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**NEW CONSTRUCTION COMPANY  
CHOSEN**



**STATUS OF ARPA FUNDS**



**DOVER WOMAN SUPPORTS OTHERS**

**JULY 20, 2021 · VOL. XI · ISSUE 28**

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**PHOTO CREDIT: DAWN DEHEL**

# HEADLINES



PHOTO CREDIT: KATHIE ENRIGHT

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# CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT COMPANY CHOSEN FOR NEW POLICE FACILITY



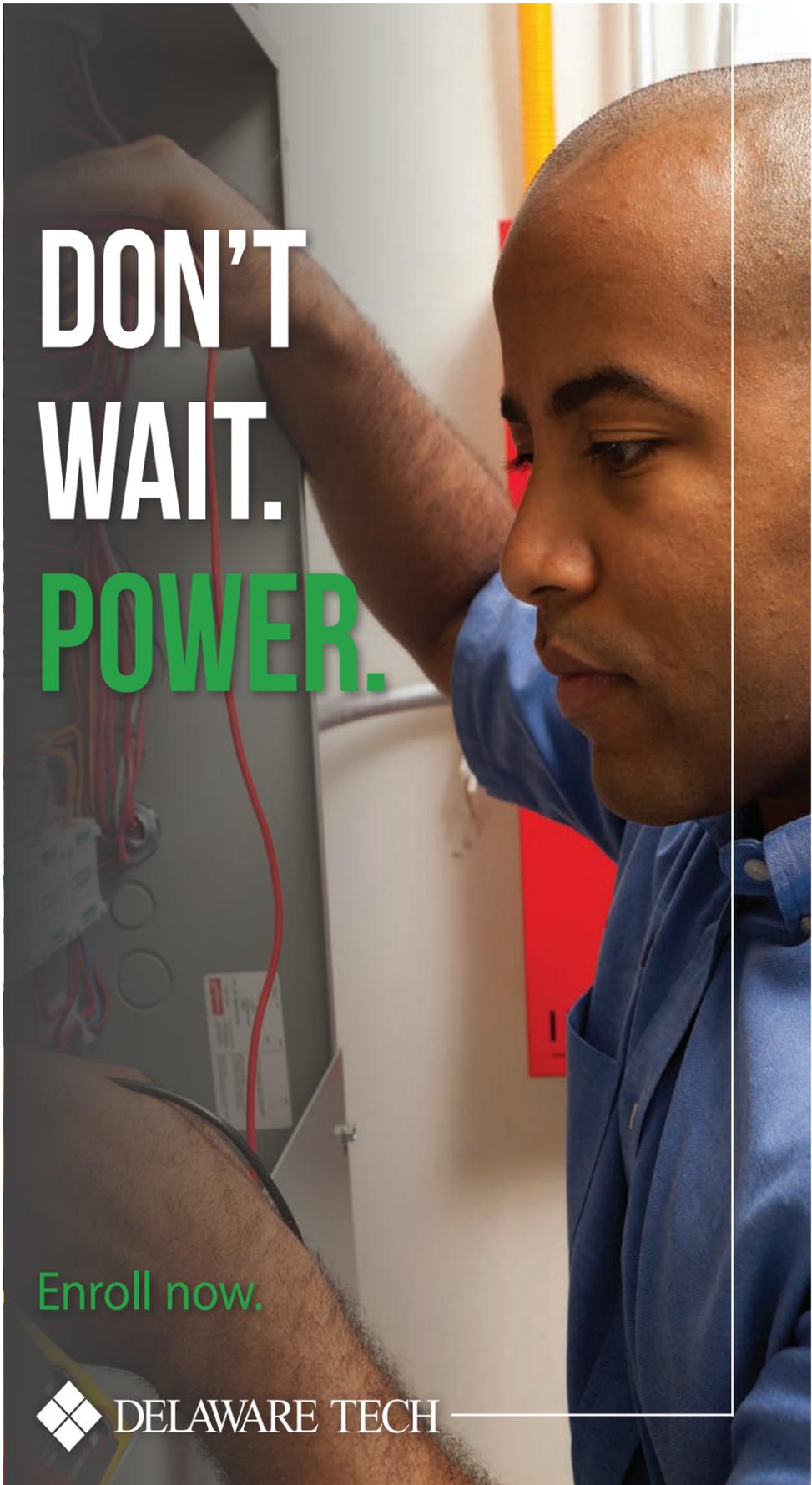
BY BETSY PRICE

As part of the design and construction process for the new police facility approved by voters in February, a five-member panel was spent several months reviewing Requests for Proposals for a construction management company to oversee the building process. Mike Svaby, Public Works director, explained that the city received nine RFPs which the committee narrowed down to three, Whiting Turner (WT), Richard Y. Johnson (RYJ) and GGA/Willow Construction (GGA). The committee's

final recommendation was that RYJ be awarded the contract.

