


# MILFORD LIVE

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# HEADLINES



photo link: [Scott Evers](#)

# ROOKERY PROPERTY SOLD, WILL REMAIN GOLF COURSE

BY TERRY ROGERS

According to Tim Johnson of Johnson Companies in Smyrna, the former Rookery North will remain an 18-hole golf course after his company purchased the property recently. Although there have been many rumors about a restaurant that may be located on the property, Johnson is not ready to discuss those plans yet.


“It is going to remain an 18-hole golf course, not a nine hole or Executive Course. We’re going to hopefully have the clubhouse reopened as a restaurant. And that’s where our hurdle is. We have to finalize things with the city,” Johnson said. “We would like to change the zoning. I really don’t want to say what the restaurant may be. I mean, people have heard the name of the restaurant, we just really don’t want to release any details until officially the city says they’ll allow us to do this. I can just say that it will remain an 18-hole golf course, the whole full blown course, but we do have to have the restaurant to work with us. That’s the key to the whole deal.”

The Rookery North began as the Shawnee Country Club, a project of the Milford Junior Chamber of Commerce, or Jaycees, spearheaded by then-President Robert Corddry. Corddry and the Jaycee membership worked with business leaders in Milford to bring a country club to Milford. Corddry, an avid golfer, felt that a country club would serve Milford well, envisioning recreational activities like golf, swimming and tennis. The Jaycees spearheaded the project starting in 1958 and the country club opened in 1959 with a pool and pool bathhouse.

The golf course was originally nine holes and it opened in 1960. Tennis came to the Country Club in 1969 and two additional courts were added in 1975. The golf course became an 18-hole course in 1981 under the direction of then President Lida Wells. The clubhouse, which opened in 1961, was furnished using donated S&H Green Stamps.

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BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford School District will hold a dedication ceremony on July 29 from 10 a.m. until noon in order to rename the high school auditorium the Dr. Gerald W. Thompson Center for the Performing Arts. The dedication ceremony will take place outside of the auditorium, is open to the public and a performance will follow.

“The Dr. Gerald W. Thompson Center for the Performing Arts is dedicated to the memory and honor of Dr. Gerald W. Thompson, who served as the esteemed band director and music teacher at Milford High School from 1972 to 1999,” Trish Gerken, public information officer, said. “Dr. Thompson’s dedication to sharing his love of music and the arts with the Milford community for nearly three decades was exceptional. He had a remarkable ability to connect with and inspire each individual,

# MILFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT TO HOLD DEDICATION CEREMONY

regardless of their background or abilities. His commitment to his students was evident in the way he helped build their confidence, created meaningful memories and taught them how to positively express themselves through their performances in both music and art.”

The dedication will be a celebration of Dr. Thompson’s life and highlight the profound impact he had on the Milford Community. Students, alumni, faculty, staff and community members are all invited to attend this special occasion. The program will include speeches, musical performances and a commemorative unveiling of the center’s name.

When the Milford School Board discussed the possibility of renaming the auditorium after Thompson soon after he passed away, the outpouring of support from the community was tremendous. The effort began at the behest of Paula Bragg, who rallied the community around changing the name, submitting a petition to the board with more than 1,000 signatures.

“He made a difference and he was just the coolest. He found a way to give us independence. He believed in us and supported our creative sides. Thanks to Mr. Thompson, I have a closer relationship with my parents. He gave us great sayings like ‘failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.’ Let us not forget the glide step that saved me in Manhattan just a few days ago. And thanks to T, I even found my first

love,” Bragg told the school board when they were making the decision. “When he passed I couldn’t find the right words, but I knew how deeply his loss is felt by so many and that we needed to do more. I had great conversation with lots of friends and the obvious choice seemed to dedicate the auditorium, a place where he spent so much time and all of us who have been theater did as well.”

The request to name the auditorium after Thompson had full support of his family.

“Tonight, I’d like to speak on behalf of my father. Because I think, at this time, he would want all of you to know how much he enjoyed his job, band members and boosters, members of the drama department and the rock ensemble and other music students,” Gretchen Pikus, Thompson’s daughter, told the board. “He always told me to get job that you enjoy, so I did that. So, I would just like to end with his favorite song that he brought from Westchester to Milford High School, and it goes ‘with all your strength, hey win, we can. So here we go again. Rah rah rah Milford Buccaneers.’”

MILFORD  
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# CITY APPOINTS FIRST FEMALE POLICE CHIEF

BY TERRY ROGERS

On Monday, Feb. 13, Milford City Council appointed its first female police chief. Chief Cecilia Ashe will be offered an employment contract immediately. She was sworn in at the council meeting the evening her appointment was confirmed.

The opening for police chief occurred when former Chief Kenneth Brown announced his retirement in August 2022. The city began a nationwide search for a new chief before appointing Ashe.

Councilman Jason James applauded Lt. Ed Huey who has been acting as interim chief of police since Brown vacated the position.

Chief Ashe spent the last 17 years with the Wilmington Police Department, where she was assigned the Inspector of Operations by then Wilmington Police Chief Robert Tracey. She has a combined 27 plus years of law enforcement experience, including time spent as a police officer in Arlington County, VA.



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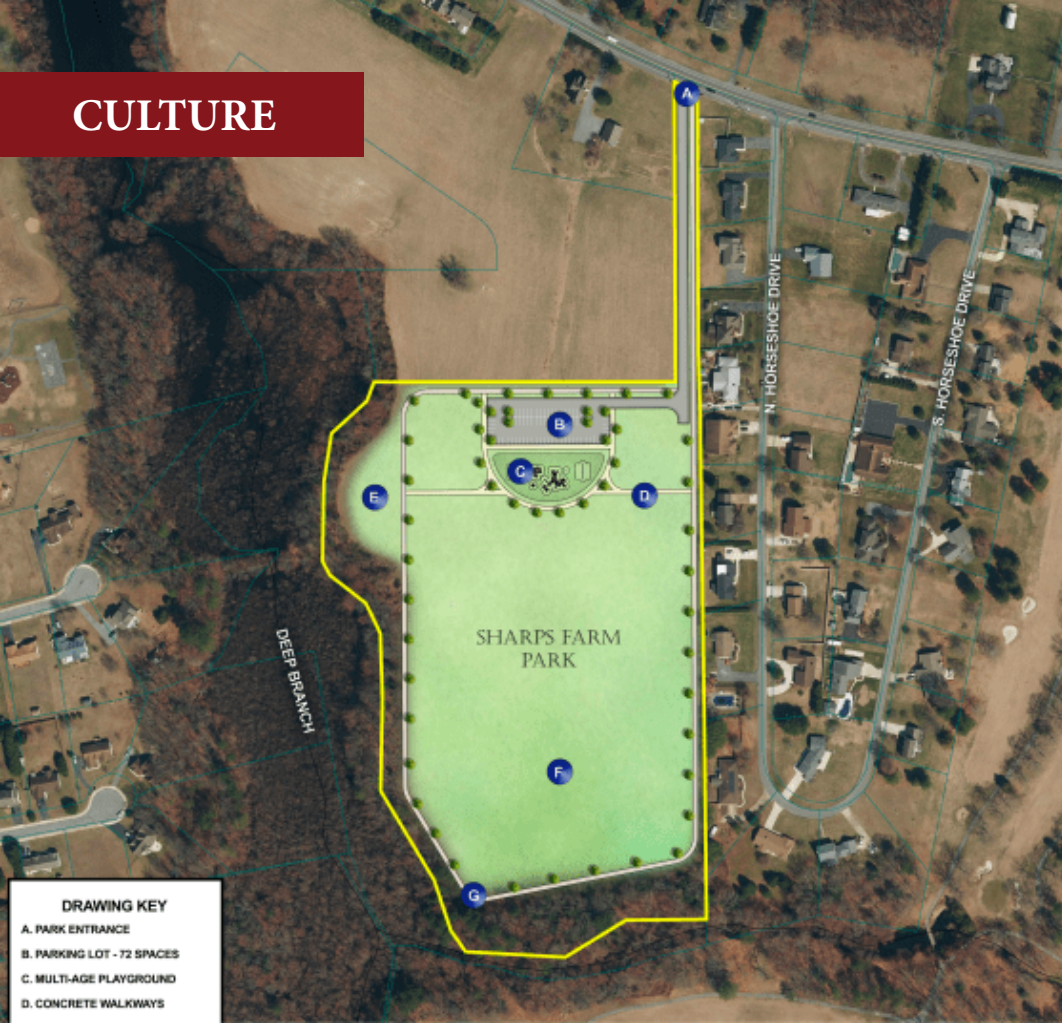
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# CULTURE



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



**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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# LOCAL BARBER HIKES APPALACHIAN TRAIL

BY TERRY ROGERS

Norman Smith, owner of Norman's Deluxe Barber-shop and Shave Parlor, recently completed a hike of the Appalachian Trail. According to Smith, he thought the idea of hiking the trail sounded "cool."

"I can't really recall when that was, but it's always been one of those 'I'd like to do that someday' kind of things," Smith said. "Back in November, I went on a solo hike on a section of the trail in Pennsylvania where I hurt my legs hiking too fast. I began to worry that my legs might be starting to go bad and if I did not do this soon, I may never be able to do it."

Born and raised in Milford, Smith also worked at Baltimore Air Coil for 20 years and has owned the barbershop for the past six years. He and his wife, Megan, have four children.

"I started the trail at Amicologia Falls State Park in Georgia," Smith said. "There is an 8-mile approach trail from there to Springer Mountain, the southern terminus of the AT. I completed the trail at its northern terminus on Mount Katahdin in Baxter State Park in Maine."

This was the longest hike Smith had ever taken. Prior to this, he had never hiked more than two nights and three days with an average range of 30 miles. He began hiking about 18 years ago on a family vacation in Acadia National Park in Maine. He only did day hikes up until about three years ago when he and his family began backpacking. Shoes were one of the biggest challenges he had on his hike.

"Some wore out, some hurt my feet, but overall, it was a challenge to find the right footwear," Smith said. "Shoes I liked didn't last very long and shoes that promised to be more durable hurt my feet. Getting enough calories was a challenge as well. You just can't carry enough food. I lost over 20 pounds, returning home very thin for a man who is 6'2" at 151 pounds. Finally, the weather in New England was a challenge. The hiking gets harder as you head north. This was compounded this year with nearly non-stop rain. My feet were wet from Vermont to Baxter State Park in Maine. Days were cut short due to storms and other days were just miserable because of the rain and mud."

