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New Police Station Opens



Southern Bus Contractors Need Insurance Funds



Dr. Trinity Pilkington Dies Suddenly in Florida

HEADLINES



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NEW POLICE FACILITY OPENS TO PUBLIC

BY TERRY ROGERS

With a crowd of local, state and national dignitaries in attendance, the city of Milford held a ribbon cutting for their new police facility. The building, which was constructed for around \$17 million, under the \$20 million approved by a referendum in 2021, not only includes space for the officers, but also community areas such as conference rooms.

“The need for this facility was first realized by Chief Hudson during his tenure as police chief. At that time, the project did not gain traction and it was put on hold. When Chief Kenny Brown was hired as Chief Hudson’s successor in 2016, he realized the need for a new police facility was even greater than before,” Sgt. Tim Maloney, Public Relations Officer for Milford Police Department, said. “Chief Brown began to work closely with Milford city council and community leaders to earn the support of the Milford community for a new police facility. This

led to a city referendum on Jan. 26, 2021, where the citizens voted in favor of a referendum to proceed with the building of this new police facility. On July 27, 2022, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on the property to begin this building project. And now, 18 months later, we are here for the grand opening of this state of the art police facility.”

After an invocation by the Milford Police Department Chaplain, Jerry Howard, the presentation of colors by the department and the national anthem sung by Adrianna Casselle of the Music School of Delaware, Chief Cecilia Ashe thanked those who were in attendance.

“I’d like to welcome first the mayor and vice mayor, as well as the honorable council here today along with many, many distinguished guests. It warms my heart and that’s probably the only part of me that’s warm right

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now, to see the turnout and support that we have here today for the opening of this building,” Chief Ashe said. “Often people ask me, what are the issues and how can we help in today’s society? We have officers who often struggle coming to work, feeling the support and the love of their community. The challenges that they face every single day, do not go unrecognized by this community. This building is an absolute reflection of the love and support that these women and men feel every day when they come to work.”

Chief Ashe continued.

“I look out on this crowd, and I see this amazing building. This is what these officers are going to come to, this is their new home. This community is an example for other communities and how they should also support their local law enforcement,” Chief Ashe said. “Often, I’m asked how do you address the recruitment crisis that you face in today’s society, that faces this country, that faces this state? This leadership administration here to my left, we choose to lead by example. And we choose to start with the four walls of our building. And what an amazing four walls we can ask for.”

Chief Ashe explained that the goal of every police chief was that the officers come to work and feel supported, something that the officers of Milford have been provided. She stated that it was an amazing feeling as a Chief of Police to look out at the men and women who help her lead the department. She was thankful that these officers now have a building that will give them a smile.

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“When we look inside the four walls of our building, it’s about focusing on the officers. It’s about focusing on their morale and their well-being. It was one of the things I said from the beginning, that we will always put our officers first. Why? Because when we put our officers first, when we treat them with compassion, when we treat them with support, we treat them with empathy, they, in turn, will go out into community and do the same,” Chief Ashe said. “To the officers of this organization. I couldn’t be more proud of you. I look at them, and they make my job easy. Why? Because they lead this agency every single day and their families. And we cannot forget the families that risk these officers being away on holidays at baseball games, missing graduations, to ensure that these streets, that this city is safe and they do that with pride.”

One of the things that the officers of Milford show each day, according to Chief Ashe is that they were the definition of nobility in policing.

“I thank the city council and the mayor and I thank this community for its leadership, its love and its support that we feel every single day and that we will put our officers health and wellness first in this organization,” Chief Ashe said. “And we’ll see that later when you tour this building, you will see a beautiful gym, and on a personal note, the businesses in this community have come in with great support. Planet Fitness, donating equipment to the gym. It’s not just the chief putting the officers first. It’s the community putting these officers first, it is businesses putting these officers first. So, I thank you, I appreciate you and I know each and every

one of the officers. I speak on their behalf. Thank you for bringing a smile and thank you for bringing us home.”

Following Chief Ashe, Vice-Mayor and Fourth Ward Councilman Jason James recognized the many dignitaries in attendance, especially Chief Keith Hudson for his tenacity in keeping the discussion in the forefront and passing that goal down to his replacement. Councilman James also thanked former Chief Kenny Brown for being diligent and sticking with the push to build a new station.

“With this great city, this new building goes a long way in making that happen. Everyone wants to live in a city where they feel safe, they can come, and they can enjoy themselves free of being inundated by crime, free of speeders up and down the road. Our police department makes sure that the citizens not only are safe, but they feel safe. They are present in the community. They have a face that they can put with their public safety. And we’ve been growing, people are talking about Milford. No matter how great the police department is performing, the growth that has taken place, none of that happens without people knowing that they can come and be free of crime in their community,” Councilman James continued. “And I do want to acknowledge the citizens of the city of Milford. When this referendum for this building came before you, I think the referendum passed but a 66% of the vote. I think that’s close. That’s an overwhelming percent. We knew from our strategic plan that safety and the police presence is one of the biggest issues of the greatest concerns of our

citizens. And I think we’ve done well in listening to them and addressing their concerns and to make Milford a great place to live and a great place to do business.”

