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BOWE BROTHERS RECOGNIZED AT SPECIAL OLYMPICS CEREMONY



JOHN MOLLURA'S LUXURY PORTRAIT EXPERIENCE



STUDY TO SLOW TRAFFIC ON WALNUT STREET

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HEADLINES



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BOWE BROTHERS RECOGNIZED AT SPECIAL OLYMPICS CEREMONY

Jon Buzby, senior director of Unified Champion Schools for Special Olympics Delaware stated that the Bowe brothers have a wonderful story. Their father, Theodis, explained that when the boys were younger, they were very protected and likely over-protected. After the passing of their mother, Theodis realized he had a responsibility to make William and Antonio independent. He knew that the nature of life would separate the three of them and he told them that even though they were different, they were human beings. He explained to the young men, then in their 20s, that they should respect everyone even if they did not get respect in return. The rest, according to their father, is history.

“So, their father basically put them out on their own in a good way so they would be able to learn how to function as two adults with jobs,” Buzby said. “They live together in their own apartment where they cook and clean. I give a lot of credit to their parents because not a lot of parents would do that. In their case, they did, and it has been very successful. The boys go over to their parents’ house for Sunday dinner like many adults do. So, it has just been neat for me to watch them grow and watch them as people and athletes. I have been

BY TERRY ROGERS

More than 30 years ago, William and Antonio Bowe, both of Milford, decided to give the sport of swimming a try as part of the Special Olympics. That first step into the pool led them to decades of friendship, new experiences and, at the Annual Night of Heroes, induction into the Special Olympics Hall of Fame.

“Amazing!” William said when asked how it felt to be recognized. “I am excited because Special Olympics is not just friends, it’s family. It’s not just a sports experience, it’s a way of life for me.”

His brother echoed his statements. “I was ecstatic,” Antonio said. “Special Olympics has given me the opportunity to compete in sports and meet other people.”



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See **BROTHERS** on page 4

BROTHERS from page 3

doing this for 32 years and they are one of my favorite stories about the difference Special Olympics can make in their lives.”

Although the Bowe brothers began Special Olympics as swimmers, they soon discovered other sports where they excelled. William chose to participate in walking events as part of the track and field program, participating in the 100 to 400 meters, the one-mile walk and the standing jump. Antonio’s favorite sport is running, especially distance. He eventually began to participate in community-organized 5K races as well as several half-marathons and a marathon.

“He has an incredible work ethic and is disciplined in all aspects of his life,” Len Leshem, one of Antonio’s first Special Olympics coach. “He’s the fittest guy I know, and I’ve known some really fit people over the years. His commitment to physical fitness inspires me. And he’s as genuine, honest and friendly as they come.” Leshem now considers Antonio a lifelong friend.

Antonio began powerlifting as a way to build strength for his track and field endeavors. His discipline led to him winning three gold medals in powerlifting at the 1995 World Games in Connecticut. He also won a gold and two silvers in track and field at the 2018 USA Games in Seattle. However, the biggest adventure the brothers took was in 2010 after William took up bowling and convinced Antonio to be his partner. The pair were selected to compete in the China National Games, leading to not only the brother’s first trip out of the country, but the first trip on an airplane.

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BROTHERS from page 4

“The experience of flying for the first time and meeting people from another country was the best part,” both brothers said. The experience paid off as they won a bronze medal in the doubles competition.

The excitement of their adventure led William and Antonio to join the Communicate with Confidence course where they honed their speaking skills and now tell their stories to audiences around the country in order to explain the impact Special Olympics has had on their and other athletes’ lives. William presented several times at the Annual Night of Heroes and learned that, when he reads aloud, his stutter disappears. Both brothers hold down full-time jobs and are both very artistically talented.

“William has a mind where he can take a drive, like from New York to Milford, he would be able to, when he arrived at his destination, draw every sign he passed along the way,” Buzby said. “He has autism, and he has a photographic memory from that. He has drawn, I’m sure, it is thousands of maps from that. Antonio is an artist, too, his focus is more on comic superheroes and bridges. He loves bridges. They are very big in their church, attending church or Bible study every day. I just cannot say enough great things about them.”