The highlights of the trip were the epic views Smith saw along the trail.

"Just lots of beautiful scenery," Smith said. "But, for me it was the people I got to meet and spend time with along the way."

If he hiked the trail again, there are things Smith would do differently.

"I did this hike fast. My goal was 120 days. That's about four months to accomplish something that most people take five to six months to do. I am happy that I hiked the way I hiked," Smith said. "That being said, if I did it again, I would want to do it with my wife and take a full six months to do it. It's a different kind of hike. My hike was more of an athletic endeavor. If I ever do it again, it would be to really enjoy the trail and the hiking culture."

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# 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

Fourth Ward councilpersons Katrina Wilson and Jason James led the first Juneteenth celebration in Bicentennial Park on Monday, June 19. The celebration offered vendors providing items for sale as well as information on various organizations.

“Juneteenth is about where we came from, but also about what we’re doing to start this thing out putting God first,” Elder Oscar Walker of Williams Chapel in Bridgeville, said before leading the group in prayer. “It says ‘seek first the Kingdom of God and all these other things that we seek for will be added’”

After Elder Walker completed his prayer, Dr. Reba Hollingsworth, a noted Delaware historian, spoke about the history of Juneteenth. Dr. Hollingsworth pointed out that Juneteenth did not become a holiday until June 17, 2021, when President Joe Biden signed a bill making it a national holiday. On Oct. 10 of the same year, Gov. John Carney signed a bill making it a state holiday as well.

# FIRST JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION HELD IN BICENTENNIAL PARK

“It’s a holiday for everybody, not just black people. Juneteenth actually is one of the oldest known celebrations, commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “Although the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on Jan. 1, 1863, it did not immediately free all enslaved people in the United States.”

Dr. Hollingsworth explained that Texas was seen as a safe haven for slaves even though the Emancipation Proclamation was issued which freed all slaves in Confederate states effective Jan. 1, 1863.

“It wasn’t until June 19, 1865, when several union regiments of the United States Colored Troops, led by Major General Gordon Granger marched along with more than 2,000 Union Congressional soldiers, traveled to Galveston, TX, to take control of the state with the news that the war had ended, and that the 250,000 enslaved people were now free,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “Major Granger said the people of Texas were informed that in accordance with a proclamation from the executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between the former masters and the slaves, and the relationship heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employer and hired labor.”

The freedmen were advised to remain quietly in their present homes and work for wages, told not to collect at the military post nor should they be “idle.” Many of

those living in Texas at the time were unaware that slaves had been granted freedom by President Abraham Lincoln two years earlier. Dr. Hollingsworth commented that the white slave owners were aware, but they had not informed their slaves that they were free.

Although Dr. Hollingsworth mentioned that President Lincoln had given credit to freed black men who fought during the Civil War, she also pointed out that his motives were not entirely based in abolitionist thinking.

“There is evidence that suggests that Mr. Lincoln’s proclamation was a tactical move designed not to free the more than 3,204,313 slaves in the United States until he could gain what he wanted, but he wanted to keep them slaves as long as possible, until he gained the support of his real plan,” Dr. Hollingsworth said. “Lincoln wanted to free Negroes gradually and to ship them out of the country to deport them, to move on what he called “racial cleansing” of the United States of America. Like Martin Luther King, Lincoln had a dream. His dream was to have a lily white America without Negroes and Native Americans. He tried to maneuver to fulfill his dream of ensuring that Negroes left America as a body as the Hebrew children left Egypt, Abraham Lincoln, like many white people in 1800s, was known to use the “N” word all the time in both public and private.”

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# BUSINESS



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)



# fondue. OPENS IN PENNY SQUARE

BY TERRY ROGERS

The much anticipated fondue., a new restaurant located in Penny Square in downtown Milford opened March 23 to outstanding reviews. The restaurant, the latest venture created by Zack and Marissa King, features fondue-style meals and unique hand-crafted cocktails.

“All in all, I would say it went better than Zack and I could have expected,” Marissa posted on social media. “Starting a new and unique concept was terrifying, for sure. We lucked out with staffing and are so grateful to have the team we do at fondue., not to mention our crew at EasySpeak holding it down while we were at fondue. the majority of the weekend.”

The menu at fondue. includes starters such as the chef’s charcuterie, pupu platter, steamed shrimp, chicken satay and a Cajun seafood boil. Salads include their house and Caesar salad, Cobb salad as well as a South of the Border salad. Any salad can be upgraded with chicken, shrimp or filet mignon. Fondue options are available as a package for two which includes a cheese, entrée and chocolate course accompanied by a salad. Diners can also choose each course separately, all of which are designed for two people. The cocktail menu includes many unique options, including the “On a Cloud,” a fruit-based drink topped with cotton candy as well as the famous EasySpeak smoked old fashioned.

“Marissa and Zack King outdid themselves again with fondue.,” Erin Germick posted. “So much hard work and dedication went into their new restaurant. The aesthetic is gorgeous and the food was absolutely delicious.”

The new restaurant features walls adorned with greenery and historic photos of Milford as well as cutting boards of all shapes and sizes. Many of the boards feature the names of those who have supported the King’s throughout their journey. All tables as well as the bar feature burners where guests can enjoy the wide range of sauces available. Cheese options include classic Swiss, Wisconsin-aged cheddar, bacon, cheddar and ranch, fontina, spinach and artichoke or South of the Border. The cheese course includes dippers like broccoli, carrots, peppers, Granny Smith apples and more.

In addition to the cheese course, the entrée options include classic vegetable, the fondue. signature, steakhouse bone broth, Eastern Shore, Pad Thai or Tikki Masala. Dippers include shrimp, chicken and filet mignon along with mushrooms, fingerling potatoes, broccoli and celery. Upgraded proteins include maple leaf duck breast, fresh-water lobster tail, fresh octopus medallions or Iberico pork tenderloin. The chocolate course offers an option of either milk, dark or white chocolate that can be specialized. Specialty flavors include s’mores, caramel turtle, Reese’s bomb or Spike it Up. The Spike It Up version includes flambeed bourbon or spiced rum. Dippers include Rice Krispie treats, banana, strawberries, pound cake, chocolate chip cookies and brownies.

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BY TERRY ROGERS

Mark Dissinger is no stranger to Dolce. As a volunteer for Second Street Players for many years, he often joined the cast and crew on Saturday when they were working on sets at the coffee shop or grabbed treats for the crew. His daughter, Libby, worked at Dolce through the end of high school and most of college.

“We would joke when she came home and talked about her shift that if we owned Dolce, we could do this or we could do that,” Dissinger said. “Dean cuts my grass, and I wrote on the bottom of an invoice once time jokingly ‘When you want to sell Dolce, call me.’ Then, late last summer, I think in July, he called me and said ‘Hey, I’m calling about your invoice.’ I immediately asked if I shorted his pay or if something was wrong. He

## DOLCE UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

laughed and said ‘No, your note.’ He explained that he and Stephanie, as Dylan was starting to get older, wanted to make more memories and spend more family time together, so we just started talking. Then, I was presented with an early retirement option at U.S. Cold Storage, not because I am old enough to retire, but I had the years of service. So, I said okay and knew what my Chapter Two was going to be.”

The only thing that will change slightly in Dolce is the décor. Dissinger plans to do some minor remodeling, including new paint, new tables and chairs, possibly new cases, just some freshening up.

“It’s still the Chuck and George look,” Dissinger said. “Nothing major, though. I do want to do some remodeling to the building, like new windows and doors, primarily on the second floor and in the back, mostly things people don’t see. But as far as the product within the shop, no, none of the recipes are changing. None of the drinks are changing. We’re going to add things actually. I mean, those recipes have been the same. They are Chuck and George’s recipes, so they’ve been around a long time. A couple of them are fairly new that maybe Dean and Stephanie introduced, but pretty much it will be the same. People in Milford are creatures of habit. They like what they like and by golly, don’t change things, whatever you do.”

Many people have asked Dissinger if he plans to change things and he tells them if anything, he may add some savory items and elevate current items. The sec-

ond location planned for 10th Street will lean more toward savory than the downtown location, but that project is on hold temporarily with plans to be open there in June or early July.

“I was hoping I could get it done before the end of the school year so I could start getting school kids, but I didn’t think the way things are going we’ll be able to do that,” Dissinger said. “I am the sole owner. I do plan to bring in my son-in-law as general manager and Libby will float between working for Tracy at the practice and helping me out. I asked her if she wanted some 3 a.m. baking shifts and she said no.”

One of the biggest challenges Dissinger has already faced is letting the public know that Dolce is not closing.

“Milford is full of rumors,” Dissinger said. “I’ve heard everything from ‘Oh they’re going to put a real estate office in there’ to ‘they’re just going to close it.’ We had a guy from Dover yesterday and he said he had to come in before we closed. The girl told him we were not closing and he said ‘I read the Facebook post and it says the owners are closing.’ She told him to read it again because the post simply said there was a new owner. I just want to let the public know we’re not going anywhere.”

Dissinger praised the Tatmans for the work they have done in the almost 10 years they have owned the coffee shop, but commented that, in any business, there was room for improvement.

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## PARKER GROUP OPENS IN PIKUS BUILDING

BY TERRY ROGERS

Dustin Parker and his wife, Rachel, initially planned to open a real estate and mortgage broker business in the Josephine Keir Building on South Walnut Street. The couple was almost finished with the historic preservation portion of renovating the building, which took about 17 months, when they were approached to sell it.

“Zack and Marissa [King] approached us and said ‘hey, we really want to have that building,’” Dustin said. “Around the same time, we were approached by Dan Bond who let us know this space was available. So, we sold the building and began the process of opening here.”

The new location is in the Pikus Building, an historic structure on the corner of Northwest Front and North Walnut Streets. For decades, the location was the site of Lou’s Bootery, a popular shoe store owned by the Pikus family. After the death of Skip Pikus, Bond purchased the building, gutted the interior and created apartments

on the top floors with a retail location on the first floor.

“We did the interior remodeling ourselves,” Rachel said. “We were fortunate it was mostly cosmetic things. It was mostly painting and cosmetic stuff.” On one wall of the space, there are now offices where Rachel explained previously had one office and a larger area with half walls. A mural on one wall welcomes visitors to the reception area and a greenery covered wall makes up the back of the space.

“We want to welcome Dustin and Rachel here,” Angel Hicks, president of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Milford, said. “We’re excited to have them in Milford. I think this is the largest ribbon cutting I have ever been to.”

Mayor Archie Campbell also welcomed the Parker Group to Milford.

