurst, D-Bear, said the House “mourns the loss of this majestic creature” also urged developers, residents and state agencies to consider nature and the wildlife when moving forward with development projects.

Phillips noted that the bear seen in Newark was quickly dubbed Delabear on social media, as were other bears discovered wandering around Delaware, usually from across a state line.

“As someone who has studied bears and loved them

so much, I was extremely excited to hear this news,” said Phillips in introducing the resolution.

This year’s Delabear was spotted in Ogletown and then the community of Bear before dying.

LOSS OF DELABEAR

The resolution said that the House was relieved that there were no injuries to the occupants of the vehicle and mourned the loss of Delabear.

“We want to capture this viral moment to bring attention to an important topic,” Phillips said. “It’s imperative to protect drivers and wildlife on our roadways as much as possible.”

It urged drivers to keep an eye out for wildlife on roads. “It is imperative to protect drivers and wildlife on our roadways as much as possible,” the resolution said.



“

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- URSULINE ACADEMY

The General Assembly passed a series of legislative initiatives to improve the safety of Delaware’s roads, the resolution said.

“It is the continuing mission of the House of Representatives to improve road safety and protect our wildlife,” the resolution said, “and it is important that we ensure wildlife is safe and that as we encroach on wildlife habitats that we are taking the necessary steps to protect nature and create a harmonious coexistence.

The resolution passed on a voice vote, with a clear majority answering aye when Longhurst called for a vote on the Delabear resolution. She asked for nay votes, surprised to hear a few booming nos.

“What!” Longhurst exclaimed.





DELAWARE RANKED BEST IN NATION AT TIPPING

BY BETSY PRICE

Here's another thing that Delaware is first at: Tipping at restaurants. That seems to surprise **Food & Wine** magazine, which noted in a recent article how small the state is and suggested the higher tipping likely is because Delaware has no state or local sales taxes.

Carl Georigi, CEO of Platinum Dining Group, wasn't surprised, but only after he checked the validity of the source of the information, which is a survey by Toast, which offers point-of-sale technology.

Karen Stauffer, senior director communications and strategy for the Delaware Restaurant Association, also was unsurprised.

Delaware is a small enough state that people and restaurants have connections up and down the state, it's an industry that includes one of every 10 state workers, and the COVID 19 pandemic raised the state's appreciation for the role of restaurants in the community, they say.

Tips tend to be based both on service and on community, Georigi said. His Platinum Group includes Taverna, Eclipse Bistro, Redfire, Capers & Lemons, El Camino and The Market.

"There's more of a personal connection on an ongoing basis, much more than you would see maybe in a resort town where people are in and out or big city where, you know, sometimes lunches and dinners are just a function of business and that type of thing," he said. "I think here we experience a connection with our clientele and our regular customers that is really a direct result of the community being so small and close to them, even though it's a state that operates like a large town sometimes because everybody knows everybody from north to south."

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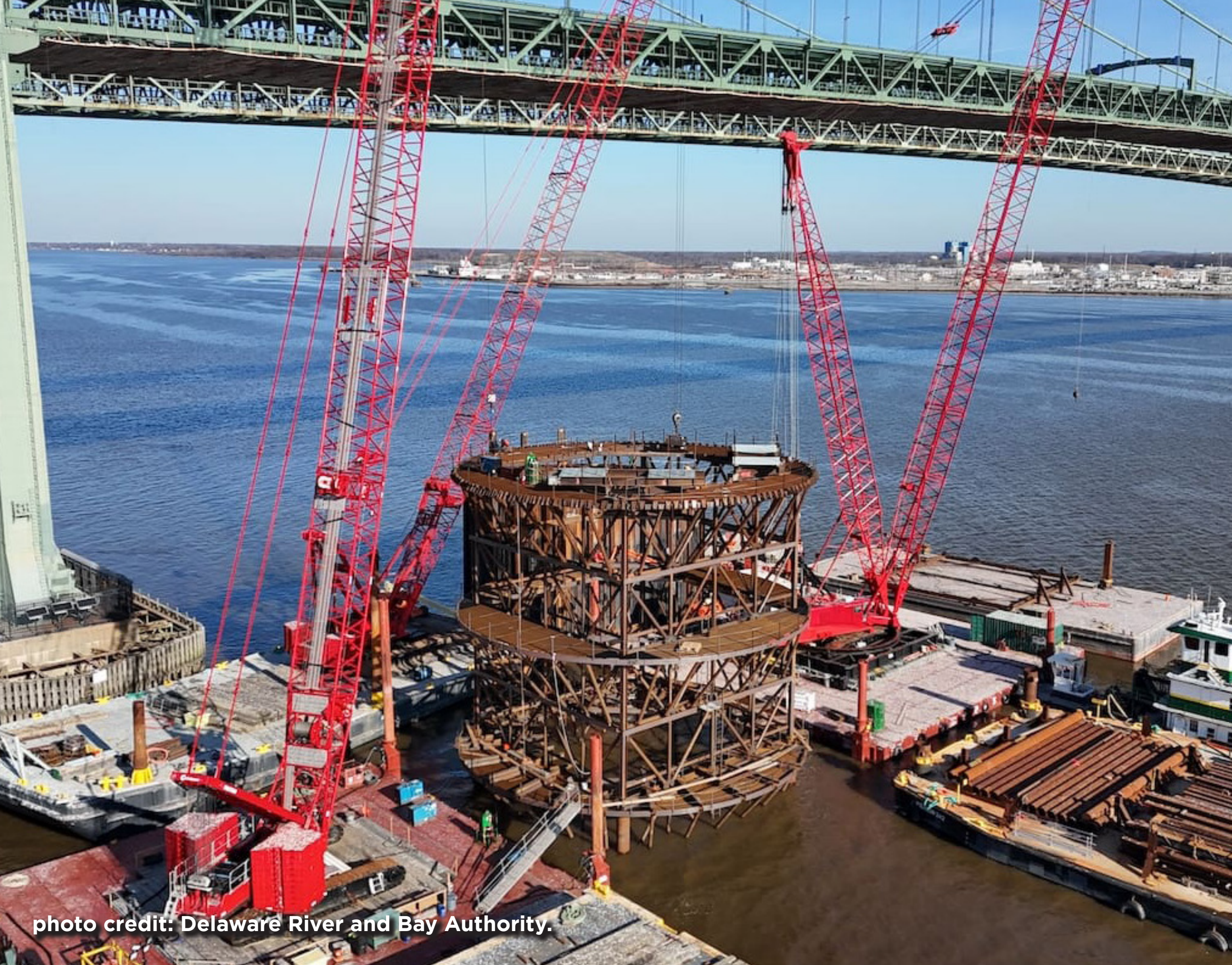


