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**September 5, 2023**  
**Vol. 13 • Issue 36**

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photo link: Carlisle Fire Company



22nd Riverwalk Freedom Festival



Walnut Street Discussions Continue



First Day of School

# HEADLINES



photo link: Killens Pond State Park

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# MEADERY COMING TO MILFORD

BY TERRY ROGERS

Social media was buzzing on Wednesday after a sign went up on the former Josephine Keir building on South Walnut Street. What to Ferment (WTF) Meadery officially announced they were bringing their unique flavors to Milford.

“We have had a dream for awhile to start a meadery,” David Wade, who co-owns the company with his wife, Jenifer, said on a Kickstarter campaign. “We are excited to bring our flavors to Milford and are grateful to Zack and Marissa King for believing in us in our endeavor.”

Mead is an alcoholic beverage created by fermenting honey mixed with water. It may also be mixed with fruit to give it additional unique flavor. Alcohol content can range from about 3.5 to 20 percent alcohol by volume (ABV).

“Marissa and I consistently look for new things to bring to Milford and we felt this company as an excellent fit,” King said. “We are excited to bring this historic building to life with businesses that we think will bring people downtown and will help Milford grow.”

Although the Wades announced their opening on Aug. 30, they are still finalizing the details on what will be offered in the new store, located at 27 S. Walnut Street. Additional details will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.



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## RIVERWALK FREEDOM FESTIVAL RETURNS FOR 22ND YEAR

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford's Riverwalk Freedom Festival, organized by the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Milford (CCGM) will return for the 22nd year on Saturday, Sept. 16 with live bands, specials throughout downtown businesses, vendors and more. Downtown streets will be closed to accommodate over 100 crafters, businesses and organizations. The event culminates in a stunning firework display at dusk.

"Many of our vendors are new this year, including several food vendors who are looking forward to getting exposure in Milford," Jo Schmeiser, executive director of CCGM, said. "Park Place Restaurant and Lounge will open early serving breakfast and offering an ATM machine. There will be new games in Kids Corner, a new addition to live entertainment and there will be events in the Milford Senior Center and Milford Public Library, in addition to all the usual outdoor festival activities."

Lincoln City will kick off the live bands in Bicentennial Park at noon and Bobby Lee Jones will take the stage from 4:20 to 6 p.m. Plead the 5th takes over at 6:30 p.m. and will play until the fireworks begin at dusk. There will be entertainment in the Library Amphitheatre as well.

"The popular Red White and Brew Garden will also return with guest bartenders serving drinks," Schmeiser said. "All the tips raised by the bartenders are donated to a worthy cause. Some of those serving include a group donating their funds to the Alzheimer's Association, The Parker Group, Kent Sussex Industries, the Milford Elks Lodge, Shore United Bank and Artisans Bank who are also one of our corporate sponsors." In addition to the guest bartenders, the Alcohauleder, powered by Easy-Speak, will also be on site.

see page 5



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from page 4

The Duck Dash is also planned for the afternoon. Hundreds of numbered rubber ducks will be launched into the Mispillion River. The first three ducks to cross the finish line win prizes for those who hold the lucky numbers. Ducks are available for sale and are \$5 each. They can be purchased at the CCGM office or at local businesses around town.

Some of the food trucks who will be offering a wide variety of dining options include Amy's Grill, Asian Taste, Big Al's, Blazen Grill, Blue Hen Concessions, Heavenly Tastes Catering, Milford High School Band, River Lights Café, Steel Bowl, The Master Grill, Top Five BBQ, Uncle Bernie's Steak Shack, and White and Associates Treats. Anyone looking to cure their sweet tooth will find Cup'r Cone, Kona Ice and the Frozen Farmer.

There are still volunteer opportunities available. Anyone interested can visit the sign up [page](#) or call the CCGM office at 302-422-3344.



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# CULTURE



photo link: [Second Street Players](#)



# HOME OF THE BRAVE BREAKS GROUND ON VET CENTER

BY JAREK RUTZ

A new community center providing support to transitioning military veterans broke ground this week in Milford. The **Home of the Brave Foundation**, in partnership with Nally Ventures and Horizon Construction Services, hosted the ceremony Aug. 29.