“We’re so excited to be part of the Milford community,” Dustin told those gathered for the ribbon cutting. “It’s a

vibrant and growing community. We so many projects going on all around us and Dan Bond does such an amazing job of building renovation. He has been a good friend. We look forward to many years of prosperity and helping other people here in this community.”

The Pikus Building was a Downtown Development District project. Bond was awarded grant funding for the complete historic preservation of the building which was built in the 1840s. It is believed to be the oldest building in the downtown area. After the death of Pikus in 2015, the building sat empty for over a year and had been in poor condition before his death. After the renovation, the location was rented to Loft Realty, who moved out of Milford in 2022.

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## SHOCK VINYL OPENS IN PENNY SQUARE

BY TERRY ROGERS

Businesses in the newly renovated Penny Square expanded recently with the opening of Shock Vinyl, a record store specializing in vinyl records, vintage instruments and the rock-themed photography of the store owner, Marc Clery. The new store also offers mint-in-box vintage toys and die-cast cars.

“Ever since I was younger, 12 years old or so, I’d go to record stores similar to this and buy records. As an adult, I continued to do that and I accumulated a nice collection and then when I decided to retire from being a photojournalist, I wanted to open my record store,” Clery said. “And also, over the years, I’ve collected musical instruments, guitars and bases, and amplifiers, so I wanted to include that and so that’s how it all came about. I retired in July of last year from the Delaware State News.”

One entire wall of the new store displays Clery’s collection of vintage guitars and amplifiers. Behind the counter are toys in boxes and the center shelving holds multiple metal cars, still in the boxes as well. Along the walls, there are bins of records as well as books on musicians and turntables designed to play albums.

“Milford was definitely the town that I wanted, because of the kindness. Dover’s bigger, but I’ve always liked Milford and then Penny Square,” Clery said. “At first, I saw the article that they were doing the fondue restaurant, and I didn’t think that there were going to be any shops available. And Sara (Bluhm) from the city of Milford who’s, she’s part of the business development in Milford, and she hooked me up with Zack and Marissa (King) and they showed me the space. It was perfect colors for my photography, the rock and roll

photography that I’ve shot at concerts and the stuff I already had.”

Clery explained that the photography of many globally recognized rock musicians is a secondary item in the store. The photos were accumulated through his years as a photographer attending various concerts.

“The store is primarily records, new mint and vintage, used in really good shape. And the price range, the new ones are a little pricey now, but that’s what they go for,” Clery said. “And then I have records in the vintage area range from an average of \$25. And then I have \$5 records and \$3 records and then dollar records, but those are primarily scratched for people who just want the covers, not necessarily to play the record.”

The market for vinyl records is a wide one, Clery explained. Many people prefer vinyl because they think it offers a richer sound. Others enjoy simply collecting album covers and are not interested in ever playing the vinyl inside the cover. Album covers also provide a wealth of information, Clery stated.

“Album covers allow you to look at everything,” Clery said. “You can read about the band, find out when the record was made, see the lyrics sometimes. It’s nicer to actually hold something tangible.”

His clientele age range is also fairly wide, Clery stated. “A lot of kids know about vinyl now and a lot of my customers are young,” Clery said. “A young gentleman who goes to the music school to learn how to play guitar. His parents bring him in here every week.

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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)



BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council recently approved an Ecotourism and Resilience Investment Strategy. The strategy was the culmination of the Waterways Infrastructure and Investment Network (WIIN) project. The project spent the last two years talking with stakeholders and developing a nature-based watershed investment strategy for both Milford and Slaughter Beach.

“Essentially, it incorporates information we’ve gained through an economic valuation study that we that we did through the University of Maryland’s Environmental Finance Center that found that the natural resources of the Mispillion River and Cedar Creek watersheds contribute millions of dollars in value just for recreation and leisure alone,” Danielle Swallow with Delaware Sea Grant of the University of Delaware said. “We also note that there’s plenty of other benefits that they bring to the communities in the form of flood protection and

biodiversity and cultural and heritage and contributing to the overall community identities and in these communities. We did a lot of stakeholder engagement and vulnerability assessment work to that stakeholder engagement that was really important in in us developing our strategy.”

Swallow explained that with the new strategy, the towns of Slaughter Beach and Milford have a vision that centers around the Mispillion as well as Cedar Creek, along with a collection of community-generated project ideas that balance both sustainability and resilience while also increasing economic opportunities.

“It has a collection of different investment ideas for the community to take on. It’s not a management plan. So it’s not prescriptive, it’s more to outline the vision, which is that these resources are too valuable not to invest in into the future,” Swallow said. “So, with that we had Ben Muldrow here I think that the last time I was here, and he gave to you on the branding and marketing strategy that we included as part of this effort. We felt that that was really important because we don’t want this strategy to sit on a shelf. In fact, we’re really hopeful that you’ll take it up and you’ll want to look at some of the recommendations in there and work to implement it. You have this partnership behind you that’s willing to support you on that.”

In addition, Swallow asked that if the city did any updates to the Comprehensive Plan that they incorporate pieces of the vision into that plan. She stated that the investment strategy was to encourage and excite people

while also bringing in investors. One of the features of the plan was branding the Mispillion as Delaware’s “hidden river”.

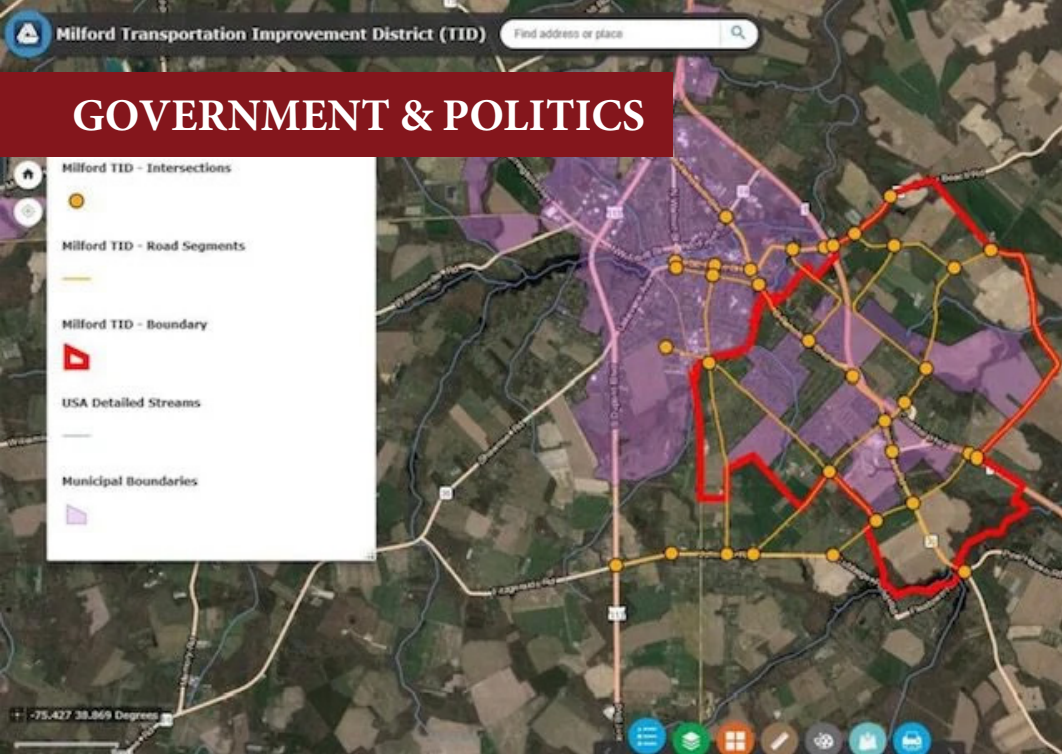
“This was based on the fact that we found so few folks had really been able to go beyond the Riverwalk limits of the river or down by Slaughter Beach,” Swallow said. “There’s a whole expanse that is waiting to be discovered. We want to encourage people to find ways to discover and projects that allow for more access and ability to discover them safely.”

Councilman Brian Baer asked for more details on a bike path that was included as part of the strategy.

“Sarah and Julia, who was my town manager, got together and they thought, ‘wonder if we could make this work?’ It’s really dangerous to go from Milford to Slaughter Beach on a bike,” said Bob Wood, mayor of Slaughter Beach. “If you go down Slaughter Beach Road, you got to go Route 1, you’ve got to take your bike across Route 1. But if you come down Cedar Beach Road, because of a bridge there, you can come right on down. So, we thought well, to be honest with you, this isn’t gonna happen. They put in for a grant and we’re already at the second stage. We’re past the first stage so I figure that is some progress.”

Wood explained that the idea was that people in Milford would be able to bicycle to Slaughter Beach for the day or residents of Slaughter Beach could travel into Milford via bicycle to do some shopping or visit local restaurants.

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## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council reviewed proposed Transportation Improvement District (TID) plans provided by the Delaware Department of Transportation. The plan reviewed intersections in an area of Milford that was less than nine miles square, but included 35 total intersections and 26 committed developments. The plan looks at road changes to accommodate growth through the year 2045. It includes changes to intersections on South Rehoboth Boulevard, Cedar Creek Road, Wilkins Road, Cedar Neck Road and more, as well as the addition of bicycle and pedestrian paths.

“We aimed for basically less than 80 seconds of delay for the overall average intersection delay,” Sarah Coakley, DelDOT principal planner, said. “And so that’s basically the time it takes for a driver to slow down from going the posted speed limit on the approach to the intersection, the length of time that they’re stopped, and then the length of time speeding up to the posted speed

# COUNCIL REVIEWS SE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT PLAN

limit. That is typically during the worst 30 minutes of traffic, but delays could get that long. The rest of the time it would be nowhere near that in terms of delayed intersections.”

The plan included eight new single-lane roundabouts, two new signalized intersections, new turn and through lanes as well as incorporation of the city’s Bicycle Master Plan. One of the new signals would be at the intersection of Johnson Road and Route 30 and another at the northbound Rt. 1 off ramp on Cedar Neck Road. The plan also followed DelDOT’s Corridor Capacity Preservation Program with the addition of service roads parallel to northbound Route 1 along with an acceleration lane from Johnson Road onto southbound Route 1.

“Your bike plan is excellent, as it calls for pursuing a complete network of bike facilities for your residents and visitors and prioritizes which side of the road for shared use paths to be on,” Coakley said. “Optimistically, we’ve agreed to follow that in terms of prioritizing projects within the TID.”