Mayor Archie Campbell followed Councilman James, mentioning that it made him proud to see all the chiefs he had dealt with over the years in attendance.

“The old police facility was built in 1979 and housed 18 officers. At the time, the population in Milford was about 5,400 people. It no longer meets accreditation standards. Today, we have 37 officers, and our population is reaching 12,000,” Mayor Campbell said. “The new building is over 24,000 square feet. The goals have been a building that will provide a safer environment for police and a hub for community policing and engagement. Our third goal is to reach national standards. And think of the future where it is predicted that by 2026, Milford will have over 18,000 people. That’s a great accomplishment for Milford. We are the growing town in the state of Delaware confirmed by the governor, by the way. And I say to everyone, especially council members, department heads and I like to thank Chief Hudson for his vision of push to get this done.”

After the tour, guests were invited to take guided tours of the new facility. Public open houses will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 13 from 1 to 5 p.m. and Thursday, Dec. 14 from 4 to 8 p.m. Operations will begin at the new location on Monday, Dec. 18.





BY TERRY ROGERS

On Thursday, Dec. 14, the Wreaths Across America convoy, consisting of approximately 15 tractor trailers carrying wreaths to be placed on the graves of veterans, traveled through Milford. The convoy began in Maine and ended its tour in Arlington National Cemetery.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA TRAVELS THROUGH MILFORD

The day began with a ceremony in Middletown before the convoy traveled past Dover Air Force Base, through Milford and finally to the Harrington Fire Company where there was a mobile education exhibit available to the public.

Doug Poore of the Greater Harrington Historical Society has been an active supporter of the Wreath's Across America program, spearheading it in the First State and encouraging groups to participate. Poore explained that this was the first time the organization asked to stop in Delaware and he was thrilled to have such an event highlight the area communities who are strong supporters.

Various wreath laying ceremonies were planned for Saturday, Dec. 16 in various cemeteries throughout the state, including the Delaware Veteran's Memorial Cemetery in Millsboro and in Bear.

Wreath's Across America is designed to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and teach children the value of freedom. In 2023, 267 wreaths were sponsored which was over 167 percent over the initial goal set. To learn more about Wreaths Across America, visit <https://wreathscrossamerica.org>.



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BY TERRY ROGERS

Heath Chasanov, who retired as superintendent of Woodbridge School District recently, began working as the new CEO of Kent Sussex Industries (KSI) on Dec. 4, 2023. He explained that even though he has only been on the job a week, he knows this will be his last job.

“I am excited to be here,” Chasanov said. “The last couple of years I just kind of been listening and just seeing if there was something out here. And then when I heard about this, this opening, I’d been here before and I know some folks who worked here. So, was a no brainer for me. It absolutely was. I’ve worked in serving com-

CHASANOV TAKES OVER THE HELM AT KSI

munities and people my entire life. There’s no better group than this.”

Chasanov spent 32 years in education, serving as a teacher, administrative assistant, admissions and federal programs director, as well as in business education for Polytech. During his career, he served as the Business Manager at Laurel before coming to Woodbridge as the Administrative Superintendent in 2003. He became superintendent in 2012. Chasnov explained that returning to his home school district of Woodbridge was a way of giving back to the community he came from, something he hopes to do at the helm of KSI.

“I most look forward to continuing the programs here and getting our latest project, the Life Enrichment Program, operational. This is a \$600,000 project. But we’ve got another \$2.6 million on the other side,” Chasanov said. “And, trying to get that completed because it’s what our participants deserve. I am looking forward to just working with those folks and the staff. This is such a caring staff. So just working with that group. This is my last job. I have only been here seven days and have really enjoyed it.”

There will be challenges, Chasanov explained, especially when it comes to funding, something every non-profit organization deals with.

“Some of our revenue sources are reimbursable through the state,” Chasanov said. “Of course, being in education all these years I’ve seen what happens when

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from page 7

there's a downturn in the economy and the state doesn't have the resources and trying to make sure that we can sustain those ebbs and flows if that ever happens again. We had to do it in education several times in my career. Just making sure we're financially stable and able to continue to provide services when the economy goes south."

The Board of Directors was extremely pleased to bring Chasanov on board.

"The Board is incredibly excited about the future of KSI under Heath's guidance," Travis Frey, board Chairman, said. "Heath will bring his superior leadership, sense of community and compassion to the KSI team. His knowledge of Delaware through his 31 years of public education will be instrumental in creating a new exciting vision for KSI."