“On May 20, 2021, all three firms were invited to come to Public Works to give a 45-minute, timed presentation, allowing for a 15-minute question and answer period,” Svaby said. “All three were presented with the rating evaluation scoresheet as well. Initially, the panel ranked WT first, RYJ second and GGA third.”

See **POLICE** on page 4



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**POLICE from page 3**

After that presentation, Svaby began a fact-finding and negotiation effort beginning with WT due to their ranking after the presentations. Questions were developed to rank the qualitative and quantitative factors, including price. There were nine factors including formatted price, fixed price ranking only, change order fee, historic starting and finishing project cost and number of change orders issued, average fee charged for CM/A contract, percent of firm's fee included insurance cost, projects undertaken in the last two years, percent of projects that led to further award to DE subcontractors and two types of differences in working day count. Those nine factors were then broken down into most and least preferred.

“RYJ was first place overall, capturing nine out of ten of the most preferred factors,” Svaby said. “WT had least preferred in six out of ten factors and GGA had one most preferred, three least preferred and six that were between most and least preferred. These factors and the related information provide the indication that RYJ is the best on price, or quantitative, and best on qualitative factors.”

Svaby also presented an example of the differences in pricing between the three firms.

“Although we can borrow up to \$20 million, we expect the project to be less than that, so I used a \$16 million figure,” Svaby said. “If the project costs \$16 million, RYJ’s fees would be around \$746,200. GGA would cost around \$1.1 million while WT would cost around \$1.2 million. In addition, preconstruction, design and estimating assistance would cost \$20,000 with WT and \$15,000 with

**See POLICE on page 5**

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**POLICE from page 4**

GGA while RJT does not charge for that service.” Councilman Jason James thanked Svaby and the committee for going through this process to choose a construction manager.

“We are not in the process like the committee who will oversee this construction,” Councilman James said. “This gives us an inside look at how this was done in an objective manner.”

Councilman Doug Morrow asked Police Chief Kenneth Brown if he was pleased with this choice.

“RYJ has been working with us since day one, so yes, I am very pleased with this,” Chief Brown said.

Council approved the appointment of Richard Y. Johnson as the construction management firm for the facility unanimously.



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# BUSINESS



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# MILFORD WOMAN HELPS FUNLAND STAFFING SHORTAGE BY RETURNING TO TEEN JOB

BY TERRY ROGERS

With many area businesses struggling to find staff this summer, Funland has been no exception, posting often on social media that they were hiring.

Several alumni staff commented that they would love to return there to work, so Funland called their bluff, according to Veronica Evans, who worked there the summer of 1990, going into her junior year of high school.

“Around mid-June, they posted to the group that they would love to see some faces from the past, and they were willing to be super flexible,” said Veronica Evans

of Milford. “So, I believe they had four alumni return this summer so far.”

A few things helped Evans decide to don her red shirt again for the boardwalk amusement park.

She had been asked to return for the 1991 summer season, but the typical schedule was seven days a week. That made it difficult for her to work around other activities she was involved in, plus she had much younger sisters she wanted to spend time with before she started college.

See FUNLAND on page 8

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Date: Wednesday, July 21, 2021

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## FUNLAND from page 7

“On a Facebook post for Funland Employees, past and present, a Funland family member asked if any alumni in the area would be willing to help cover staffing shortages,” Veronica Evans said. “I have wanted one to two days of summer work for a while since I am a teacher with summer flexibility, and this seemed like a win-win for Funland and me.

“My husband and I had also been trying to decide if this summer would be the summer to encourage our son, Will, to get his first job, but we hesitated because he has a lot of activities this summer. Since they were willing to be flexible with both of us, we were hired.”

Veronica Evans said had been great working with her son on his first job and that she sees him growing more confident in general while gaining work experience in a very positive environment.

