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July 25, 2024

GOD BLESS AMERICA

Vol. 52, No. 01



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Bangor Memorial Park Pool Hosts Annual Family Luau



Bangor Memorial Park Pool hosted their Annual Family Luau on July 19th. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Wind Gap Summer Sounds Presents "New Individuals"



The Summer Sounds Summer concert series continued on July 21st with the musical stylings of the "New Individuals" at Wind Gap Park. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

53rd Annual Blue Mtn. Antique Gas & Steam Engine & Tractor Show Held at Jacktown



The Blue Mountain Antique Gas & Steam Engine Association held their 53rd Annual Gas Engine and Tractor Show July 19th through July 21st, at Jacktown Grove. This year they featured a John Deere 6HP Engine. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Flood Applauds Compromise to Reopen Route 611, Says It's Time to Put People First

Rep. Ann Flood (R-Northampton) today applauded the long-awaited release of a plan to reopen Route 611 in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The highway was closed in December 2022 due to a rockslide; it is expected to finally reopen after work is completed in eight to 10 weeks.

"This has been a major hardship for everyone, as drivers have been forced to pay tolls, as well as higher fuel costs, to get around the closed section of roadway. Businesses in the area have struggled or even been forced to close due to the lack of traffic that sustained the area," Flood said. "It's time to put the people first, and the plan unveiled today will do that. "We have worked hard



to keep this issue in front of key decisionmakers from the start. We've had the House Transportation Committee chairs tour the closure site, held meetings with people in Portland to hear their concerns and try to develop solutions, communicated our concerns with the governor and more. It's taken longer than any of us would have liked to get here, but we can finally see the light at the end of the

tunnel. "It took the efforts of many to get to this point. I commend the engineers at PennDOT who have worked hard to come up with a resolution to solve a very complex problem, and I want to especially thank Congressman Matt Cartwright for taking the reins and getting us across the finish line with a workable plan to get this road open by late summer."

RT611 cont'd on page 3



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NJ Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, An Advocate for Those in Need of Food, Visits Norwescap Food Bank

The Honorable Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin, a major advocate of ensuring food for all, visited the Norwescap Food Bank on Monday, July 15 where he toured the Phillipsburg facility, as well as spoke with the Norwescap leadership team and met with several pantry partners.

As part of his advocacy efforts to combat food insecurity across New Jersey, Coughlin learned first-hand about Norwescap programs and services across its five service counties, which includes Warren, Somerset, Hunterdon, Morris, and Sussex. During his visit he spoke with organizational leadership and pantry partners who rely on the Norwescap Food Bank to



fill their shelves every day.

Mark Valli, CEO of Norwescap, and Lisa Weber, Senior Director Food Security and Health Equity for Norwescap, led the tour with Coughlin.

Throughout his career, Coughlin has dedicated himself and his platform to working toward a future in which

no family suffers the effects of food insecurity. Speaker Coughlin has increased aid to food banks in the State budget by 500%, authored legislation to expand free school meals, and increased the monthly minimum SNAP benefits. He also authored a bill to create New Jersey's Office of Food Secu-

rity Advocate, the first in the nation. With the support of other community leaders and organizations like Norwescap, Coughlin has stated he hopes to eliminate hunger in New Jersey by 2030.

"The work you do has a profound impact on those in need," said Coughlin, addressing the partners in atten-

dance. "What you do on the frontlines is so important. This is a priority. We need to make sure people have food. It's folks like you who are the best of what we are in New Jersey."

Among those representing the Food Pantries for the event were Scott Savokinas, Lord's Pantry at Trin-

ity United Methodist Church in Hackettstown; Rachel Laul, The Outreach Connection in Washington Township (Warren); Jennifer Tavormina, Open Cupboard (Clinton and Washington - Hunterdon and Warren); Jenn Williford, (Fisherman's Mark in Lambertville); Jeannine Gorman, The Flemington Area Food Pantry in Flemington; Valerie Macchio, The Sparta Community Food Pantry in Sparta; and Christine Parauda, Foodshed Alliance and Local Share, which partners in investing with farmers across Sussex, Warren and Hunterdon counties.