Chasanov has served as President of the Delaware Association of State Personnel Directors, the Delaware Chief School Officers Association and the Delaware Association of School Administrators. In addition, Chasanov has served on the Public Employee's Compensation Committee, the Governor's School Reopening Committee, Professional Standards Board, the Education Funding Improvement Commission, the Financial Literacy Task Force, The TeachDE Leadership Council, the Delaware Teacher Hiring Task Force, the School District Finance Work Group and the Vision Coalition Executive Leadership Team.

A 1987 graduate of Woodbridge High School, Chasanov earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Delaware.



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CULTURE



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



BY TERRY ROGERS

Although the weather has gotten colder and many people are no longer thinking about gardening, the Milford Garden Club has kept busy throughout the past few weeks. The club decorated Parson Thorne Mansion for the holidays and created a beautiful tree for the Milford Library Extravaganza of Trees while also continuing their tradition of a poinsettia tree at the Milford Senior Center.

MILFORD GARDEN CLUB KEEPS BUSY DURING WINTER MONTHS

“We decked out Parson Thorn Mansion with Christmas greenery just in time for the annual Holiday Stroll,” Sue Fischer, secretary of the garden club, said. “This project has been part of the garden club’s efforts for several years and began when members sought to match the historic traditions, similar to those in Colonial Williamsburg and the Delaware Governor’s Mansion.”

In order to match the historic look of the mansion, the club followed strict traditional rules. There are no fancy bows and ribbons, just local greens which included magnolia leaves and cypress fronts to hang along the main door and over side doors.

“In keeping with tradition, a pediment filled with fruit, made from wood to avoid spoilage, was also constructed to hang over the main door,” Fischer continued. “Simple wreaths adorn each door.”

Brooke Clendaniel of the Milford Historical Society, who operates the mansion, added to the decorations with battery lights in each window. He thanked the city’s electric department for adding lights to the trees in front of the mansion as well.

At the library, the garden club created a “winter white garden” themed tree under the direction of Cindy Mullarkey, who has headed up this project for 23 years. Donations from the library fund raiser this year benefit Milford Advocacy for the Homeless. At the Dec. 6 meeting, members donated to the project as well. All are

asked to visit the library and vote for their favorite tree.

“The club kept another tradition this year, setting up the poinsettia tree in the Milford Senior Center on Nov. 29,” Fischer said. “The tree is a fundraiser for the center and the plants are on sale for \$7 each.”

Anyone interested in joining the Milford Garden Club can email milfordgardenclubdelaware@gmail.com. A brochure will be sent that outline the activities of the club and they will be provided details on when the group meets.



[CLICK TO SEE MORE PHOTOS](#)



STAFF REPORT

The Milford Lions Club Service Foundation will again be accepting applications from non-profit 501 (c)3 organizations for grants from the Eunice S. Reed Fund to benefit the greater Milford community. Applications will be accepted during January 2024 and must be post-marked no later than 5 p.m. on Jan. 31, 2024. Grant checks will be awarded by late May 2024.

The Milford Lions Club has established this grant program to enable prospective recipients to develop or expand projects of significant benefit to the greater Milford community. In 2023, this program awarded grants totaling \$63,600 to 20 very deserving organizations.

Requests for a minimum of \$5,000 are preferred, however smaller amounts will be considered. This is a matching program, with grant recipients required to provide at least 10% of total project funding, unless in the judgment of the Lions Reed Fund Awards Committee the project merits waiver of this requirement. The application letter must include the purpose of the project, the amount being requested, how the funds are to be spent and a schedule for completion of the project.

LIONS CLUB GRANTS AVAILABLE AGAIN IN 2024

Eligible applicants include schools and other youth organizations, non-profit organizations, public welfare organizations, environmental groups, civic associations, etc. Cooperative partnerships involving multiple parties, including private industry, are also welcome to apply. Grants will be awarded to applicants whose projects, in the judgment of the Milford Lions Club, will be most beneficial to this community.

Application forms are available on the Milford Lions Club [website](#) or from club members. All applications must be fully completed, signed and mailed by the deadline to be considered. Questions on the grant program may be directed to Lion Tom Reiss at 302-725-5843 or 908-581-7931 or Lion Gaillyn Wadkins-Berry at 302-745-1177. Send completed applications to: Awards Committee Chairperson Milford Lions Club Service Foundation PO Box 25 Milford, DE 19963.



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TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY FOODS AND THEIR ORIGINS

BY TERRY ROGERS

Have you ever wondered why roasted chestnuts, cookies, eggnog and other foods are popular during the holiday season? Many of these traditional foods are the highlight of the holidays for some with most only available between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Much of the reason for that is how the tradition began in the first place.