“The best part about working here is that, because it is so family oriented, you immediately feel like family and like they are there to help you be successful,” Will Evans said. “Your success contributes to the whole of Funland. Besides my parents. Funland was a job that definitely helped develop in me a strong work ethic and teamwork, which is why I also felt it was a great place for Will to get job experience.”

Veronica Evans said that working at Funland has not really presented any scheduling or other challenges.

“My friends lovingly thought I was crazy to work this summer, and it was not on my radar at all,” she said. “But that is how much I love the Fasnact family and the environment they have at Funland.”

See FUNLAND on page 9



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**FUNLAND from page 8**

Most people might think it would be challenging to transition to a resort customer service job, she said.

“But I think after everything, most of us have experienced the past year and a half, we have learned to pivot, show more grace and flexibility. As a teacher, I have also felt that teaching involves a level of customer service and constant adjustment and reflection, so working at Funland helps transcend those skills.”



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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



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# COUNCIL HEARS STATUS OF ARPA FUNDS

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council, at a workshop held July 12, heard from Lou Vitola, finance director, about the funds provided from the American Rescue Act. The funds are designed to support municipalities in meeting the demands and needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The funds were allocated to the state and then reallocated to local governments by the state,” Vitola said. “Milford will receive \$6.34 million in two installments. The first was received in June 2021 in the amount of \$3.17 million with the remaining \$3.17 million expected in June 2022. The fund has four main eligibility uses. It can be used for public health and economic impacts, premium pay, revenue loss or investments in infrastructure.”

The public health initiative addresses the negative impacts of COVID-19 on health, mental health, the economy and businesses. Vitola explained it is designed to address areas where the virus has negatively impacted

the ability of necessary services to function. Milford used about \$150,000 of the funds to support the Police Behavior Health Unit. Milford did not use any of the funds for premium pay which is designed to provide compensation to essential workers for extra hours, increased risk and workload. That portion of the fund cannot be used to substitute for regular earnings but as an added bonus.

“As for revenue losses, we hope to use about \$200,000 to cover revenue shortfalls,” Vitola said. “This would be for things like Parks & Recreation programs that had to be shelved or to offset lost receipts in Planning and Zoning. We are not allowed to deposit the funds in pension, nor can we offset a reduction in tax revenue. For example, council could not purposely reduce taxes in order to use these funds.”

See ARPA on page 13

# SUMMER MEAL SCHEDULE

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**ARPA from page 12**

As for infrastructure, Vitola explained that they were using \$4.25 million with the primary focus lead line replacement. With these expenditures, Vitola stated that the city still had about \$1.3 million that could still be used for community support initiatives as well as broadband expansion.

“Why isn’t there any discussion about putting that toward the police,” Councilman Doug Morrow asked. “You know for retention, police cars, that kind of thing.”

Vitola stated that the funds could not be used to purchase police cars. One area that would benefit the police is the \$89,000 in lost revenue placed in the General Fund as any funds placed there benefit the entire city. Councilman Andy Fulton asked if funds were being used to support the fire company and Vitola stated that the \$140,000 granted to Carlisle would come from ARPA funds.

“As the guidance developed and became more transparent through our budgeting process, I wonder if we could have reached for more to help our police department,” Councilman Jason James said. “At least for the Behavioral Health Unit. I think this is going to become a full-time, fully engaged house specialist, so is there an opportunity now to use funds from this to fill that position?”

Vitola stated that it was possible to use ARPA funding for that purpose but was not sure if knowing more sooner would have changed anything. He did caution that ARPA funds would only be available through 2024 and that anything approved now would need to be

**See ARPA on page 14**



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**ARPA from page 13**

sustained on its own starting in 2025. Councilman James also asked if there was a possibility that the city could create a fund using ARPA to help citizens who simply cannot afford to fix their sidewalks or pay their electricity.

“That sort of thing appears to be permitted under the guidelines,” Vitola said. “The city can provide funding from ARPA for a homeowner who cannot afford to repair them, but the funds cannot be used for the city to repair or install sidewalks.”

Councilman Todd Culotta asked if this was an opportunity for the city to establish its own broadband service similar to the electric service. Councilman Culotta felt this was something the city should look into seriously as it could also entice businesses to the area.

“The way I understand it, yes,” Vitola said. “Right now, we have one provider, and we may want to step into offering broadband capability. One focus could be on underserved areas of the community.”