For more information about Norwescap's Food Bank visit norwescap.org.

Cutler, Mullins Applaud Funding for Neurodegenerative Research Included in State Budget Plan for PA

House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) and Rep. Kyle Mullins (D-Lackawanna) Thursday applauded the inclusion of nearly \$3 million for neurodegenerative research included as part of the fiscal year 2024-25 state budget.

The funding is a first-of-its-kind, direct state investment that represents

a continued combined effort by Cutler and Mullins to combat neurodegenerative diseases like ALS, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Huntington's that would go to Pennsylvania institutions currently involved in studying treatments and/or cures for these devastating diseases.

"Neurodegenerative diseases impose a significant burden on individuals, families and caregivers across Pennsylvania. This significant, bipartisan funding as part of the state budget underscores Pennsylvania's dedication to combating these diseases through robust scientific inquiry and collaboration among researchers, health care professionals and advocacy organizations,"

Cutler said.

"This investment not only prioritizes the health and well-being of our residents but also capitalizes on Pennsylvania's position as a leader in biomedical research," he continued. "By supporting groundbreaking research initiatives, we are fostering hope for patients and families impacted by neurodegenerative diseases."

"The devastation of being diagnosed with a disease like ALS, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or Huntington's comes from knowing there is no cure. Too many have shared in that devastation, watching a loved one lose their physical or cognitive abilities as their cruel disease progressed," said Mullins, who lost his fa-

ther in 2022 to ALS or "Lou Gehrig's Disease," which progressively robs patients of their mobility, speech, swallowing and breathing abilities.

"Despite the heartbreak and loss associated with these diseases, there is renewed reason for hope because of this new state funding for research," he continued. "With this investment, our state will empower research teams at our world-class institutions to expand their work toward the treatments and therapies that will one day make these livable diseases."

The funding was passed as part of the Fiscal Code budget enabling legislation signed into law by Gov. Josh Shapiro on July 11 as Act 54 of 2024.

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Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



RT 611

Continued from page 1

The agreed-upon plans include the installation of a temporary, free-standing rockfall barrier, which will allow two-way traffic to flow while crews continue working behind-the-scenes on a more permanent solution. PennDOT estimates it will take about eight to 10 weeks to complete the project.

"I appreciate the efforts that Congressman Cartwright and his office made," said Borough of Portland Mayor Heather Fischer. "We needed his oversight to get to this point; this is how it works. Portland cannot thank Rep. Flood enough for exhausting



every path to try and get eyes on this situation and the impact it was having on the residents and small businesses. While we have a long road ahead to get the work done, we can now take a rest with one to two lanes open from Portland to Delaware Water Gap as it gets sorted."

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Bangor Memorial Park Pool Hosts Annual Family Luau



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DEP To Host Public Hearing For Lehigh County Warehouse Project

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will host a public hearing on the permit associated with a proposed warehouse project in Lowhill Township, Lehigh County. The hearing will take place on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, from 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM at the Germansville Volunteer Fire Company located at 6011 Memorial Rd, Germansville, PA 18053.

DEP will accept testimony from the public regarding a National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System Permit (NPDES) application from Core5 Industrial Partners for the 2766 PA Route 100 Industrial Project in Lowhill Township, Lehigh County. Representatives from the DEP's Waterways & Wetlands Program, the Lehigh County Conservation District, and Core5 Industrial Partners will be in attendance.

Core5 plans to construct the warehouse for storage purposes along Route 100 in Lowhill Township. The NPDES permit will allow for the discharge of stormwater from construction activities to the following receiving watercourses: an unknown tributary to Little Lehigh Creek, which is considered high-quality-cold water fishery, and to exceptional value wetlands, both of which have special protections under the Clean Water Act.

The DEP received the NPDES permit application on May 18, 2023, and the application was

deemed administratively complete on December 5, 2023. Written public comments were received during the public comment period.

