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March 6, 2025

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Vol. 52, No. 33



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Bangor Girls Basketball Team Battles Against Becca in The District 11, 5A Finals



Bangor took on Bethlehem Catholic in the Girls Basketball District 11 5A Finals on March 1st, but were defeated 61 to 16. Bangor had won the semifinals on February 26th, 55 to 42, over Pocono Mountain East. Bangor will play in Regionals on March 8th at Bangor. Additionally the Bangor boys won their semifinal game on February 25th, 62 to 40, over East Stroudsburg North but lost in a close game to Pottstown, 33 to 30 in the finals. The boys will play in Regionals at Bangor on March 7th. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press.

Warren County Commissioners Oppose A-919/S-1518 on Privatization Contracts

At the Warren County Board of County Commissioners meeting on February 26, the Board voted unanimously to adopt a resolution opposing Assembly Bill 919 and Senate Bill 1518 (A-919/S-1518), which seek to impose new procedures and standards on public services privatization contracts.

The Warren County Commissioners believe this legislation would significantly limit the ability of counties, municipalities, and school districts to operate financially responsible budgets. Salaries, wages, pensions, and

health benefits make up approximately 65% of overall operating budgets, and privatization contracts are a vital tool for achieving cost savings and managing costs effectively.

By mandating that county governments pay newly hired employees' wages and benefits at a rate no less than those of the previous employee A-919/S-1518 would force spending to continually increase and strip away counties' ability to make important financial and operational decisions.

At a time when counties,
Warren cont'd on pg 2

"You Only Lose If You Stop Playing," A Motto That Rolled Belvidere High School's Bowling Team Into A State Championship



Congratulations to the Belvidere High School 2025 Group 1 State Boys Bowling Champions! The team consists of 5 seniors, Ryan Sak, Joseph Tomaro, Cameron Yeisley, Landin Stout and Cole Clark, and one freshman, Ethan Zmyewski, and is coached by Greg Tack, and assistant coach, Jason Stout. This season they have accomplished so much, including: Edison Classic Champions, Roll for our Veterans tournament Champions, Skylands conference regular season & tournament champions, North 2 Group 1 Sectional Champions, and now Group 1 State Champions. Additionally, Senior Landin Stout placed 5th in the state at the state finals for individual bowlers. Congratulations on a great season! Courtesy Wendy Zmyewski

Delaware River Named Pennsylvania's River of the Year for 2025

The Delaware River has been recognized as Pennsylvania's 2025 River of the Year—a well-deserved honor for this vital waterway. Home to the stunning Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, one of the nation's most-visited park areas, the river continues to play a crucial role in conservation and recreation. Many of its tributaries are also under review for national protection under the Wild & Scenic Rivers program.

Beyond its natural beauty, the Delaware River holds deep historical significance. It was the site of Washington's famous crossing during the Revolutionary War and later became a driving force behind the



Industrial Revolution. Today, it supports the world's largest freshwater port and provides drinking water for over 14 million people. Once heavily polluted, the Delaware River has made a remarkable recovery and now boasts

more National Wild and Scenic designations than any other river in the country.

This recognition highlights the importance of preserving and protecting our waterways for future generations to enjoy!

New in the Bangor Public Library

February 21, 2025 to February 27, 2025

Adult Fiction: From Blood and Ash by Jennifer L. Armentrout; Dream Girl: A Novel by Tessa Bailey; The Quiet Librarian by Allen Eskens; The Favorites: A Novel by Layne Fargo; Midnight Black by Mark Greaney; Black Woods, Blue Sky: A Novel by Eowyn Ivey; Waiting For The Long Night Moon: Stories by Amanda Peters; Dream State: A Novel by Eric Puchner; Grave Empire by Richard Swan

Adult Non Fiction: The Harder I Fight, the More I Love You: A memoir by Neko Case; Gift From the Sea by Anne Morrow Lindbergh; Ancient Rome by Romolo Augusto Staccoli

Easy Fiction: Hope In a Jar by Deborah Marcano; The Hidden Rainbow by Christie Mathes

Easy Non Fiction: You are a Wildlife Warrior!: Saving Animals & The Planet by Bindi Irwin