Pam Cannon was also recognized as the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year. Buzby explained that Cannon, who lives in Seaford, takes athletes who have no transportation to practices, games and meets. Currently, she is driving a Seaford Special Olympics participant to Middletown twice each week for basketball practice for

See BROTHERS on page 6



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BROTHERS from page 5

a team that plans to compete in Florida at the USA Games. Mary Ann Evans of Smyrna was recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

“I have been doing this for 32 years and she has been doing it longer than I have,” Buzby said. “Her daughter is in Special Olympics, and she chips in and does everything that is asked of her.” Evans has participated in a Special Olympics fundraiser, Over the Edge, every year it has been held. At that event, participants rappel down a 17-story building.

Other recognitions included Outstanding Athlete—Steve Dagg of the Newark Dragons; Outstanding Coaches—Ryan and April Bradford of the Kent Wild Kats; Outstanding Family—The Oldham Family of the MOT Tigers; Outstanding Unified Partner—Christopher ‘Danny’ Halsey of the Kent Wild Kats; Outstanding Youth Leader—Patrick Campbell of the Wilmington Wizards; Outstanding Visual Arts—Sheri Okladek Bailey; Outstanding Organization—Aetna Hose and Ladder Company and Outstanding Corporation—Bounteous.

Buzby stated that athletes can join Special Olympics at the age of two, but there is no age limit for how long they can compete.

“We have what we call a Young Athletes Program for younger children,” Buzby said. “Most of our athletes age out at 70. A lot of them still bowl or they’ll play bocce. But they are the runs who have been running track since they were 18. Eventually your legs give out whether you have a disability or not.”

Theodis is very proud of his sons and was excited to see them honored as the 31st and 32nd members of the Special Olympics Hall of Fame.

“I am very excited for them to receive this honor,” Theodis said. “They’ve been in it for a long time and I never thought it would come to this point. Special Olympics is a great thing for them. I always told them there would be a place in life for them.”

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 de.gov/boosters



CULTURE



PHOTO BY MARCIA REED

FESTIVAL FUNDING APPROVED BY COUNCIL



BY TERRY ROGERS

Two popular festivals received funding from Milford City Council at a recent meeting. The Ladybug Festival, sponsored by Downtown Milford Inc. (DMI), which has been cancelled the past two years due to the pandemic, will receive \$30,000 as will the Riverwalk Freedom Festival, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Milford (CCGM). Although DMI requested the same amount as in previous years, CCGM requested an additional \$5,000 due to the higher cost of fireworks this year. The Riverwalk Freedom Festival was cancelled in 2020, but returned in 2021.

“I think the success last year really proved we have the ability and that we can do anything in the community and especially this time-held traditional event,” Angela Dorey, chairperson of the festival, said. “We’ve understood that we would cover all expenses using the city funding including the fireworks and the port-a-potties which means we would not ask for anything from Parks and Recreation. We definitely need them to assist with preparing the park and cleaning up the trash that day, but as far as monetary amounts, that is all inclusive.”

See **FESTIVALS** on page 9



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FESTIVALS from page 8

Dorey explained that CCGM received \$30,000 from the city the year before and only \$10,000 of that was used for fireworks. The remainder was used for items in the Kids Corner, an entertainment stage, four live bands and promotional costs. Fireworks increased by \$5,000 last year and CCGM covered those costs, but asked for an additional \$5,000 for 2022.

“I did state to them that we pay this year until July 1,” Mark Whitfield said. “We have \$30,000 already allotted in the budget up to July 1. If they want the additional \$5,000, they will have to wait until after July 1 which they understood. There is a difference between our fiscal year and theirs.”

Council approved the \$30,000 request unanimously. At a previous meeting, council also approved an alcohol waiver request that would allow the Red White and Brew Garden to serve alcohol in Bicentennial Park during the festival.

The Riverwalk Freedom Festival will be held in September. Vendor and sponsorship information can be obtained by calling CCGM at 302-422-3344 or emailing milford@milfordchamber.com.

According to James Rabe, president of DMI, explained to council that the cost of the Ladybug Music Festival had risen from \$30,000 to \$40,000 since 2019 when it was last held. Council had approved \$30,000 in funding for the past two years, but when the event was cancelled due to the pandemic, DMI returned the funds to the city. Although the event costs have increased, DMI did not request additional funds for the festival from the

See **FESTIVALS** on page 10



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city as it intends to use fundraising to bridge the gap between the two amounts.

“We fully expect this event to eventually cover its own costs,” Rabe said. “The Ladybug Music Festival is planned for July 30 and we anticipate a very large turn out this year.”