Roasted poultry is often eaten for holidays, including turkey and goose. Before farm-raised poultry and grocery stores became commonplace, families either raised

their own meat or hunted for it on their land. Goose became popular as they only laid eggs seasonally, while chickens provided eggs almost daily. Before the turkey took over as the favorite on Thanksgiving and Christmas, geese were the most popular. Turkeys grew in popularity as commercial farms grew more prevalent. They were cheaper to raise than other poultry and were born in the spring. This meant they were the perfect size by the time the holidays arrived. This made them

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especially popular among the working class.

In some households, Christmas dinner includes ham, a holdover from when a boar's head adorned wealthy tables during Tudor England. In working class households, a Yule ham took the place of the boar's head and it is still a cornerstone of many Christmas dinners.

Sweets are another staple in households during the holiday. In Italy, panettone is a very popular dish. It is a yeast bread filled with dried fruit that is very popular during the holiday season. Plum pudding began when a Roman Catholic Church decided to make a 13-ingredient pudding to represent Christ and the apostles. On the Sunday before the Advent season, families make the pudding by stirring the batter from east to west to represent the journey of the wise men.

Fruitcake is another popular baked good during the holidays and this dessert has roots in the Middle Ages. Dried fruits and sugar were expensive, so using them in large quantities was saved for a special occasion. Interestingly, during the Middle Ages fruitcake was a popular option for wedding cake. Fruitcake usually consists of dried or candied fruit as well as liquor or wine. Mince-meat originated as a way to stretch the meat supply. Over time, the amount of meat in mincemeat has been reduced significantly, but in the 16th century, mince pies were a British Christmas specialty.

The 17th century is when eggnog got its start as a milk and wine based punch. Nogs were often used for special occasions, with glasses raised to toast the health of anyone who partook. As for chestnuts, it is unclear why they became a Christmas tradition as they were plenti-

ful in the United States. There is a legend that on the Feast of St. Martin, the poor were given chestnuts for sustenance, which may have created the "chestnuts roasting on an open fire" tradition.

Finally, the gingerbread house is steeped in holiday tradition. Gingerbread has often been popular at Christmas, especially during the Victorian era. After the publication of "Hansel and Gretel" by the Grimm

Brothers, gingerbread houses grew in popularity. During the 17th century, only professional bakers could make gingerbread all year, but during Christmas and Easter, anyone was allowed to bake it which may be why gingerbread men and houses grew popular.



BUSINESS



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)

RIBBON CUTTING HELD FOR NEW LIFE ENRICHMENT PROGRAM CENTER AT KSI

BY TERRY ROGERS

On Tuesday, Dec. 12, Kent Sussex Industries (KSI) held a ribbon cutting for their newly renovated Life Enrichment Center. This is the first step toward total transformation of the KSI Skill Development Center on Rehoboth Boulevard.

“We have been in this facility for nearly 40 years now. And for those of us who’ve been here a long time like me, you remember what this was? Well, this was the main road to the beach in those days, but also this was an old shirt factory,” Jim Greenwell KSI Vice-President of Finance and Technology, said. “And the company that ran the shirt factory up and left the state with the economic development bonds. The state approached us, and we worked out a deal where KSI could take over this facility, and we’ve been here ever since.”

Greenwell continued that the building continued to look like the old factory and with the organization

providing services to as many as 200 participants, it was time to change the look from an old warehouse to something the participants could be proud of.

“For many of the people we deal with, they spend a significant portion of their adult lives in this building. That’s just the fact of the service we provide. So, when you think about that and you think about the space that they’ve been in, this is a heck of an improvement in what they’re going to see every day,” Greenwell said. “It is based around living and where they’re gonna have their activities and their learning activities and spend their day with their friends. So this is a major, major improvement. We were able to come up with a facility thanks to a Community Reinvestment Grant from the state and some support for some other private sources.”

KSI plans to continue their revitalization efforts in the building as funds become available. Greenwell stated

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that he was looking forward to the “balloons coming down” and watching the faces of the participants when they entered the renovated facility. He also thanked those who had helped KSI make this project a success.

“You know it’s a great day to be back here and see what has happened here at this facility. I can recall in the early days, the old facility here. You mentioned earlier that was a shirt factory, but we called it a dress factory. I can remember when they liquidated and moved out of town. Our company came in and sold all the tables, the gear that they had in the other part of the building here

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before KSI came in. I go back to thinking of other things that happened,” Sen. Dave Wilson said. “When Lee Travelware went out of business, they donated a lot of their items when they left the Smyrna area and Mr. Cliff Crouch was here at that time. We picked up the items and sold them for the facility here, so it is near and dear to my heart to see this facility. And these people that you see here come here every day. What they get done here and where these are people willing and able bodied that don’t always get work, even though they are some of the best workers. They’re dependable. We’ve had them work for our company and I can tell you, they’re dependable. They’re dedicated to being at work, they show up on time and they’re just a good, good group of people that we need to be doing more for.”