Junior Non Fiction: Wi-Fi by Kelly Roberts; Networks by Kelly Roberts; Crossing Borders: Navigating Immigration in North America by Elsie Olson; How to Grow Strawberry Jam by Alix Wood; How to Grow Carrot Cake by Alix Wood; How to Grow Potato Chips by Alix Wood; How to Grow Tomato Ketchup by Ruth Owen; Who Was Princess Diana? by Ellen Labrecque; Norway by Sakina Kagda; Finland by Chung Tan; United Arab Emirates by David C. King; Pakistan by Sean Sheehan; Libya by Peter Malcolm; El Salvador by Erin Foley; Puerto Rico by Richard Sebra; Maine by Hannah Perkins; Vermont by Casey Englund; Massachusetts by Kate A. Conley; Rhode Island by A. W. Buckley; Connecticut by Audrey Harrison; New York by Laura K. Murray; Pennsylvania by Tammy Gagne; New Jersey by Helen Evans Walsh; Delaware by Helen Evans Walsh; Maryland by Marcia Amidon Lusted; Washington, DC by Richard Sebra; West Virginia by Emma Huddleston; Georgia by Margaret Lawler; Florida by Carol Conca; Alabama by Marcia Amidon Lusted; Louisiana by Richard Sebra; Texas by Tammy Gagne; Arkansas by A. R. Carser; Tennessee by Annie Bright; Kentucky by L. C. Edwards; Ohio by Anna Saxton; Indiana by Elsa Pelkola; Illinois by L. C. Edwards; Michigan by Jane Vernon; Wisconsin by Ryan Gale; Minnesota by Jane Vernon; Iowa by Elaine Hadley; Kansas by Emma Huddleston; South Dakota Helen Evans Walsh; Montana by Jane Vernon; Wyoming by Laura K. Murray; Colorado by Laura Perdew; New Mexico by K. A. Hale; Arizona by Audrey Harrison; Utah by Martha London; California by Richard Sebra; Oregon by Doris Edwards; Idaho by Margaret Lawler; Washington by Hannah Perkins; Alaska by Audrey Harrison; Chile by Jane Kohen Winter; Colombia by Jill DuBois; Venezuela by Jane Kohen Winter; New Zealand by Roselynn Smelt; Hawaii by Annie Bright

Young Adult Fiction: Rebel Witch by Kristen Ciccarelli

DVDs: Blink Twice; Nosferatu; Paw Patrol, Rescue Wheels; Weekend in Taipei



The North Warren Middle School's all girl basketball team, 7th and 8th grade, made a great come back after being behind six points, 11 to 5, to finish the game 17 to 13. A 12 point scoring run to White townships 2. The game was held in the school's gym Saturday morning. Photos by Kathleen Dolan

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WARREN

Continued from page 1

municipalities, and school districts across the state are facing double-digit increases in

health benefits, rising pension payments, utility expenses, insurance costs, and other financial pressures, this legislation removes one of the few available tools to help control spending and reduce the property tax burden on residents.

Additionally, the Board expressed concerns that the bill would create an

unnecessary bureaucratic hurdle by requiring the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) to review and approve privatization contracts. The Commissioners emphasized that local governments should retain autonomy in making financial and operational decisions that best serve their constituents.



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BANGOR (16) VS BETHLEHEM CATHOLIC (61) DISTRICT 11 5A GIRLS BASKETBALL FINALS



Bangor took on Bethlehem Catholic in the Girls Basketball District 11 5A Finals on March 1st, but were defeated 61 to 16. Bangor had won the semifinals on February 26th, 55 to 42, over Pocono Mountain East. Bangor will play in Regionals on March 8th at Bangor. Additionally the Bangor boys won their semifinal game on February 25th, 62 to 40, over East Stroudsburg North but lost in a close game to Pottstown, 33 to 30 in the finals. The boys will play in Regionals at Bangor on March 7th. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press.

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Space Bill To Help Military Families With College Course Credit Passes Senate

The New Jersey Senate passed Senator Parker Space's (R-24) bill that would extend grade options to dependents of service members.

Under current law, a student enrolled in a public institution of higher education who is unable to complete a course due to a military obligation as a service member has up to four options regarding the grade for the course. S-3052 extends these grade options to the dependents of service members and defines a "dependent" as a dependent child or spouse of the service member.

"New Jersey is home to thousands of military families who are subject to unplanned obli-

gations that uproot their lives," said Sen. Space. "Under current law, only service members themselves are granted the ability to decide the outcome of their grade if they're unable to finish the course, so it's common sense to extend that same courtesy to their dependents who are frequently subject to the same unplanned obligations."

If the student has completed at least 55 percent of the course, they may choose to receive a:

- letter grade
- pass or fail grade
- grade of incomplete or,
- withdrawal

If the student has completed fewer than 55 percent of the course,

the options are limited to choosing between receiving an incomplete grade with faculty approval and withdrawing from the course.

You can read the full bill, S-3052, at: https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/S3052?utm_source=New+Jersey+Senate+Republicans&utm_campaign=3deb01dd3-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2024_12_05_05_17_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a35f0d8e31-463346998

To speak with Sen. Space, contact Kyle Fischer, SRO director of communications at kfischer@njleg.org.

Senator Boscola Introduces Bill to Crack Down on SNAP Skimming Thieves



State Senator Lisa M. Boscola (D-Northampton) announced the introduction of Senate Bill 362 aimed at increasing penalties for criminals who steal food assistance benefits from Pennsylvania families through a method known as "SNAP skimming."

This growing form of electronic fraud allows thieves to steal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits from recipients by capturing card information and draining accounts, leaving families and seniors without the resources they need to put food on the table.

"As of August 2023, more than 2,750 reports of SNAP electronic theft were submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, with nearly half a million dollars stolen from individuals who depend on these benefits for survival," Boscola said. "This is not just fraud, it's theft from our most vulner-

able citizens and a betrayal of taxpayer dollars."