Mayor Archie Campbell asked how the city would manage assistance with electric, sidewalks and rent using ARPA funds and Vitola explained it would be handled by a third party.



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BY TERRY ROGERS

On July 12, Sussex County Board of Adjustments approved a variance for a garage setback but denied an additional request by the property owner for a tourist home conditional use. The home, located at 607 Meadowbrook Lane, is owned by John D. Gibson, who had been renting rooms to the homeless over the past few years.

According to the Board of Adjustments, a tourist home allows someone to rent up to six rooms in their home, a different designation than an Air BnB which is often rental of one room in the home or the entire home. Gibson stated that he currently had four rooms rented in the house.

# BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS APPROVES VARIANCE, DENIES CONDITIONAL USE

“The home has nine rooms and two bathrooms,” Gibson said. “I have converted it to six bedrooms and have rented them out to homeless people on a month-to-month basis. These are people who cannot find a place. The average person stays six months and then moves on. A lot have applications into the state for apartments and I give them a place to stay until they are approved. I bought the place planning to live there on my own, but I got lonely. It is a big place. I don’t know for sure, but I think the previous owner must also have rented rooms just based on the mail we receive for various people. I have been renting it like this since I bought it. None of the rooms have individual cooking facilities, they all use the kitchen. I just installed a new septic for six bedrooms. I am not sure when the garage was built, but it may have been in conformance then.”

According to public records, the garage on the property received a building permit in 1998 but no Certificate of Compliance was ever issued. Gibson

See BOARD on page 16

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explained that he put in the larger septic when the one on the property failed. The garage has never been an issue and he had recently completed termite treatment on the building. Gibson stated that none of his neighbors had ever complained to him about the property. However, several neighboring property owners spoke against the conditional use application.

“I have a petition signed by many people who have opposed this,” Robert Godfrey, who lives across the street from the home, said. “The petition is signed by 24 individuals representing 18 individual properties, many of which are in a 200-foot radius of this property. We are in total opposition to this property being granted a special use exception to operate as a tourist home. Since 2018, this home has been operated illegally as a group transitional home for approximately five to seven tenants, many with physical and developmental issues. Part of the lawn was paved and striped for up to seven vehicles. Recently, fights with violence and offensive language have been witnessed outside. During one tenant situation, a child was also living there.” Mr. Godfrey also pointed out that the previous tenant, an elderly woman, never rented the home to anyone.

Ruth Ann Godfrey, Mr. Godfrey’s wife, explained that she was a real estate agent by trade and that she had shown the home on multiple occasions. She presented an email to the board in which she advised a prospective buyer to offer \$90,000 for the home, tear it down and construct a new one because the home was in such disrepair. Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey also submitted over 60

photos and video which totaled 45 minutes showing issues that occurred on the property.

“About a week ago, there was an incident on the front lawn,” Mr. Godfrey said. “A woman, I think she may have been a resident, was wearing a two-piece bathing suit. She took off the bottom of her bathing suit and exposed herself to some of the residents there. She did it a second time. Later, the state police came because one of the residents filed a complaint. Because my wife witnessed the incident, she spoke to the police who said they were out there numerous times. Directly to the right of this property, there is a single mom with two children. I don’t think it is appropriate for them to witness this.”

Jamie Sharp, counsel for Sussex County, explained that, under Sussex County code, that up to four unrelated people could live in a residence and it would still be considered a single-family dwelling. In addition, because Gibson was renting rooms, the home could not be considered a homeless shelter.

“I am the property owner directly beside this property,” Marian White said. “I purchased the lot, had it cleared and built a home. This was my primary residence for several years. When I moved, I retained this property as a rental. I’ve had many prospective tenants comment on what a great neighborhood this is. Fast forward to today, the photos and the video, and you get just a glimpse of what the neighbors have dealt with. Recently, I noticed a section of the fence is missing and I can only assume they are using my property to access their backyard. I did not give permission, nor would I have given

See ARPA on page 17

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**ARPA from page 16**

permission for that to happen.”

Gibson explained that the sections of fence were removed after getting permission from White’s tenant. He did not know who the owner of the home was, so he obtained permission in an effort to remove an RV from his property. The tenant agreed to the removal of the fence which Gibson plans to replace.