The mission of the foundation is to reduce homelessness among military veterans. In addition to providing transitional housing, food and security, it assists with employment, counseling services, access to healthcare, transportation and locating affordable housing. The foundation's goal is to help veterans successfully

transition into permanent housing and personal independence.

The one-story community center will include an office, multi-purpose space, bathrooms, storage room and an outdoor covered activity space to provide programs and services for veterans. Nally Ventures and Horizon Construction Services are partnering to facilitate fundraising and provide construction management services for the project.



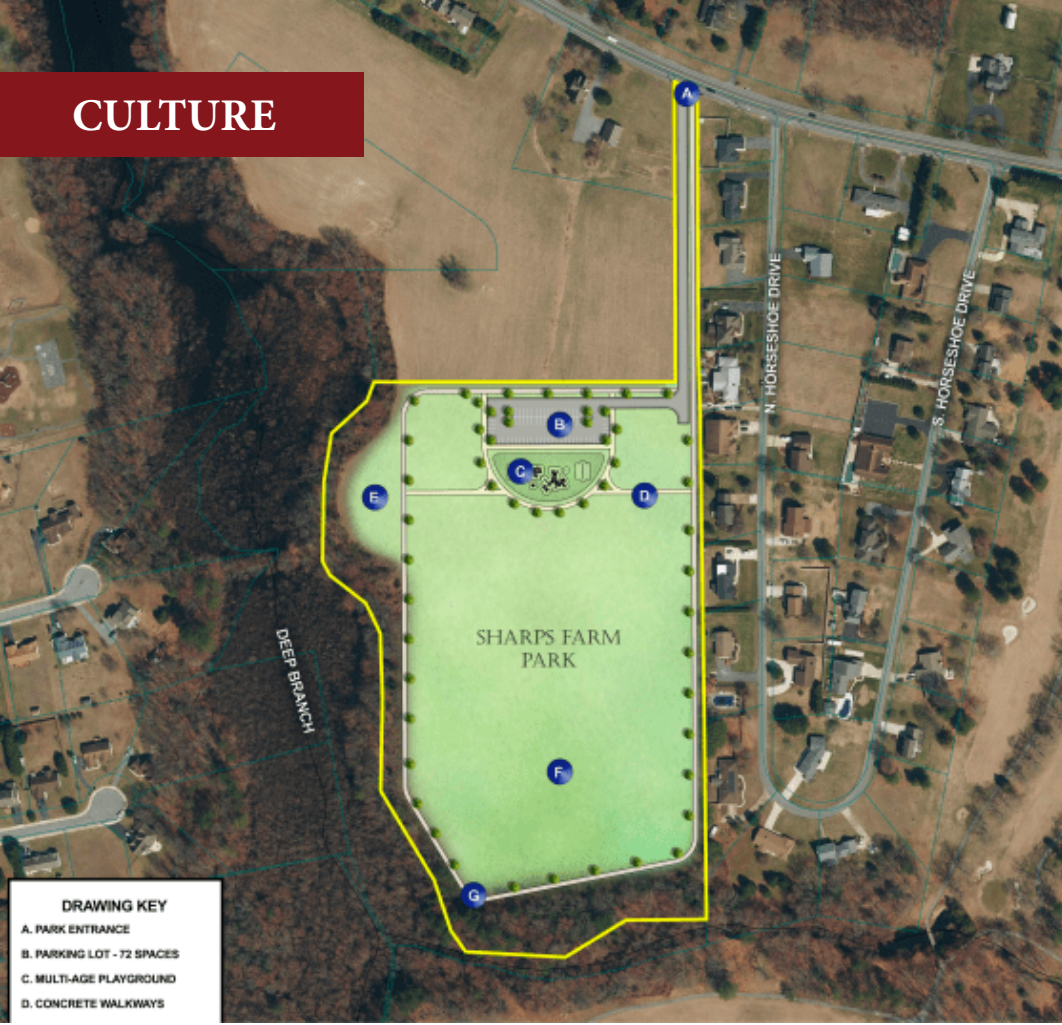
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**STAFF REPORT**

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council authorized Brad Dennehy, Parks and Recreation director, authorization to move forward with converting 19 acres of land, known as the Sharp property, into a city park and trail system. The city purchased the land in August 2021, located next to the former Rookery North, with the intention of creating a park.

