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photo link: Marcia Reed



Old Firehall to Undergo Renovations



UD Grant to Assist With TAP Project



ARTC Program: Ilianny Abad

HEADLINES



photo link: Marcia Reed



BY TERRY ROGERS

The former Carlisle Fire Company building located at 11 N. Church Avenue in Milford will gain new life after Milford City Council approved a conditional use authorizing DE OZ Property Management to renovate the building into 16 apartments. According to Dan Bond, a partner in DE OZ Property, the letters “OZ” stand for Opportunity Zone.

“That building has been empty since the state offices moved out, I think, 12 years ago because of flooding issues,” Bond said. “When we had our last big downtown flood, they had a couple of feet of water. The building is probably the lowest relative to water level of any of the downtown buildings. We did our due diligence before we bought it and found that Milford’s code would require that everything be above that, I think six and a half feet above the first floor elevated to address flooding.”

Bond stated that it was not feasible to raise the former firehouse to protect it from flooding. Instead, the decision was made to convert the first floor into parking

OLD FIREHALL TO UNDERGO RENOVATIONS, BECOMING APARTMENTS

spaces and limited storage with vents placed around the foundation of the building that would allow any floodwaters to flow through without causing damage to the structure.

“I had been talking with the previous owners about taking advantage of the fact that this was an historic building,” Bond said. “It’s listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places which means you can get tax credit support from the state and federal government that are substantial. It is also in the Downtown Development District that provides 20 percent reimbursement of hard costs. There are also energy and energy efficiency grants and low cost loans.”

Bond explained that he had taken on many projects in historical buildings throughout downtown and had encouraged the previous owners of the firehouse to consider rehabbing the building, but they did not. When the Opportunity Zone program began a few years ago and Bond discovered that a large portion of north Milford was in an opportunity zone, he felt it was a good time to look into investing in more property.

“If you are doing apartments downtown, the first floor is supposed to be commercial, but it is understood why I can’t do commercial in this project,” Bond said. “I have also purchased the property across the street which has

See **APARTMENTS** on page 4

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APARTMENTS from page 3

a one-story office building on it with 45 lined parking spaces. We are talking to a non-profit about renting the building, but they don't need all those spaces, so that is additional parking the tenants in the apartments can use.”

The apartments will be middle-income apartments, not luxury or low-income, but designed for working adults such as nurses, hospital technicians and young people who are just starting out in a career. He stated that they intend to keep as much of the historic features in the building, including pressed metal ceilings that are still visible inside. The exterior of the building will not change significantly although there are plans to open up a central entrance where fire engines used to enter the first floor with an automatic garage door option for secure parking under the building.

“We are hoping the city will accept an offer from us to give them a strip of land alongside the Mispillion River,” Bond said. “We made a formal offer to the city that we will give them the strip of land wide enough to extend the Riverwalk alongside the old firehouse as that is one section where the Riverwalk is not contiguous. So, we have offered to gift them the strip of land.”

Bond stated that the strip of land may be looked at as a gift horse as there is a concrete bulkhead that will need repair. If the city takes it over, the bulkhead will become the responsibility of the city. However, there is a small asphalt area that was parking for the firehouse next to the land the company wants to gift to the city. Because the firehouse will have geothermal heating and air conditioning, wells must be drilled and the intention...

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CULTURE



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SOBIECH COMPLETES EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

BY TERRY ROGERS

Adam Sobiech wanted to do something that would have a positive impact on the community. In a conversation with Nancy Wagamon, who manages the Milford Community Garden, Sobiech learned that although building an accessible walkway through the garden would be beneficial, the legal requirements of meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were too complex for a young group of volunteers. Wagamon suggested an informational kiosk, so Sobiech and his fellow scouts in Troop 186 took on that project.

“The project was to build an informational kiosk for the Milford Community Garden,” Sobiech said. “This message board allows the garden to publicize their work and activities. They can post messages about plants, events, announcements and garden rules. The Eagle project allowed me to participate in teamwork with brother scouts and provide leadership on the project.”

According to Sobiech, it took just one day to build the actual kiosk, but the research and planning as well as the solicitation of donations and supplies before choosing a date and recruiting volunteers took about six months. Overall, the project required almost 105 hours to complete, including assistance from other members of the troop.