photo credit: Delaware River and Bay Authority.

Business

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NBN SPORTS ACADEMY OPENS NEW FACILITY IN HOCKESSIN

BY NICK HALLIDAY

NBN Sports Academy has opened its new facility in Hockessin. NBN purchased the old Hockessin Indoor Tennis Facility and turned it into a basketball and volleyball training facility with three high school courts with shot clocks. The basketball courts can then be converted into five volleyball courts. The facility also includes a cafe, classrooms, and training and physical therapy area.

NBN Sports Academy is an independent sports academy that was established in 2017 by Lonnie Wright. NBN has four coed divisions based on age for youths between the ages of four and 17. Each team consists of eight to 10 children, a coach and an assistant coach. Wright and his group also run an AAU group out of NBN called Delaware Ignite which is a nationally ranked program that competes in grades six-12.

But just like the motto says, NBN is “More than Sports”. Their program also provides educational and life skills training. They offer a curriculum that supports the needs of youths and helps them advance to the next level. Their educational and life skills training programs include:

- Conflict resolution
- Interviewing skills
- Self-esteem
- Money management
- Critical thinking
- Credit building
- Resume/job search

Wright told us his reason behind starting NBN was “I had four boys who were basketball players and they were not being taught the game the right way. They were

playing in programs that just had them come in and run up and down the floor. But more importantly, I wanted my boys to be more well-rounded. Sports have a way of bringing all types of groups together black, white, green, yellow, rich and poor.”

Since NBN’s inception in 2017, they have nearly quadrupled their size with their purchase of the new facility. The new facility also brings more opportunities and NBN hopes to hold some major tournaments here in our state to showcase the talent our state has to offer.

Wright told us when asked why the bigger facility was so important. “We see all the professional Delaware athletes that don’t come back. Then we see all of the high school kids leaving the state because they think they offer a better opportunity. Now there’s an opportunity for them all they have to do is walk through the door.”

NBN also offers adult leagues and tournaments as well as other sports like volleyball and cheerleading. They are also going to offer an NBN podcast, as well multimedia training for those kids who want to be an analyst or a broadcaster. Looks like we may have some future NBN staff members joining us one day. NBN expects the new sports facility to offer many more opportunities in which they see their new facility and growth to continue upward.





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Food & Dining

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CHEF ROBERT LHULIER TAKES ON BRANDYWINE RESTAURANT

BY BETSY PRICE

The ability of a restaurant to adapt and thrive is an admirable trait in the post-pandemic era. The hospitality industry must navigate labor shortages, high food prices, evolving diner demands, and soaring credit card fees. In the past, new restaurants had more time to work out the kinks. No longer.

For instance, Wilmington-based **Tsionas Management**, which owns 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue and **The Brandywine Restaurant**, located in that building, recently parted ways with Bill Irvin, who launched the elegant eatery in fall 2023.

“Bill was brought on to operate and manage The Brandywine, but we have decided to go in a different direction,” said a spokesperson of the real estate and property

management company. “We plan to do a rebrand while keeping the elements that have been successful from the start.”

Irvin agreed that the original stakeholders’ visions are no longer aligned. He owns **Snuff Mill Restaurant, Butchery & Wine Bar** in Brandywine Hundred and will focus on that restaurant and new projects. “We have a lot of sticks in the sand, and we’re working on other projects,” Irvin said.

Tsionas Management has contracted with Robert Lhulier to operate The Brandywine. It will close for a week starting Sunday, June 30 and reopen on Tuesday, July 9, to explore new dishes.

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photo link: Governor John Carney

Government

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WILM. COUNCIL WANTS CITY TO HIRE PARKING CONSULTANT

BY JAREK RUTZ

Tired of driving around the same four blocks for a half hour trying to find a parking spot? The Wilmington City Council is taking action to remedy the parking concerns of residents and visitors.