The legislation will create a new criminal offense specifically targeting those who use skimming devices to commit SNAP fraud. Under the proposed bill, theft of SNAP benefits of \$1,000 or more would be elevated from a third-degree felony to a second-degree felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine. Smaller thefts of less than \$1,000 would be raised from a misdemeanor to a third-degree felony, carrying a sentence of up to seven years in prison and a \$15,000 fine. Additionally, convicted offenders would be permanently banned from receiving public assistance.

"With more than two million Pennsylvanians relying on SNAP, including children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, we must send a clear message: if you prey on those in need, you

will face serious consequences," Boscola added. "While the federal government had taken some steps to help victims recover stolen funds, that seems to be ending. Absent additional card security measures, we need stronger deterrents to stop these crimes before they happen."

Due to recent federal changes, victims of SNAP theft after December 20, 2024, can no longer be reimbursed, placing even greater urgency on preventing these crimes. Senator Boscola is urging swift passage of this legislation to ensure Pennsylvanians are protected from organized criminal enterprises raiding taxpayer funded benefits accounts.

For more helpful information regarding known SNAP scams and how to protect yourself, visit the PA Department of Human Services website, at www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/report-fraud/scams.html

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Shapiro Administration Launches RISE PA Initiative to Create Energy Jobs, Cut Costs, Grow Pennsylvania's Energy & Manufacturing Industries, and Lower Toxic Air Pollution

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) opened the Reducing Industrial Sector Emissions in Pennsylvania (RISE PA) program today, accepting grant applications from companies that own industrial facilities, mines, and natural gas infrastructure for projects that will create up to 6,000 jobs and reduce air pollution in the industrial and manufacturing sectors. Nearly \$400 million is available for projects that reduce air pollution from industrial facilities and create jobs.

"My Administration is taking real action to create energy jobs and grow our economy – and today, our natural gas companies, mines, and industrial manufacturers can apply for this commonsense initiative that will help them continue growing their operations while reducing costs and air pollution in our communities," said Governor Josh Shapiro. "Through RISE PA, we will offer grants for companies working to make their operations more efficient, creating thousands of good-paying construction and manufacturing

jobs in the process. This investment will help us reduce toxic air pollution, invest in our energy sector, and continue Pennsylvania's legacy of energy leadership."

"This program is going to create good paying union jobs, make Pennsylvania more competitive in global markets, and lead to cleaner air for us to breathe. It's a commonsense program that improves the economy and the environment," said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "Pennsylvania has a long industrial history and this program is going to write the next chapter of it – more jobs, stronger communities, and cleaner air."

Union labor, environmental advocates, and leaders from across the energy industry (opens in a new tab) have praised the RISE PA program, which will create jobs and lead to cleaner air and a stronger economy in Pennsylvania.

RISE PA establishes a competitive grant program to fund innovative projects that reduce pollution from industrial sources. Grant applications are being accepted through the DEP website until August 29,



2025, for the first round of awards.

The RISE PA program is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act. Governor Shapiro has filed a lawsuit challenging the Trump Administration's unconstitutional freeze of federal funding, and thanks to the Governor's lawsuit and continued engagement with the Trump Administration, this funding is currently accessible to DEP.

Examples of eligible initiatives could include installing energy-effi-

cient heat recovery systems to reduce the energy required to heat or cool an industrial facility, electrifying an industrial plant by swapping out diesel-powered generators with equipment that runs on electricity, and capturing coal mine methane from mining operations. All of these projects would make our air cleaner while creating good jobs and helping companies cut costs.

Prospective projects will need to satisfy the following proposed criteria:

-Benefit communities near industrial sites that

have higher rates of toxic air pollution

-Achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions that are long-lasting and certain

-Incorporate high labor standards, emphasize job quality, and support equitable workforce development

Pennsylvania has a long legacy as a national energy leader – for over one hundred years, the Commonwealth has been one of the nation's top energy producers, embracing innovation to create jobs, lower costs, and drive progress. RISE PA will continue that through grant awards that reduce emissions while supporting and creating good paying jobs.

Grants will be accepted through Friday, August 29, 2025, at 11:59 pm, with the first awards being announced in Fall 2025.

More information on the program, including application guidance, can be found on the RISE PA page on the DEP website.

The program is funded through a federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program grant awarded to Pennsylvania in July 2024.



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New Bureau Directors Working In Roles For Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Game Commission filled two important vacancies in recent months with the hiring of two new bureau directors.

Timothy Haydt, who had worked as Chief of the agency's Oil, Gas and Minerals Division, was promoted to Director of the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management, and Eric Allen, who came to the Game Commission from the state Department of General Services, is now serving as Director of the Bureau of Administration.

Haydt and Allen both began in their new roles in November.

"Both Tim and Eric benefit from the wealth of knowledge and experience they brought to their new jobs, and they've been demonstrating that in leading their respective bureaus," said Game Commission Executive Director Steve Smith. "They hit the ground running and haven't looked back, and I look forward to working more with them for the betterment of Pennsylvania's wildlife and

hunting tradition."

Haydt has worked for the Game Commission the past six years, first as Chief of the Public Lands Section, then as Chief of the Oil, Gas and Minerals Division. Some of his work included negotiating oil and gas agreements and coordinating comprehensive management plans for 311 individual state game lands.

