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photo link: Marcia Reed



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HEADLINES



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)

COUNCIL DISCUSSES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council recently continued discussing the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the next five years. The plan includes capital improvement projects of \$16,772,044 in 2024; \$27,784,735 in 2025; \$21,699,063 in 2026; \$1,5798,361 in 2027 and \$4,804,080 in 2028. Before discussing the projects, City Manager Mark Whitfield explained that the CIP, including projects, costs and timelines were requests and not a spending plan.

“It’s not a budget, we have put numbers to it obviously, but the actual allocation of dollars will come at a time when we prepare the operating budget and then we will actually put dollars toward the plan,” Whitfield said. “Some of those dollars may end up being grant dollars or potential grant dollars. I think we have a lot of proj-

ects on here. Quite honestly, I’m not sure unless we’ve found that pot of gold in the bottom desk drawer, we’re going to be able to do all these projects unless we get some help through bond bill or other grant funding.”

The CIP included projects such as bike paths on Route 113 and Cedar Creek Road as well as a maintenance building for the new police station. Public Wi-Fi along the Riverwalk that would be available for festivals and residents in the downtown area was also included in the plan. Development of the Marshall Pond Riverbank and additional open space development was also included in the list of projects. Riverwalk improvements, a Walnut Street pedestrian crossing and additional LED street-light replacement were also included in the plan.

Whitfield explained there was no requirement in the

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city charter for council to approve the plan, but he was requesting council’s blessing as staff moves into the budget preparation process.

“Really what we need is your concurrence that the projects are within the scope of what you want to see done and aligns with our strategic plan, that the timing of the projects are what you want to see and again in alignment with the strategic plan and that we will continue to work towards the endeavor above all the current year projects as well as those future your projects,” Whitfield stated.

Councilman Jason James was unclear why council needed to vote on the CIP since the projects would be included in the annual budget process.

See PLAN on page 4

PLAN from page 3

“We can say we’d like to plan something but because there are no resolutions required, why do a resolution when it can change?” Councilman James said. “I think the resolution is not required because the 2024 capital improvement budget will be a part of the operating budget, which is important to council for a couple of reasons. Because when there are capital items in there, that are of the nature that will depreciate over years, that depreciation amount will be compared and will become part of the equipment replacement. That could affect the equipment replacement line and the operating budget. So I really don’t see the necessity of this adoption of this resolution.”

Lou Vitola, finance director, stated that although Councilman James was correct, the financial procedure the city followed over the past few years included confirming a CIP. It also provides credibility to organizations who grant or lend money to the city for projects as it indicates the city communicates at a high level.

“It shows there is support for these handful of projects in there as we planned out in these years with these funding sources. Some we have sufficient funding for, others we don’t. When we say ‘we need your grant funding,’ they know Lou Vitola or another administrator at the city isn’t going astray and for lack of a better term, just applying for any old grant, anytime to suit the needs of his or her individual department. But that it’s satisfying a capital improvement plan, not a budget, but a capital improvement plan. That it’s been published in public and discussed on the floor and approved by city council. Those are two reasons I see value in approving the plan.”

Councilman James felt that if the city manager had a five year plan that council could evaluate periodically, that would give council the opportunity to speak up about any changes in the plan, but that a resolution did not seem to be necessary.