“The paperwork was a major challenge,” Sobiech said when asked what the biggest challenges were in completing the project. “I had to produce a big binder in which I recorded everything I did. I had to have an initial pro-

posal approved by the troop and by the state board, a final plan with drawings and photos, and then a project summary. I am not very good at paperwork!”

Working on the project was exciting, Sobiech explained. He enjoyed watching the kiosk come to life, and credits his grandmother, Sharon Collins, with supporting his scouting career, stating that she was the reason he was in scouts. After he graduates from Milford High School in June 2023, Sobiech plans to attend Del Tech and pursue a career involving welding in a business similar to Baltimore Air Coil.



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PT WORKS OPENS NEW LOCATION IN MILFORD

STAFF REPORT

The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Milford, friends and family recently celebrated a Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Celebration with George Rodriguera, the owner of PT Works Delaware at their location at 907 N. DuPont Blvd., Suite 104, Milford.

PT Works Delaware offers comprehensive physical therapy services for individuals of all ages and abilities. Their team of highly qualified physical therapists are dedicated to providing personalized care that is tailored to the needs and goals of each individual. They specialize in injury rehabilitation, post-operative care, sports medicine and more. They strive to provide the highest

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photo credit: Ben Muldrow



UD ISSUES GRANT TO ASSIST MILFORD AND SLAUGHTER BEACH WITH TAP PROJECT

STAFF REPORT

The Grant Assistance Program at the University of Delaware celebrates its first successful grant application, bringing vital bipartisan infrastructure funding to local municipalities throughout the state. The federal Department of Transportation selected GAP’s application, submitted on behalf of the city of Milford and town of Slaughter Beach, as one of 64 nationwide recipients for its Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Awards.

Just over \$21 million was set aside for this first round of projects, designed to “enable disadvantaged and under-resourced communities to advance a pipeline of transformative infrastructure projects that will increase mobility, reduce pollution, and expand affordable transportation options, connecting communities to the essential opportunities and resources that will help them thrive,” according to the grant application. The city of Milford and the town of Slaughter Beach will be

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receiving \$295,000 worth of technical assistance to support the design of a bicycle and pedestrian pathway that will connect the vibrant retail district of Milford with the natural resource amenities that Slaughter Beach has to offer.

“We hope this is the first of many applications we are able to work on with the city of Milford to help their citizens access more of the natural wonders in our area and give our citizens better transit options for shopping and dining in the city,” said Slaughter Beach Mayor Bob Wood.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, a “once-in-a-generation” infrastructure funding package, offers unprecedented opportunities for Delaware’s local governments to secure funding for critical projects, such as road repairs, power grid upgrades, climate-change resiliency, and more. In conjunction with the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act, municipalities are currently presented with an abundance of funding opportunities that can be tapped for much-needed infrastructure and resilience projects. There’s only one problem: many of Delaware’s municipalities don’t have the staff to chase down this funding. Municipalities with less fiscal and administrative capacity are hard-pressed to successfully pursue these opportunities, due to complicated and time-consuming processes. Fortunately, Delaware has a solution.

The Grant Assistance Program (GAP) is a state-funded initiative that provides free technical grant assistance to local governments for infrastructure

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initiatives and other competitive and formula grant opportunities. Housed within the Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration's Institute for Public Administration (IPA), the program launched in August 2022 and is now fully staffed with three grant specialists to support the needs of Delaware's communities. To date, the GAP team has submitted 11 funding requests for a total of \$12.3 million on behalf of Delaware municipalities.

While the program works with all local governments in Delaware, outreach and support are especially focused on local governments that typically lack the resources and capacity to compete for large-scale infrastructure funding opportunities, including rural or underserved communities. In addition to this successful grant application, the program is supporting the towns of South Bethany and Bowers Beach in their efforts to obtain funding for resiliency projects designed to offset impacts of climate change.

GAP provides a wide array of technical assistance and support services, allowing local governments to seek help at any stage of the grant application and project management process. This includes online resources, like the [Funding Opportunities Portal](#) that details specific federal and state funding opportunities available to Delaware local governments. GAP hosts "drop-in" technical assistance sessions, where local governments can connect virtually with the GAP team to discuss particular grant opportunities. GAP offers hands-on services, such as training workshops for local

government employees on grant management processes, as well as direct booking availability for in-depth project assistance.