Prior to the Game Commission, Haydt spent nearly 17 years with the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in its forestry program, where he was heavily involved with all aspects of forest management.

The variety of his experience provides an understanding of the intricacies of habitat management, which is vital for the success of wildlife.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to lead the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management and to be a champion for wildlife across the Commonwealth," Haydt said. "It has been a pleasure to work with

the passionate staff at the Game Commission for the past six years, and I look forward to continuing to work toward promoting and protecting wildlife habitats for current and future generations."

Allen was Director of the Bureau of Publications for the Department of General Services. Prior to that, he was the Director of Business Transformation for the state Department of Environmental Protection, a member of the Governor's Office of Transformation, Innovation, Management and Efficiency (GO-TIME) and a senior project manager for the state Office of Administration. In total, Allen has almost 15 years of management experience within the Commonwealth.

That experience serves him well as Director of the Bureau of Administration.

"I'm enjoying the opportunity to use all of my experience in leadership to help Game Commission improve processes and become as efficient as possible," said Allen.

Local Rescue Squads Hold Ice Rescue Drills



Members of Ladder 46 Fire were invited by their brothers and sisters of Hope Fire Dept. to participate in an Ice Rescue drill on February 25th. They spent a full day of training capped off by a swim in Swayze Mill Pond. A great day of learning to rescue a victim on ice or in cold water. Photos Courtesy Blairstown Hose Company #1



Don't Miss Our Shamrock Special Page for St. Patrick's Day. See ad on pg 5 for detail

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Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



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Hello, fellow readers. Spring soon arrives, and many are anxious for green with a splash of color. My go-to is harvesting branches of forsythia, but you can also bring other spring-flowering woody plants indoors to encourage early spring blooms.

On a day above freezing, cut branches 1 to 2 feet long as if you were pruning; choosing young branches and cutting at a steep angle helps water uptake. Be sure to pick those with plentiful flower buds, typically fatter than leaf buds.

Choose a large vase that won't tip over and add 4-6 inches of wa-

ter—place in a bright room above 60 degrees away from direct sun or heat. The next day, recut the stem ends and change the water every few days. Once your blooms bloom, mist them so they last longer.

When forsythia flowers fade, leaves will emerge, and the stems will likely sprout roots. So why not nurture them to add more to your yard? Continue to change the water every few days. Then, after the risk of frost, plant your forsythia babies right into the ground. Loosen up the soil about eight inches and group three to five babies six inches apart. And soon, you'll have a lovely living wall each plant gracefully draping like a fountain.

A dear friend, garden writer, and photographer, Vicki Johnson, shared one of her stories about Persuading Early Flowers that encompasses many more treasures. I adore the color of her words and how she sets the scene:

The garden is still blanketed with snow and ice, and frost feathers glisten on windowpanes while blustery winds ratt-



Photo by Vicki Johnson

le at the door. It is March, the month of transition from frozen, unyielding winter to fitful Spring. But we can feel it coming. The sky is brighter behind the curtains when the alarm sounds in the morning, and the sun still hangs above the horizon as we drive home from work.

There are days when it is warm enough to leave my jacket on its peg inside the house, even though the snow and ice remain against north-facing walls. Spring— It really is coming. The snow really will melt away. But until then, it is possible to trick Mother Nature and have flowers from your garden gracing your home by cutting branches and



twigs from spring-flowering shrubs and trees and "persuade" them to flower weeks before their natural bloom cycle. There could be dogwood blossoms glistening on a mantelpiece or an arch of creamy magnolias draped across a dining room sideboard a month before they appear outside. (Aren't Vicki's words so lovely?)

Flower and leaf buds on spring-flowering shrubs and trees are formed in the fall before the plants enter their winter dormancy. Our favorite lilacs, dogwoods, and rhododendrons require a winter chill (below 40 degrees F) before they flower. After that, small branches can be harvested and brought inside,

where they can be conditioned and brought into bloom.

Forsythia, quince, and pussy willow are three of the easiest to encourage into flower. Vicki shared a list of trees and shrubs recommended for forcing and the weeks needed in cool storage to bring them to flower (available on AskMaryStone.com.) There's flowering dogwood, red bud, honeysuckle, crabapples, almond trees, cherry, magnolia, Japanese quince, spirea, mock orange, flowering pear, and rhododendron, including azaleas.

Such beautiful spring-flowering woody plants to give you that taste of Spring early. And rather than forcing them to flo-



wer, we'll call it persuading, as Vicki does, or encouraging, as I like to call it. It's gentler, it's kinder, and kindness is more beautiful.