“The idea is grounded in Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Trails Program (ORPT) funding with DNREC which is an outdoor trails program which the city of Milford has been successful in getting funds for over the years, we’ve been the recipient of 19 different funding cycles,” Dennehy said. “So, the city has purchased this property. We have a design consultant at the

# NEW PARK COMING TO REHOBOTH BOULEVARD

moment who has created this, again, a concept rendering of what it could be. So, it’s very preliminary at this stage, but the next step in this process would be moving forward with a contract with a design professional to put an entranceway, parking lot and moving forward with the playground.”

Councilman Dan Marabello, who grew up in New York City, suggested that the city look for the best designer they can for the new park which will be known as Sharp’s Farm Park.

“Just as a comment, I grew up in New York City, knowing parks that started from nothing that look like they are natural,” Councilman Marabello said. “Federal Hall, I’m sure you heard of it, that are designed to show your heritage. And I’m hoping we get the very best and the design of it is designed with a purpose. There’s a connectivity with all the land around it and possible future land.”

Dennehy agreed, stating that he felt this section of land would be a guiding light in the greenway additions in the town.

“I know that’s a bit of a blank canvas there at the moment. But we have to start somewhere and again, this is just preliminary concept, but it is the first concept. The first thing is to get the road put in there and the parking lot and get access to that site,” Dennehy said.

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from page 8

“And I think there will be several more meetings related to designs that will go through the Parks and Rec Advisory Board, we will canvass a lot more comments. So again, tonight that is very much a concept plan. That again, we need a resolution to back a concept in order to get funding from DNREC. The plan can always change, but it’s important for DNREC to know that the mayor and council is serious about these projects and moving forward.”

Mayor Archie Campbell asked if more pickleball courts would be placed in the new park.

“It’s a blank canvas. Whatever you would like to see, whether it is pickleball or I’m sure there are some gentlemen in the room here today who would like to see some tennis courts there,” Dennehy said. “I’m sure as Councilman Culotta wants to see a bike track out there. What we will do is take the input and we will gather your esteemed input, opinions, and importantly, the public’s opinions as well. But again, this is money on the table. We have a good track record with DNREC of moving forward with constructible projects and completing them. So again, the resolution is basically a support of this project.”

Carolyn Price asked where exactly the property was located. Dennehy explained that leaving Milford from Front Street, she would cross Marshall Pond and head towards Route 1. The park would be just before what is now the Southern Delaware Golf Course. The property is adjacent to the golf course.

City council approved the request unanimously.



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



# DNREC ISSUES TEMPORARY EMERGENCY VARIANCE FOR AIR QUALITY

## STAFF REPORT

The **Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control** has issued a temporary emergency variance for air quality to allow for the construction and operation of a rental boiler at Perdue Foods, LLC’s Milford poultry processing facility until a temporary permit can be issued following a public notice to appear Sunday, Sept. 3.

On Sunday, Aug. 27, plant managers at Perdue Milford—which processes approximately 240,000 chickens daily—discovered a critical failure in one of their permitted boilers. The boiler remains inoperable at this time.

The DNREC Division of Air Quality expects to issue a temporary air permit for the rental boiler early next week. The permit will allow the rental boiler to operate for up to 90 days. The variance incorporates requirements for Perdue Foods, LLC to develop a boiler

maintenance plan for the Milford poultry processing plant, including a plan for long-term facility maintenance, and requires the facility to solidify a commitment to continuous compliance with Delaware’s environmental regulations.

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state’s natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. The DNREC **Division of Air Quality** monitors and regulates all emissions to the air. For more information, visit the [website](#) or connect with @DelawareDNREC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), Twitter (also known as X) or [LinkedIn](#).



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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



photo link: City of Milford

# CITY TO LOOK INTO UPGRADING MISPELLION RIVER BULKHEAD

BY TERRY ROGERS

When he and a group of investors purchased the former Carlisle Fire Company on Church Street, Dan Bond explained that there was an intention to give the city a strip of a land along the Mispillion River in order to make the Riverwalk contiguous in that area. At the time, Bond was very open about the fact that a concrete bulkhead would need to be repaired or replaced should the city take over the small strip of land. Brad Dennehy, director of Milford Parks and Recreation, explained at a council meeting that the city had been awarded a \$125,000 grant, half of which could be used toward the bulkhead project while the other half was earmarked for a park on South Rehoboth Boulevard.