The Ladybug Music Festival is the largest celebration of women in music with a 100 percent female-fronted lineup. The female-led bands are staged throughout downtown Milford, offering free live music around town. In addition to bands, there are food trucks and vendors available. Artist submissions are still being accepted for the Festival at <https://theladybugfestival.com/artist-submissions-milford>, but will end at 11:59 p.m. on April 20. Vendor and sponsorship information can be obtained by contacting DMI at 302-839-1180.

Council approved \$30,000 in funding unanimously.



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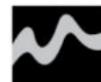
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MISPILLION ART LEAGUE'S UPCOMING EVENTS

PRESS RELEASE

Mispillion Art League (MAL) has some very special events coming up in the next few months! To start, we are holding our annual 6x6 *Silent Auction* in June, and now is the time to pick up your canvas. Beginners to advanced artists, members of MAL and non-members—all are welcome to participate. You get one FREE 6x6 canvas with the option to purchase up to three more for \$2 each. Make your creation and donate it back to MAL between now and June 4. Bidding will start on June 7 and end on June 25 with a reception and final bidding from 6–8 p.m.

Still cleaning out your garage or storage shed? We need your donations for our *4th Annual yART Sale!* We will be taking donations from May 1-24 only. Visit our website for details on acceptable items (<https://www.mispillionarts.org/special-events/>). The sale is May 27-28 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In conjunction with the yART Sale, *Jerry's Artarama of Newark* will hold a mini trade show at the Art League on Saturday, May 28 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can pre-order art supplies and pick them up in Milford. There will be a lot of art supplies offered at great prices! Grab your artsy friends and make a day downtown! You can find more information about these three special events [HERE](#).

And don't forget about our classes! Class details and registration can be found on our website, on Facebook and Instagram (@MispillionArts), and on the Delaware Division of the Arts website.

Located at 5 N Walnut Street in Milford, MAL is open Tuesday–Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Starting May 7, Saturday hours change to 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the DMI Milford Farmers Market opens for the season! Find us online at www.mispillionarts.org, on Facebook and Instagram (@MispillionArts), and on www.delawarescene.com.

The Mispillion Art League is an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This organization is supported in part by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The Division promotes Delaware arts events on www.DelawareScene.com.

For more information contact Sonja Frey, operations manager, mispillionarts@gmail.com, 302-430-7646.

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JOHN MOLLURA

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BUSINESS



Q2 PHOTO BY MARCIA REED

AWARD-WINNING LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER OFFERING LUXURY PORTRAIT EXPERIENCE

ing photograph of yourself. I am also now offering wall-art and custom heirloom quality photo albums.”

Working as an engineer, Mollura took up photography as a hobby, capturing images of exotic locations from the ice fields of Antarctica to the Mojave Desert as he traveled for his job. He began photographing events for Downtown Milford Inc. (DMI) and concerts for 88.7 The Bridge as well as the Bottle and Cork. These assignments helped him overcome a fear he developed over his life, being afraid to not know the answer while someone was watching him.

“I replaced the broken soundtrack in my head of ‘you’ll look foolish if you tell someone how to pose and it doesn’t look perfect,’” Mollura said. “Instead, I now am confident that even if something isn’t working out with a specific pose, I have the experience to immediately correct it and ensure that my clients look their best.”

Like many photographers, Mollura has not always focused his lens on people and landscapes. He has done a significant amount of commercial work, photographing such everyday items as hearing aids, dog toys, diaper bags, diaper wipe packages, sunglasses and even water bottles with energy crystals. He jokes that it is likely

See **MOLLURA** on page 15



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BY TERRY ROGERS

John Mollura, an award-winning photographer, has recently expanded his offerings to include a luxury portrait experience. Known for his empowering and creative portraits, the elevated service removes a lot of the stress many people have when facing a portrait session.

“After these past few years, everyone could use a bit of pampering,” Mollura said. “I can’t think of many things that boost your self-esteem as much as seeing an amaz-

MOLLURA from page 14

someone has a product in their home they purchased from Amazon after seeing one of his photographs. Mollura credits his success in creating stunning portraits with the mentors who guided him.

“I have been incredibly fortunate to have some photographers that I look up to professional and personally take me under their wings over the years,” Mollura said. “The relationships always started with me reaching out and asking them to share their knowledge, sometimes in the form of paid coaching. It started with Milford’s own Bob Connelly helping me keep my fear in check during the first event I photographed, Milford’s inaugural Eat in the Street in 2013.”