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Clean Team Workforce Announces Employee of the Month for February



The Clean Team Workforce congratulates its Employee of the Month for February, Peter F. After the death of his wife four years ago, Peter was ready to give up on life. He couldn't function and quit his job as a horse groomer. He struggled with depression and felt that he was too old to matter or make a difference in the world. After his savings ran out, Peter was evicted from his apartment, and he attempted to take his life. He stayed in a mental health program for six months and then came to the Allentown Rescue Mission. At the Mission, Peter felt his anxiety lift after his immediate needs were met and he talked to other guests and realized he wasn't alone. He joined the eight-week Transformation Program and enjoyed learning new skills and ideas. Mission staff knew a change was happening inside of Peter because he began to smile, something he never thought he would do again. "I became closer to God," Peter stated. Peter

started working for the Clean Team Workforce after graduating from the Transformation Program. He worked on street cleaning assignments for several weeks and would always stop by the Clean Team Workforce office to thank the managers for giving him the opportunity to work. Peter arrives every day with a big smile and is happy to be productive and earn money. Then, an opportunity arose in the Food Service Department of the Allentown Rescue Mission. Peter jumped at the chance to do this type of work. He and his wife had cooked together, and he knew she would love that he was cooking. The Food Service Manager has taken Peter under his wing and is teaching him kitchen skills to make him eligible for a job after he leaves the Clean Team Workforce. Peter's goal is to take advantage of his new skills and find a job in the restaurant industry in the Lehigh Valley. He has been saving money and is looking for a place to live.

Everyone at the Mission is rooting for Peter and wishes him the best of luck in the future. The Allentown Rescue Mission, a 501c3, 123 bed non-profit homeless shelter has been providing shelter to men experiencing homelessness since 1900. In addition to emergency shelter services (365 days a year), the Allentown Rescue Mission offers a residential life skills program, and transitional employment on the Clean Team Workforce that's available for hire to the community. The Clean Team Workforce pays the men above PA state minimum wage—helping them save a nest egg to transition back into the community. In a typical year, the Allentown Rescue Mission provides shelter services for nearly 1,000 men and serves more than 60,000 meals to men in need. To refer someone to the Allentown Rescue Mission for services or to learn ways you can help make a difference please visit www.allentownrescue-mission.org

Slate Belt Chamber of Commerce Is Now Accepting Applications for the 2025 Scholarship Achievement Award

The Slate Belt Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce applications for Scholarship Achievement Award 2025 are available at the guidance departments of Bangor High School, Pen Argyl High School, Faith Christian & Career Institute of Technology. The Chamber will award one scholarship to a senior from each

of these schools. Applicants must reside in the Slate Belt to apply. The scholarships will be presented to the students based upon the following criteria; academic accomplishment, demonstrated service to school and/or community, demonstration of leadership capabilities and future college or vocational plans. Please note: A separate

award, The Frederick R. Curcio, Jr. Scholarship Award, may also be applied for at this time. To qualify a senior must be enrolled in a computer science related course or planning to attend a Technical School of their choice or majoring in computer science. Applications must be received by April 10, 2025.

Northampton County Executive - Lamont G. McClure Named Grand Marshal of the 2025 Parade of Shamrocks by the Celtic Cultural Alliance



Northampton County is proud to announce that County Executive Lamont G. McClure has been selected as the Grand Marshal for the 2025 Parade of Shamrocks. This festive event, organized by the Celtic Cultural Alliance (CCA), will take place in the streets of Historic Downtown Bethlehem on Saturday, March 15, 2025, at 1:00 PM.

County Executive McClure, a lifelong resident of Pennsylvania, has dedicated much of his career to making a positive impact in his community. He takes great pride in his Irish heritage and has consistently supported the mission of the CCA. In regard to this honor, he stated, "I am truly honored to have been chosen as the Grand Marshal of the

Parade of Shamrocks. I can't wait to celebrate with all of you." The Parade of Shamrocks is a significant cultural event that highlights the rich traditions of the Celtic community. Join us in celebrating this vibrant event McClure as the Grand Marshal. We look forward to seeing everyone in Downtown Bethlehem for a day of fun, culture, and community spirit! The CCA is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving Celtic culture through various programs and events. Founded in 1988, the CCA has grown to become a vital part of the community, hosting the largest Celtic festival in North America, attracting over 200,000 visitors annually.

Laughter is simply the happy explosion of cheerfulness, and cheerfulness is our friend and helper when we think we are having trouble. ~Harry G. Milholland

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NJEDA Board Approves Programs to Expand Number of Zero Emission Medium and Heavy-Duty Vehicles on NJ Roadways

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Board yesterday approved two programs aimed at putting more zero emissions vehicles on roads across the state. Together, Phase III of the New Jersey Zero Emission Incentive Program (NJ ZIP) and the New Jersey Zero Emission Vehicle Financing Program (NJ ZEV), aim to accelerate the adoption and use of commercial zero-emission medium and heavy-duty vehicles within the state, while reducing harmful emissions.

“I am thrilled to see our state is moving closer to zero emission roadways with the approval of NJ ZIP and NJ ZEV,” said Governor Murphy. “This past December we hit a significant milestone of surpassing 200,000 electric vehicle registrations—leading to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality, and a cleaner, healthier New Jersey for all. The programs approved today by the NJEDA Board will continue to drive us forward in our mission of decarbonizing transportation, reducing consumer costs, and responding to market preferences.”