“Earlier this year, Dan Bond purchased this property. They want to move forward with rehabbing the building. They want to give the city an easement behind the building, which would then mean we would have connectivity on our Riverwalk. That’s the last remain-

ing piece which is not contiguous. So, there’s a number of things that need to occur there,” Dennehy said. “One, we would have to enter into agreement with the property owner. But two, we effectively then would be responsible for the rebuilding of the bulkhead. The bulkhead is the concrete wall, for lack of a better term, which is in the river, which has shown a lot of decay. It is deteriorated to the point where it needs to be repaired. We’re not sure exactly when that was installed, but the building dates back to the early 1930s. So we’re assuming that the wall went into the river prior to the firehouse getting built.”

Dennehy explained that he met with the Army Corps of Engineers several times and that there was no record stating that the city owned the bulkhead and that it appeared it was owned by the property owner. Dennehy met with an experienced contractor who performed

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repair and renovation of several sections of the Riverwalk bulkheading who suggested driving sheet piling in front of the wall and pouring a concrete pad on top. Dennehy confirmed that Bond was interested in putting a small pocket park along the Riverwalk next to the building.

“We need to get a design professional down here who’s got a lot of skill in marine construction and shoring up stuff. So, it’d be my recommendation to take the ORPT funds and put that towards a design professional. And then we can figure out really what’s involved in that,” Dennehy said. “I don’t want to speak out of turn, Mr. (David) Rutt, but I don’t know if we did that, does that leave the city on the hook contractually wise or not? I don’t know. I would think in a layman’s term that if we get a report from an engineer, and it’s cost prohibitive, city can say we don’t want to move forward with the easement.”

City Solicitor David Rutt asked if there was a pending agreement with Bond and Dennehy stated there was not, but he did not think the city could qualify for funding unless there was an agreement.

“In that agreement, you can put a contingency that says that the city will either accept the easement or ownership of the property or however you want to term it subject to this report,” Rutt said. “They determine exactly what has to be done and could even put like maybe a cost cap on the cost in excess of \$250,000. Let’s just throw a number out there. But it depends on what the agreement is. You can always put terms into a contract like that.”

Dennehy felt that would be the best option to move forward with the project. Councilman Jason James expressed that he was very supportive of the project as it did provide connectivity for the Riverwalk, but wondered if there may be other funds available to offset the cost of repairing the bulkhead.

“I think that there’s always opportunities, whether that could be with the bond bill or this ORPT funding. I submitted a bond bill application but it didn’t get funded. But we did get other funding for other city projects,” Dennehy said. “I think in my experience, if we have actual design of a project, and we know one, what we’re trying to do with it and two, we’ve got a real cost estimate with that. I think we’re a lot more likely to get funding, whether it’s from a legislator or state level. But I think when we have a concept, it’s one thing but if we’ve actually got an agreement with the design professional and we’ve got a set of, for lack of a term, blueprints that I think helps us so I don’t think this would be an easy fix. But I think if we had a set of prints and a cost estimate, then I think we’d be in a lot better position to petition for more funds.”

Councilman Andy Fulton asked if the Army Corps of Engineers had to be involved in the project and Dennehy explained that the city would need a permit from them. In the three meetings with the Corps, Dennehy felt there would be no objection from them in completing this project.

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BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council adopted a strategic plan that is designed to guide activities for the next five years. For the past year, the city has been working with the Biden School of Public Policy and Administration through the University of Delaware to create an updated plan with input from council and the community.

“The years worth of research started in October of last year, we took a lot of public input during that time-frame, used a lot of data from our National Citizen survey in order to put together our strategic plan that will guide us over the next five years,” Mark Whitfield city manager, said. “So tonight’s the night and council can take action by adopting the plan. But first, we’d like to give the public one more chance to comment on anything that may be able to plan.”

Bill McGowan with the University of Delaware, who helped develop the plan, explained that a lot of work went into creating a plan that he felt would have the

# STRATEGIC PLAN ADOPTED BY COUNCIL

support of council and the community.