Resolution 24-039, sponsored by Councilman James Spadola, R-at large, requests that the city administration hire an external consultant to assess Wilmington's parking needs.

"Every resident, business owner and visitor to Wilmington I have spoken with agrees that the city's parking system is difficult to navigate and could be much more user friendly," said Ken Grant, a spokesperson for the Wilmington Fines and Fees Team.

The resolution unanimously passed the city council during their bi-monthly meeting last week.

"This resolution gives an opportunity for the city to hire an outside consultant to examine what we are doing and what we are doing wrong, tell us what we can be doing better, and to tell us what we are not even talking about that we could implement," Spadola said.

By working with a professional consulting firm, the council can plan for the future using best practices from other cities and the best way to handle the complexities of Wilmington, Spadola said.

"We have some neighborhoods that want weekend enforcement and we have some neighborhoods that don't," he said. "The aim is to have a strategic plan that will improve parking accessibility, efficiency and convenience for our residents and visitors."

Grant said the decades-old system is confusing, contradictory and uses illogical signs throughout the city that even Wilmington Police Officers have admitted they don't understand.

"The need for a comprehensive study of Wilmington's parking system is obvious to just about everyone who lives, works or drives in the city," he said. "The policies put in place nearly 30 years ago do not reflect the current parking and transportation needs of a city with a changing night-life, growing weekend activities, and more residents in its downtown neighborhoods."

CITY'S ALREADY HIRED PARKING FIRM

John Rago, deputy chief of staff for the Office of Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki, said the city engaged with a firm earlier this year to conduct a comprehensive parking study to better understand the parking needs of residents, businesses, daily commuters and visitors.

"Council Member Spadola had been informed previously that such a parking study was being conducted, so his resolution was unnecessary," Rago said. "The city is relying on the expertise of urban planners and engineers to conduct a holistic study, which began in the downtown area and will expand city-wide."

He said the city anticipates seeing some of the early results of the downtown portion of this study sometime in the fall.

"The need for a comprehensive study of Wilmington's parking system is obvious to just about everyone who lives, works or drives in the city," Grant said.





TRANS ATHLETE BILL SPARKS HEALTHY DEBATE IN SENATE COMMITTEE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill forcing transgender student athletes to compete only with others who share their biological gender drew some healthy discussion in the Senate Education Committee Wednesday.

“While the public could be broadly accepting of the idea that adults who want to identify as a different gender and undergo hormone treatment to live out their lives should be given space to do so, transgender activists are pushing for changes that have direct ramifications for others—here girls high school sports,” said Tom Neuberger, an attorney at the [The Neuberger Firm](#) who was called to testify in support the bill.

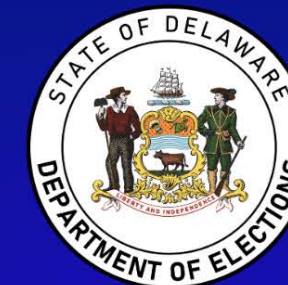
Dubbed the “Fairness in Girls’ Sports Act,” [Senate Bill 191](#), sponsored by Sen. Bryant Richardson R-Seaford, defines biological gender as being determined by birth and based on the student’s birth certificate or other government record if a birth certificate is unobtainable.

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover and a longtime athletic coach, pointed out that there’s scientific evidence of biological males having an athletic advantage over biological females.

“All that means is bigger, faster, stronger, something that I painted on the walls in the weight room when I ran those weight rooms for 30 years, telling the athletes that bigger, faster, stronger was how you won the moment,” he said.

He pointed out that in his time as a legislator he took heat from his own side of the political aisle for supporting the Pride Month legislation, but said logic would tell people that biological males should not compete with biological females. Buckson then brought up Anna Hall, who he said is referred to as the greatest American female athlete right now.

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**Election Dates
& Deadlines**



BY BETSY PRICE

The state will invest \$160 million for school projects in six districts and \$100 million in deferred maintenance and capital improvements in state buildings, according to the \$1.1 billion capital budget introduced Monday.

The \$160 million for school construction projects is the largest amount of money designated and will go to Smyrna, Red Clay, Colonial, New Castle County Vo-Tech, Polytech and Christina school districts. It represents the state's share of construction after all six districts applied for the construction money, were approved and then had to get residents to vote for tax increases to pay the district share.

The capital budget includes investments in roadway enhancements, school construction, state building renovations, economic development initiatives and various projects to protect Delaware's natural resources.

House Bill 475, known as the Fiscal Year 2025 Bond Bill, is created by the Joint Capital Improvement Committee, a 12-member panel of legislators who draft the state's capital spending plan.

FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS WILL SHARE \$160 MILLION FOR PROJECTS

HB 475 was on the **agenda** for Tuesday's State House of Representatives session, but was not called up. If approved it will go to the Senate.

"The capital budget is prudently financed with a combination of cash reserves and bond sales that limits and manages state debt," said Joseph Fulgham, director of Policy & Communications for the House Republican Caucus. "While there will always be disagreements about the individual items included in any omnibus bill of this size, the Bond Bill delivers value in long-lasting tangible assets that will serve our residents for years to come."

The 2025 budget will be \$300 million less than 2024's \$1.4 billion and ends a three-year run of rising bond bills, which were based on huge revenue surpluses. Delaware is not expected to have that kind of surplus in 2025 for a variety of reasons.