Senator Wilson told the crowd that he was dedicated to continuing legislative support for KSI, pointing out that no one knew what the 2025 budget would bring, but that he would fight for Milford’s worthy organizations to help them grow. Rep. Danny Short of Seaford agreed, explaining his connection to KSI.

“You might ask what a guy from Seaford might know about KSI well, a little history. I see my good buddy Bill Strickland back here and Mayor Archie Campbell. But I was fortunate enough to meet the Crouches back in a timeframe when I worked for Blue Cross Blue Shield. We actually had an office in Milford. I worked on Lakeview Avenue. We had staff there and were right across the street from LD Caulk. So, my job as the Senior Marketing rep for Kent and Sussex was to visit LD Caulk, IG Burton and KSI. And innovative things

were happening,” Representative Short said. “I mean, how can you raise money when you tell people that have come to a golf tournament, that they get to use three clubs—that was the event and that was the first one we knew about, right Bill? I mean our guys liked playing in that tournament, but then all of our foursome brought the same three clubs. And we didn’t do much. But my point is it was innovative.”

Representative Short continued, talking about how he got to know the Crouch family as part of his work with Blue Cross. He commented that the organization was doing good things then and continues to do good things now. He also stated that he watched the KSI bus pick up young people on either side of his home to bring them to work at the facility, pointing out that many people with disabilities struggled to find work, to be recognized and to be active in society.

“I bring it up because I think there’s a lesson to be learned from this. The legislators and all of us here individually support KSI much like what I think we should do as legislators. They make a difference individually, one life at a time. One life at a time, because those lives were changed when they became participants here at KSI,” Representative Short said. “They have a place to go, a mission and they will tell you about it at the end of the day. So, I’m just here to say that we’re here to support you. Senator Wilson will bend our arms this year to help out if the money’s there, and we’ll be able to do what we think are important things and support functions like this.”

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photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)



BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council approved a zoning change for lands owned by Randall Kenton. The land will now be zoned as C3, Highway Commercial, as opposed to I1 and I2, which are industrial. The land is located at the corner of N. Rehoboth Boulevard and Northeast Front Street.

“As you may recall, the applicant received a Comprehensive Plan map amendment back in October to change this future land use of this area from industrial to commercial. Therefore, the request would be consistent with prior Council action changing the comprehensive plan future land use maps,” Rob Pierce, City Planner, said. “So, this area is now commercial on our future land use maps. We also included a copy of the land use and zoning link from our comprehensive plan

COUNCIL APPROVES ZONING CHANGE FOR KENTON LANDS

land use chapter and a list of the list of use scenario regulations from the C3 highway commercial district.”

Kenton explained to council that they felt making the land commercial rather than industrial would provide them with more options to use the land as they are attempting to clean up the area. Councilman Dan Marabello asked if the pallet recycling business would remain after the zoning.

“We’d like to have enough time to remove everything,” Kenton said. “The other little patch there is already commercial, so that would just tie everything together and we are demoing that building on the corner.” Kenton also explained that his brother owned a small portion of the land.

A public hearing was held after the presentation by Pierce and Kenton with no member of the public speaking for or against the zoning change. Council approved the request unanimously.

“The changes are consistent with the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and future land use,” Councilman Mike Boyle said. “

Councilwoman Katrina Wilson felt the new zoning fit with the city’s strategic plan for Rehoboth Boulevard while Councilman Marabello felt the change would not adversely impact the area.



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EDUCATION



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SURVEY: BUS CONTRACTORS SOUTH OF CANAL NEED INSURANCE FUNDS

BY JAREK RUTZ

School bus contractors are hoping to get about an additional \$500,000 from the state to cover vehicle insurance costs. The request reflects a survey presented in Thursday's Public School Transportation Committee meeting.

The contractors say costs are higher than the state allows; some companies are requiring higher levels of premiums to cover special needs students, potential child abuse and acts of terrorism; and that the difference in insuring smaller buses and larger ones isn't as much as the state pays for.

"There are 93 contractors south of the canal for this new year, and there are 615 buses that operate south of the canal," said Tyler Bryan, education associate for school transportation at the [Department of Education](#).

"It has been a barrier for new contractors to get, and especially one-bus operators who want to pick up a bus, to get any insurance company to take them if they don't have like five years of insurance are given worse premiums at much higher rates," Bryan said.

The current state allowance for bus insurance, which is calculated by passenger sizes of buses, is \$2,104 for buses that hold 60 or more passengers, \$1,822 for buses carrying 36 to 59 passengers, \$1,735 for buses holding 17 to 35 passengers and \$1,563 for buses with a capacity of 16 passengers or less.

"We had 42 respondents to the survey and the average insurance cost of all the respondents was \$2,993.75," Bryan said.