“You have a great community, and we got a lot of input which hopefully we translated or transferred that all into the strategic plan. You had a good one going and we just reinforced what you had brought to the top some of the things that you’ve already heard tonight,” McGowan said. “You need to focus on your bike plan and your Downtown Redevelopment Plan. And you’ve got principles in the plan, and as I said the last time, basically, strategic plans are touchstones, they’re the things you’re going to dust off every quarter with your matrix and kind of say, are we really doing the things that we need to do? And you’re a very busy town and so touchstones are important, and I hope this helps you as you move forward.”

Councilman Mike Boyle asked that two photos in the plan be updated. One still showed Georgia House which closed many years ago and was now La Hacienda. The other had COVID restrictions which no longer applied. Councilman Andy Fulton asked if those corrections would be made before the plan was published and Whitfield stated they would. Councilman Brian Baer commented that he had some minor changes he wanted to make to the plan, but he did not have them with him. He felt the plan could be approved with a motion that included minor changes that would be forthcoming.

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“I just want to comment for Bill McGowan. The hard work that went into doing this thing and the length of time it took and he was on top of it throughout the entire process,” Councilman Boyle said. “It’s a really good report. Thank you from at least me, and I look forward to working with you again on projects.”

Councilman Fulton also commended the group who put the plan together.

“I was speaking to some of the people that were on some of the teams, some of the people had submitted information and not only did the teams do what they were supposed to do, they also came back for other teams as well, because they found the process interesting,” Councilman Fulton said. “So, I think it was a good reaching out to build it. I think the workshops were good and I’m very happy with the product. And if I can just ask the edits [Councilman Baer] is going to do, are they typos, administrative type edits? Are they something to do with the meat and potatoes? How’s that? Because I can’t make a motion and then say ‘Oh, by the way, there might be some meat and potato changes to this.’ So, we probably need some clarification.”

Councilman Baer stated that it would be minor edits.

“Just one more, since we’re holding you up with just

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## COUNCIL CONTINUES TO DISCUSS CHANGES TO WALNUT STREET

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent workshop, Sonia Marichic-Goudy, associate vice president of Century Engineering, presented potential changes to South Walnut Street between McCoy Street and Maple Avenue designed to slow traffic and add pedestrian/bicycle lanes. The project was presented to the public at two different public information sessions. On Monday, Aug. 28, the plan was presented to council and opened up for public comment.

“We’ve been working on over the past several months with the team here at city of Milford. We had a few project goals including improvement to the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity along South Walnut Street. That was in consultation with your comprehensive plan as well as the Milford Bicycle Master Plan,” Marichic-Goudy said. “We were looking to add a new shared-use path as well as completing gaps in the existing sidewalk system. But we also wanted to provide traffic calming

measures and reduce traffic speeds as much as we could, as well as improving some of the pedestrian crossings, the one at Seabury Avenue and Clark as well as Jefferson at the railroad.”

During the study, Marichic-Goudy explained they had reviewed crash data and discovered there were 18 crashes over a three-year period.

“Most of the crashes occurred when there was a lot of traffic on the road. So, during rush hour, school let-out time, things like that, we saw a peek in the actual crash numbers. We also looked at the speeds, so the current speed is 25 miles per hour,” Marichic-Goudy said. “The average speed that we looked at was from Sept. 11–19 where we checked speeds every day. The average speed was 27. The 85th percentile speed was 31. There was one speed that was clocked very, very high over 90 miles an hour, while 62% were of the vehicles were traveling more

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than the posted speed limit. And we did notice that half of all crashes occurred basically at McCoy and then the intersection with Seabury.”

There were no fatalities in the crashes, and most were simply sideswipes and property damage. This information was used to create the first option for slowing traffic and adding pedestrian lanes. That plan would require the removal of all existing parking and the narrowing of the roadway as a method to slow traffic.