“I’ve lived here for over 27 years and raised my children here,” Craig Crouch said. “In my professional life, I was the CEO of KSI. We provide training, employment and transportation services for people with disabilities. I have not experienced the discomfort that the Godfrey’s have experienced, but I know professionally this looks like a group home. In order to operate a group home, you must be accredited with an agency, you have to get a license from the state. You must have certain safety standards and your staff must have levels of training. My concern here is more of concern for the residents.”

Joann Milton, a real estate broker who does not live in the neighborhood but has sold many properties in the area, stated that a home like this would impact property value.

“Like Ruth Ann, I showed that house,” Milton said. “The inside of that home was covered in mold. That house was in a great state of disrepair. It had a cesspool in the backyard that would never pass inspection and should have been replaced way back. Like Craig said, my concern is for those residents. People don’t move into a tourist home. They don’t bring all their belongings.”

After the opposition spoke, Gibson apologized to his neighbors.

“What attracted me to this neighborhood was the quiet beauty,” Gibson said. “I consider all my neighbors really nice people and I sincerely apologize for any distress that I may have caused anyone. I have never had a single complaint from anyone, so it kind of surprises me. The people I have rented to have been living in the woods or their abandoned cars. I did my best to help them. I am not a professional, but I did my best.”

Dexter Jackson, who has been a resident in the home for a year, refuted some of the photos and parts of the video.

“I am a resident,” Jackson said. “I don’t look like I need any help at all. A lot of those videos are old. The guy being taken out by the ambulance is the same guy, just different times. He has health issues that require hospitalization sometimes. In the year I have lived there, the ambulance has come twice, and I have never seen a fire truck. The police have only been there twice. The lady who exposed herself is not permitted to be on our property, so we called the police to have her removed. There are only five people there, including Mr. Jack because it is his house. He simply tried to help people.” Gibson stated that he didn’t know he was violating anything by renting rooms.

The board voted three to one to approve the garage variance but to deny the request for the tourist home conditional use.



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# EDUCATION



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# MILFORD SCHOOLS SEEKS REFERENDUM TO REDO HISTORIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

BY CHARLES MEGGISON

The Milford School District announced at a sparsely attended Board of Education meeting Monday that it would be seeking a referendum on the question of increasing property taxes to finance the revitalization and expansion of a historic school property.

If approved, the school district intends to revitalize the currently vacant Milford Middle School building on Lakeview Avenue.

It was not immediately clear what effect a successful referendum would have on a property owner's tax bills.

The site has been vacant for nearly six years after being closed for health and safety reasons. The plans call for a renovation of the historic portion of the building, which was built in 1929.

The more recent additions would be demolished, making way for new construction better suited to a 21st Century learning environment. The renovated building would house the district's fifth and sixth graders who currently attend Milford Central Academy.

Presently, the Milford Central Academy hosts grades 5-8, but shares a campus with Milford High School. Overcrowding has become a problem at the two schools, according to Milford School District Superintendent Dr. Kevin Dickerson.

"If we are able to have a five/six grade school in the future, Milford Central Academy would only house grades seven and eight, relieving the overcrowding in that school. We could also then utilize Milford Central

Academy to help reduce some overcrowding at our high school as the schools share a campus and a hallway," Dickerson said.

In 2019, a committee composed of community members, parents, former educators, teachers and board members held public hearings to determine the fate of the property. The public overwhelmingly requested that the property be used for educational purposes.

With the Board of Education's approval, the school district sought a Certificate of Necessity to build a 1,000-student fifth and sixth grade school.

The Department of Education issued the district a Certificate of Necessity in November 2020, but the school board opted to postpone the request for a referendum in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The estimated cost for the project is \$57,270,453 with the state contributing \$42,380,185 and the district paying the remaining \$14,890,318. Each year the project is delayed could add 5% to the cost.

In a presentation presented by the board, the district emphasized the 'community aspects' of the proposed project. According to the presentation, if approved, the project would:

- Utilize and revitalize existing district resources and property
- Provide opportunity to re-evaluate current facilities and seek increased efficiencies and best use of space district-wide

- Create open recreational space, large recreational gymnasium and auditorium
- Provide classroom space in center of city for educational and workforce development partnerships
- Ensure the dedicated Milford 11 historical plaque would remain at the school site

The board voted to hold the referendum on Oct. 27. Dickerson said that by holding the referendum in the fall, the district would have "more time to present the project to the community and answer any questions the community may have."