Rob Pierce, city planner, explained that the TID included a fee structure that must be adopted by council which would have developers cover the cost of the improvements, including intersection changes and the addition of bike lanes. The total cost should all improvements be implemented would be just under \$85.7 million. DelDOT recommended a fee structure of between 30 and 35 percent for developers. Coakley explained that collecting higher fees could result in road

projects receiving approval from DelDOT more quickly as there would be a higher municipal match.

“I think in terms of planning, we have a lot of land that’s slated for development in the southeast. And what this does is allow some of those projects to move forward without doing a transportation impact study because it’s already been done for them,” Mark Whitfield, city manager, said. “So, projects can move faster. Developers like it because projects can move more quickly. But we also have a plan in place to put improvements to address the traffic concerns and demands that would have seen. I’d like to say I think I believe we’re ahead of the game on this project by looking ahead and planning ahead. Knowing what those transportation improvements are going to need to be made in order to address the additional traffic that we’re going to see due to these developments.”

Councilman Dan Marabello asked how much the addition of roundabouts would impact surrounding land. Coakley stated that, in some cases, a roundabout may take less land than an intersection, pointing to one on South Rehoboth Boulevard. In other areas, DelDOT would need to purchase additional land, but Coakley explained that they try to minimize how much private land they need to use. Councilman Todd Culotta asked if it was possible to hold a public hearing on the proposed fee scale and intersection changes.

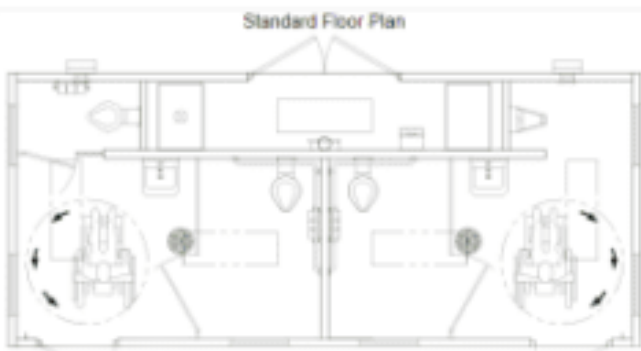
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9



## DOWNTOWN RESTROOMS APPROVED

BY TERRY ROGERS

After the third presentation by Public Works Director Mike Svaby, Milford City Council approved the purchase of a prefabricated restroom for Memorial Park. The new restroom will be located across from the Milford Public Library. Svaby was asked to reach out to contractors to see if it would be less expensive to design and construct a restroom as opposed to buying a prefabricated model.

“Members of council, I submitted something for your packet with a recommendation. But just kind of a quick recap of where this subject matter has been. On this

third instance of review, we first presented the package recommending we procure a prefabricated unit from CXT,” Svaby said. “And after some discussion here in this forum, we agreed that we wanted to see some more options. So, in the previous council meeting to this one, I brought back three different options that would fit in the buildable footprint on 5 S. Washington Street across from the library. And after talking about those, it was more the size and features that we wanted.

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# BUDGET

## CITY BUDGET HEARINGS REVEAL PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

BY TERRY ROGERS

Over three nights, Milford City Council held budget hearings, gaining an understanding of the 23-24 budget from various department heads as well as City Manager Mark Whitfield and Finance Director Lou Vitola. Council was presented with a balanced budget totaling over \$59 million. The budget includes a 9 percent tax increase, some of which is due to debt service related to the new police station.

“We did have one meeting and I basically challenged all the department heads and said either you cut or I will,” Whitfield said. “They all went back and relooked at their numbers and really looked at where there may have been things double counted and really tried to pare everything down so Lou and I did not have to make any cuts.”

Much of the increase was due to increased personnel costs. In addition, the budget includes a significant

amount of capital improvements, including streets, parks, water and sewer. The budget includes an increase in property taxes which include debt service for the new police station as well as to cover operating costs. The proposed increase would change the rate per \$100 of assessed value from \$0.49275 to \$0.546, 9.7 percent higher.

“For the average Milford home with an assessed value of \$147,000, the increase will be \$5.81 per month, or \$70 per year,” Whitfield said. “No portion of the property tax increase is unscheduled or emerging suddenly from the inflationary operating cost environment. Rather, the proposed movement in the property tax is rooted in City Council’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.”

Just five years ago, the city’s budget was \$42.8 million which reflects an increase in the city budget of 28 per-

cent. Based on a summary provided by Whitfield, there has been in an increase in general fund expenses of 12.1 percent, in water fund expenses of 4.8 percent, in sewer fund expenses of 21.3 percent, in solid waste fund expenses of 11 percent and in electric funds of 7.5 percent, totally a 9.9 percent increase in overall expenses from last year. The budget also includes a 2.5 percent increase in base pay for non-union employees as well as step increases that could be as much as 3 percent per step. Healthcare premiums also rose by 9.4 percent.

“The budget is balanced using additional transfers from utility accounts,” Whitfield stated. “While the transfers are defensible, continuing to rely on utility accounts may result in increases in utility rates, making it financially less attractive to reside or maintain a business in the city. Council should consider setting limits on the transfer amounts.”

In addition to increases in funding for city operations, the budget includes funding for various non-profit organizations as well. The Milford Museum could receive \$40,000, up from \$35,500, an increase of 12.7 percent. DMI is slated to receive \$50,000, a 5.3 percent increase while the library could see \$28,000, an increase of 4.7 percent. The Milford Armory could see \$25,000, an increase of 156 percent. Community festivals were included at a cost of \$70,000, the same as in prior years while Carlisle Fire Company will receive \$205,000, the same as last year.

Council will vote on the budget at their June 5 regular meeting.

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# EDUCATION



photo link: Milford High School Band





# FIRST PUBLIC MEETING FOR MSD MIDDLE SCHOOL DESIGN

“We are about a quarter of the way through the timeline,” Dr. Sara Croce, chief financial officer, said. “At the end of January, we hope to have Milford School Board approval of the schematic design and then we will begin the bidding process. There are a number of things that have to take place during that process. We’ll go through procurement procedures for demolition and for the environmental abatement work that needs to take place, then also for construction.”

Once those contracts are awarded, Croce explained that demolition could proceed, likely around August 2023. Tim Skibicki and Marine Rescinzki, both of BSA&A, then presented drawings of what the new building might look like once it is completed.

“The historic three-story building will remain,” Skibicki said, presenting a rendering of the new façade with an historic photo imbedded in the slide. “It will no longer be the front entrance of the building. The original photo shows the scale of how high that entry space was. The goal is to bring it back to its former glory and make it something the community can be proud of.”

Additional slides showed the location of the existing gym and auditorium, but the cafeteria, which used to exist on the east side of the building near School Place will be moved to the west side near Kent Place. The main entrance will be moved to what is now the rear of the building in order to provide better security. The bus loop will remain in the same location with a special bus entry door for students. That entry can also be used for easy access to the auditorium for plays, concerts and other events. A new playground will be installed but the ball fields and track will remain untouched.

“It’s really going to have a park-like feel which is the goal,” Skibicki said. “We’re also proposing a safe walking path from the new front door all the way out to the fields. There is more of a design development that needs to be done, but that is the concept. You will also see this area here, what we call architecturally a cut-out. It is an opportunity to place a courtyard, like a plaza, which will also allow for future expansion.”

## BY TERRY ROGERS

On Wednesday, Jan. 4, Milford Middle School held its first meeting to present preliminary drawings to the public related to the renovation of the historic building. The district plans two more meetings as it gets input from the public regarding what the school will look like after demolition and renovation.

“We began this journey back in 2018,” Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, said. “We appreciate those Milford Middle School committee members who are in attendance tonight. As we had the planning process for about a year, the public made great recommendations which were supported by our board.”

Dickerson explained that after the meetings of the committee which included public comment, the district was awarded a Certificate of Necessity in 2020 and held a referendum in October 2021 which was successful. The plan included keeping the historic section of the building, constructed in 1929, and demolishing newer wings which could not be salvaged. According to TetraTech, who conducted a thorough engineering review of the building, the older portion was salvageable although there would need to be some environmental remediation done to the interior. After the passage of the referendum, Richard Y. Johnson was awarded a contract to act as project manager and BSA+A was selected as the architectural firm.

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# CERTIFICATE OF NECESSITY SUBMITTED FOR MHS

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent meeting, the Milford School District Board of Education voted unanimously to submit a Certificate of Necessity for major renovations and expansion of the Milford Senior High School. Dr. Sara Hale, chief financial officer, explained that this was a very preliminary discussion, but a required one in order to have conversations at the state level.

“So, each year there’s a process for Certificates of Necessity for all school districts in the state to submit projects that they may have for consideration in the bond bill in fiscal year 2025,” Dr. Hale said. “In this case, there are a number of projects statewide, which we are aware of and there’s a lag for being approved for these projects. So, we feel it’s important to start the conversation at the state level, knowing that our district is growing substantially.”

Dr. Hale explained that the district would maintain the current high school which has a capacity of 1,149 students. However, current enrollment at the school is 1,348, which is significantly over capacity for the building, making an addition necessary.

“The conceptual plan would remove the modular classrooms and do some restructuring in the back wing

for career and technical education courses, providing opportunities for new pathways here, and then potentially a major demolition on the front side of the building, restructuring the main entrance way and providing an addition that could secure us up to approximately 30,000 square feet of additional space here at Milford High School,” Dr. Hale said. “So again, this is a very preliminary conversation, one that we just need to go through the process of submitting and getting some final estimates and figures together. If we were approved, we would continue to come back to the board for our next steps. But again, just starting that conversation as we continue to grow and see that capacity here at Milford High School.”

School Board President Scott Fitzgerald clarified that this was a preliminary first step and that this process could be several years in the future. Hale confirmed that was true and that this process was only done on an annual basis.

“We felt like it was important to at least have a submission this year and get our project kind of in the queue of projects at the state level, knowing that the likelihood of us being approved this year is slim,” Dr. Hale said. “So we would have an opportunity to resubmit next year having them already familiar with the project and the intent as we go forward and refine.”

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# MHS TO OFFER NEW EMT PROGRAM

out the state, was suffering from a lack of volunteers. In 2022, the fire company responded to 781 fire calls and 3,964 EMS calls, indicating that the area where they needed the most help was on the ambulance side of the company. At one meeting, Chief Hinton commented that the station had run 21 ambulance calls in 24 hours, the equivalent of one call per hour.