Mollura also studied under Jeremy Cowart, a celebrity photographer and global humanitarian, who has led Mollura to some of his most powerful projects. The RE-Figured Project has a mission to turn scars, wounds and hurts into celebrations of survival. During the heart of the pandemic, he began the Sacrifice and Light Project, highlighting healthcare workers and utilizing Zoom to create powerful portraits of those on the front lines. He also did a series of black and white photos addressing race issues head on.

“I am extremely excited to now offer the highest quality printed products and have partnered with artisans who work exclusively with professional portrait photographers,” Mollura said. “Everyone is so used to seeing images on a screen. It is quite impactful when you get to hold a printed product or admire it on a wall.”

Mollura is offering the luxury portraits to families and individuals in addition to offering professional

See MOLLURA on page 16



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headshots and branded images for marketing. Each photoshoot is tailored to each client's personality and style and can be done in his newly renovated studio or onsite at many of the beautiful locations throughout Delaware and the surrounding area. The photoshoot includes a pre-shoot wardrobe consultation to ensure the outfits will be flattering and look good on camera. The day of the shoot, clients are treated to on-site professional hair and make-up service as well.

"I realize no one knows what to do with their hands in photos or how to stand for that matter," Mollura said with a smile. "I provide direction for posing that flatters you throughout the photoshoot. After the shoot, we review the photos together and discuss which images you would like to have professionally edited and retouched. As a final touch, I offer complimentary installation for all wall-art in your home."

Voted Best Downstate Photographer in both 2020 and 2021 by *Delaware Today* magazine, Mollura asks anyone interested in the luxury portrait sessions, or any other type of portrait, to arrange for a complimentary telephone call at <https://calendly.com/johnmollura-photoshoot-consult>. His Bay 94 Studio is located at 6 Park Ave. in Milford and is open by appointment only.



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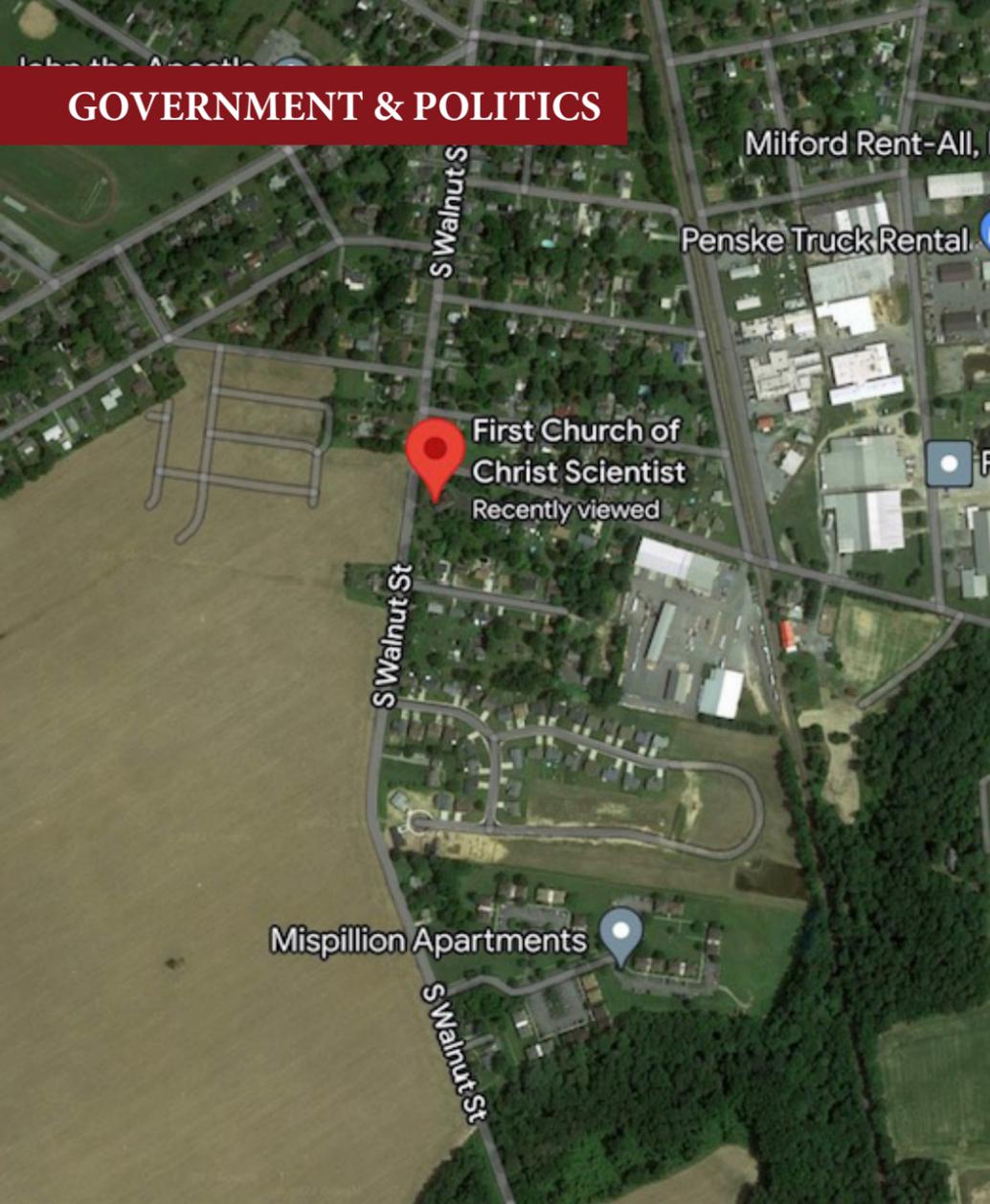