The average cost for insurance per bus last year, according to the survey, was \$3,031.44. Bus contractors are asking for the state to fill that gap. Here's how much was spent on individual bus insurance by the surveyed contractors:

- Under \$2,104 = 8 contractors
- Between \$2,105 to \$2,500 = 11 contractors
- Between \$2,501 to \$2,999 = 7 contractors
- Between \$3,000 to \$3,999 = 9 contractors
- Between \$4,000 to \$4,999 = 2 contractors
- Between \$5,000 to \$5,999 = 1 contractor
- Above \$6,000 = 3 contractors

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Some of the concerns reported in the survey were:

- Newer contractors with little experience are paying more than \$6,000 per bus for insurance.
- There isn't a significant price reduction for contractors of smaller buses, and most smaller buses transport special services students which may cause insurance to require higher premiums for liability.
- The current transportation funding formula reimbursement doesn't provide additional funding for vendors to increase above minimum insurance requirements. There is concern that a \$1 million liability is no longer sufficient in a school bus accident.
- Some insurance companies are starting to require additional insurance for terrorist attacks and/or for child abuse.

The committee seems to be turning its focus away from bus driver pay and towards insurance and benefits. Along with the Public Education Compensation Committee, the transportation committee has sent recommendations to the governor to increase bus driver pay to \$25 an hour from \$22.50. Any changes will have to be made in legislation sent to the General Assembly.



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ADDING \$500M+ MORE INTO EDUCATION LIKELY MATTER FOR LEGISLATURE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A long-awaited report released from the American Institutes for Research on school funding has shown that Delaware needs to allocate anywhere from \$590 million to \$1 billion more into education. That's between a 27% and 46% increase from the multi-billion dollar investment the state already has in public education, which is typically about a third of the state budget.

The Report

Drew Atchison, a senior researcher at the [American Institutes for Research](#), presented to a crowd of educators, advocates, parents and legislators the findings from the report, which cost Delaware \$700,000. One of the main recommendations of the report is to transition to a weighted funding system, rather than the current resource-based system that converts student enrollment into "units" and bases part of the funding on the experience level of teachers.

Some problems arise from this, including the fact that students with disabilities, English language learners or low-income students do not receive the additional funding to support their specialized needs.

The report focused on three areas: adequacy, equity and wealth neutrality with emphasis on transparency, flexibility and stability. In its recommended weighted system, each student receives a base amount of funding and then gets a multiplier if they are low-income, an English language learner or have a disability. Then, there is an effective weight—an adjusted weight accounting for the proportion of students for which a given weight applies.

For example, a low-income weight of 1.81 for a school where 31% of students are low-income results in an effective weight of 1.20, whereas a school where 70% of students are low-income would have an effective weight of 1.51.

The state of Maryland uses single weights for economic disadvantage, students with disabilities and English learners, multiplied by the base amount. New Jersey uses multiple economic disadvantage weights differentiated based on concentration, with the base amount differentiated by grade level.

Another issue with the current funding formula, Atchison noted, is some districts cannot raise local funds as much as others because of lower property values and a higher population of impoverished families. The state usually funds around 70% to a district or local share of 30%. But richer districts utilize more local funding—about \$2,000 more per student on average.

Because Delaware's current resource-based formula follows teachers more than students, low-income districts tend to have the least experienced teachers for a variety of reasons. Atchison and other advocates have said there's a direct correlation between the amount of money invested in education and student outcomes. And while Delaware historically has been in the top 15 states of funding per student, the outcomes fall much short of the state's goals to have 76% of students proficient in English language arts and 70% proficient in math by 2030. Just 40.76% of students are proficient in English language arts and 30.91% are proficient in math, according to the Delaware Report Card.

Also, more than one out of five students are chronically absent, which means they miss 10% or more of the school days in an academic year.

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HEALTH



photo link: [Bayhealth Medical Center](#)



BY TERRY ROGERS

The holiday season is supposed to be a festive, happy time, bringing joy and peace. However, for many people, the holidays can also be frantic, chaotic and stressful. There are tips that can help you avoid feeling stressed, overwhelmed or even becoming sick over the holidays, according to Bayhealth primary care physician Shailly Saini.

“It’s important for people to practice self-care and not be afraid to say no from time to time, especially around the holidays,” Saini said. “The stress of taking on too much can manifest into physical ailments. Patients won’t necessarily come in because they are overwhelmed or stressed. They will come in complaining of bad headaches, GI issues or trouble sleeping. It is through ad-

STAYING HEALTHY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

ressing these issues we begin to see stress may be partially at fault.”

One tip offered by Saini is to not try to do it all. Many people feel as if they are excellent multi-taskers who can do “everything.” As the to-do list gets longer and longer, however, it is easy to lose focus and end up not doing anything at all. Prioritize what is important and don’t take on other tasks.