“When we have a third, fourth, fifth or sixth emergency in our district, Kent Center knows and can dispatch the next company,” Chief Hinton said in response to comments from the public about other stations having to cover Milford. “So, that’s why companies are coming into the district. When it comes to response times, it is not just volunteer needs. Every incident, every form of traffic or construction jeopardizes our response. It’s hard right now to get the inner city people to volunteer, to accept an application and then go forth with training. I will say in the city of Milford, we have some of the best firemen in the state. People want to come in and ride with us and come and work with us.”

The new pathway at MHS will include 157 hours of classroom instruction along with 10 patient contacts through collaboration with Carlisle and other neighboring companies.

“In this year-long course offered during school hours, students will gain knowledge and hands-on experience treating patients in addition to local fire company ‘patient contact rides,’” Buford said. “They will need to

take a certification examination at the end of the course. Successfully completing the course and the exam will give them full certification status in Delaware.”

Students who are interested in entering the pathway should talk to their guidance counselor or Kate Lynch, career counselor. Anyone interested in volunteering for Carlisle Fire Company can visit its website at <https://www.carlisle42.com>, click on Contact Us and click on Recruitment or call 302-422-8001.



BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford High School will begin offering a new Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) pathway in an effort to address a lack of qualified individuals in the area. The new program was implemented at the request of the city of Milford and the Delaware Fire School.

“We were approached by the city of Milford and the Delaware Fire School,” Seth Buford, Milford High School principal, said. “There is a huge need in the medical field right now, especially in our area of first responders. This is an opportunity for our students and our community. Any time we can provide our students the opportunity to leave high school with a full certification and employment opportunities, I am fully prepared to invest in that program.”

At several meetings, Carlisle Fire Company President Tor Hazzard and Chief Shawn Hinton advised City Council that the company, along with many through-

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# HEALTH



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## BREAST CANCER SCREENING CRUCIAL TO BETTER OUTCOME

BY TERRY ROGERS

There is significant evidence that early detection is the best tool in fighting breast cancer, as cancers caught early are more likely to be localized. Unfortunately, breast cancer statistics indicate that there is a higher incidence of death among women of color, especially black women, who are diagnosed with breast cancer.

“Delaware ranks number one in black women diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), which is a more aggressive form of breast cancer,” Francesca Vogel, CEO of Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) said.

Research indicates that there has been a 43 percent decline in breast cancer deaths over the past 30 years due to more awareness of early detection, better treatments and other factors. Yet there is a mortality gap between black and white women. Although incidence rates are very close, black women have a 40 percent

higher chance of dying of breast cancer and for black women under 50, the statistics are much higher.

The reason for this disparity is complex and multifactorial, according to the American Cancer Society. Social, economic and behavioral factors are part of the issue leading to higher mortality rates. Black women also have a higher rate of heart disease, obesity and diabetes. They are also less likely to breastfeed after childbirth, all of which increase the risk of breast cancer. Lack of health insurance or access to healthcare facilities contribute to the higher mortality rate as well. There is also research from the National Institute of Health that black women may be predisposed to TNBC due to biology and not due to lack of screening or access to healthcare.

However, some of the discrepancy can also be due to biology, as black women have a higher rate of TNBC and inflammatory breast cancer. TNBC gets its name

because it is a form of cancer that is estrogen and progesterone receptor negative as well as HER2-negative. This means that the cancer does not respond to hormonal therapies in the same way as other types of cancer. About 10 to 12 percent of all breast cancers are TNBC and it tends to be more aggressive than other forms of breast cancer.

“Black women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with TNBC and are more likely to be diagnosed with a later-stage disease than white women,” Vogel said. “DBCC wants to change those statistics by increasing awareness of breast cancer risks through outreach and education as well as access to screenings by offering screenings to people who may not have access to them otherwise—even on weekends! The earlier we diagnose any type of cancer, the more likely there will be a good outcome. Another factor to point out is that it is not just women who can be diagnosed with breast cancer. Men are also at risk as one in 833 men are diagnosed with breast cancer every year according to the American Cancer Society.”

DBCC partners with the state of Delaware to offer centralized patient services for breast cancer. Vogel explained that DBCC is constantly pioneering and growing partnerships with providers, employers and even non-traditional partners to expand mammogram accessibility throughout the state.

The women’s health screening team is embedded in the community, hospitals and community health fairs, they are here to help you connect the dots before, during and after your mammogram appointment,” Adriana Viveros-Sosa, Program Manager for Women’s Health Screening, said.

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# FREE BIKES 4 KIDZ VOLUNTEER EVENT A HUGE SUCCESS

BY TERRY ROGERS

A suite in the Blue Hen Corporate Center was filled with boxes of unassembled bicycles and volunteers on Monday, Jan. 16, as Bayhealth held the first Free Bikes 4 Kidz (FB4K) event in Delaware. The event was the vision of Dr. Tom Vaughan, a retired radiologist at Bayhealth, who has taken the role of chief wellness officer for the organization.

“I am a bike advocate, and I became aware of this organization about a year ago and knew I wanted to bring it to Delaware,” Vaughan said. “As I gathered information, I learned that they usually partner with a healthcare organization because they want to have a connection to community health, things like getting kids out on bikes, plus the availability of volunteers and warehouse space to repair, build or store bicycles. We partnered with Bayhealth who provided us the warehouse space and marketing, and the hope in the future is we will start collecting used bikes.”

According to Vaughan, this event had volunteers putting together new bicycles donated by Kent Bicycle Company, who gave them 277 bicycles for various age levels of children. Throughout the country, FB4K has given away more than 150,000 bicycles in 15 different cities.

“Everyone remembers your first bike, that bike was my ticket to go explore the world,” Terry Esau, executive director of FB4K said in a video shown to the volunteers.

“There are millions of kids in our country who do not have a first bike story. I think there are three ways that we impact our community. One, obviously, is the kids, having more active kids and reducing screen time. The next is the more than 35,000 volunteers who have worked with us since we started this thing. These are people coming from all sides of the aisle, coming together to do something. And, finally, we have kept 1,700 tons of metal and 130 tons of rubber out of landfills. We’re making a powerful impact on our world. I just want to make sure that when you ask someone “what was your first bike,” they have an answer for that. If you’re a kid out there in America, we see you and we got you.”

After showing the video of Esau, Vaughan showed one of a grandmother whose grandson had just received his first bicycle thanks to FB4K.

“I didn’t know what to expect, but when I pulled up and stood outside, everyone made us feel welcome,” the grandmother said. “When I got inside, I am like ‘Oh my, God!’ I am so very humbled, and I thank you all for your time and effort. Just looking at the smile on his face is going to make me cry again. You don’t know what it means to me to see that smile on his face.”

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## MILFORD WELLNESS VILLAGE OFFERS WECARE PROGRAM

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford Wellness Village recently announced the launch of a new website for their WeCare program. It is a personal health nursing program and the website is designed to promote wellness as well as improve access to Chronic Disease Self Management in collaboration with the Delaware Department of Health.

“Our program is designed to equip participants with a comprehensive set of skills and techniques to manage chronic diseases and improve their overall well-being,” Lon Keiffer, executive director of Milford Wellness Village, said. “We offer virtual classes and can provide laptops, Wi-Fi connection and technical support.”

The WeCare program helps people navigate through their medical needs. They offer assistance with nutri-

tion and daily living activities with the goal of improving lives. The program is funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) which allows the program to be offered at no cost. Seniors can remain safe and healthy in their homes using self-management programs while also getting the tools designed to help them make better healthcare decisions. The programs also offer some socialization for those who may live alone, helping them develop personalized relationships.

“I’m glad to be part of this, I call it family, of health-care members,” Kemi Sanni, care coordinator at WeCare, said. “Because when a patient comes here, like when they go to LaRed, they can stay in one place to do all of their shopping, everything is accessible to them.

So, if they want to do their labs, if they want to enroll in WeCare, LaRed just has to call us, so everything is just like centralized.”

The new website describes some of the programs offered by WeCare, including techniques to handle common challenges like fatigue, poor sleep and feelings of isolation. Fitness is another topic covered by WeCare, with experts providing exercises designed to improve strength, flexibility and endurance. There is also information provided on the proper use of medications and how to effectively communicate with family and friends. Communication tips are also provided for discussions with healthcare providers. Nutrition, techniques to pace activities and evaluation of new treatments are also included.

“Another thing we teach is self-care,” Keiffer said. “People need self-care when they are caring for others. We will teach you how to prioritize your own needs and well-being while caring for a loved one with a chronic illness.”

The new website can be accessed at <https://wecare-services.org>. Clicking on Programs at the top of the home page, it is possible to access either the self-service registration section or a WeCare Assisted Registration for those who may need help registering for the programs. For more information, contact them via email at [info@wecareservices.com](mailto:info@wecareservices.com) or call 302-459-3900.

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# SPORTS



photo link: [Milford School District](#)



# MILFORD MAN RUNS BOSTON MARATHON

BY TERRY ROGERS

Dave Vezmar began running cross country in high school, but took a break for a while before picking up running again at the age of 30. In 2009, he developed ankle and hip pain after long runs, so he went to a local running store where he was fitted for special shoes.

“They were horrible, I felt like I had 2×4 planks strapped to my feet,” Vezmar said. “I started looking for alternatives and happened upon a brand new forum on the Runners World website for barefoot runners. There were only a few people there at the time, but I was intrigued and went all in. That was March 2009. I ran my first barefoot race in Dewey that July.”

For many years, Vezmar has run in the Milford area as well as in races throughout the state, all as a barefoot runner. On Monday, April 17, 2023, he achieved one of the ultimate runner’s goals when he ran the Boston marathon, running the entire race barefoot.

“Sam Adams is the official beer sponsor for the marathon, so we get a certain number of bibs for each race that they raffle off,” Vezmar, an employee of Boston Beer Company, said. “All Boston Beer company coworkers are able to enter. I got lucky this year and they drew my name.”

Vezmar prepared for the race by increasing his weekly mileage over the past several months. When he found out he was running, he started looking at training programs and says he quickly became overwhelmed by the sheer number of programs as well as the wide range of training regimens.

“I basically did what I typically do and I just listened to my body as I trained as long as I felt good,” Vezmar said. “I kept increasing mileage. If I started to feel worn out or thought there was a possibility of injury, I scaled back. My longest run during training was 15.5 miles, total mileage that week was around 25 miles. One challenge we have training in Slower Lower is the lack of hills. Boston is known for its hills, so I had to figure out how to get hill training in. I did some hill work on a treadmill, but I also spent a lot of time running back and forth over the Route 1 overpass by the new hospital.”

Aware that he would be fairly slow, Vezmar expected to finish the race in about 5.5 hours but finished the race better than expected.