“Under Governor Murphy’s leadership, New Jersey continues to advance programs and initiatives that support the state’s transition to clean energy, lower

rates of harmful emissions, and create new economic opportunities for businesses across the state,” said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan. “Through NJ ZIP and NJ ZEV, business owners will be able to modernize their fleets with environmentally friendly vehicles that reduce fuel costs and keep their businesses moving forward. New Jersey’s families, especially those living in communities historically disproportionately affected by environmental issues, will reap the benefits of improved air quality as a result of more electric vehicles on New Jersey’s roads and highways.”

The Board approved Phase III of NJ ZIP, which will provide vouchers to businesses and institutional organizations to offset the cost of purchasing new, zero emission medium and heavy-duty vehicles. The size of vouchers awarded through Phase III, which is funded at \$75 million, will vary depending on the class of vehicle being purchased, from a minimum of \$15,000 for Class 2b vehicles to \$175,000 for Class 8 vehicles. Bonuses will be available for school busses, small businesses; women-, minority-, and veteran-owned businesses. Additionally, 50 percent of funds will be set aside for applications from small businesses in

Overburdened Communities (OBCs).

Originally created in 2021, NJ ZIP has awarded \$54 million in vouchers to 155 applicants, supporting the purchase of 422 new zero emission vehicles.

During the meeting, the Board also approved a new, \$25 million program known as the NJ ZEV Financing Program, which is a loan program to support businesses adopting medium and heavy-duty zero emission vehicles. The program complements NJ ZIP by offering financing for vehicle costs that may not be met by NJ ZIP vouchers or other available grant funding resources. Loans will also be available through the program for business not utilizing the NJ ZIP program. NJ ZEV will offer low-interest rate loans ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 for the purchase of one or more eligible vehicles. For more information on the program and for eligibility requirements, click here.

Funding for both NJ ZIP and NJ ZEV are from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). As part of the 2023-2025 RGGI Strategic Funding Plan, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJ-BPU), and the NJEDA committed to investing



in several clean energy initiatives, including catalyzing clean, equitable transportation in the state. The NJZIP and NJZEV announcements follow on the heels of last week’s \$35 million announcement by the Murphy Administration for local government vehicle electrification projects, directly supporting the implementation of the Advanced Clean Trucks rule to achieve increasing percentages of annual electric vehicle sales.

“DEP is proud to partner with the NJEDA and BPU to support initiatives such as NJ ZIP and NJ ZEV that help achieve the Murphy Administration’s goals of cleaner air and healthier, more sustainable communities,” said Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette. “These newly launched programs further complement work underway by DEP to increase

the number of electric vehicles charging stations, electric school buses, electric garbage trucks and other EVs. When we work together to reduce the presence of air pollutants across the state, the result is a greener and better New Jersey for all.”

“The NJBPU is proud to work with our sister agencies to continue to advance smart, clean transportation initiatives that provide considerable health and environmental benefits to residents,” said NJBPU President Christine Guhl-Sadovy. “NJEDA’s efforts build upon a variety of actions the NJBPU took to expand charging access for medium-and-heavy duty vehicles throughout the state. Establishing a backbone of essential charging infrastructure not only helps build confidence in and helps businesses make the switch to this clean transportation alter-

native, its benefits are especially vital to the overburdened communities that have borne the brunt of air pollution for far too long.”

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) serves as the State’s principal agency for driving economic growth. The NJEDA is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents, and provide pathways to a stronger and fairer economy. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the NJEDA creates and implements initiatives to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in the State and strengthen New Jersey’s long-term economic competitiveness.

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Bloom Hosts Join the Movement Luncheon to Spotlight Human Trafficking and Inspire Action in the Lehigh Valley

Bloom, an organization dedicated to providing sanctuary and a continuum of care to heal, empower and employ survivors of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation in the Lehigh Valley, to host its Join the Movement Luncheon on Friday, March 14th at Hotel Bethlehem. Leaders, advocates, and community members will gather at this powerful event dedicated to disrupting human trafficking and exploitation and fostering real change in the Lehigh Valley. This must-attend luncheon will feature two panel discussions: one with system professionals working in the anti-trafficking space and another highlighting the resilience and strength of survivors.

This event is an opportunity for attendees to gain deeper insight into both the systemic challenges and the personal journeys of those affected by trafficking and exploitation. By brid-

ging the gap between professionals, policy-makers, and survivors, the luncheon aims to inspire actionable solutions and community collaboration.

“This is not just another luncheon – it’s a call to action,” said Carol Andersen, CEO of Bloom. “Trafficking thrives in silence, and we refuse to look the other way. The survivors we serve are reclaiming their lives, but they shouldn’t have to do it alone. It’s time for all of us to stand together and say, ‘not on our watch’.”

Attendees will hear firsthand accounts of survival and resilience from a Survivor Leader panel; as well as expert insights into the policies, partnerships, and resources needed to dismantle trafficking across the Lehigh Valley and support those on the path to healing. The system/provider panelists include:

- Special Agent Sean Crawford, Homeland

Security Investigations

- Josh Newland, CRS from Lehigh Valley Health Network’s Valley Health Partners’ Street Medicine

- Jana Morris, MS, LPC, CCS, CAADC, Recovery Revolution, Inc.