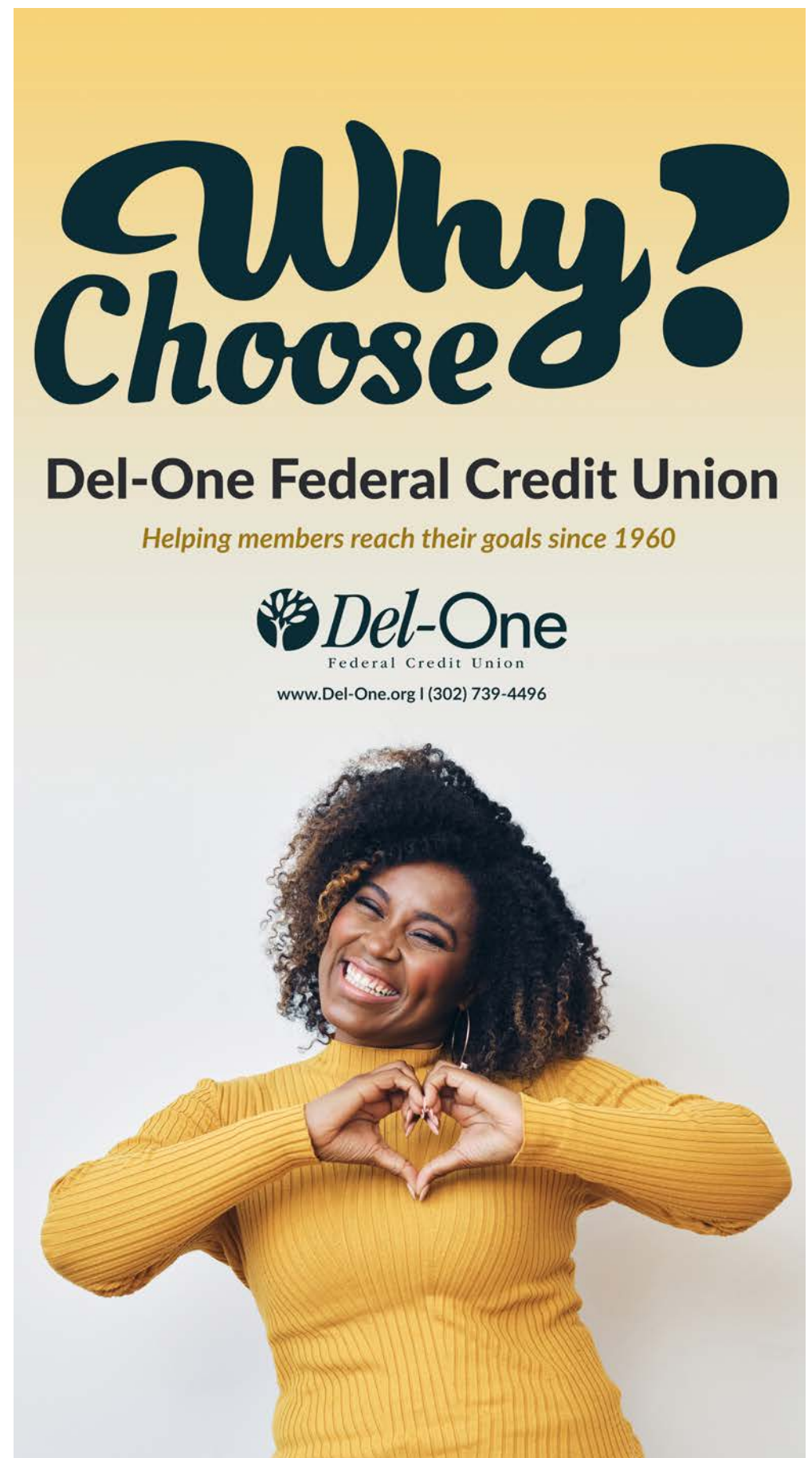
“My second comment is that we were presented this in a workshop, a proposed plan. And I think there was probably changes to that plan,” Councilman James said. “And I don’t know what those changes are. I haven’t had a chance to review it in any detail. I don’t know what those changes are in the presentation that pertain to this resolution that we’re speaking of on this council item at this particular time.”

City Solicitor David Rutt explained that the city charter did require council to approve a CIP by the start of the next fiscal year, which meant it needed to be approved before July 1.

“There’s two things. It should be submitted along with the budget. We don’t have an operating budget to measure how this will affect the operating budget is especially fiscal year 2024,” Councilman James said. “Council would be adopting that resolution blindly. And I know that we will say ‘well, this is the plan but the actual budget will be presented along with the operating budget.’ Well, if that’s the case, then what is the expediency of adopting this resolution without knowing the impact that it has on the operating budget for fiscal 2024?”

Whitfield explained that the expediency was to be sure that the projects listed in the CIP were what council felt were important projects moving forward.


See PLAN on page 5



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PLAN from page 4

“If there is inconsistencies with what was presented at the workshop and what we have here tonight, I think they need to be pointed out and discussed,” Councilman Todd Culotta said. “I know there was some discussion about police cars. I know there were a couple items. I don’t have both in front of me or I could do that. But, if we could get that redlined with changes from the workshop, I think that would be ideal.”