“When I got to mile 20 and knew it was just 10k left, I knew I had a chance of beating five hours,” Vezmar said. “I ended up at 4 hours and 52 minutes.”

After joining the barefoot group online, Vezmar explained that the small group of runners in that group became a great group of friends. They eventually launched the Barefoot Runners Society, a global community at [www.theBarefootRunners.org](http://www.theBarefootRunners.org) a few years later. He explained there has been a significant amount of research into barefoot running and Vezmar himself was part of a barefoot running study done at the University of Delaware 10 years ago.

CLICK TO READ MORE



# BUCS COME OUT ON TOP AT CAPITAL CLASSIC CHAMPIONSHIP

## STAFF REPORT



In an exciting Capital Classic championship game, the MCA Boys Basketball team came out on top 50-41 over Gunning Bedford. Being named to the All Tournament Team were Stephen Sivels and Ka'ron Bacon. Michael Mullen received the tournament's Sportmanship Award and Kaisan Bacon earned MVP. We are beaming with #bucpride #wearemilford

The MCA Girls Basketball team captured third place at the Capital Classic, with a 41-17 win over Mariner Middle Monday! Eighth grader Saniya McCray was recognized as an All Tournament Player. Way to go, girls!



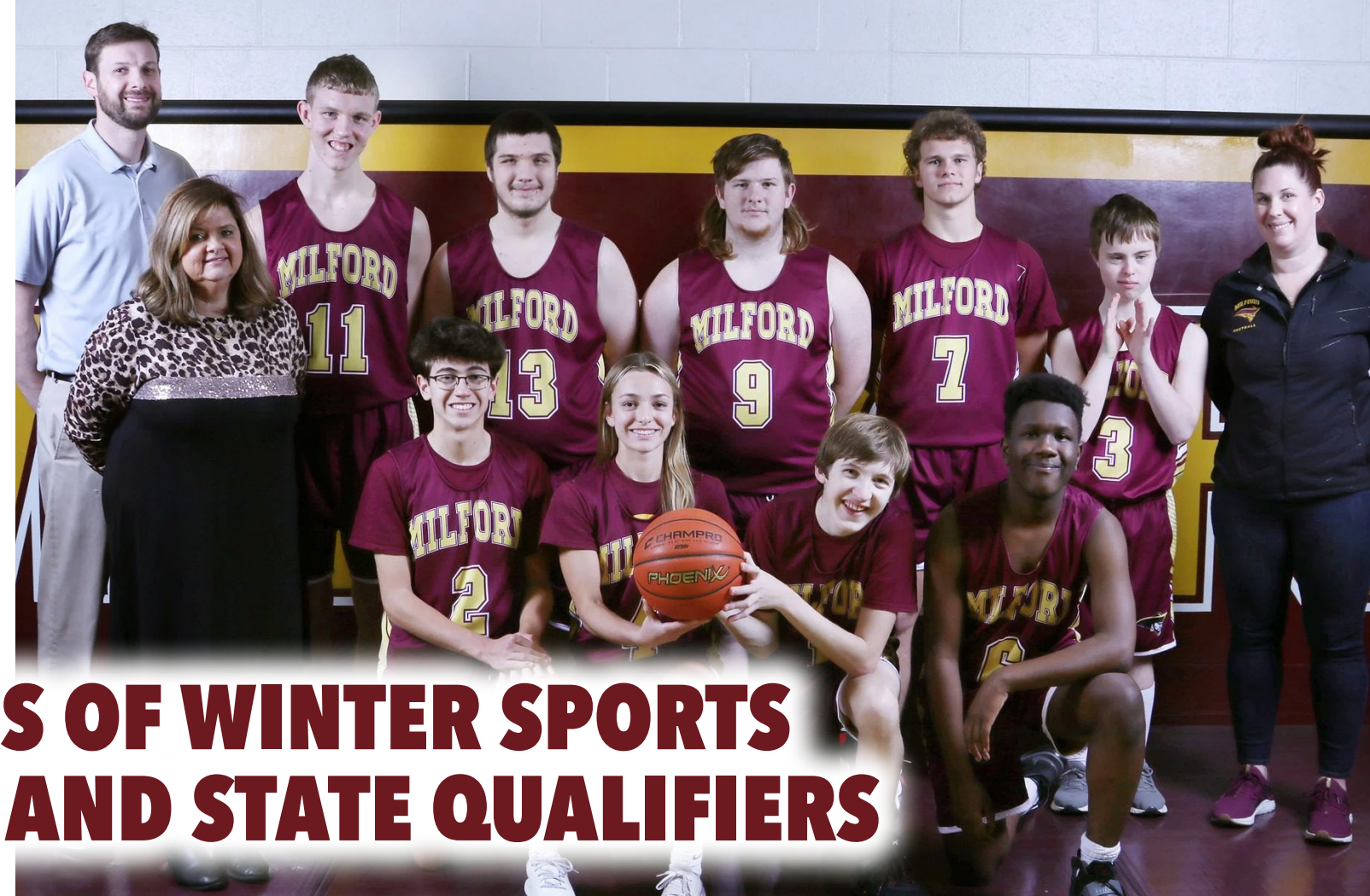
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## MSD RELEASES NAMES OF WINTER SPORTS ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM AND STATE QUALIFIERS



BY TERRY ROGERS

Although spring sports have already begun, Milford School District recently recognized students who have been designated All-Conference Team and State qualifiers. The students were as follows:

**Unified Basketball:** Nathan Waydelis, First Team Henlopen All-Conference

**Boys' Basketball:** Ethan Wilkins, Second Team Henlopen Northern Division and Jayden Norman, Honorable Mention Henlopen Northern Division

**Girls' Basketball:** Tatiyanna Davis, Honorable Mention Henlopen Northern Division

**Indoor Track and Field:** Benjamin Gusciora, High Jump—First Team Henlopen All-Conference; David

Fuhrman, Shot Put, Second Team Henlopen All-Conference; Kaitlyn Sivels, Shot Put, Second Team Henlopen All-Conference

**Swimming and Diving:** Carley Mackert, Second Team Henlopen All-Conference; Eryn O'Brien, Honorable Mention, Henlopen All-Conference. **State Qualifiers—Girls:** Giorgia Bertozzi, Carley Mackert, Sophia Massotti, Eryn O'Brien, Eve Sekscinski. **Boys:** Liam Dennehy, Mitchell Graham, Paul Huot, Levi Massotti, Owen Peel.

**Wrestling:** Vincent Jenkins, Second Team Henlopen All-Conference. **State Qualifiers:** Alexander Sharkey (113), Vincent Jenkins (120). **Individual State Champi-**

**onships:** Patrick Sharkey (126), Jordan Curry (190). **State Championships:** Greg Lockett (215) and Josue Villarreal-Gomez (285).

In addition, Vincent Jenkins was the fourth place finisher in wrestling at DIAA, while Jordan Curry was the seventh place finisher.

[CLICK TO SEE MORE PHOTOS!](#)

## MILFORD POP WARNER SEASON A SUCCESS IN 2022

BY DAVE MCCALLUM

The 2022 Pop Warner cheer and football seasons were something to write home about for the more than 100 Milford youngsters who participated in the program, which featured three football and three cheer squads. It included a bid to Nationals for one of the cheerleading squads, while a football team earned a bid to regionals for the first time in recent memory.

The jayvee cheer squad, which consisted of 10- through 13-year-olds, placed at the regionals in New Jersey and earned a bid to the Nationals in Orlando, FL. The squad, however, decided not to compete at the Nationals due to a cost factor.

“It was very expensive (a minimum of \$1,000 per girl) to go to the Nationals and they (Nationals) ask for the money up front,” said Danielle Dixon, a member of the Pop Warner eight-person board. “When you find out

you can go, you must pay the money a week later. The competition was in the first week in December and for us it just wasn’t feasible to ask parents to come up with that kind of money right before Christmas. So, what we did was continued on and combined the two teams (jayvee and Mighty Mite) with the girls that wanted to keep cheering and we took them to the Global Cheer Championships in February in Atlantic City (NJ). They did really well and finished second in their division.”

The Mighty Mite cheer squad, made up of seven through nine-year-olds, finished 10th out of 22 teams and missed earning a bid to Nationals by 3.5 points.

“Pop Warner was always a big part of my childhood,” Dixon said. “I cheered through all the years that I was eligible, and a friend and I came back and coached when we turned 21. And now, my kids (Cali and Luke) both

participated and that’s how I got involved again. The season starts on Aug. 1, we practice throughout August, and we have (football) games on Saturdays in September and October, and the girls have cheer competition in October and November.”

On the football side, the 8U squad went 7-1 and got a bid to the regional championships in Syracuse, NY. It is the first trip to the football regionals for a Milford squad that anyone on the Pop Warner board can recall, Dixon said.

Following the seasons, the program had its end-of-the-year banquet at the Ellendale Fire Hall where sponsors and coaches were recognized as well as giving out awards to the participants.

In addition to the football and cheer seasons, the Pop Warner program wanted to be more involved in community events, Dixon said.

“We wanted to be more involved in community events such as the Bug & Bud Festival, Third Thursday and Hippie Fest. We raised money also by selling concessions at the Milford High football games in the fall. We’ve also worked on getting sponsorships and one of the big ones was Equity Prime Mortgage. They purchased reversible football jerseys for our teams and bought out the concession stand one night after practice so everybody could have something to eat. We also received a sizeable grant from the Milford Lions Club, which bought all new cheer outfits for last season as well as an ice maker and other equipment that we needed for the building (Pop Warner Building on Lemuel St.)”

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

# MHS BOYS' TENNIS ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE



## STAFF REPORT

Milford High School's boys' tennis team, led by Jaime Morales and Derrick Bogan, finished the year with a varsity record of 6-5. Standouts in the Henlopen Conference tournament were Milford's Liam Dennehy at first singles. Dennehy (MIL) defeated Augustin (SEA) 6-0, 6-0 in the preliminary rounds. Milford's Jefferson Mendez, at third singles, defeated Vasil (IR) 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 to advance to the semifinals where he finished in

fourth place. Milford's second double team, Orin Sharp and Augusto Periera, went 9-2 in the regular season. In the Henlopen Conference tournament, Pereira/Sharp (MIL) defeated Brenington/Westphal (SC) 6-0, 6-1 in the semifinals and went on to take third in the Henlopen Conference tournament.