The service is free to any qualified entity, and unlike many other grant assistance programs, the GAP offers technical grant assistance at any stage of the process, from grant research, writing, implementation and reporting. The GAP team can also help prioritize and develop projects. The program's goal is to help Delaware secure as much funding as possible while it is available to help improve the First State's infrastructure and resilience.

Visit [GAP](#) for more information on this new service opportunity.



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BY TERRY ROGERS

Ilianny Abad, who is currently a Spanish Immersion teacher in the Milford School District, knows firsthand how beneficial the Alternate Route to Certification program, a program designed to address the current teacher shortage, can be. Abad, who was born in Barahona, located in the Dominican Republic, always wanted to help others, but never thought she would do so as a teacher.

“I immigrated to the New York at the age of 10,” Abad said. “I was placed in an ESL classroom until I became

ARTC PROGRAM: ILIANNY ABAD

proficient in English, meaning all classes were learned in Spanish except English. Due to my love for helping others, my initial career path started in human services.”

Abad graduated with an associate degree in human services and began working as a Family Service Worker for Telamon Head Start. She continued her education, earning a bachelor’s degree in behavioral sciences from Wilmington University and then earned a master’s in human services.

“However, I always worked with children and families from birth to age five,” Abad said. “As I was growing, both educationally and professionally, I felt attracted to helping early learners and their families in school readiness, including learning English as a second language. In fact, I transitioned from Head Start and Child Development Watch to ECAP, where I had to do much more than just attend to the needs of young children and families through partnerships to enhance their head start in education. I was able to be in the classroom at various times as a substitute. I fell in love with making an impact in children’s education as well as discovering my true passion.”

A friend shared with Abad how she began her teaching career through the ARTC program at the University of Delaware. Since Abad held a bachelor’s and a master’s, she was able to obtain a position in Seaford School District as a World Language Teacher, teaching Spanish.


See ABAD on page 15

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“My dream was always to teach in my hometown district,” Abad said. “This became true when I applied and was offered an open Spanish Immersion position at Milford School District. They encouraged me to pursue my master’s in education. This was how I was, thankfully, introduced to the Relay Graduate School of Education, who helped me grow in my career, granting me an emergency teacher certification while I pursued my master’s.”

Relay-ARTC offers evidence-based skills and fundamentals to be an effective educator, Abad explained. Throughout the two-year program, Abad was able to build and grow, gaining her teaching skills while in the classroom. Abad had considered teaching prior to joining the Relay-ARTC program, but with five children, returning to school would be very difficult. Because ARTC allowed Abad to learn while she worked in the field, it was more convenient.

“The program and district provided me with a coaching team both in the program and in the school building to ensure the necessary support was received,” Abad said. “Moreover, the learning acquired throughout the time with Relay was relevant to my position, meaning it felt it was tailored to my path. For example, all that was learned in the courses, I actually used in the classroom, and I was able to implement strategies such as lesson planning and math concepts.”

Abad was provided certification courses that helped her pass the Praxis, something that is required before graduation. Relay also continually monitor and guide

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students according to the state requirements, Abad explained. That does not mean there were not challenges during the process, however.

“The biggest challenge is you as the student since you have to do the work and ensure you are meeting the requirements for the course,” Abad said. “My experience was very positive as I am used to multi-tasking. I used all that I did in the classroom toward my course’s completion. That would be my advice to students that enter the program. I think the lesson planning was the harder part for me once I got into the classroom since it was totally new for me. I needed to get acquainted with teaching pedagogy, but after I became familiar with lesson planning and curriculum pace, it became less hard and more routine.”

Being able to impact children on a personal level has been the biggest reward for Abad.

“As an educator, I get to teach them skills that they get to use in real life outside my classroom,” Abad said. “It is gratifying when my students share stories on our Talk Forum and share with others the importance of what they learned. Furthermore, educating is more than just academics. I get to shape their mindset toward a bright future. Since I teach in Spanish, I have many of my former students tell me how they have used the language to help others by translating for them. I am excited to see them when they go to high school.”

As for advice for others who wish to enter the teaching field through the ARTC program, Abad wants them to know they will be making an impact on every child that comes into the classroom.

“Entering the ARTC program granted me hands-on experience, with continuous support from Milford School District and Relay Graduate School of Education, which prepared me to become an effective culturally responsive educator,” Abad said. “My advice to potential candidates is to choose wisely among districts and ARTC programs as not all are as accommodating and supportive as Milford School District and Relay Graduate School of Education.”