“So as part of industry standards or industry guidelines, when we’re looking at how we can calm traffic, narrowing roads, shifting roads, adding roundabouts which really wasn’t an option for this roadway configuration. There’s various select options that we have in the menu of what we can do,” Marichic-Goudy said. “So, we did implement a few of those. And then concept two was similar. We still have a shared-use path on one side and connecting the sidewalks on the other. But we were able to conserve some parking. So in between the utility poles, we would do a bump out so that we could have still some street parking. And overall, this option was received better at the workshop. They’d like to keep the parking,”

One of the outcomes of the public workshops was a request for all-way stop signs at McCoy, Seabury and Kings Highway. Marichic-Goudy explained that a stop sign warrant analysis was conducted using three main criteria for adding all-way stops. The first is crash data which requires five or more crashes in a 12-month period. The second is volume, a certain number of cars

approaching the intersection for a one-hour period in an eight-hour timeframe. Finally, sight distance must be taken into consideration.

“None of the intersections met a crash analysis for a stop sign. And then we went on to look at the volume criteria and none of the traffic volumes warranted a stop sign at any of the three intersections,” Marichic-Goudy said. “And then we looked at the other criteria like were there any locations that would benefit from having all of the traffic stopped or even the minor approach stopped and none of those actions met those criteria either. So essentially, none of these locations met the warrants and so we do not recommend adding a stop sign at McCoy, Seabury or Kings Highway.”

Marichic-Goudy was prepared for comments that even though all-way stops were not warranted, they would add a level of safety and were less expensive than other alternatives that slowed traffic.

“I talked about what happens if we put a stop sign there anyway. We wanted to be ready for the community who might say we don’t care if it’s warranted, we want a stop sign there. So, generally if you install a stop sign when it’s not warranted, motorists get upset because now they’re stopping at a stop sign and there’s nobody there for them to stop for. They might try to recover lost time and go faster once they get through the stop sign or they may stop obeying it altogether and just run the stop sign,” Marichic-Goudy said. “In which case, now you may have pedestrians who think I can cross here safely. There’s a stop sign and now there’s a conflict. So,

it is better to recommend traffic calming measures like narrowing the lanes, introducing roadway curbs, both of which we did in both options. And then there’s always speed enforcement that could be completed by police officers versus trying to add a stop sign that’s not warranted.”

At the public workshops, those in attendance were happy with the explanation for why all-way stop signs were not warranted. Marichic-Goudy explained that they were recommending going with the second option which would add a separate bike and pedestrian lane, create greenspace and allow for some parking along South Walnut Street. The cost of the project would be \$4 million which would include contingencies, utility relocation, construction engineering, right-of-way and preliminary engineering.

“We will refresh all of the existing signs, will add crosswalks at certain intersections here at McCoy, we’re adding crosswalks so that we’re crossing everyone a little bit safer. Then much of the same we’ve got the shared-use path crosswalks on the minor approach, new sidewalk on the lower side as necessary to complete the gaps. And then here we’ve got the intersection with Seabury,” Marichic-Goudy said. “So we did some modifications to that intersection so that as you’re crossing on the Seabury side of Walnut, you do have a pedestrian refuge, you do have a way to get kind of up to Seabury to get up to the school. And then we refresh all the striping and signage so that everybody knows there are pedestrians crossing here.”

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# FINANCE DIRECTOR EXPLAINS PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

BY TERRY ROGERS

Recently, social media sites have had multiple comments about an increase in city of Milford property taxes. Some residents claim their city taxes are now three times higher than their county taxes. In an effort to be transparent, Mayor Archie Campbell asked city Finance Director, Lou Vitola, to explain what the increase included.

“What I instantly thought mayor, when you reported that to me, was that the truth is the way costs have been escalating in this post-COVID environment and runaway inflation environment and the fact that not a smidge of the tax increase is attributable to our own cost pressures,” Vitola said. “So, 100% of the tax increase is related to one of two things. One is larger than the other, the larger being the debt service on the new police station. This is a large project, a \$20 million project that was approved by voters back in 2020 and should be done by the end of 2023. We’re going to come

in under budget, we’re going to be on time, but the ramifications of taking on such a large project like that is that it has to be paid for with our current income stream. We borrowed for the police station and we’ll meet that debt service through property tax assessments of a few pennies in 2023 and another few pennies in 2024 and in fiscal 25.”

Vitola continued that the smaller portion of the increase was related to the city’s cautious use of realty transfer tax (RTT).