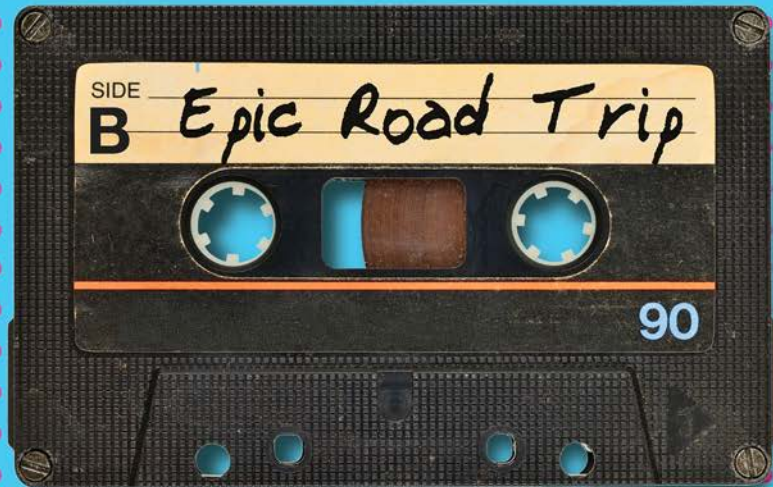
Councilman Mike Boyle agreed with Councilman James that there had been changes to the CIP since the workshop and some of them had an impact on what council wanted to see included in future budgets.

“If there’s a significant variance, we ought to be made aware of that and given the time to discuss it,” Councilman Boyle said. “So I would recommend we table this either for a workshop or the next council meeting. And we go over this where there are significant changes and I mean maybe more than five percent that we need to see what it was, why it was and how it impacts what we vision we want to accomplish next year.”

Council voted to table approval of the CIP unanimously until details on changes from the workshop were provided. The CIP can be viewed [HERE](#) and scrolling to page 107.



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CULTURE



photo link: [Downtown Milford Inc.](#)

MILFORD SENIOR CENTER CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford Senior Center celebrated its 50th year in March 2023 and, in celebration of that milestone, will hold a Golden Anniversary Gala on Saturday, May 20, from 6 to 10 p.m. in the Crystal Room at the center, located at 111 Park Avenue in Milford. According to Amy Stratton, executive director of the center, the gala is to celebrate the huge milestone.

“Tickets to the event will include a buffet dinner provided by Lighthouse Catering, a champagne toast and feature Mike Hines and the Look for entertainment,” Stratton said. “A cash bar will be available for those interested.”

Milford Senior Center began as the Bi-County Adult Center of Milford and was incorporated in March 1973. The center opened its doors in May of that year with just 20 members. Membership and attendance grew quickly, leading the center to move three times in the first two years it existed. The final move was in September 1997 when they secured a 25,000 square foot space in the former Leggett’s Department Store where they currently operate.

“There are so many benefits to being a member of the Milford Senior Center,” Stratton said. “We provide free transportation to and from the center as well as to local appointments and shopping. There are free and low-cost meals served each day and over 120 activities and

programs offered each month. Members enjoy socialization, peer support, recreational trips and outings along with health and wellness seminars. All of this is included in an active membership.”

Membership is available to those 50 and over with dues only \$20 per year. Applications can be completed at the senior center or downloaded from the website. There is a lifetime membership option for veterans, first responders and their spouses as well.

Tickets for the gala are \$50 each and can be purchased by calling 302-422-3385 or in person at the main office. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. You do not need to be a member to purchase tickets to the event but all tickets must be purchased in advance as there will be none sold at the door the night of the gala. The Milford Senior Center website can be accessed at <https://milfordseniorcenter.net>.