For more information about the ARTC program, contact Dr. Jason Peel, Director of Human Resources and School Climate at 302-422-1600, Extension 212 or email jpeel@msd.k12.de.us



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MSD BOARD APPROVES MMS RENOVATION DESIGNS

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent meeting, Milford School District Board of Education approved designs for the renovation of the former Milford Middle School. The original portion of the building, built in the 1920s, will remain during the renovation while newer wings will be demolished. The interior of the historic section of the building will be remodeled during the process.

“The building is undergoing asbestos abatement now,” Mike Sharp, supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, said. “They will start on the first section, then move on to the second, third and fourth. It’s moving right along. They have between 10 and 18 people there each day so there is a lot of progress.”

School board president Jason Miller asked if neighbors in the area should be concerned about the asbestos

abatement. Sharp explained that the asbestos is contained within the building and that neighbors should not be concerned.

“We set an amount for square footage, it’s almost like 133,000 square feet and we are below that with what will be presented to you this evening,” Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, said. “We thought we were going to be asking for market pressure funds in the future which is additional funding we are allowed for. We thought we had to stay true to the community and to stay where we were with our square feet of this project. In addition, we’re staying true to having 1,000 students be able to occupy the school. As you will see in the designs here tonight, value engineering and really maximizing our

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classroom space has been a theme throughout to make sure we have space to serve our students.”

Tim Skibicki of BSA+A as well as Tim Metzner of Davis Bowen & Friedel and Dean Johnson of Richard Y. Johnson and Sons provided details on the design of the new school. Since presenting the plans at community meetings in January, the design has not changed significantly. The historical front of the building will remain untouched but will no longer be the front entrance. Instead, students, staff and visitors will enter in what used to be the rear of the building.

“The brick is immaculate,” Skibicki said. “It is really in incredible condition. You just don’t see brick being installed like this anymore, so we’re really excited to be able to have that on a project for a school nowadays. It’s really a treasure and it we hope to bring this building back to its original character almost as if it was the day it was built.

Skibicki explained that the new entrance would be secured, placed along the south side of the academic and gymnasium wing. The track, fields and baseball diamonds will remain, creating a park-like feel to the grounds. A playground will also be added. The existing bus lot will remain with access stretching from School to Kent Place. Skibicki stated that the state authorized a building of 132,900 square feet and that the current plan was about 600 square feet under that.

“That is somewhat unusual that we were able to achieve that and also meet programmatic needs,” Skibicki said. “So, all of the classroom spaces, all of the special needs, all of the administrative student services, all of the office

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spaces that were desired and required to meet programming are in this building. Since we have not sacrificed anything from a programmatic standpoint and we were able to reuse existing classrooms, reuse the existing multipurpose room, flip a classroom wing and reuse the gymnasium.”

According to Skibicki, DEMA requires some locations in the school have bullet resistant glass and frames which will be incorporated into the design. The auditorium will have telescoping seating so that the room could be used for other programming. In addition, corridors will be widened, there will be handicap ramps as well as three elevators. The design also includes areas where the history of the school can be celebrated with murals or photographs. Colors throughout the building will be maroon and gold. Board member Matt Bucher pointed out that the brick in the newer sections of the building looked different, wondering if that was by design or due to cost.

“It was a design choice and one of the theories when you are working with an historically important building is to make sure that it’s clear where the historical part of the building stops and where your addition starts,” Skibicki said. “So that’s one way to do that. I’m sure you are aware the bricks will depend on the type of bricks that are available, but we would like to see the same size used.

Board member Jean Wylie asked what type of security would exist at the front entrance as it appeared there was an open space that might allow someone to enter the building who should not be there. Skibicki explained

that the front entrance has two buzzer-activated entrances, one from the outside and a second into the actual school. He also stated that card swipes would be used to provide additional security. Bucher asked if there was enough room for tractor trailers to pull up to the loading docks from Kent or School Place.

“Part of the design task is to run truck templates to verify turning radius entering and exiting a parking lot safely,” Metzner said. “That’s one thing we will add in for the size trucks and the trash truck access to dumpsters.” Bucher explained he was more concerned with larger tractor trailers who would need to deliver items to the cafeteria and Metzner stated that they would confirm that there was ample space for all size trucks to get on and off the property.