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BY KEVIN EICKMAN

Milford field hockey coach Andrea McPike has her team off to a 5-0 start to begin the season. This past week the Buccaneers played two different games. The first would be a 4-0 victory over a 0-4 Dover team, the second would be a 4-3 win over Sussex Academy. At first glance, the home shutout against Dover would look to be the most solid of the two games. After speaking with McPike, it was easy to come away with a different take on how the week went.

## FIELD HOCKEY NOW 5-0

Hosting Dover on Tuesday, Milford came out quickly scoring two first quarter goals off the stick of junior Hannah Zimmerman who would end up with a hat trick on the day. Following that, however, Milford fell into a malaise that would last until Zimmerman would find the back of the net five minutes into the third quarter. “You can take a look at the numbers and say it was a solid victory. We squandered opportunities and did not take advantage of our opportunities. That is not what this team is about, we are about getting better, finishing and defending, and while you will always take a win the fact is that we need to be better,” McPike said.

Traveling down to a much tougher Sussex Academy squad on Thursday, even though the score was close, the effort was better. In a back-and-forth battle, it would be Zimmerman again who stood out. She would net two goals in the game, including one in the fourth quarter which doubled the Milford advantage to 4-2. “Hannah had a great week and has been coming on strongly, game by game. As she has gotten better, so has the rest of the team,” McPike stated.

Milford has a tough pair of games coming up this week, hosting Woodbridge on Tuesday and traveling to perennial power Cape Henlopen on Thursday. While the Woodbridge contest might look like an easy win on paper, McPike understands nothing is a given. “We take everything and everyone very seriously here. It’s not about Cape on Thursday, it’s about every game, every practice. This team is about getting better and playing better with each opportunity.”

Along with a solid week from Zimmerman, seniors Madisyn Hitchens and Erin Dunlap put in solid weeks as well. Also standing out was sophomore Madison Stahl who recorded seven saves at Sussex Academy. “Everyone has been working hard and these players came up big in some key moments for us this week. But it just isn’t them, I think the whole team has been playing their best, with the Dover game just being looked at as a learning experience,” McPike concluded “It’s not just a few players that win a game, it’s a team. And that is exactly what we are trying to build here, at team.”

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# POLICE & FIRE



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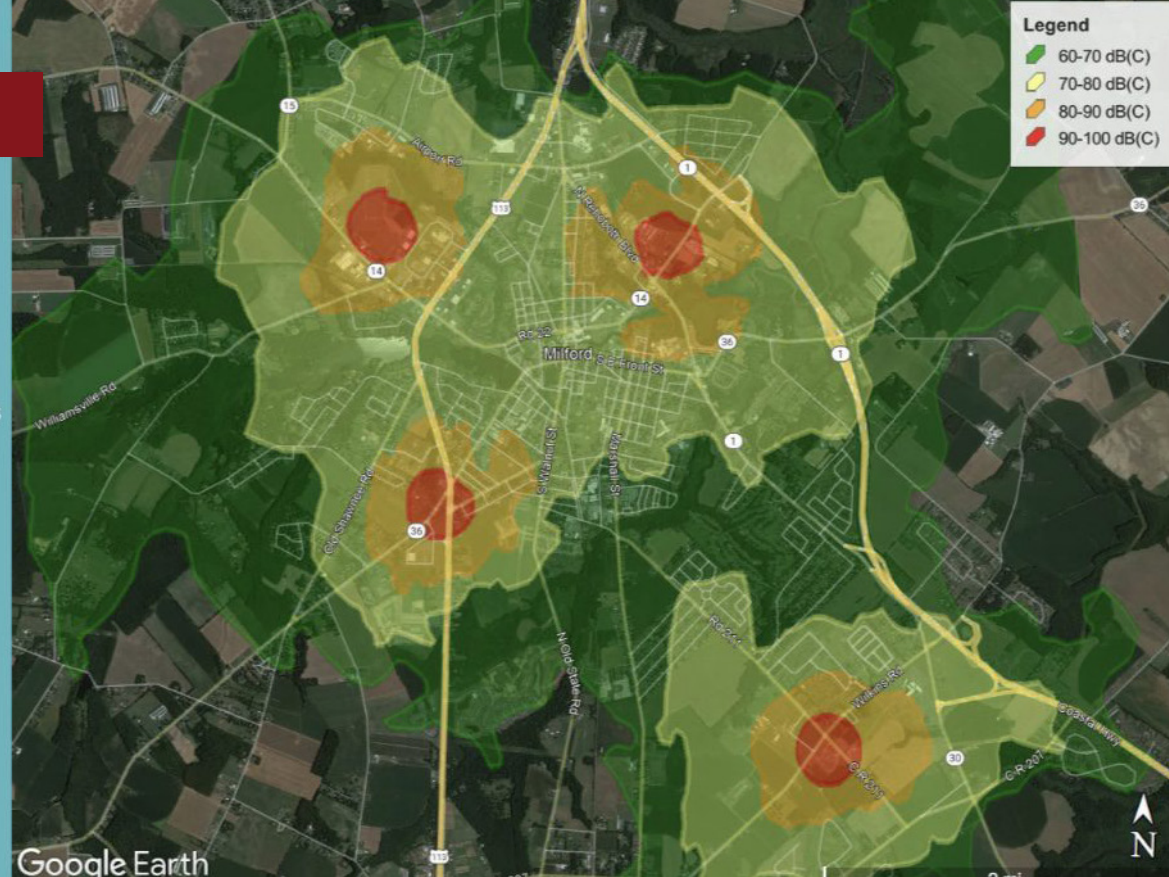
## POLICE & FIRE

### Proposed Installations / Coverage

Removal of Water Tower Siren

Installation of four (4) New Sirens across the City

- Utilizes Current City property / Land
- Readily Available Infrastructure
- Increases Coverage across City



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# FIRE SIREN, RESPONSE TIMES FOCUS OF RECENT COUNCIL MEETING

in 2023 already. He also informed council that 40 percent of the alarms were due to automatic fire alarms, culinary mishaps and faulty smoke or heat detectors.

“Since 1802, the Carlisle Fire Company continues to protect and serve the citizens of Milford and surrounding communities,” Hazzard said. “The public has been misinformed for too long due to ineffective news and social media platforms. We feel the need for increased public education related to the volunteer fire service. The Carlisle Fire Company and surrounding companies provide less expensive alternatives to a paid fire company.”

Chief Shawn Hinton suggested that one area where the public was misinformed was the need for the fire siren. He pointed out that the siren was there to alert members that there was an emergency in the district, but was also a way to alert the public that volunteers would be traveling through town at higher rates of speed in order to get to the fire station. He also explained that the fire siren does not go off for every call and that of the 780 calls the company ran in 2022, about 100 of them did not require the fire siren to sound.

“The fire siren is not only for fire alarm calls, but also for natural disasters and to alert the citizens here in Milford,” Hinton said. “As you all know through the years, we’ve had an increase of natural disasters whether or not it’s been a tornado warning or actual tornadoes that touched down within the area.”

Hinton also stated that since the company is fully volunteer, those responding to the fire station need to have a clear path when they are heading in that direction.

“The volunteers are responding with their hazard lights on and we’re in a hurry,” Hinton said. “We’re responding to get to the firehouse to get our fire gear on and get on the fire trucks. The fire trucks don’t respond without us. So, when that siren blows, it also means citizens need to give us the right-of-way. We understand that yes, it blows, and it blows and it blows.”

### BY TERRY ROGERS

Carlisle Fire Company recently provided information to Milford City Council regarding the need for the fire siren as well as additional details on response times in the district. The company has ramped up recruitment, resulting in five new members and reactivation of several others who had been inactive. The company is also looking into funding to offer family medical plans as well as a pension plan after losing one paid EMT when the company could not offer those benefits.

“We currently pay 100 percent for medical, but just for the employee,” Tor Hazzard, president of the company, said. “There’s no current retirement or pension package. Our employee and finance committee, along with our Board of Directors is investigating ways to improve that.”

Hazzard explained that increased call volume is overwhelming their EMS staff. In 2022, the company responded to over 4,000 EMS calls and many of these were to specific locations in the city, including Milford Center, Milford Place, Delaware Veteran’s Home and Milford Wellness Village which all have long-term care facilities. Hazzard stated that EMS staff responds to three to four calls per shift to one or more of these locations. In addition, fire and accident calls have increased with 118 alarms

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BY TERRY ROGERS

On Feb. 17, Captain Ed Huey announced that he was retiring from the Milford Police Department as of March 1. Huey had recently served as Acting Chief of Police while the city searched for a replacement for Kenneth Brown who retired in August.

“I have been very blessed by God to have been able to serve for 37 years, 33 of which were served in my hometown,” Huey wrote on social media. “I feel so thankful for the support you have all shown me over the years, especially through the last eight months. I was extremely humbled by your thoughts, prayers, messages and posts, etc. I have had a fantastic career and thankful that God brought me home safely to my wonderful family each

## CAPTAIN ED HUEY ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

day. I respectfully ask you to please offer Chief Ashe your support as she leads some of the finest officers and civilians into the next chapter.”

Huey, who held badge number 5121, was born and raised in Milford, graduating from Milford High School in 1984. The youngest of eight children, Huey was a member of marching band, soccer and track. He attended Delaware Technical and Community College, graduating with an Associate’s in Applied Science in Criminal Justice.

“I served in the Carlisle Fire Company both as a junior and adult member,” Huey said. “I became a state certified Emergency Medical Technician and served on the ambulance crew for about two years. I began my career in law enforcement as a seasonal dispatcher in Rehoboth in 1985 and returned as a seasonal officer in 1986.”

Huey worked for Laurel and Seaford before coming to Milford in 1989, completing his field training on Nov. 4, 1989. He was promoted to the rank of Patrolman First-Class on Sept. 18, 1990. He remained as a patrol officer until 1991. In August of that year, Huey was sent to the Virginia State Police D.A.R.E. Officer Training program and became a Drug Abuse Resistance Education program instructor for the next three years.

“In September 1994, the city of Milford obtained a grant called the North Milford Initiative program and I was assigned to the department’s newly created Community Policing initiative aimed at addressing root causes of criminal activity in that area during the

crack cocaine epidemic,” Huey said. “Initially, I was assigned to walk foot patrols in the problem areas, conduct surveillance operations and serve as a part-time drug detective. As part of that initiative, I helped clean up vacant lots used to dispose of articles such as old washing machines, refrigerators, brush and other debris. I also became a trained specialist in covert and technical surveillance and used these skills to help in the closing down of a problematic bar which was the site of many serious assaults, and an open-air drug market. The city was able to purchase the property where the bar once stood and while serving on the Delaware Community Clusters Against Substance Abuse Program Executive Board, Huey assisted in securing a federal grant to tear down the building and replace it with a Community Head Start educational facility.”