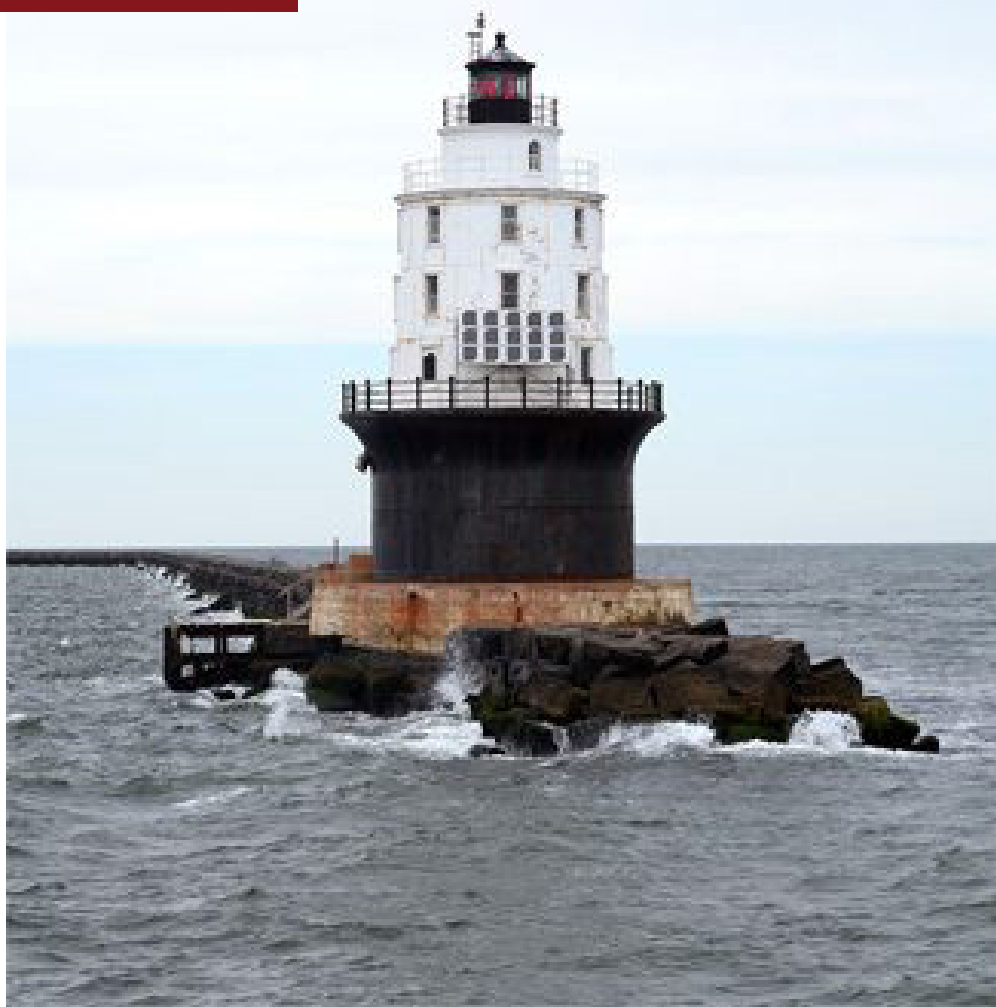


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BY TERRY ROGERS

The First Presbyterian Church of Milford will present “History and Restoration Efforts” at the next 2nd Friday program, planned for Friday, May 12 at 7 p.m. in the church library. Speakers will include members of the Delaware River and Bay Lighthouse Foundation.

“This program will provide details on the refurbishment of the Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse,” John Huntzinger, 2nd Friday program coordinator, said. “There will be some late breaking details included as well. The program will also include information on the Lightship Overfalls museum.”

LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION TOPIC OF 2ND FRIDAY EVENT

The Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse sits at the mouth of the Delaware Bay and was constructed to protect maritime vessels from striking the Harbor of Refuge breakwater which was completed in 1901. The lighthouse was completed in the early 1900s and operated by a lighthouse keeper until 1973 when it was automated. Efforts began in 2002 to preserve the lighthouse.

In addition to learning more about the preservation efforts for the Harbor of Refuge lighthouse, there will also be information provided about the preservation of the Lightship Overfalls which was decommissioned by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1972 and has been in Lewes since 1973. At the 2nd Friday program, experts will provide information on the mission of the Overfalls Foundation and the maritime history in the area.

A Zoom link can be provided by emailing 2ndFriday.Milford@gmail.com. Those who wish to attend in person should park in the parking lot behind the church and enter through the back door with the handicapped sign. Walk through the kitchen to enter the library.





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"KALAMAZOO" PRESENTATION PLANNED AT MILFORD LIBRARY

BY TERRY ROGERS

In partnership with the Kent County Theatre Guild, the Milford Public Library will present "Kalamazoo" on Saturday, May 13, at 1 p.m. in the Community Room. The play is based on a book by Michelle Kholes Brooks and Kelly Younger.

"We are so excited to present this fun comedy," Carolyn Tabor, program director at the library, said. "We always enjoy partnering with other organizations in Delaware to bring fun programs to Milford. This is a free community service presentation and all are welcome to attend."