“Make a list and stick to it,” Saini suggested. “Write everything down and get organized so that you can focus on what needs to be done. Never be afraid to say no and stay home. It is okay to only go to two of the ten parties you are invited to, especially if you will see the same people at each event. Initially, you may feel some guilt, especially with family and friends, but setting healthy boundaries and clearly communicating expectations in advance is better for you.”

One of the biggest stressors at the holiday season is finances. Saini suggests budgeting for gifts, decorations and food to remove some of that stress. It is not difficult to be resourceful with finances, such as donating to a good cause rather than buying the typical holiday gift. Be open to talking to someone if you feel the holiday stress is too much, whether it is a family member, your primary care doctor or a counselor.

Another area where people may fall victim to unhealthy habits is the rich foods that are popular during

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the holiday season. Nicole Fisher, PA-C, a physician assistant for Thomas P. Barnett, MD, FACS, suggests a few tips that she often shares with surgical weight loss patients in their practice.

“Plan ahead with a quality, pre-event snack or even a small meal, so you aren’t starving when you arrive at a party,” Fisher said. “That way, you won’t head straight to the food table. Plan what you are going to eat before you get there so you dine in moderation. The key to success is moderation, even desserts or other foods that have been off limits. Don’t be too restrictive. Take one or two bites and push away the cake, pie or cookie.”

Exercise is also critical during the holiday season, even if you don’t feel you have time to fit it in.

“Exercise helps burn calories and increase metabolism,” Fisher said. “Moderate exercise is better than no exercise at all. Even in cold or inclement weather, moving around inside is better than sitting on the sofa. Take ten minutes and walk up and down the stairs. Turn on holiday music and dance for ten minutes.”

Holiday beverages can be packed with calories as well, so be sure to drink water in between each holiday beverage like cocktails or eggnog. The most important thing is to not beat yourself up.

“You get to start over with every meal,” Fisher said. “If you made a mistake, move on. Recognize that every meal or snack decision is an opportunity to make good choices. If you make a mistake, behave the next time.”

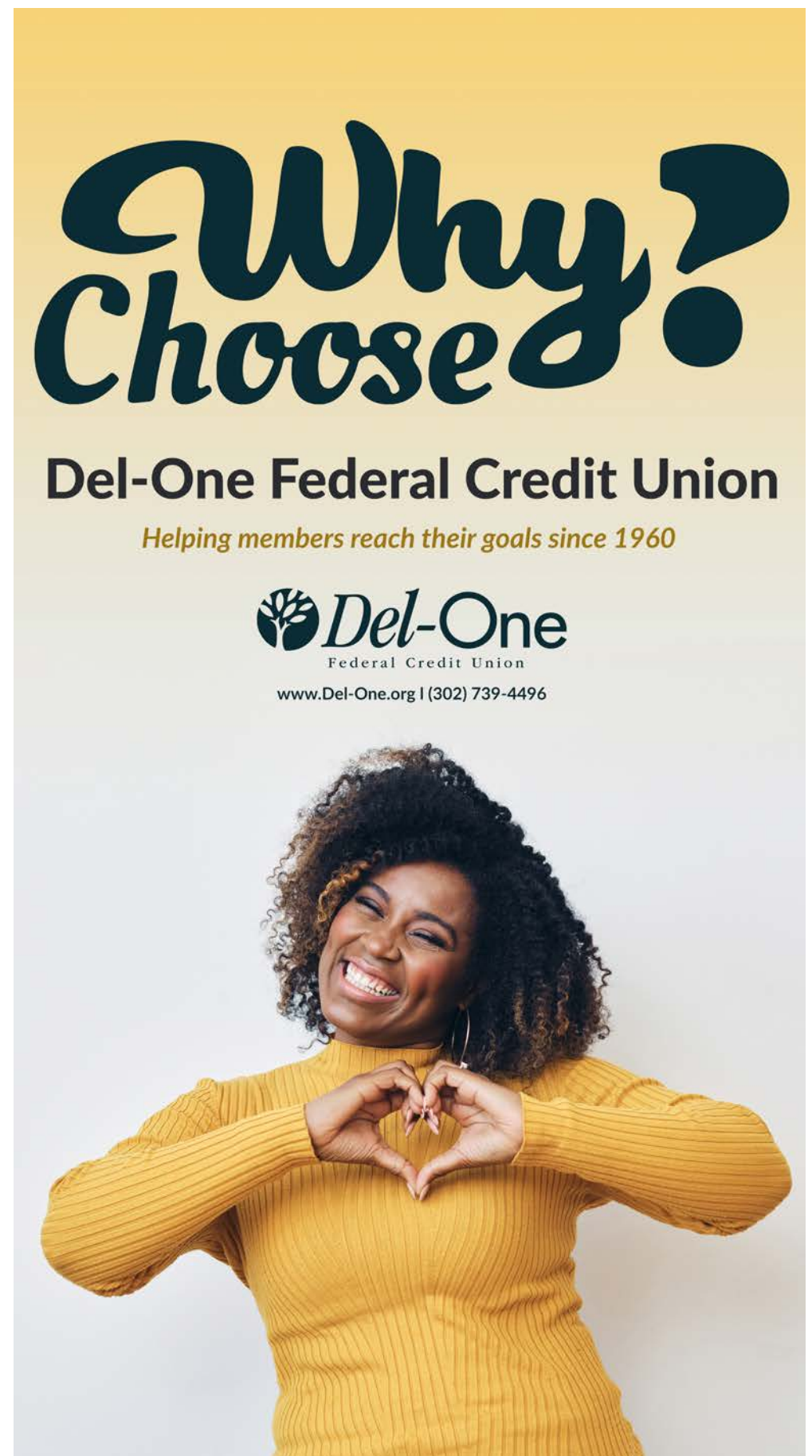
Finally, with the holidays falling in the middle of cold, flu and virus season, there are precautions you can take to avoid getting sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. This is especially important when preparing food or before touching your face. Try to get at least nine hours of sleep each night. Be sure to get your annual vaccinations as well to help avoid serious illness from flu, RSV or COVID-19. If you are sick, stay home and rest. Be sure to keep hydrated, but visit your doctor if your symptoms worsen or are not gone in 10 days.