Asked whether the amount quoted for the project would be sufficient given the near-universal rise in materials costs, the district's chief financial officer, Dr. Sara Croce, explained that a process exists wherein the district could request additional funds from the state to cover differences related to construction costs.

The board unanimously approved a motion to move forward with the referendum.

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# HEALTH

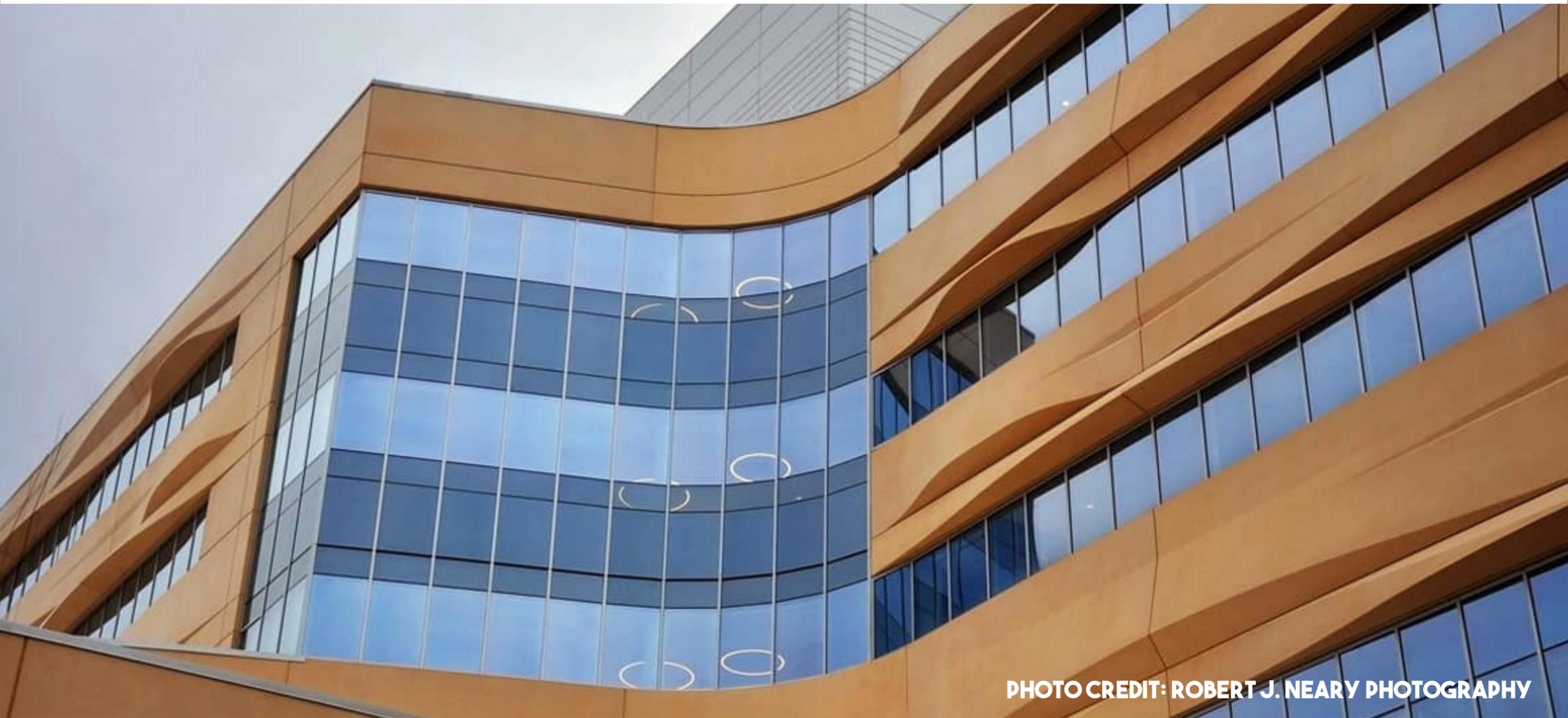


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**BY BETSY PRICE**

Diagnosed with breast cancer in 2012 soon after moving to Dover from New York, Purnima Dixit contacted Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition soon after her treatment was determined to see what services they had available.

Since that time, Dixit has worked with the Peer Mentor program to help other women who have received the devastating diagnosis.

“In this program, survivors like myself, after training, can guide and talk to newly diagnosed patients about what to expect when they have to make decisions about treatment,” she said. “I think this tete-a-tete gives hope to them that they can and will survive this.”