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MILFORD REQUESTS DELDOT STUDY TO SLOW TRAFFIC ON WALNUT STREET

drivers down and may include all-way stops at some intersections.

“I want us to be safe, I want all streets in Milford to be safe, whether they are city owned or state owned,” Councilman Jason James said. “But my concern is that we’ve got to be careful because we’ve seen other towns where there are stop signs everywhere you go. Traffic can’t flow. It may sound good, like we’re going to slow people down, we’re going to make them stop, but if you have people stopping all the time, you’re going to end up in a worse situation because you know, you end up worse off than you originally were.”

Councilman Todd Culotta agreed and disagreed with Councilman James’ statements, stating that he had plenty of input from his neighbors and others who live on South Walnut Street. He commented that he could only speak to South Walnut and suggested someone else speak to North Walnut.

“Walnut Street gets a certain amount of traffic. Yes, it’s a major artery, but it’s also a street that many people live close to the road on. And with the new developments in the south part of town, Milford Ponds, Simpsons Crossing, we’re gonna get a lot more traffic through

See **TRAFFIC** on page 19



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BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council voted to allow the city engineer to request DelDOT conduct a traffic study on South Walnut Street in an effort to reduce speeding on the southern section of the road. According to James Puddicombe, the city’s engineer, there had been several complaints regarding speeding with some cars traveling in excess of 50 miles per hour coming into town. The study will be used to determine what type of speed control device is necessary to slow

there,” Councilman Culotta said. “We want to have a walkable city, that’s a priority of ours. And in order to have a walkable city, there needs to be a safe way to cross over the street. And we’ve done a traffic study previously with the speed thing and we found most people don’t speed, you know, more than 10 miles over. Most people are within that realm. However, there are people that do speed there excessively and it only takes one of those people to cause an accident, cause a death or something like that. So while I understand you don’t want to stop every 10 feet, I get that. But in an effort to allow time for people to cross the street, stop signs may be necessary and my opinion is maybe something in the McCoy Street area coming into town and then something closer to the railroad track area like such as Kings Highway.”

Councilman James remarked that he did not make an assertion either way but that he felt the city needed to be careful on how speeding was addressed, pointing out that a stop sign was not always the best option. Councilman Culotta pointed out that he initially did not agree with the new four-way stops on Seabury Avenue but has already seen benefits, so he has changed his mind about their installation. Councilman Andy Fulton commented that he had noticed the only vehicles not stopping at those signs were bicycles, which concerned him. However, he personally had noticed vehicles on Walnut Street traveling above 40 miles per hour. Councilman James stated that there is not one street in Milford where speeding does not occur.

“That’s just it. There’s always there’s engineering changes that need to be put in place,” Councilman

Fulton said. “One hundred percent enforcement of one area of a street will mean the loss of one police officer patrolling the city, preventing them from other duties. How many felony arrests were made, 393 over the course of the month? I’m sorry, it was over 300, but they had large number of felony arrests done by Milford PD. So enforcement isn’t my first answer, where engineering changes are, so I’m in concurrence with both of you. So please don’t get me wrong and I’m not saying throw up a stop sign today. But I’m saying we need to do engineering changes to the street in order to make it safer for everyone. If it comes to a stop sign it comes to a stop sign. If it comes to one of those lights where you hit the button and it goes from yellow to red for us for a crosswalk like you see in some cities, they have lights controlled by the walkers and they press a button. A yellow light turns red cars are supposed to stop and people can now cross the street safely.” Councilman James stated that those types of devices worked well in towns like Rehoboth and Ocean City.”