The 2024 Bond Bill is \$1.409 billion, the second-largest in state history behind 2023's record \$1.458 billion capital spending plan. The 2022 bond was \$1.350 billion and 2021 was \$707.9 million.

The Bond Bill is one of four budgets the General Assembly must pass, including the general budget, one-time supplemental and grants-in-aid. But it doesn't have to be passed by June 30 like the state budget does.

"These investments have a real, tangible impact on people's lives, whether it's students attending new and upgraded schools, roads that are easier to travel, or clean

water projects moving forward," said Rep. Debra Heffernan, D-Bellefonte, chair of the Joint Capital Committee, commonly referred to as the Bond Committee.

The projects financed by the budget include school, road and environmental efforts and serve as a catalyst for job creation and economic growth, Heffernan said. "For several years now we've been fortunate to make significant investments in the infrastructure improvements that Delawareans want and need to strengthen our state."

The Bond Bill includes \$40 million for the Community Reinvestment Fund, which will provide funding for capital projects for Delaware community nonprofit and municipal organizations.

"My Republican and Democratic colleagues on the Bond Committee deserve a lot of credit for putting together a strong job creation bill that continues our record of strong, sound investments in the infrastructure that keeps our communities running," said committee co-chair Sen. Jack Walsh, D-Wilmington.

NOTABLE BOND BILL PROJECTS

- \$352.7 million to complete road projects statewide, including additional funds to address the roads in the poorest condition.
- \$160 million for school construction projects in the Smyrna, Red Clay, Colonial, New Castle County Vo-Tech, Polytech and Christina school districts.

READ MORE HERE



CARNEY VETOES BILL TO REWORK EMPLOYEE BENEFITS COMMITTEE

BY BETSY PRICE

Gov. John Carney on Tuesday vetoed a bill to restructure the state committee that tried to move state retirees from a rich health plan to a Medicare Advantage one to save money.

House Bill 282, sponsored by Rep. Paul Baumbach, D-Newark, is one of several that grew out of a year's worth of committee hearings. It promised to revise the membership, structure and procedures of the State Employee Benefits Committee to increase transparency and accountability.

"I am disappointed that the governor has vetoed House Bill 282, a bill of such importance to our retirees and current employees and a bill that unanimously passed in both chambers," Baumbach said in a statement he issued Tuesday evening. "I will be in communication with House leadership to determine next steps in the best interest of our state," he said.

BENEFITS & RETIREES

The Benefits Committee moved in 2022 to switch retirees to Medicare Advantage to help stem the rising costs of healthcare. That set off a huge revolt by retirees that led to the committee hearings who accused the state of making the move in secret, even though it did not and was known across state government.

One of the big concerns was that committee members didn't always attend the meetings, but instead sent someone in their place so the information wasn't getting to the right people.

Ultimately a court ruling said the state couldn't push retirees into Medicare Advantage because it violated what the retirees had been promised. HB 282 sought to thwart any future attempts to change retiree healthcare by requiring the Speaker of the House and the Senate Pro Tempore to appoint retirees to the committee.



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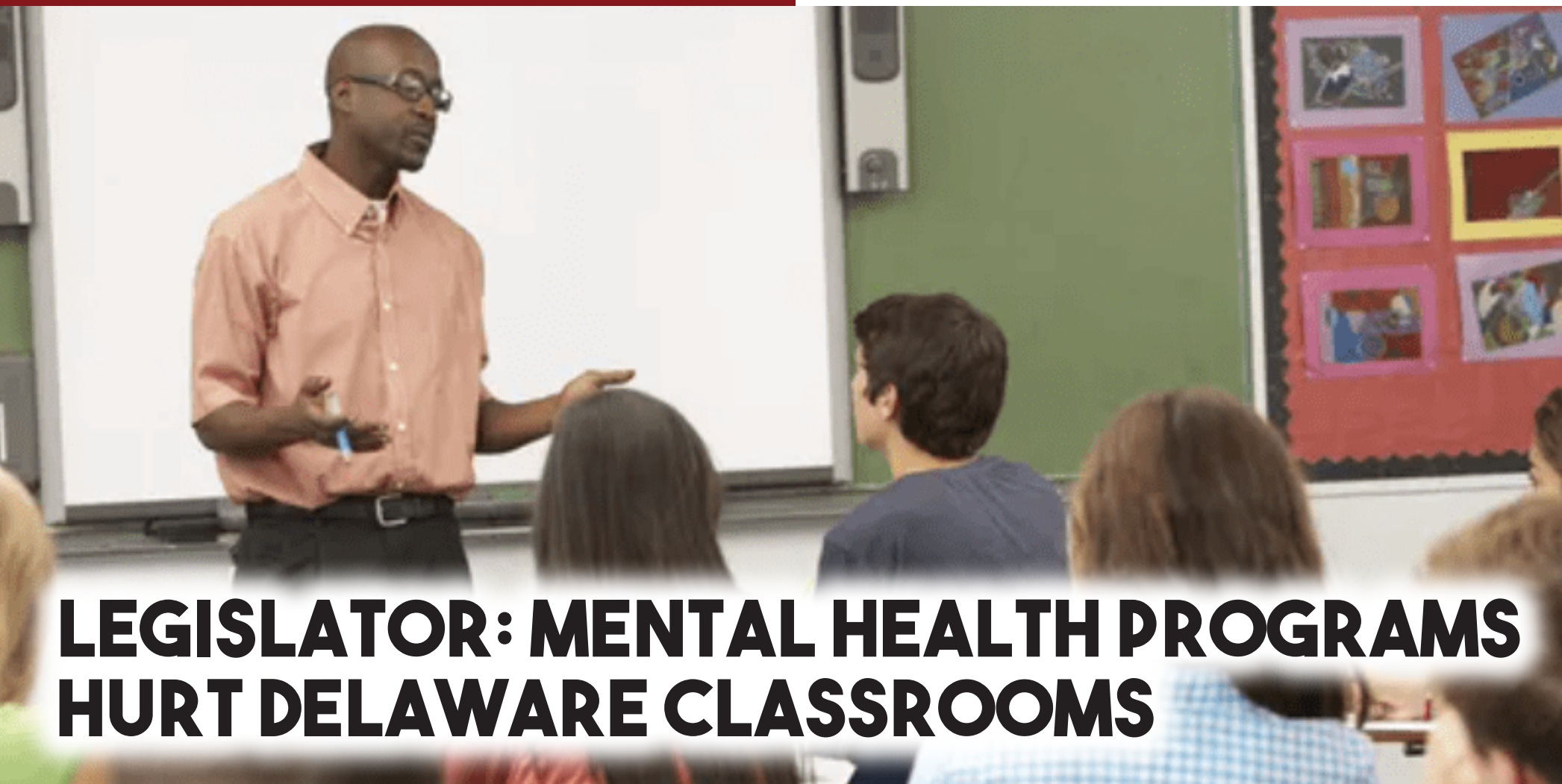
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"It's important to understand that this veto will leave our state employees and retirees haunted by the fear of the next surprise cut to their retiree benefits," Baumbach said.