"Kalamazoo" is a quirky comedy about two older people who meet online, decide to meet for dinner and wake up in a motel room the next morning. Irving is an outgoing Jewish man while Peg is a naïve Irish Catholic, creating a couple that are complete opposites yet seem to have similar interests. Both had long, happy marriages and have been widowed, making both of them leery of commitment. Yet Irving has the belief that no one is "too old to be young."

"Although the play focuses on two older people, the message sent should resonate with younger people as well," Tabor said. "It is a story of hopefulness, forgetting the past, fighting off those who are not supportive and finding happiness."

The presentation stars Chuck Rafferty and Lori Ann Johnson. It is directed by Gina Schuck. Registration to attend the presentation can be completed at <https://delawarelibraries.libcal.com/event/10665263>.



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KALAMAZOO

Book by
Michelle Kholes Brooks & Kelly Younger

Starring Chuck Rafferty & Lori Ann Johnson

Directed by Gina Schuck

Milford Public Library Community Room
11 S E Front St, Milford, DE 19963
May 13 at 1 pm

Delaware Division of the Arts

The Kent County Theatre Guild is supported, in part, from the Delaware Division of the Arts state agency, in a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The Division promotes Delaware arts events at www.DelawareArts.com

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BUSINESS



photo link: Marcia Reed



DELAWARE RANKED 5TH FOR CELLPHONE FRIENDLINESS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Delaware is the fifth-friendliest state for cellphones, a new list concludes. Maryland and New Jersey top the list, with Pennsylvania at No. 10.

The list crunched data from the Federal Communications Commission, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the Tax Foundation and Opensignal to see which states had the best cellular internet speeds, phone service, 5G coverage, taxes (meaning lowest) and programs.

Delaware has the second-greatest 5G access, ranking 9.87, behind only New Jersey, with a perfect 10. Delaware has the third-lowest local wireless tax rate, 6.73%, and local internet speeds are the seventh-highest in the nation. However, Delaware ranks below average for phone service and state broadband grants.

Each category could earn 10 points, with Delaware's total score at 31.54 out of 50. If the scores were grades, Delaware and 46 other states would flunk, and only Maryland, New Jersey and Illinois would pass.

"Access to cellular devices and the internet has become necessary to do our jobs," said Andreas Voniatis, founder of [Artios.io](https://www.artios.io), a startup consultancy that created the list. "So it's important to understand which states offer the best internet access, phone coverage and support to residents and businesses."



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photo credit: Ben Muldrow

CITY OF MILFORD RECOGNIZED AS A RELIABLE PUBLIC POWER PROVIDER

STAFF REPORT

The city of Milford recently announced that its Electric Department has earned a Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3)[®] designation from the American Public Power Association for providing reliable and safe electric service.

The RP3 designation, which lasts for three years, recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in four key disciplines: reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement. Criteria include sound business practices and a utility-wide commitment to safe and reliable delivery of electricity. The city of Milford joins 271 public power utilities nationwide that hold the RP3 designation.

“Receiving an RP3 designation is a great honor signifying a utility has demonstrated commitment to industry best practices,” says Troy Adams, chair of APPA’s RP3

Review Panel and General Manager at Manitowoc Public Utilities, Wisconsin. “And ultimately, the culture developed from this pursuit of excellence and continued improvement through the RP3 program results in measurable value delivered to the local community”

“We couldn’t be prouder to be honored with this designation,” said Mark Whitfield, Milford city manager. “This is the culmination of a lot of work from a lot of people who really care about powering our community. But this designation is not a final destination. We are committed to continuing to look for ways to improve our operations and service to our customers.”



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EDUCATION



photo link: [Milford School District](#)

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WATERMELON CRAWL THROUGH MILFORD AGRISCIENCE

BY BENJAMIN STUTZMAN, MHS STUDENT

On April 28, Ross Chastain, NASCAR Cup Series driver came to the Milford High School to tour the agriscience department and network with students. Chastain, comes from a family of watermelon farmers and is an advocate for agriculture. Last year, during NASCAR Dover Weekend, Milford FFA gave Chastain a watermelon plant in the garage area. As a result of giving him this watermelon plant, Chastain was welcomed to the high school this year to see where the watermelons and other plants are grown.