Huey transferred back to the Patrol Division in 1996 where he served for several years. The Milford Police Department made a decision to pursue national accreditation and Huey was selected to author the department’s Policy and Standard Operating Procedure Manual and serve as an accreditation manager. As part of the accreditation process, Huey was able to install monitoring cameras in all prisoner holding cells and movement areas, research and implement procedures that were considered best practices by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

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## MPD UNIT ADDRESSES MENTAL HEALTH OVER INCARCERATION

BY TERRY ROGERS

A few years ago, Milford Police Department established a Behavioral Health Unit, an idea suggested by Councilman Jason James. According to statistics provided by Chief Cecilia Ashe at a recent board meeting, through April 2023, there have been 72 diversions from arrest, 98 diversions from the ER and 893 follow-ups by the unit.

“Some of the biggest benefits to this unit is that it allows individuals to be diverted from the criminal justice system when relevant which lessens the burden on the criminal justice system,” Jenna Haines, Behavioral Health director/Embedded clinician, said. “It also reduces strain on emergency rooms by connecting individuals with appropriate level of care and lessens recidivism by linking individuals with needed behavioral health treatment.”

Currently, Milford’s unit has one full-time clinician, Haines, as well as two part-time subcontracted clini-

cians, Greg Bisset and Danielle Blackwell. The clinicians ride along in the car with police officers and respond to calls for service, providing necessary resources and/or interventions. They also do a brief case management and follow-up with individuals throughout the treatment continuum. Officers also refer individuals to clinicians if they were not present at the call.

In addition to reducing arrests and emergency room visits, the Milford Behavioral Unit is being used as a model for other departments. Haines explained that is because the Milford unit is somewhat unique.

“Having a clinician ride with police allows them to engage with an individual as the situation unfolds in order to complete an appropriate evaluation,” Haines said. “It also allows people to be met where they are and, even if something is not a behavioral health call, there is often a behavioral health component to calls, so having a clinician ride with the police allows more indi-

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viduals to be engaged with resources. Overall, the goal lessens time that police spend on these repeat calls and lessens the stigma associated with mental illness and substance abuse disorder.”

The unit is not without its challenges, however, Haines said. “There is a lack of resources in southern Delaware, including minimal transportation options, long waiting time for affordable housing and difficulty finding treatment for uninsured individuals,” Haines said. “We also face overall challenges due to the increase in the opioid crisis.”

Chief Ashe and Haines both hope that the department can expand the unit in the future.

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# CFC VOLUNTEERS COULD BENEFIT FROM TAX REFUND

## STAFF REPORT

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council approved an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Carlisle Fire Company that could allow its volunteers to receive a tax refund of up to \$1,000.

“In the FY2023 budget, one of the items in the budget was an additional \$65,000 that was to go to Carlisle and that \$65,000 was to pay for additional EMT firefighters that would be relocated or be located at the station that would improve response times,” Mark Whitfield, city manager, said, “In order memorialize what the agreement was between Carlisle and the city I have put together an MOU that outlines what this \$65,000 is for and that they will do reporting of such on their response time.”

In addition to the additional \$65,000 provided to the fire company, the city will now offer a tax refund up to \$1,000 of city property taxes for company volunteers.

“In order to qualify for the refund, the volunteer must be listed as active which means he or she has responded to at least 30% of all the calls for a 12-month consecutive

period, that they provide proof of residency that they have owned and occupied the home for a full 12 months, provide a receipt that they actually paid the taxes and that the city retains the right to determine final eligibility,” Whitfield said. “We reviewed this with the fire company and they agreed to this change in the MOU and we’ve also agreed that we would relook at the MOU that we signed back in 2020 and do a revision to include these items here.”

Councilman Jason James supported the new MOU terms.

“I think this addresses council’s request that there was some accountability for the taxpayer funds that we were allowing to be passed on to the fire department and it is to increase response time and safety for the residents of the city of Milford,” Councilman James said. “I think there’s a way this can be measured or at least try to attempt to measure it. I think it’s a good faith effort to show partnership for the safety of our citizens.”

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Councilman Andy Fulton also felt that this agreement would be beneficial to the volunteers who risk their lives for the safety of others.

“The incentive is also wonderful for the people that get up in the middle of night to run out to fight fire, save lives, so on and so forth,” Councilman Fulton said. “I think this is a wonderful thing we’re doing, helping them increase their staffing. Also, increase the response time. It will decrease the response time and make everyone a little bit safer.”

Whitfield commented that it was his hope that the fund would require additional money due to an increase of volunteer firefighters living within city limits.

The MOU changes passed unanimously and the tax refund will be in place starting with the 2023-24 fiscal year which begins July 1, 2023.

# IN MEMORIAM



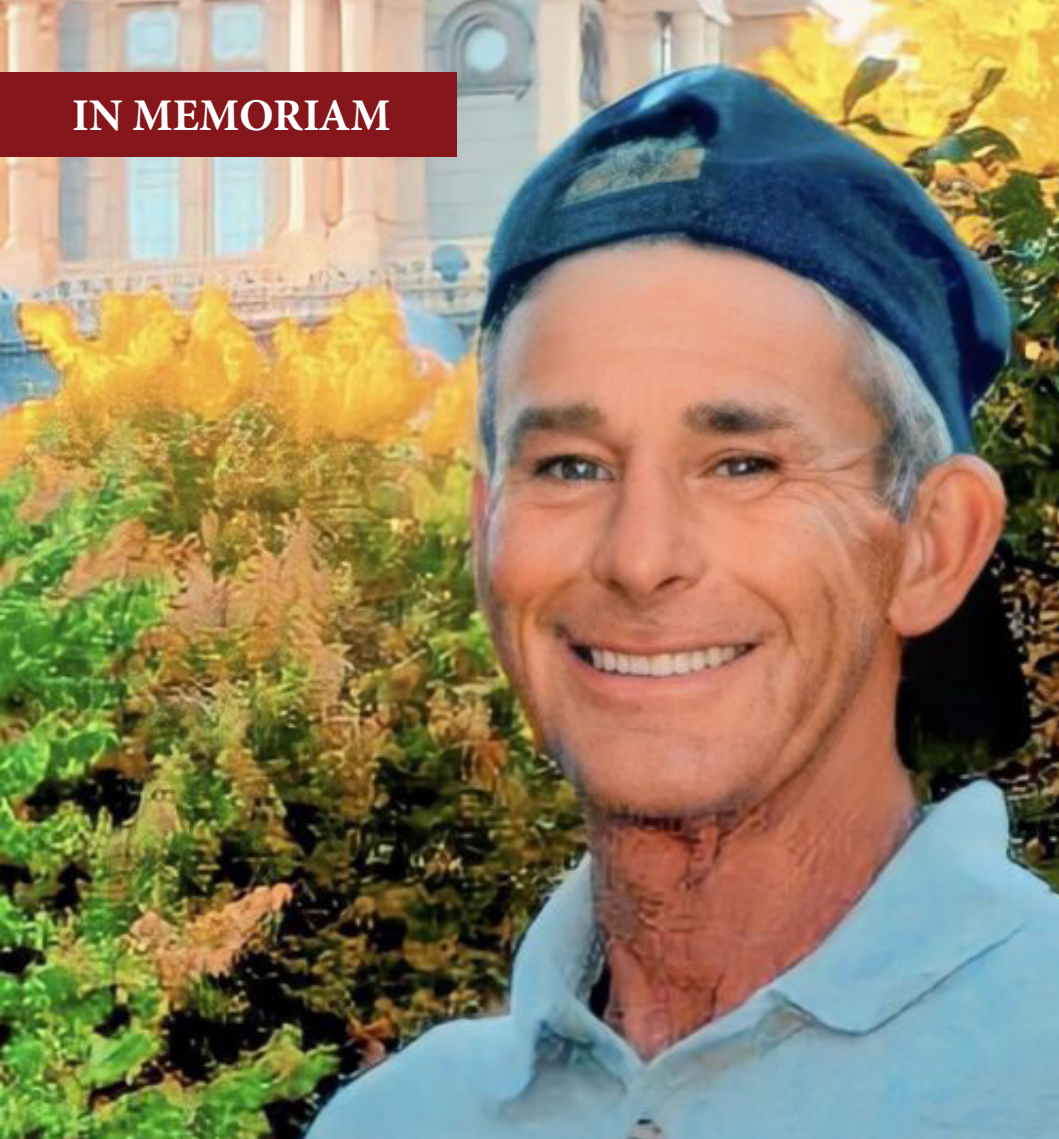
photo by Deborah Felmev

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## STAFF REPORT

Robert B. "Bobby" Walls, 75, of Milford, passed away peacefully on Saturday, Aug. 12, at home surrounded by his loving family. Bobby was born in Milford, the son of the late James L. and Mildred (Megee) Walls. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. Following his military service, Bobby went to work for UPS as a delivery man and shop steward for 30 years before retiring in 2006. He was a member of Avenue United Methodist Church and the Teamsters Union. As a competitive athlete, Bobby relished the joy of playing on a team. He also coached many teams for Milford

## SERVICES PLANNED FOR ROBERT "BOBBY" WALLS

Little League and Senior League, coached Pop Warner Football, and volunteered his time to support athletics in the Milford School District. Bobby was also a devout Notre Dame sports fan and loved to dance. He also cherished his role as "Pop" to his grandchildren, and was first and foremost, devoted to his family. In addition to his parents, Bobby was preceded in death by two sisters, Jeanette Reale and Toni Diogo.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 53 years Elaine (Bunting) Walls; his children Yvette Dennehy and her husband Brad and grandsons Liam and Keegan Dennehy; Keith Walls and his wife Linzy and granddaughter Isla Walls; and son Kevin Walls and his partner Joanna Inman; two brothers Bill Walls and Jim Walls; sister Molly Kirby, and numerous nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life for Bobby will be held at noon on Saturday, Aug. 26, at Avenue United Methodist Church, 20 N. Church Street, Milford, where friends may visit with the family from 11 a.m. to noon. In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions be made to Milford Little League, P.O. Box 404, Milford, DE 19963 or to the Milford High School football program, 1019 N. Walnut St., Milford, DE 19963. Arr. by Lofland Funeral Home, Milford. Letters of condolence may be shared with the family at [www.loflandandmcknatt.com](http://www.loflandandmcknatt.com).



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