Johnson provided details on preliminary information regarding how much the renovations would cost. Currently, after receiving 22 mock bids, the district is almost \$15 million over the amount approved by referendum. This is a 26 percent increase over what the state approved via referendum, but was significantly lower than what other schools, some of which are requesting 65 percent, were requesting in the way of market pressure funds. These are funds set aside by the state to address cost overruns for projects. Because it can take several years for a school project to reach the construction phase, the state uses market pressure funds to offset higher construction costs. The district will still need to cover 26 percent of the \$14.8 million overage, but 74 percent may be covered by the state.

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MHS TEACHER ACCEPTED TO SUPREME COURT SUMMER INSTITUTE

STAFF REPORT

Shae Parks of Milford and a teacher at Milford Senior High School, will travel to Washington, D.C., this June to attend the prestigious Supreme Court Summer Institute. After a highly competitive application process, 60 teachers were selected to participate this year. The Institute, open to teachers in the fields of law-related and civic education, is co-sponsored by Street Law, Inc. and the Supreme Court Historical Society.

The Institute offers teachers the opportunity to study recent Supreme Court cases in detail and learn innovative teaching methods for conveying this information to students. Well-known Supreme Court lawyers, reporters, scholars and educators will be among the speakers and instructors for the Institute. A recent evaluation of the Supreme Court Summer Institute found that, after the program, teachers who attended

(1) felt much more confident discussing controversial issues and Supreme Court cases in their classrooms; (2) discussed Supreme Court cases and used interactive teaching strategies more frequently; and (3) gained critical knowledge about the U.S. Supreme Court.

Upon returning home, teachers will be available to present workshops on teaching about the U.S. Supreme Court, and to meet with media to discuss how the new skills and information will apply in their classrooms.

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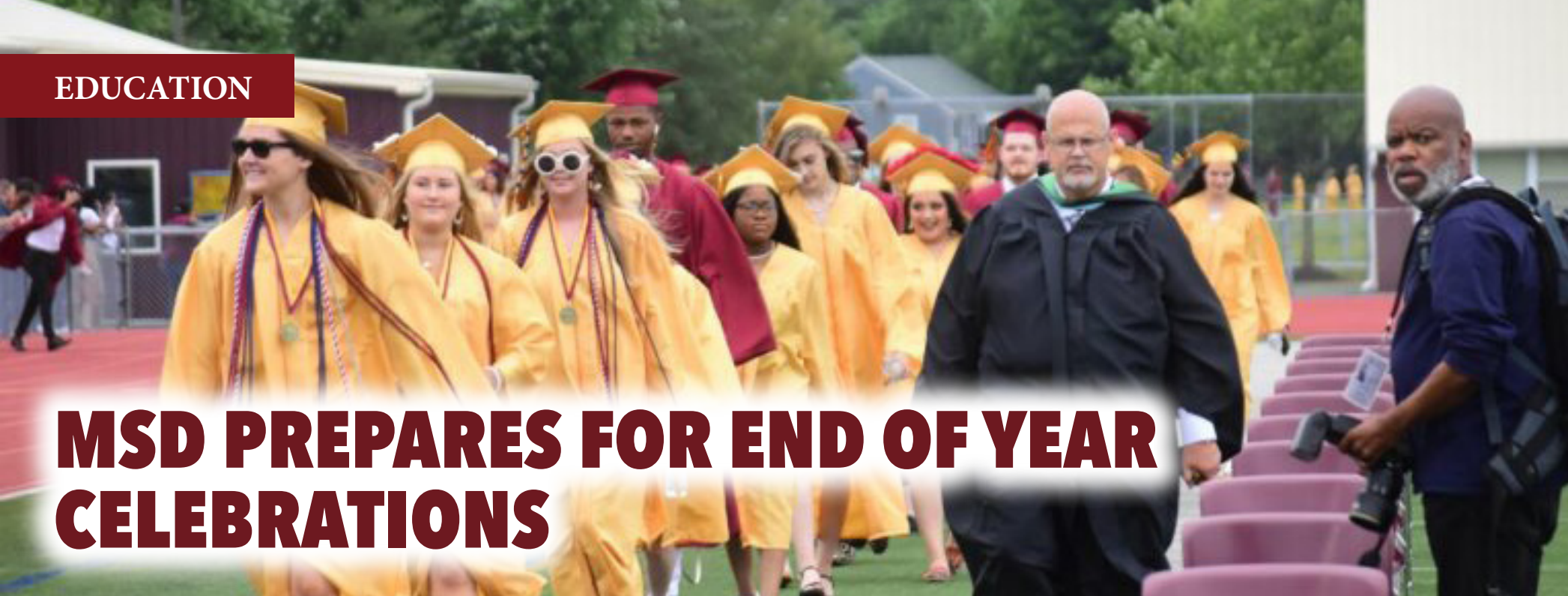
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MSD PREPARES FOR END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford School District is preparing for the end of the school year with several celebrations planned for students. The celebrations begin with the Milford High School Senior Awards Program and end with all students dismissed for the summer in June.