An unnamed member of the audience stood to speak, and Councilman Culotta told them that he was mistaken, that he thought the item on the agenda would be open for public comment but it was not.

“Somebody is going to be killed,” the unnamed person said. “You guys, it’s going to happen, someone will be killed. Now, I was here this whole time waiting for public comments because I sit right outside where that indicator is and I see them going by at 30, 40, 50, 55, 65 and 75 and it is ruining my home.”

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CITY OF MILFORD INVITES PUBLIC TO 2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT OPEN HOUSE

PRESS RELEASE

The city of Milford will host an Open House on Wednesday, May 4, 2022, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Public Works Facility (180 Vickers Drive) to discuss a requested change to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use. The property owner of approximately 110 acres of undeveloped land east of State Route 1 requested a change from Low Density Residential to Commercial.

The applicant, city staff and representatives from various state agencies will be available during the two-hour period to discuss the status of development in the southeast neighborhood and provide information related to the proposed change in future land use designation.

City of Milford Comprehensive Plan amendment requests are compiled annually for Planning Commission and City Council consideration, which is done through a public hearing process. Ordinances for the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment requests will be reviewed during public hearings, which will be held at City Hall, 201 S. Walnut St., on the following dates:

- Tuesday, May 17: Planning Commission 7 p.m.
- Monday, May 23: City Council 7 p.m.

Upcoming meeting agendas and packets can be viewed on the city's website.

All parties of interest are invited to participate in these three aspects of the planning process—Open House and two public hearings. Questions should be directed to Rob Pierce, planning director, at 302-424-8395 or rpierce@milford-de.gov.



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\$300 CHECKS ARE ON THE WAY. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Delawareans will soon receive \$300 checks thanks to a bipartisan **direct relief bill** signed April 14 by Gov. John Carney. The bill, aimed at helping Delawareans faced with high gas prices and soaring inflation, consists of a one-time payment to every state taxpayer who filed a 2020 tax return.

“Delaware families are dealing with higher costs at the grocery store and the gas pump,” Carney said. “These direct payments to Delaware families are part of a broader, responsible budget proposal that will invest in education, our economy, and Delaware communities, and increase our reserves to prepare our state for the future.”

Lawmakers say residents who filed 2020 taxes can expect to receive the money from the Department of Finance by the end of May. Seniors and residents who didn't earn enough to file taxes in 2020 will also receive payments, though they'll have to wait several months while the state sets up a system to verify their identities and request the funds.

Taxpayers do not have to take additional action to receive the \$300 check. Married couples who file jointly will receive \$600. Payments will be sent by mail to the most recent address on file with the Division of Revenue.

The payment is expected to go to 600,000 tax filers with an additional 150,000 being eligible once the state sets up the verification process.

“While our economic recovery has been strong in many ways, it has also slammed residents with new challenges of increasing costs in almost every facet of their life,” said House Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst, D-Delaware City. “Residents have seen increased costs at grocery stores and at the gas pump, but fortunately, we as a state are in a position to provide some assistance.”

Republicans were supportive of the measure, too.

“With prices of gasoline, food, and other necessities continuing to rise, the General Assembly needed to act quickly,” said Senate Minority Leader Gerald Hocker, R-Ocean View. “I'm proud of the work each of the



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caucuses in the legislature accomplished to provide much needed relief to Delawareans.”

“This rebate will return approximately \$230 million to Delaware citizens,” said House Minority Leader Danny Short, R-Seaford. “My members believe this initiative should be the first significant step in a process to better balance the cost of providing state services and easing the tax burden on all Delawareans.”

The state has created a website to answer questions and provide information about the rebate. Click [HERE](#) to visit the site.



EDUCATION





STATE: STUDENTS SHOULD BE TESTED FOR COVID AFTER SPRING BREAK

BY BETSY PRICE

With COVID-19 cases rising again, the state Division of Public Health and Department of Education are asking parents to have their children tested the day before they return to the classroom.

Spring break for most Delaware schools will occur the week of April 18.