The changes would address longstanding concerns, both from retirees and current employees, about the visibility and makeup of the committee, said Baumbach, who is not running for re-election.

"With several bills this year and last year, the legislature has collaborated with the governor to fully address the issues he raised in his opposition to the bill," he said. "However, we must acknowledge that there is an underlying operational problem within the SEBC."

DELAWARE
LIVE



LEGISLATOR: MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS HURT DELAWARE CLASSROOMS

BY JAREK RUTZ

A member of the state task force that’s trying to improve student behavior and school environments in schools said that tiered mental health programs are killing Delaware classroom productivity.

“They don’t need all the fancy stuff,” said Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said. “They don’t need the interventions. They don’t need the couches, they don’t need the specialists. They just need to realize, okay, there’s accountability back in the system and I need to handle my business.”

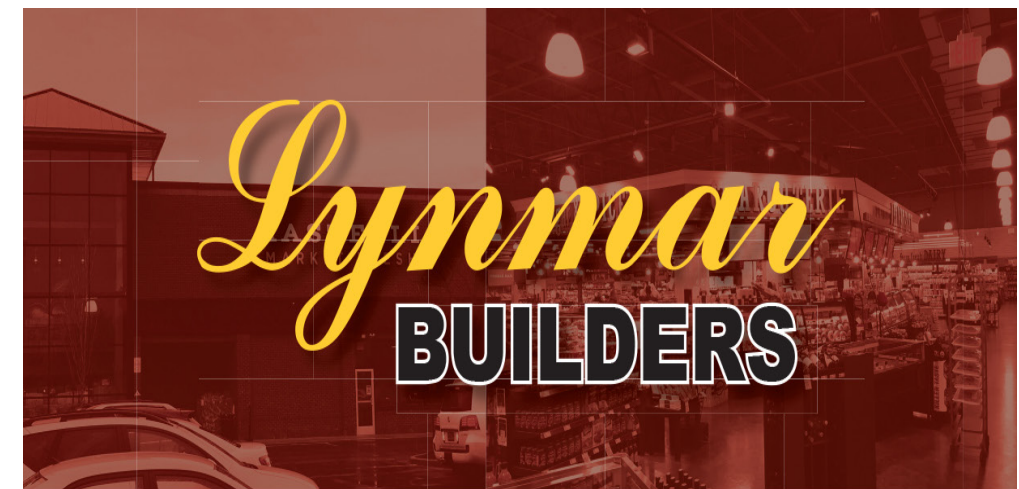
He made the comment in the Student Behavior and School Climate Task Force’s fourth meeting Monday night.

The focus of the meeting was the multi-tiered system of supports, referred to as MTSS, in First State schools.

“Mental illness is real, mental fitness is real,” Buckson said. “Mental health is a good thing that we all have, but we’re labeling it as some stranglehold on education and the weight of it is collapsing the system.”

The 24-member task force, made of government and educational officials as well as school behavioral specialists and resource officers, was created to study the needs and options of students and educators to improve student behavior and school climate policies.