Upon Chastain's arrival, Milford FFA officers escorted him, his mom and his public relations specialist to the first stop which was in Milford High School's Greenhouse where FFA members elaborated on what student opportunities are available in the plant science pathway. Members also spoke on what opportunities members have during the summer to work at the school with

planting, maintaining, and harvesting from raised beds.

Chastain also visited one of the shops in the ag department where members spoke on how students learn to weld along with learning how small engines function. Some students were even given the opportunity to showcase some projects that they have been working on in the shop.

Finally, Chastain was welcomed by agriscience students inside one of the ag classrooms where he answered questions, along with sharing some advice on how to be successful in the agriculture industry. Chastain and FFA members enjoyed ice cream that was made by our Milford High School Food Science program. To cap off the experience, Chastain was presented with his own official blue corduroy FFA jacket with Milford, Delaware, printed on the back, by Milford FFA Chapter

See **WATERMELON** on page 16




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President Mason Foxwell. This jacket was given as a symbol of our appreciation for his advocacy in agriculture.

Chastain proceeded to finish second after leading nearly 100 laps of the Wurth 400 at Dover Motor Speedway on Monday, May 1. The National FFA Organization makes a difference in the lives of students through the pursuit of premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agriculture education. The National FFA Organization has members reaching across the United States of America and the Milford FFA Chapter has nearly 620 members.



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JOHN MOLLURA

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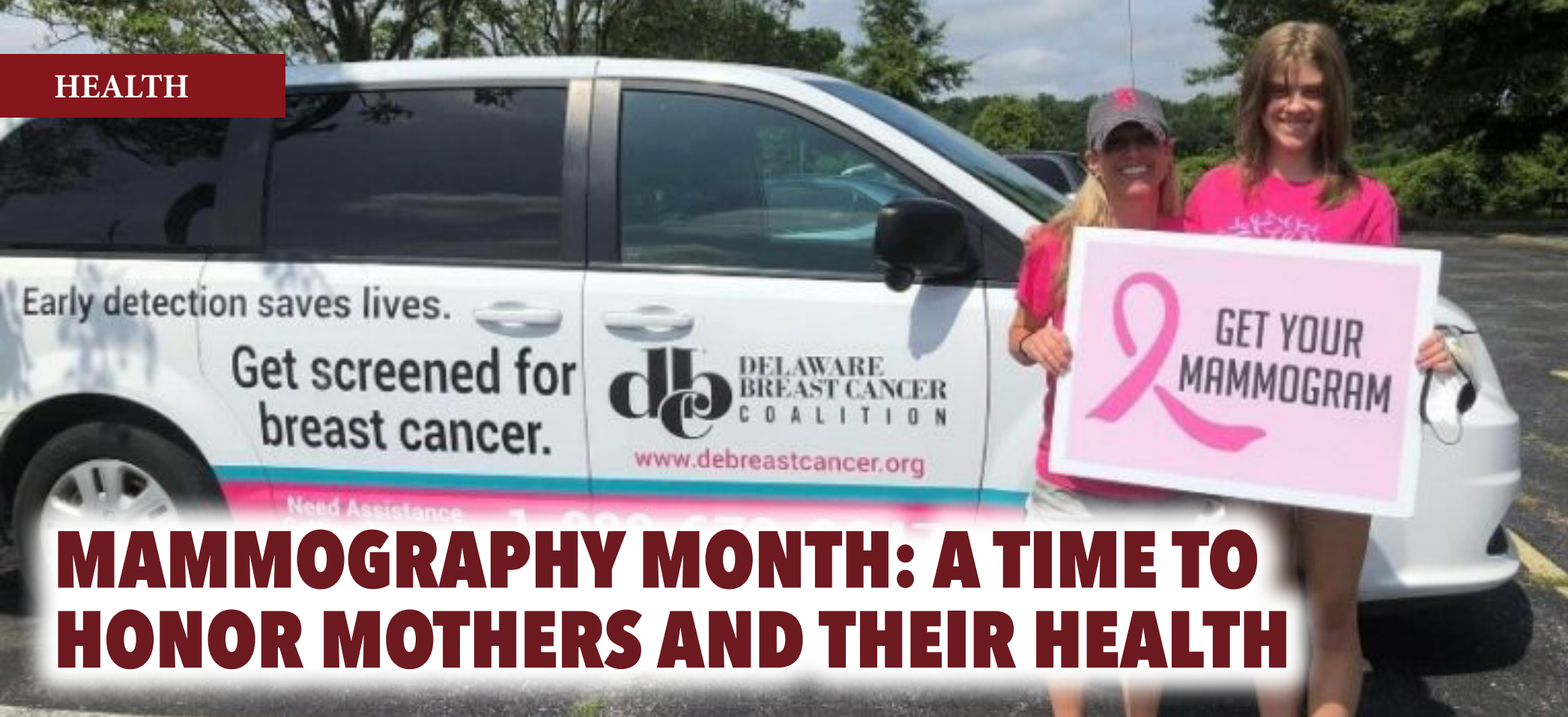
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HEALTH