## DOVER WOMAN SUPPORTS OTHERS DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER

Born in Mumbai, India, Dixit came from a family that stressed the importance of education. She completed a master’s in chemistry at the Indian Institute of Technology. Her father was a consultant in the field of rubber lining and Dixit worked with him for a few years but did not find the field interesting.

“I decided to change my field to environmental science as that was an up-and-coming field,” Dixit said. “I began working with a consulting engineering firm. In the meantime, my parents set me up for marriage. Yes, it was an arranged marriage, but we did meet before we both agreed to this marriage. We celebrated our 43rd anniversary this year.”

Dixit’s sisters were settled in the United States and the couple decided to move here for better opportunities, arriving in 1983.

They initially lived in New Jersey, but with her background in the environmental field, Dixit began working for the City of New York in their Environmental Protection department. They moved to New York where they raised two daughters.

After 28 years, Dixit and her husband retired moved to Dover in April 2012. Four months later, she received her diagnosis after a routine mammogram.

“Of course, it was a shock initially,” Dixit said. Coming from a family of doctors, she didn’t need help deciding on treatment.

“I had a total mastectomy,” she said. “With recent research in field gene testing for treatment of breast cancer, I am very happy to report that I didn’t need any chemotherapy or radiation, but only have to take hormone medication treatment. I have to take that medicine for 10 years and I am happy to report I have almost completed nine years of treatment.”

Her breast cancer surgeon introduced her to the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition.

“I will forever be indebted to her for her care and empathy,” Dixit said.

In addition to her work with the Peer Mentor team, Dixit also volunteers with Delaware Hospice and the Senior Medicare Program. She also enjoys the Nurture with Nature breast cancer discussions offered by Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition as they allow survivors to meet and share stories.

“With all that volunteer work, I am enjoying my retirement,” Dixit said. “I have two grandchildren that keep us alive and happy. We also love to travel and are both voracious readers so there is never a dull moment.”

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# STATE OFFICIALS BLAME DELTA VARIANT FOR RISE IN COVID-19 CASES

BY DANIEL LARLHAM JR.

State officials blamed the Delta variant July 13 for increased numbers of COVID-19 cases in Delaware.

During an online town hall meeting, the officials also talked about a new type of testing, whether a vaccine booster shot will be needed and COVID-19 regulations that will be in place when schools start next month.

The meeting came on the day that Gov. John Carney officially lifted his emergency [COVID-19 order](#) to expire, removing mask and social distancing guidelines, among other things.

Coronavirus statistics have gone up across the state since Gov. Carney stopped holding weekly press conferences two weeks ago when all statistics were on the way down.

On Tuesday, the state was seeing an average of 29.1 new cases per day, up from only 20 two weeks ago, while the percentage of positive tests has climbed up to 1.8%, up from 1%.

Hospitalizations have been used in the past as an indicator of how hard the disease has been hitting the state, and they also have increased. On July 13, 27 people were hospitalized for COVID-19, up from 14 on June 27.

The highly contagious Delta variant, which has been sweeping the nation especially in unvaccinated populations, could be to blame for the increase, said Dr. Karyl Rattay, director of the Delaware Division of Public Health.

The state randomly tests positive case and there's been an increase in the Delta variant, first spotted in India, and a drop in the Alpha variant, originally found in Britain and the variant that has the most cases in Delaware.

While the state has been constantly finding two cases of the Delta variant in its random testing, two weeks ago it saw eight. Because far fewer cases are tested than are known to exist, that means there's likely to be many more cases caused by the Delta variant, which is said to be more infectious and more dangerous.

Rattay said that the best way to protect oneself from this variant is to get vaccinated. She also said the state follow the Centers for Disease Control's COVID-19 guidance for schools when they begin reopening next month.

The CDC recommends that vaccination should be promoted to those eligible to take it.

The Centers also recommended that individuals not vaccinated should wear masks and that all students should maintain a physical distance of three feet from each other whenever possible.

Rattay said that the state will work with school districts and the Department of Education to encourage students involved with athletics to get vaccinated after student athletics saw a number of cases in the last year.

The state also announced July 13 that Curative testing sites will move from a saliva-based test to a nasal-based one. Results from the nasal test, called the Abbot Shallow nasal PCR test, are expected to return in the same time frame that the saliva-based ones did, about 24 to 48 hours.