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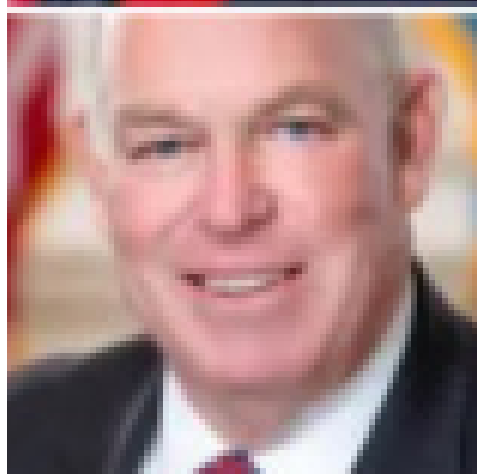
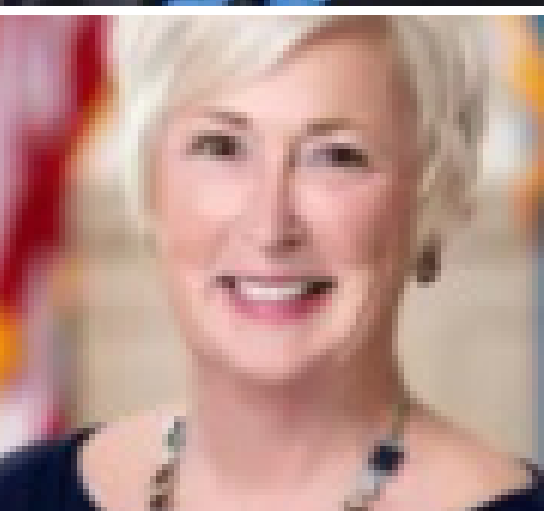
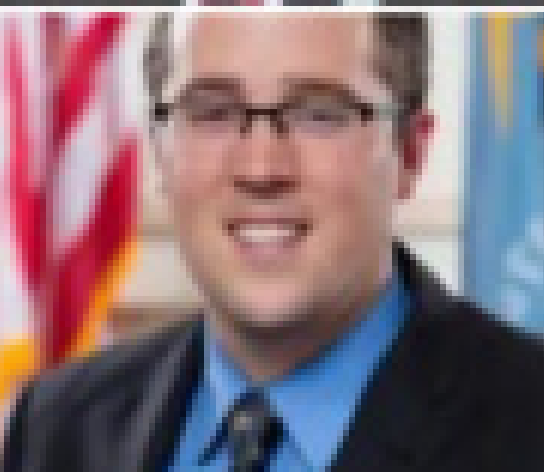
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DELAWARE HOUSE TO SALUTE SIX DEPARTING MEMBERS

BY BETSY PRICE

Among the last week's work in the 2024 session will be **Delaware House of Representatives** saluting six legislators who are leaving or have left the Delaware House.

They include Rep. Sherry Dorsey Walker, D-Wilmington; Rep. Sean Matthews, D-Middletown; Rep. Paul Baumbach, D-Newark; Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach; Rep. Michael Ramone, R-Newark/Pike Creek; and former Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown.

On Tuesday, June 25, the House celebrated Matthews and Briggs King. She resigned last fall after moving into a house a mile outside of her district. She's now running for lieutenant governor on the Republican ticket.

On Wednesday, the House recognized Baumbach and Schwartzkopf. Both have already been the subject of much appreciation, Baumbach when he announced he was not running for re-election a few weeks ago and Schwartzkopf when he stepped down last year as Speaker of the House.

On Thursday, the House will recognize Dorsey Walker and Ramone. She is running for lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket against two other women. He is running for governor on the Republican ticket.



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WILMINGTON TASK FORCE FINDS FINES, FEES ARE 'HIGH PAIN, LOW GAIN'

BY JAREK RUTZ

Water fees have risen the most of any city of Wilmington fees and the city is increasing its use of the water/sewer fund to pay for general city expenses, according to a [city task force report](#). The report said, among other findings, that using fines and fees is a low-reward system.

The 16-page report, conducted by Wilmington's Fines and Fees Task Force, is about a year-and-a-half in the making. The group was created in October 2022 to review fees, fines and administrative sanctions administered by the city, make findings and potentially make recommendations to the city council for changes.

The Wilmington City Council voted last Thursday to approve the final report, which says the fines have "high pain and low gain." That's because over the last two decades, the city has increasingly used fines and fees to generate revenue, shifting more of the burden of paying for city services to people with the least ability to pay.

"As the costs of fines and fees rise, more people have had difficulty paying, causing financial hardship, especially among lower-income residents," the report states.

Plus, late payments or failure to pay and increased costs of collection have impacted Wilmington's bottom line.

The task force believes fair and equitable budgeting is a solution. That means revising the city's budget to better align revenue with sources that have the ability to pay. It also means Wilmington must address the needs of low-income groups to ensure universal access to city services.

Here are the 13 key findings outlined in the report:

- Water bill fees have grown more than any other source of revenue.
- New Castle County's payment for sewage services has been growing much slower than direct user fees paid by water customers.
- Water customers have made up the difference.

- The city uses the water/sewer fund to pay for both water/sewer expenses and general city expenses.
 - The city is increasing its use of the water/sewer fund to pay for general city expenses.
 - A growing portion of the water/sewer fund is paying for general city expenses.
 - Wilmington's population hasn't grown at all, and resident incomes aren't growing as fast as fees are going up.
 - Wilmington's higher water bills have outpaced many residents' ability to pay.
 - The city uses its most harmful collection tactics to collect overdue bills from residential accounts.
 - Fines contribute a small but growing portion of city revenue.
 - Generating revenue from fees and fines is time-consuming and expensive.
 - A very large portion of fine revenue goes to pay outside contractors.
 - Booting and towing for overdue parking tickets generates little revenue and harms Wilmington's low-income residents the most.
- The 13th finding was actually the focus of a legislative bill brought before the General Assembly in April that is currently stuck in committee. [House Bill 351](#), sponsored by Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Newark, would create a slew of requirements for the towing and storage of vehicles without the consent of the owner or operator.