- Dr. Nicole Bendock, St. Luke’s University Health Network

- Christina DiPierro, Valley Youth House

At the event, Bloom will also be holding a clothing drive for one of its two social enterprises, My Sister’s Closet. This is a women’s charity boutique based in Bethlehem providing curated and preloved clothing and accessories, as well as employment opportunities for survivors, community volunteer opportunities, and financial support for Bloom. Spring and summer women’s clothing, purses and jewelry will be accepted.

Attendees may register by March 8 for the Join the Movement Luncheon by visiting:

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 Tickets are \$45. All members of the press RSVP to Karen Higin.

Bloom for Women, Inc. is a faith-based

non-profit organization with the mission of providing sanctuary and a continuum of care to heal, empower and employ survivors of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. As part of its mission, Bloom offers emergency response, a two-year residential program, pregnant and parenting survivor services, and an independent living program in the Lehigh Valley area of Pennsylvania. Bloom follows the model and is a sister community of the remarkably successful Thistle Farms Nashville program. Additionally, Bloom offers direct-to-survivor outreach, community education and prevention

services, including serving male, children and youth survivors. Furthermore, the Bloom Creative Studio, located in Bangor, Pa., is a social enterprise to leverage art as a healing tool and provide employment opportunities for survivors. Bloom also has a women’s charity boutique, My Sister’s Closet, based in Bethlehem, Pa., offering curated, pre-loved clothing and accessories; and providing employment for survivors, community volunteer opportunities, and financial support for the organization. To learn more about Bloom, visit: www.bloomforwomen.org.

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New Jersey Attorney General Under Fire at Assembly Session

Assembly Republicans ramped up their fight against Attorney General Matt Platkin (pictured) on Thursday, filing a formal resolution for impeachment and calling for his resignation during a heated Assembly voting session.



As Democrats advanced a bill requiring the attorney general to update and report on the statewide use of force policy, Assemblymen Jay Webber and Erik Peterson delivered blistering rebukes of Platkin, accusing him of ignoring legislative directives and disregarding the rule of law.

Webber criticized Platkin for failing to implement multiple bipartisan laws aimed at increasing transparency, including measures to track law enforcement suicides, report sexual assault data and monitor civil asset forfeitures.

“We as a body should recognize that this attorney general doesn’t care what we say,” Webber (R-Morris) said. He urged lawmakers to hold Platkin accountable.

“We have the top law enforcement officer in this state not respecting

the law and not respecting the law put into place both by Democrats and Republicans,” continued Webber. “Once and for all this body needs to send a message to the attorney general that when we pass the law we mean it and he should follow.”

Peterson echoed those concerns, accusing Platkin of prioritizing partisan political battles instead of his duties.

“Our attorney general is very busy inserting himself into federal politics to do anything here in New Jersey,” Peterson said. “He should resign. He’s a disgrace.”

Peterson emphasized that lawmakers represent the will of the peo-

ple, and Platkin has repeatedly ignored their authority.

“We need an attorney general who will do the will of the people, and we represent the will of the people here in New Jersey, and he should follow it,” said Peterson.

The impeachment resolution, introduced by Assembly Republican Leader John DiMaio, along with Assemblymen Antwan McClellan and Christopher DePhillips earlier in the day, lays out a case for Platkin’s removal.

The five-page document accuses him of weaponizing his office, exceeding his authority by investigating the New Jersey State Police, and unlawfully taking control of the Paterson Police Department in 2023—a move struck down by a state appellate court in December. Platkin has since appealed that ruling to the state Supreme Court.

With the impeachment resolution now on the table, Assembly Republicans will continue their push for accountability and restoring integrity to the attorney general’s office.

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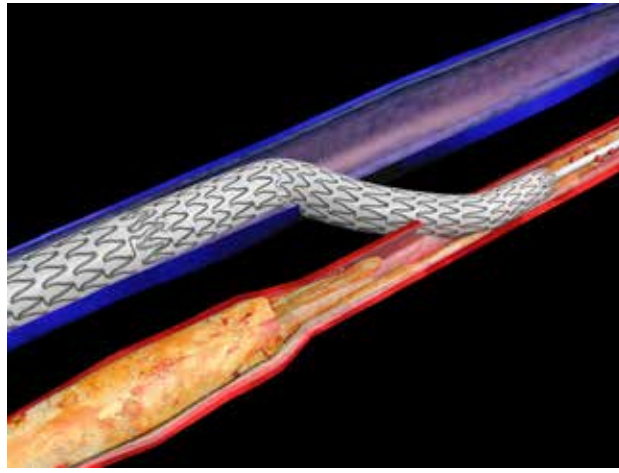
St. Luke's physicians are offering a new minimally invasive procedure that offers hope to persons facing likely amputation of a lower extremity due to a permanently blocked artery, called chronic limb-threatening ischemia (CLTI).

St. Luke's vascular surgeon Jared Feyko, DO, became the first physician in the region to treat a patient with the LimFlow minimally invasive system to improve the blood supply to a patient's lower extremity. In the hybrid OR at St. Luke's Bethlehem Campus, he created a novel blood supply to the patient's foot using a vein rather than an artery, since the patient's artery was completely blocked.