“Our Senior Awards Program will be held on Thursday, May 25 from 6 to 7 p.m. in the high school auditorium,” Trish Gerken, public information officer said. “At this program, seniors will receive awards and scholarships they have earned. It is always an exciting time for students and staff as the seniors begin to take steps towards their next chapter.”

All schools are closed on Monday, May 29, in celebration of Memorial Day. Milford High School graduation is planned for Thursday, June 1 in Briggs Stadium. Milford Central Academy will hold their 8th grade promotion ceremony from 9 until 10:30 a.m. on June 9.

The Senior Cruise is planned on May 30 from 5:30 to

6:15 p.m., with students leaving the high school and riding through town in cars decorated to celebrate the end of their high school career.

Benjamin Banneker Elementary will hold their Family Picnic and Field Day on Friday, June 2 at the school and their band concert is planned for June 6 from 6 to 8 p.m. Lulu Ross Elementary will hold their band concert from 6 to 8 p.m. on May 30.

Mispyllion Elementary will hold their band concert on June 5 from 6 to 8 p.m. and Field Day is planned for Thursday, June 8 with a rain date of June 9. Their 5th Grade Recognition Day will be from 10:15 until 11 a.m. on June 12 with a rain date of June 13.

Morris Early Childhood Center will hold Kindergarten Celebrations at the school on June 7 and 8.

The last day of school for students is June 13.



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DELAWARE DIABETES COALITION CO-SPONSORS DIABETES, OBESITY WEBINAR

STAFF REPORT

The Delaware Diabetes Coalition is pleased to co-sponsor a webinar about the impact of diabetes and obesity in the workforce, scheduled for June 6 at 9 a.m. Other partnering sponsors are Delaware Health and Social Services, Delaware SHRM State Council, Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health and Novo Nordisk.

Diabetes and obesity are major health issues and cost drivers in the workforce and community in Delaware and the nation. Among U.S. adults, 37 million have diabetes and 96 million have prediabetes, at an annual combined cost of \$403 billion. Among Delaware adults, 12% have diabetes and 13% have prediabetes, at an annual cost of \$1.1 billion. Among U.S. and Delaware adults, 34% report having obesity. The nationwide cost of obesity, a condition associated with prediabetes, diabetes, and other health issues, is \$173 billion. Addressing these conditions in the workforce is vital.

The program features subject matter experts and open discussion.

- Learn how addressing diabetes and obesity can improve workforce health, productivity and retention, and reduce costs.
- Gain insight and best practices from an employer case study.
- Access resources to take action to implement evidence-based programs and medical interventions.

Speakers include:

- Kimberly Moore, MS, Health & Well-being Educator, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, and President, Delaware Diabetes Coalition
- Stephanie Belinske, MPH, Chronic Disease Epidemiologist, Delaware Division of Public Health
- Lydia Wang, PharmD, Medical Account Associate Director, Novo Nordisk
- Neil Goldfarb, president & CEO, Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health
- Dany Bourjolly Smith, benefits director, city of Wilmington

All are welcome to this free webinar. The program is approved for 1.25 SHRM Professional Development Credits (PDCs). View the full agenda and register [HERE](#).

The Delaware Diabetes Coalition, Inc. (DDC) is a statewide nonprofit organization comprised of a network of healthcare organizations working together to improve the lives of all people in Delaware affected by diabetes through awareness, prevention, identification, dissemination of services and advocacy.

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I would love the opportunity to meet with you for 10-15 minutes to see how we can help. You can click the link to set up a meeting with me in our virtual office: <https://meetings.hubspot.com/shupe1>

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