Individuals being tested will be directed by trained personal on how to self-administer the test. It involves a

See DELTA on page 23

**DELTA from page 22**

swab being inserted ½ inch to about ¾ of an inch into each nostril for about 30 seconds.

Rattay and Carney also said that Delaware would be prepared to administer booster shots if federal health officials call for it.

Pfizer caused a national stir two weeks ago when it said that a third shot might be needed to top off the immunity that its first two shots created.

Rattay said that pharmaceutical companies are looking into the creation of a booster shot. but there's still no way to tell if or when we might need them.

She said the current two doses of vaccine seem to have a little more efficacy than expected. Another factor would be if a variant ever came about that the current vaccines didn't protect against.

Carney agreed with Rattay in saying Delaware is aptly prepared in the case that a third shot is necessary.

“We certainly learned a lot. We know how to do it, right, A.J.?” Carney said to A.J. Schall Jr., director of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency. “With great partners and great venues, we can certainly do it again.”

On July 12, Carney also authorized the Division of Public Health to direct COVID-19 vaccination, treatment and mitigation measures to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Under that rule, the Delaware National Guard may also provide support under the direction of the director of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency and the Secretary of the Department of Safety and Homeland Security.

The new order continues to specify that Delaware providers that offer COVID-19 vaccinations must do so at no out-of-pocket cost to individuals.

All health care providers, facilities and entities that offer vaccinations shall make those vaccinations available to any person meeting the vaccination criteria without regard to that person's ability to pay, type of health insurance or participation in any particular provider network.



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### BY KEVIN EICKMAN

It is a hot, July, Thursday morning. If you're a student on summer vacation, it is the perfect day to fire up your gaming console and enjoy your air conditioning, if you have it. For the members of Milford's Bigger, Faster, Stronger, program that is not what is on your agenda. Your morning gets off to an early start as you need to be at Milford Central Academy by 8 a.m. It is here where students from Milford middle school through high school can go to participate in a program that is designed to develop aspiring athletes.

# BFS ATHLETES ENJOYING THEIR SUMMER

Depending on the athlete and sport or sports they play, everyone works on core body conditioning and weight training. The key is to develop the person's abilities. While some may be young and just starting out, others require more intensive training. The bottom line is everyone there is getting bigger, faster, stronger. "This is a great summer program for these athletes, they are really getting extra work and making themselves more physically fit. This is on top of the regular season work they do as well," instructor Jawon Sivels said.

BFS isn't about lifting weights however, it's about competing and having fun while you do it. On this day after their morning routine, the participants were broken up into teams and then the fun really began. A rousing session of dodgeball, complete with all the laughs and smiles that goes with it, was followed by a session of a version of football that can best be described as unique. The three teams rotated through and once again enjoyed the competitive environment and healthy exercise that goes with it. It was honestly so much fun, I was jealous. "Hey, this is summertime. Yes, we want to make you a better athlete, but more importantly, we want you to have fun and make friendships," Sivels said. "That's really what this is all about, providing a positive and fun environment for our kids."

With the group's demographics so varied, it was easy to find athletes of different ages and genders who were taking advantage of this summer program. The first person I spoke with was soon to be 9th grader Bailey Masten, who plays both field hockey and lacrosse. "This

is a great opportunity to improve my overall athletic skills, and by extension, become a better player. Everyone here has a great time and we really enjoy every day we spend here."

I also spoke with sophomore Ben Gusciora who plays football. While enjoying almost everything he has gotten out of the camp, he explained his work in the weight room is most important to him. "It's great to have instructors here that can take the time and give proper instruction on how to lift. They have been great in teaching me better technique and I am becoming stronger just by that alone, this really is fantastic."

Speaking with seventh grader Grayson Weisberg, he has been having a fantastic time at BFS as well, getting ready to play football and baseball. "I really like how we get to experience new things that we wouldn't get to do otherwise. It's also just a pure learning experience where we all get to have a little fun."

Besides Sivels, Matt Faulkner and Quinn Abbott are working with the athletes too. The program is without cost and Abbott hopes these are just the beginning stages of something that will grow over time. "It is fantastic to give the students a chance to challenge themselves in different ways than they normally would throughout the year," he said. "This year has been a lot of fun and we are all looking forward to this program continuing for years to come."

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# STAY CONNECTED



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