photo link: Bayhealth Medical Center



MAMMOGRAPHY MONTH: A TIME TO HONOR MOTHERS AND THEIR HEALTH

BY TERRY ROGERS

May is the month to celebrate mothers and what better way to celebrate the women in your life than by encouraging them to get an annual mammogram? Since May is also Mammography Month, Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) urges all women to put themselves first and get a routine mammogram.

“It’s important to take care of yourself even when taking care of others,” Francesca Vogel, chief executive officer of DBCC, said. “Mothers too often focus on taking care of their spouse, their children, their grandchildren, pushing their own needs aside. By doing so, they could actually be endangering their own health. An annual routine mammogram is one of the best tools we have in the fight against breast cancer. It takes only

about 30 minutes for the average mammogram. This is 30 minutes that could actually save your life.”

According to the National Institute of Health, annual mammograms identify breast cancer in the early stages, usually Stage I and II when survival is greatest. In Delaware, Healthy Delaware recommendations are for breast screening to begin at 40 and are covered by insurance. Even if there is no known family history of breast cancer in your family, it is recommended that all women speak with their doctors about their personal risk factors for breast cancer and that they are routinely screened for breast cancer by getting an annual mammogram. More information about screening recommendations can be found at [HERE](#).

See MAMMOGRAM on page 20



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“You don’t want to wait until you have physical symptoms before you get screened,” Vogel said. “At that point, the cancer may have advanced and spread to other parts of the body. This is why we want women to take action in the fight against breast cancer. We want you to do it in honor of the women who have fought, are fighting and will conquer this disease by prioritizing your health and getting your annual mammogram this May.”

Vogel explained that there are options available for those who may not have insurance or have other barriers to obtaining annual mammograms. DBCC’s Women’s Health Screening team is available with assistance and can provide information in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole.

If you would like to help further the reach of the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition’s life-saving programs and services, please donate through the DBCC [donation site](#) with a tax-deductible contribution which can help make a difference in someone’s life. To learn more about the services offered by DBCC as well as information on cancer diagnosis, treatment and survival, visit www.debreastcancer.org.



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PACE YOUR LIFE TO CELEBRATE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

BY TERRY ROGERS

PACE Your Life, located in the Milford Wellness Village, will hold a first anniversary celebration on June 21 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The celebration will include a ribbon cutting hosted by the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Milford Chamber of Commerce, as well as food, ice cream, a photography booth and more.

“We are very proud of our growth over the last year,” Erin Steele, director of Marketing and Enrollment, said. “Not only do we have more participants, but we have grown our team of employees and specialty providers.”

Steele explained that they have used feedback from participants to improve programming and also hired a recreational therapist who is trained very specifically on how to utilize recreation as a medical treatment to

help reduce anxiety, stress and depression. Her skills include creating activities that assist in supporting both physical and mental health.

“As requested by our participants, PACE Your Life has opened a salon,” Steele said. “We are partnering with a local stylist to provide services such as haircuts, color and perms right in the center. To continually increase access to convenient healthcare services, we have expanded the number of specialty providers who also come onsite. They are providing services such as podiatry, dental care, optometry, X-rays, IV therapies and lab services. It truly has become a one-stop shop for our participants!”

Some of the challenges faced by PACE Your Life in the

See PACE on page 22

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first year include getting the word out that they are located in Milford Wellness Village so that they can educate the community on who they are and what they do.

“We have made some significant progress, but there is still a lot of work to be done,” Steele said. “We need the community to know that we are here to serve seniors who want to age successfully and stay in their home. We also want to support caregivers. We are always looking for employees and specialty providers who share our passion for serving older Delawareans.”