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BAYHEALTH SURGEON DIES SUDDENLY IN FLORIDA

BY TERRY ROGERS

Dr. Trinity Pilkington, a popular Bayhealth orthopedic surgeon, passed away last week while attending a conference in Florida.

“In a solemn moment for the medical community and the residents of Milford, we mourn the passing of the esteemed orthopedic surgery specialist, Dr. Trinity Pilkington,” a statement released after his death read. “At the age of 49, Dr. Pilkington left a lasting impact on the field of orthopedics, leaving behind a legacy of compassion, expertise, and dedicated patient care.”

Pilkington was born in 1974, graduating from the University of South Carolina of Medicine in 2002. His career shaped the lives of many needing orthopedic care. After completing his residency, Pilkington set up a practice in Dover which focused on patient-centric care. He also played a crucial role in addressing various orthopedic challenges.

“The news of Dr. Pilkington’s passing has left both the medical community and his patients in shock,” the statement continued. “As an orthopedic surgery specialist, he was known for his skills in handling cases related to arthritis, fractures and injuries requiring joint replacement or trauma repair. His untimely departure has created a void in the medical landscape that will be

challenging to fill.”

Details on what caused Pilkington’s death have not been released, but the local medical community is mourning the sudden loss of a physician who played an important role in addressing orthopedic issues in the area. According to those who knew him, Pilkington’s impact extended far beyond the operating room.

“His dedication to community education set him apart, reflecting his belief in the importance of informed patients. This dedication to spreading awareness about orthopedic health showcased his commitment to not only treating ailments, but also preventing them,” his obituary read. “In a profession where precision and compassion are paramount, Dr. Pilkington stood out as a beacon of excellence. Patients remember him not only for his surgical expertise, but also for the empathy he displayed in understanding their struggles. Colleagues speak of him as a mentor and source of inspiration, emphasizing his significant role in shaping the future of orthopedic surgery.”

Tributes have poured in from colleagues, patients and community members alike.

“I have worked with Dr. Pilkington since he came to Bayhealth a little over 10 years ago. He was my colleague, but also my friend,” Angie Ney Russell posted on social media. “He was a very dedicated servant and will be

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missed tremendously by family, friends, colleagues and patients. As with those that have gone before him, we will get through this one day at a time together. Please keep his family, our staff and his friends in your prayers. I will miss you, my friend.”

Patients expressed how important Pilkington was in their recovery with one stating that his compassion and skill gave them a new lease on life.

“He performed an amazing procedure on my then 13 year old son’s severe compound fracture in 2014. That boy was back to normal in one year, playing sports because of Dr. Pilkington,” Sean Duffy posted. “We will forever be eternally grateful for his work and compassion towards my son and my family. Prayers and sincere condolences to his at this time.”

Bayhealth’s statement continued regarding services for Pilkington. “We will continue with Dr. Pilkington’s passion for delivering exceptional care to his patients. In the coming days, Dr. Pilkington’s patients will be contacted by our Bayhealth Orthopedics team to discuss options,” the statement read. “If you are a Bayhealth team member in need of grief support, please refer to the Pastoral Care and the Employee Assistance Program. Information was sent to your email. While our teams are still grappling with this loss, we will be organizing a memorial service to honor Dr. Pilkington’s life and contributions. Details will be shared once arrangements have been finalized. In the meantime, please join us in keeping his family, loved ones and our Bayhealth family in your thoughts and prayers.”



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