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photo link: Delaware Department of Education



Education

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STATE MOVES TO TAKE CHRISTINA SCHOOL DISTRICT OUT OF CITY

BY JAREK RUTZ

The state legislature has stepped in and created a path for the removal of the **Christina School District** from the city of Wilmington. **House Concurrent Resolution 146**, sponsored by Rep. Nnamdi Chukwuocha, D-Wilmington, supports Christina’s city students and plans for the eventual withdrawal of the district from the city’s bounds.

It’s a result of the recommendation made by the Redding Commission for Educational Equity, which was created in 2019 and suggested policies and practices to the governor and legislators to improve education equity and outcomes in the city of Wilmington and northern New Castle County.

Christina is the second largest school district in Delaware (Red Clay Consolidated), serving more than 13,000 students.

“The Christina School District is, by our recommendation, not meeting the needs of the students of the city of Wilmington, and we should begin to make plans for them to no longer serve the city of Wilmington with the discontinuous footprint which currently exists,” said Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman, D-Wilmington, and co-chair of the Redding Consortium.

This is just a first step, she said, and this resolution is not a binding action in any way.

“It’s really just about acknowledging the context in which the Redding Consortium has been working, the mandate that has been handed to us and the progress that we’ve made in the study and consideration of what next steps taken,” Lockman said, “as we spend the next couple of weeks to months coming up with a more substantive plan for what this means.”

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SENATE MOVES TO ADDRESS SCHOOL FUNDING STUDY WITH COMMISSION

BY JAREK RUTZ

After a couple of briefings on the landmark December 2023 report on school funding that says Delaware should invest up to \$1 billion more into it, the state legislature is moving to take action. Tuesday, the Senate passed [Senate Concurrent Resolution 201](#), sponsored by Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin and chair of the Senate Education Committee, which establishes the Public Education Funding Commission.

That group will be tasked to continue the comprehensive review of public education funding, develop a roadmap of recommendations to implement improvements to the education funding system and serve as an ongoing body to review the funding annually and recommend updates and changes.

It's a response to the [American Institutes for Research's](#) (AIR) 200-page [report](#) that suggests an investment of \$500 million to \$1 billion more in public educa-

tion, which already accounts for about a third of the state's annual budget. Notably, the report points out that the funding formula for Delaware—which is more than 70 years old—is outdated, doesn't follow the resources and needs of students and doesn't sufficiently provide enough for certain demographics like minorities, low-income and students with disabilities and special needs.

“In my 25 years as a public school teacher, I saw firsthand how the incredibly complex and inequitable system that Delaware uses to fund public education is failing to meet the needs of students and contributing to widespread burnout among educators,” Sturgeon said Tuesday.

Some of the inequities in funding led to a Delaware NAACP lawsuit which was settled in 2020.

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Sports

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PLAYER

ABBY MACE IS C2C FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR



BY SHANNON TIMMONS

For Salisbury University softball graduate Abby Mace, the accolades just keep piling up. Mace has had an incredible career as a starting centerfielder for the Gulls. She opted to play her fifth season due to a COVID year and boy did it pay off. Despite the Sea Gulls early exit from the NCAA Division 3 Tournament in 2024, stand-out Mace cemented her name in the legacy of Salisbury softball and the Coast 2 Coast Athletic Conference (C2C). Let's take a quick look at Mace's career:

Mace was a two-time Delaware State Champion with the Smyrna Eagles (2018 and 2019) and was recruited to Salisbury by the late Margie Knight. In 2020, the 5'9" freshman started 13 games, batted .424 with 14 hits and 12 runs scored. She hit three home runs, three doubles and one triple before COVID would cut the season short.

In 2021, Lacey Lord replaced Coach Knight at the helm. Mace started 34 games, batted .442 with 46 hits,

37 runs scored, hit 14 home runs, 10 doubles and stole 22 bases. She earned All C2C outfield, C2C Player of the Year and NFHS All-Region First Team honors.

In 2022, the junior really came into her own, putting her team on her back in 48 games, batted .441 with 46 hits, 65 runs scored, 21 stolen bases, hit 18 home runs, 12 doubles and four triples. She earned All C2C outfield and NFCA All-Region First Team.

The 2023 season could have been her last. The senior started 51 games, batted .353 with 54 hits, 51 runs scored and 22 stolen bases. She hit 10 homeruns, 12 doubles and four triples. Once again, All C2C outfield and NFCA All-Region First Team. The team would make the NCAA Division 3 Tournament and make it to the finals where they finished as the runner up to Trine University.