At the celebration in June, C.M. Baker Photography will be on hand with their Shasta Shutterbug Photo-booth and Eagle 97.7 will broadcast live. In keeping with the theme of a summer party, there will be a barbecue food truck and an ice cream truck.

“The biggest reward for us at PACE Your Life is, hands down, watching our participants join our program and thrive,” Steele said. “We provide comprehensive medical care but there is something to be said about the social interaction and friendships that participants have developed among each other and with our staff. It is so awesome to see the participants become each other’s support system beyond the time we spend together in the Day Center.”

For more information about the first anniversary celebration, visit <https://paceyourlifemwv.com>. Those interested in becoming a provider or to find out where to register for the June event, call 302-856-3565, while those interested in employment should search for position openings on www.Indeed.com.



PACE Is The Place For Me! Hear what PACE Your LIFE participants are saying!



"Since I have enrolled, I have become more lively and social. I like everything about PACE, especially the people and the food!" ~ Theresa Shaffer

"Before enrolling in PACE Your LIFE I was depressed. Now I love to mingle with the participants and help them enjoy themselves." ~ Ed Darling

"My days before PACE Your LIFE were terrible. I was home alone all day. Now I tell people there is nothing else like PACE." ~ Ronnie Armstrong



PACE Your LIFE is a comprehensive medical and social program for residents in Milford as well as surrounding towns, who are 55 and older and need assistance with activities of daily living but want to age in place and remain in their home. Learn more today by scanning the QR Code!



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SPORTS



photo by Chino Rocha on Unsplash

OVER 90 'EDGERS' TO RAPPEL 17 STORIES AS A FUNDRAISER

STAFF REPORT

Over the Edge, sponsored by Brandywine Realty Trust, New Castle County Fire Service and TD Bank, is the state's only rappelling fundraising event of its kind.

On Thursday, May 11, more than 90 people from across the state will rappel 17 stories (222 feet) down the 300 Delaware Avenue building in Wilmington, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and continuing throughout the day.

Each participant is required to raise a minimum of \$1,100 in order to participate. "Edgers" are supporters of Special Olympics Delaware who either play a role in the organization or are related to, or friends with, someone who cares about the cause. The event is streamed live on the Special Olympics Delaware [YouTube channel](#).

[nel](#). In its 11-year history, more than \$1.4 million has been raised for Special Olympics Delaware.

"This is another one of our unique fundraising events we do that has captured the interest of our community and even reached beyond," said David Halley, president & CEO of Special Olympics Delaware. "Certainly, the thrill is part of the attraction, but we are also told by many that their inspiration to take on such a daring feat comes from our athletes themselves, who inspire us every single day."

For more information on the event, visit the Special Olympics Delaware Over the Edge website at www.sode.org.

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POLICE & FIRE



photo link: Downtown Milford Inc.

POLICE CHIEF REQUESTS FUNDS FOR RADIO UPGRADES

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford Police Chief Cecilia Ashe recently requested \$499,000 from City Council to upgrade the radio communication system used by dispatchers and officers. The current system is almost 20 years old and is in dire need of upgrading.

“In my evaluation going through the department, this is one of the major things that we will need going over to the new facility,” Chief Ashe said. “This was not a ball dropped by anybody, per se. I think it was just something that was thought of later in the game because, as we had examples of different construction sites that have been done with DSP, none of those actual sites have a communications division within them. So, I don’t think it was something that was thought of in the actual development of the building and that’s to nobody’s specific fault. We’re trying to get to state standards.”

Chief Ashe explained that the current system is nothing more than one radio talking to another and that if

the system was to crash or fail, the police department would lose all communication. This would mean they would be unable to dispatch officers for calls nor could officers communicate with each other.

“How do failures happen and how often, well, they can happen at any time. And failures can be something as easy as a lightning strike,” Chief Ashe said. “As I indicated in the memo to City Council, this happened in 2012. And at the time, it cost the city approximately, outside of insurance, \$132,000 to replace the equipment that was damaged. If that was to occur today, we have no means of replacing the system. Because the system that we have currently is so dated, that there are no supports for it, there are no parts that we can order. There’s nothing that we could do. So that’s why this is for me is mission critical.”

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CEO, Bryan Shupe / 302-542-9231 / shupe@delawarelive.com