“Realty transfer taxes are considered one of the more stable and recurring forms of revenue that we can collect as a city, but we’ve been guilty of using them to meet operating expenditures over the years. But the state could change the law. We could lose the funding tomorrow. We could have a bad year in real estate or a bad several years in real estate where that funding is no longer reliable, and then we’d have a budget gap that

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we’d be forced to fund with something like a tax increase but by gradually doing a penny a year for five years and we’re in the third of those five years of doing just a penny of the assessment,” Vitola said. “By doing that and gradually pushing realty transfer taxes off into a fund that can float as our capital needs, we’ve put ourselves in a stronger position so that the increases are known and can be measured and budgeted by residents, businesses and families. And we can put the capital side to be able to use for streets, sidewalks, curbs, projects, vehicles, equipment and so forth. So that was probably a little longer than you wanted, but none of any of the tax increases in the last few years were related to any of

see page 21

the city's own internal cost pressures at all. It was these two initiatives.”

When the current budget was approved in June, it included a one penny per \$100 assessed value in relation to the shifting of RTT funds from operating cost use to reserves that could be used as a backup funding source. An additional small increase was included as part of the debt service for the new police station, something approved by the voters several years ago. City of Milford property taxes increased from \$0.49275 per \$100 of assessed value to \$0.546 per \$100 of assessed value, an increase of 9.7 percent.

“For the average Milford home with an assessed value of \$147,000, the increase will be \$5.81 per month or \$70 per year,” Mark Whitfield said at the time.” No portion of the property tax increase is unscheduled or emerging suddenly from the inflationary operating cost environment. Rather, the proposed movement of the property tax is rooted in the city's push for a structurally balanced budget as outlined in the strategic plan along with the voter-approved referendum to construct the new police facility.”

Although the referendum for the new police station permitted the city to borrow up to \$20 million to complete the project, Mayor Campbell and other council members have been adamant that they want to keep the costs below that. Currently, the station appears to be on target to cost around \$17.5 million. During promotions for the referendum, the city stated that taxes on a home with a \$150,000 assessed value would increase

between \$7 and \$11 per month, or between \$86 and \$138 per year.

Another factor facing the city is that appraisals on property are done more often in city limits than they are at the county level. In Kent County, appraisals have not been done since the 1980s, while Sussex County has not reassessed property since 1974. This means that a house in Milford may be appraised significantly higher at the city level than the county level. For example, a search of a home located on South Washington Street in Milford shows that the home is valued at \$74,100 with a tax bill of \$404.59 to the city. That same house at the county level has an assessed value of \$5,350 and a tax bill of \$297.47. The assessed value is significantly lower, indicating why the county tax bill may be lower than the city tax bill. All three state counties are currently undergoing tax reassessment which should bring assessed values more in line with actual value.

“During our budget process, we were very transparent and very vocal for explanations on every penny that had been spent and the other increases for the penny and for the police station,” Councilman Jason James said. “They were known things that have been discussed and vetted, and information has been made available to the public in several different forms on several occasions. But we do owe it to the public to make sure we're transparent and if it left their minds, it's our duty to remind them right now. It is what they have voted for to try to accommodate the understanding and the needs of the constituents.”

Councilman Todd Culotta stated that Councilman James had a good point.

“People remember it when they see it on the bill in front of them. Is there some way we can remind them of that and some of what he just said, a very simple press release,” Councilman Culotta said. “Something that says you may have noticed a tax increase and this is why for those that didn't vote or who have simply forgotten.”

Mayor Campbell pointed out that school tax had actually gone down over the past years which may be why people are seeing lower county tax bills.

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# MILFORD STUDENTS RETURN FOR FIRST DAY OF 2023-24 YEAR

BY JAREK RUTZ

As first-day photos across social media attested Aug. 27, **Milford School District**'s 4,500 students were among those who returned to the classroom.

"This is an incredibly exciting time of year for us as we eagerly welcome our students back to our school buildings," said Superintendent Bridget Amory. "Our mission remains to provide all learners a comprehensive, individualized education in a safe, supportive, rigorous environment where learners are prepared to grow and thrive in a global society."

Kirsten France is a mother of three, with two of her children currently in Milford School District: her son, Kieran, is entering high school and her daughter, Kyleigh, is starting first grade at **Banneker Elementary**.