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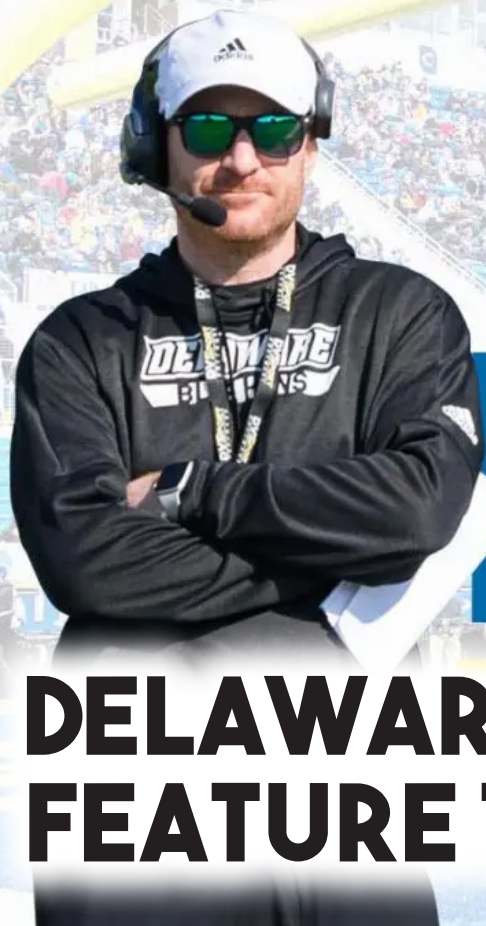
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DELAWARE QUARTERBACK ACADEMY TO FEATURE TWO FORMER NFL PLAYERS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Delaware Football Camps hosted a quarterback academy Saturday, June 29, at the University of Delaware with two former NFL players and Delaware Alumni. Rich Gannon and Joe Flacco were in attendance for the quarterback academy per Delaware football tweet which stated “Pair of legends in the House!”

Gannon set 21 school records, including total offense (7,432 yards), passing yards (5,927), pass attempts (845), and completions (462) and was the only Delaware player at the time to achieve at least 2,000 yards of offense three years in a row.

As a sophomore, Gannon won the Eastern College Athletic Conference Division I-AA Rookie of the Year award in 1984. Then in his 1986 senior season, Gannon

won Yankee Conference Offensive Player of the Year honors and was an honorable mention All-American selection. He went on to play 18 seasons in the NFL with the Minnesota Vikings, Washington Redskins, Kansas City Chiefs and the Oakland Raiders. He was named the NFL’s MVP in 2002 and took the Raiders to the Super Bowl in 2003. Gannon retired in 2005 and began his NFL analyst career on CBS, which lasted until 2020.

At Delaware, Flacco set 20 school records, including yards passed in a single season (4,263 in 2007) and career completions (595). He transferred to Delaware in 2005, but was ineligible to play until the 2006 season. He played two seasons with the Blue Hens in 2006 and 2007.

In 2008, the Baltimore Ravens selected him in the first round with the 18th pick in the draft. Flacco played 10 seasons with the Ravens and won a Super Bowl with them in 2012 where he was named Super Bowl MVP. Flacco has since played for the Denver Broncos, New York Jets, Philadelphia Eagles, Cleveland Browns and is now currently with the Indianapolis Colts.

Camps were held on the campus of University of Delaware and led by the UD football coaching staff. The purpose of this series was to focus on the complete development of physical and mental skills that are required to play quarterback at the highest level. The camp was for kids between the sixth and 12th grade. [CLICK](#) for more information.



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BLUE TEAM BREAKS RECORDS IN 68TH DFRC ALL STAR GAME

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The 68th DFRC Blue-Gold All Star football game took place Friday night, June 21, at the University of Delaware. The game showcases Hand-in-Hand Buddies, children and young adults with intellectual disabilities, and Delaware's finest high school student leaders who participate as football players, cheerleaders, band members and school ambassadors.

Forty-eight schools across the state were represented. The main event of the night is the all star football game, with top seniors from around the state split between two teams—the Blue and Gold teams.

The Blue team opened the game with a trick play that went 92 yards for a touchdown and set a new Blue-Gold record that had stood since 1982. On a double reverse, Rahshan LaMons pitched the ball back to quarterback Rashaan Matthews Jr. who found Vandrick Hamlin at midfield wide open as he caught the ball and ran in for the touchdown.

Late in the second quarter, Matthews found Hamlin again for a pass down the sideline, 46 yards down to the 10-yard line. LaMons finished off the drive with a five-yard run to make it a 14-0 lead. Cole Fenice then picked off a Jacob Tiberi pass on the ensuing drive and returned it to the 13-yard line. Fenice was then able to kick a successful 36-yard field goal to take a 17-0 lead into the half.

On the opening play of the second half, the Blue team went for another big play as Matthews found Hamlin again for a 78-yard touchdown. On that play Hamlin broke another Blue-Gold record as he totaled 216 receiving yards after that play. The previous record was held by Gary Hammond of Newark who had 202 yards in 1969. Blue took a 23-0 lead.

The Blue team added six more points when Markevis Rogers picked off a pass and walked it in for a 23-yard pick six. The Blue team led 29-0 heading into the fourth and final quarter of the game.

The Gold team finally broke the shutout after they were stopped short of the goal line on fourth down. The Blue team had a miscommunication on the snap which made Matthews get rid of the ball quickly, but he was unable to get it out of the end zone which resulted in a safety, giving the Gold team two points.

In the 32-2 victory the Blue team broke three different Blue-Gold game records. The duo of Matthews and Hamlin set new records in longest play from scrimmage (92), most receiving yards (Hamlin 213) and most passing yards in a game (Matthews 254). All of these stats are unofficial until the final stats are available, but we are certain all of these records were broken in Friday's game.



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