Families can use over-the-counter tests—which some schools gave to student families during the last week—or go to a convenient testing location.

With most mask mandates lifted around the country, many people will be attending big family gatherings or travel to other areas, the state pointed out in a press release.

Public Health distributed about 190,000 home test kits to school districts, charter schools and private/parochial schools this month. Schools were allowed to keep them for in-school testing or distribute them to families.

Free at-home COVID-19 test kits can be ordered from the federal government at <https://www.covid.gov/tests>.

They also can be bought at nearby pharmacies. A testing site near you can be found at <https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/testing/>.

“Our educators, students and families are grateful that, after two years of intermittent remote learning and quarantines, having everyone back in our buildings full time has made this spring feel more like a ‘typical’ school year,” said Secretary of Education Mark Holodick. “As families and staff travel over the break, I encourage everyone to continue mitigation strategies to reduce their risk of exposure and to test themselves before they return to school. This will help us finish this school year in the face-to-face instruction we are so happy to have back.”

In addition to testing before returning to school, families are encouraged to seek testing for their children when a student has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, has COVID-19 symptoms, or wishes to

See COVID on page 24



Milford School District
Morris Early Childhood Center
Kindergarten Registration Information

2022-2023 School Year

March 10 (Thursday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
March 14 (Monday)	8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
March 29 (Tuesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
April 6 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
April 12 (Tuesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
May 4 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
May 19 (Thursday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
June 1 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
June 7 (Tuesday)	4:00p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Important notes:

- Please call 422-1650 to schedule a date and time
 - Please indicate if you will need an interpreter
- Child must be 5 years old by August 31, 2022 to begin kindergarten
- You must bring your child for screening on your scheduled date and time to assist

Documents required for registration include:

- State Issued Birth Certificate (with raised seal)
- Proof of Residency (utility bill, lease agreement, mortgage papers) within the Milford School District
- Guardianship/custody information if applicable
- Immunization (shot) record
- Physical Exam
- Tuberculosis Risk Assessment or PPD results
- Lead test result

*Please note: Any family who is interested in being considered for the 2022-2023 Spanish Immersion Program lottery will need to register on or before June 7th. Any late registrants will be added to the waiting list.

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know their status before spending time with a person who is vulnerable to COVID-19, such as the immunocompromised, elderly or unvaccinated.

Vaccines will be available over spring break for those who want them.

“Cases have slightly increased over the last week. We know COVID is not over,” said Dr. Karyl Rattay, director of the Division of Public Health. “Right now is actually the perfect time to make sure everyone is up to date on their vaccines to protect themselves and their community.”

One way to avoid COVID-19 is to voluntarily wear a mask in areas of high COVID-19 transmission. Also consider wearing a mask around others if you are unvaccinated, immunocompromised, or around people who are.