This saved the patient from a major amputation.

Many persons experiencing a totally blocked blood supply to their leg eventually must undergo major lower extremity amputation. These advanced, limb-threatening plaques commonly form in patients with diabetes or chronic kidney disease, or those who are long-time smokers. CLTI can cause foot pain, prevent wounds from healing and may ultimately require amputation of a limb.

"Normally, arteries supply oxygen and life-sustaining nutrients in blood throughout the body, and veins return blood to the heart and lungs for regener-



ration," explained Dr. Feyko. "In patients with CLTI, whose diseased or damaged artery cannot serve as the blood supply to the lower limb, LimFlow technology enables us to adapt a vein so it will serve as an artery." LimFlow, approved

by the FDA in 2023, comprises balloon catheters, endoscopic instruments and covered stents, which are inserted in veins to become blood channels. Physicians use ultrasound imaging technology for visual guidance during this delicate procedure. "The LimFlow treat-

ment can benefit select 'no-option' patients in whom all other medical and surgical options to correct arterial blockages have been exhausted," said Dr. Feyko, who has performed this innovative procedure on a total of 14 patients, thus far.

Using the LimFlow system, Dr. Feyko rerouted blood flow around the patient's totally blocked tibial leg artery in the calf. He then channeled flow it through a tiny puncture from the artery into the adjacent tibial vein, which he had modified to serve as an artery and become the new blood supply to the patient's foot.

Since undergoing this procedure, the patient has less pain in his lo-

wer leg and foot, their chronically infected foot/leg wounds are healing and, most importantly, they have been able to avoid total amputation of the once-in-jeopardy limb.

"This procedure, and subsequent tissue/limb survival, were possible only because we have access to the last-chance LimFlow treatment," Dr. Feyko continued. He estimates that at least 20-30 patients per year will be able to undergo LimFlow at St. Luke's, because their tibial artery and vein are adaptable to this new, limb-saving treatment. In addition to Dr. Feyko, St. Luke's interventional radiologists will perform this unique procedure.

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Newspapers Are Alive And Well And Thriving In the Suburbs

By Dorothy York, President and CEO of North American Precis Syndicate (NAPS)

As the world has become increasingly digital, print marketing has kept pace or exceeded performance of online offerings. With fewer printed publications and fewer pages being printed, the value of information in newspapers has increased, due to a greater likelihood of being seen, as people are more easily able to read small, suburban community newspapers, cover to cover in a short amount of time. The digital versions of newspapers often have many more pages, as there is comparatively little cost to adding more and more content online.

As online publications are inundated with thousands of requests per day for inclusion of branded content, and the volume of site traffic remains relatively stable,

the value of each individual placement in the online versions of newspapers is diminished and diluted by the influx of new information.

The visibility of the printed word as compared with the value of the same word in online versions, has always been far greater, by any measure, which is reflected in the cost of getting seen in newspapers in print versus the digital publication. As the gap widens, and digital publications add more and more pages for sponsored content, advertorials, and the like, the value of the printed word will increase.

For those targeting Boomers or seniors, who generally read more in print than online, the disparity is especially appreciated.

For those targeting Millennials, they will reach more if they cover print than if they don't, both directly,

as many read newspapers, starting with High School and College newspapers, and as a result of referred traffic from peers, co-workers, friends and family members. The printed versions can easily be shared online as many are replicated as a pdf version on an affiliated digital site with social media channels. Some take a picture of articles to share.

All things considered, here are five good reasons to add print media to your marketing mix:

1- Printed Newspapers Trigger Multiple Senses: Many people seek time away from touching their mobile phones, computer keyboards, and TV remote controls. It's nice to get the feel of a printed newspaper or magazine, with glossy pages, the smell of the ink, and the sounds of the pages flipping, which have been simulated online in digital flip

books, by popular demand. It's easier to see a printed page in bright sunlight, instead of the glare or reflection on a screen.

2- Print Engages More Readily: Content that lives online doesn't engage as well if it is in an abbreviated format, requiring readers to click through to another page to see the rest of the article. Many readers are impatient when reading online, feeling they don't have time to stop and read a whole article or blog post, so they merely skim, scan and move on to the next. Print readers tend to slow down and actually read, not only the news, but also the ads, especially those that are native and relevant to the adjacent articles they read.

3- Brains React Differently To Paper Than Screens: The human brain processes information differently depending on the presen-



tation in print or on a screen. Readers of print have longer attention spans because screens have far more distractions. The act of deep reading, which occurs more naturally in print, creates deep thinking, which means readers can become fully engaged in the content. When readers see relevant sponsored content next to the publisher generated content, they are more easily swayed to think about that as well.

4- Print Drives Online Engagement: To get people to take action and interact more with your brand, you

can capture attention in printed media and drive your audience to your online assets.

5- Adding Newspapers To The Mix Increases ROI: For the message you worked so hard to craft and deliver online, you can get more mileage out of it, for very little extra cost, by covering print media, to reach more people in your target audience, and to achieve goal oriented outcomes.

For more information, or a proposal from our experts, contact us at info@napsnet.com or visit <https://mynewstouse.com/>.

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