Kyleigh is most excited to enter the school's Spanish immersion program, she said. "I know she will be

amazing. I can't wait to learn from her this year," France said.

Milford has a two-way dual language immersion program offered in Spanish for kindergarten through sixth grade. It's offered at Benjamin Banneker Elementary, Morris Early Childhood Center (kindergarten), Lulu Ross Elementary and now for sixth grade at Milford Central Academy. The program provides some of the district's youngest learners with an opportunity to learn and engage in two languages and cultures—English and Spanish—during the school day.

Immersion classes follow the same curriculum in all content areas: reading, writing, math, science and social studies. Two teachers instruct students in this program, one for half the day in English, and the other for half the day in Spanish. In the Spanish-speaking

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classrooms, the teacher speaks entirely in Spanish and uses a range of strategies including pictures, songs, games, body language, facial expressions and more.

"Our guiding principles, marked by our strategic plan, will focus on academic excellence, supporting the whole student, empowering and investing in our people, and building our future," Amory said. "We are confident that we will have a great school year, brimming with joy. Our students and staff will continue their educational journey, seizing every opportunity and prioritizing self-care."







# 11 STUDENTS WIN SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FARM ACTIVITIES

Dathan Ivory, Zane Adams, Brayden Hearn, Lauren Hudson, Kaitlyn Johnson and Ruby Phillips. Here are some of their activities that helped them earn the cash:

**Olivia Daniels**—*New Castle County Farm Bureau Scholarship*. Daniels, who’s from Galena, won a \$500 scholarship from the New Castle County Farm Bureau as she studies environmental science at Bridgewater College in Virginia. She graduated from Kent County High School in 2022, and worked at Hooper, Inc. and Daniels Family Farm.

**Emerson Hickey**—*New Castle County Farm Bureau Scholarship*. Hickey, who’s from Middletown, won a \$500 scholarship from the New Castle County Farm Bureau as she heads to the University of Delaware to study marketing. She graduated from Middletown High School this year, and was active in the school’s Future Farmers of America chapter, acting as its reporter for a year and earning Greenhand and Chapter degrees. Over the last several years, Hickey has worked at Emerson Farms and Cowgirls Creamery.

**Sydney Phipps**—*New Castle County Women’s Committee Scholarship*. Phipps, who’s of Wilmington, won a \$1,000 scholarship from the New Castle County Women’s Committee for her veterinary and biomedical sciences studies at Pennsylvania State University.

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Delaware Farm Bureau has awarded 11 recent First State high school graduates with scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$3,500. Money was given to students for their achievements and involvement in a wide array of agricultural activities.

The funds for the scholarships were raised throughout the year. The **Young Farmers & Ranchers** committee raises funds through its annual strawberry festival in May and the antique tractor pull which is traditionally held on the last day of the Delaware State Fair.

The Delaware Farm Bureau Women’s Committee also contributed to the scholarship, and raised money by running a food booth at the state fair.

This year’s winners were Olivia Daniels, Emerson Hickey, Sydney Phipps, Laurel Clark, Vanessa Gaines,



  
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## DE TOUGHENS RULES ON MOTORCYCLE HELMETS, EYE PROTECTION

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Delaware is requiring everyone who obtains a new motorcycle endorsement or anyone riding with them to wear a helmet and eye protection for two years after they receive their endorsement. The [law](#) went into effect on Friday, Sept. 1.

Currently, every adult operating or riding as a passenger on a motorcycle is required to have a helmet in their possession and wear eye protection while operating or riding a motorcycle. And everyone up to 19 years of age must wear a helmet and eye protection. Helmets and eye protection are already required for those operating with a temporary motorcycle instruction permit as required under [§2703 of Title 21](#) of Delaware Code, and no passengers are allowed.

“We know helmets save lives and prevent serious head injuries. We know a quarter of all motorcycle accidents that occurred last year involved a newly endorsed rider,” Secretary of Transportation Nicole Majeski said in announcing the new law. “By requiring this group to take extra precautions and wear a helmet, we’re able to help keep Delawareans safer.”

Violators will be fined \$25 to \$50. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia require all motorcyclists to wear a helmet. There are 22,174 motorcycles registered in the state. Riders interested in improving their skills can enroll in [safety courses](#) run by the Delaware Department of Motor Vehicles.

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