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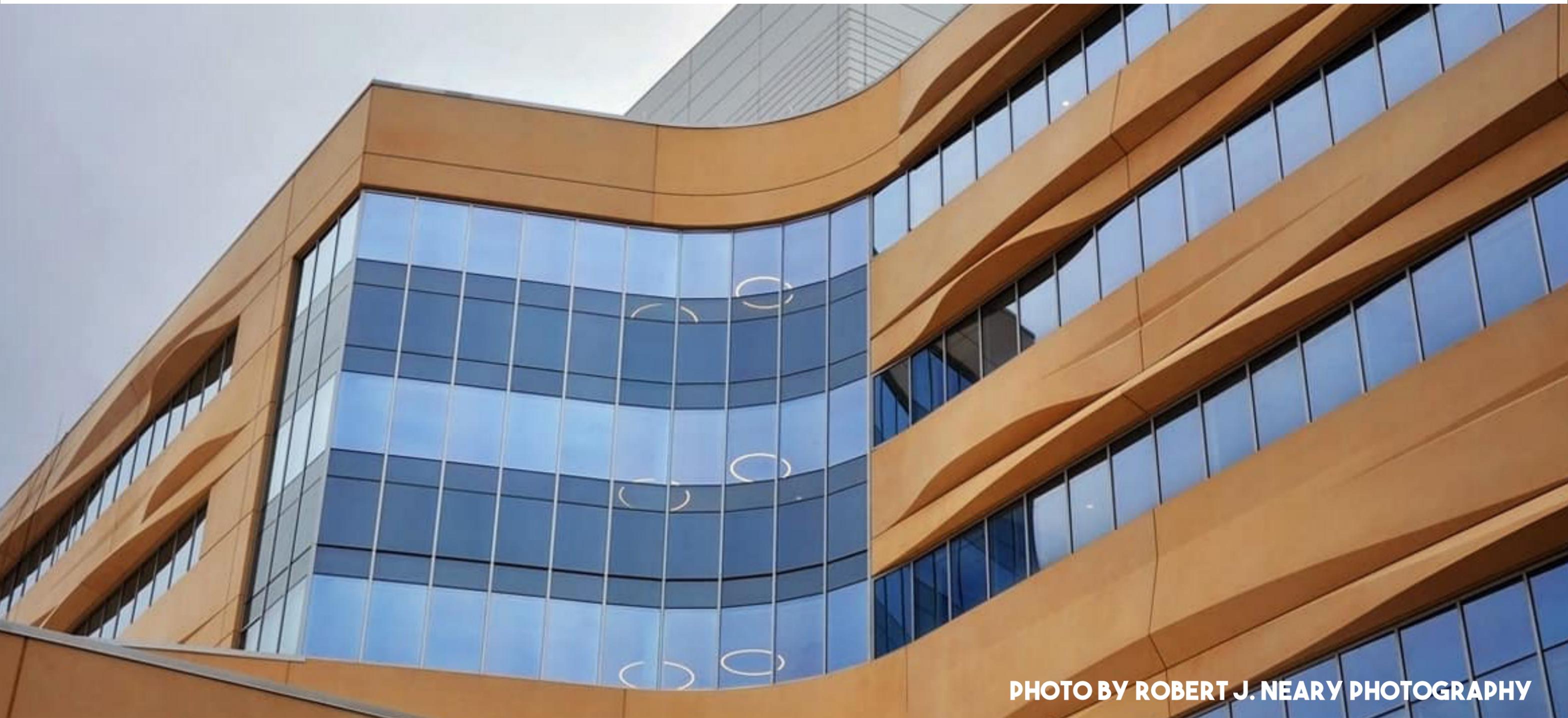


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PAID LEAVE BILL HEADS TO CARNEY FOR SIGNATURE

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The bill to create a paid family and medical leave program in Delaware passed in the House of Representatives April 14 by a margin of 29 to 11. Three Republicans, Reps. Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek, Kevin Hensley, R-Odessa, and Mike Ramone, R-Hockessin, voted in favor of the legislation.

Because the House voted to add an amendment, the bill was sent back to the Senate for a final vote, which it quickly received. It will now go before Gov. John Carney, who is expected to sign it into law.

“This is a historic day for Delaware and a watershed moment for working families throughout the First State,” said Sen. Sarah McBride, the bill’s sponsor. “Thousands of families throughout our state are now one signature away from having the security and peace of mind that comes from knowing they will be able to

keep food on the table and a roof over their heads even as they face some of the most common challenges that we all face as human beings.”

The **Healthy Delaware Families Act** will create a statewide insurance program to provide up to 80% of wages for eligible Delaware workers for up to 12 weeks per year for parental leave and six weeks over two years for caregiving and medical leave.

If signed into law, employer and employee contributions to the program will begin in 2025. The benefits will be available beginning in 2026. The program will be funded through a 0.8% payroll contribution split between the employer and the employee. For example, an employee who makes \$1,000 per week would pay \$4 per week and so would their employer.

“This major step forward would not have been possible

without the hard work and persistence of advocates, business leaders willing to come to the table, statewide leaders and a bi-partisan coalition of legislators, and the overwhelming support of Delawareans,” said McBride, D-Wilmington.

The House **Amendment**, introduced by House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, exempts businesses that are closed for 30 consecutive days or more per year. That will benefit the many seasonal businesses that operate in Schwartzkopf’s oceanside district.

The amendment also requires that before July 1, 2029, the Department of Labor submit a report to the General Assembly and the governor detailing the program’s usage and efficiency, as well as recommendations for improvement.

Businesses with fewer than 25 workers will not be required to participate in the medical and family caregiving component of the program, and businesses with fewer than 10 workers will not be required to participate in parental leave, though they may opt-in.

Businesses with comparable benefits will be able to opt-out of the program in whole or in part.

“Delaware set the example by becoming one of the first states to establish paid parental leave for state employees and teachers,” said Rep. Debra Heffernan, D-Bellefonte, the bill’s lead House sponsor. “Now, Delaware has done the right thing for thousands of private workers and ensured they have access to paid family and medical leave.”

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