Those who wish to register to testify at the hearing can do so by contacting Colleen Connolly at connolly@pa.gov, registration will be accepted up to the date of the hearing. Those who wish to submit written comments on the permit application can do so by sending them to Pam Kania, Program Manager, DEP Waterways and Wetlands Program at pkania@pa.gov. Those comments will be accepted until Tuesday, August 6, 2024, at 4:00 PM.

The permit application is available for public review on the DEP Northeast Regional Office Community Information Webpage at: <https://www.dep.pa.gov/About/Regional/Northeast-Regional-Office/Community%20Information/Pages/Core-5-at-Route-100-Warehouse-Project.aspx> or at the Lehigh County Conservation District located at 4184 Dorney Park Rd, Allentown, PA 18104, and the DEP Northeast Regional Office, located at 2 Public Square, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701 (570) 826-2511.

Persons with a disability who wish to testify and require an auxiliary aid, service, or other accommodation should contact Colleen Connolly at connolly@pa.gov to discuss how the Department can meet their needs. Dial 711 to access Pennsylvania Relay services.

Marcell, Friel Applaud PA 529 Tax Credit Bill Being Incorporated into Recently Passed Tax Code, Offering Significant Benefits to Families and Employers

The 529 tax credit, originally House Bill 1745 and co-prime sponsored by state Reps. Kristin Marcell (R-Bucks) and Paul Friel (D-Chester), has been successfully incorporated into the recently signed Tax Code by Gov. Josh Shapiro. This new tax credit incentivizes employers to contribute to their employees' PA 529 College and Career Savings Program accounts, providing substantial benefits to families across Pennsylvania and supporting workforce development.

House Bill 1745 expands the tax credit to encourage workforce development and ease the financial burden of higher education for Pennsylvania families. The PA 529 tax credit allows for a 25% tax credit on employer contributions of up to \$500 per participating employee per year. This initiative encourages



employers to support their employees' educational savings, facilitating financial planning for future educational expenses.

"The 529 Act is an example of how we can, and must, work together to make progress for our families," said Friel. "By finding common ground, building bipartisan connections and remembering who we serve - the people of Pennsylvania - I'm proud that we are making saving for college or career training that much more accessible."

"Addressing the skills gap and strengthening our workforce starts with access to education," said Marcell. "By encouraging employers to invest in their employees' futures, this tax credit supports Pennsylvania families and builds a more skilled and educated workforce. We are making it easier for families to save for higher education, ensuring that our students have the opportunities they need to succeed."

"This tax credit is outstanding news. It will

encourage employers to help employees save with our tremendous PA 529 College and Career Savings Program and PA ABLE Savings Program for people with disabilities," said Pennsylvania Treasurer Stacy Garrity. "That will be a huge help to families across Pennsylvania, and by offering this new benefit, employers will become even more attractive places to work. I thank Rep. Friel and Rep. Marcell for their great work getting this tax credit enacted."

The PA 529 program, known for its flexibility and growing popularity, offers two savings plan options to cover various educational expenses, laying a strong foundation for the initiative. House Bill 1745 underscores the importance of workforce development in sustaining economic growth and competitiveness.

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Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Awards Grants To Support Education Projects

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) has awarded \$203,527 in grant funding to support 19 education projects in 17 counties that foster interest in fishing and boating in Pennsylvania through the R3 (recruitment, retention, and reactivation) Education Grant Program. One statewide project was also awarded. The R3 grants are awarded to recipients to help increase the number of anglers and boaters in Pennsylvania. Efforts include recruiting new participants, retaining existing participants, and reactivating former participants in fishing and boating recreation.

Last year, the PFBC awarded \$187,625 in grant funding to support 15 education projects in 11 counties and 2 statewide efforts.

"Providing the people of Pennsylvania with education and outreach opportunities for fishing and boating is paramount to the work of the Fish and Boat Commission. Having trusted partners who carry out and believe in the work, too, means more people will experience all Pennsylvania's waterways have to offer," said Kim Garris, PFBC Director of Outreach, Education and Marketing. "This grant program supports our partners' work to get and keep people involved in

fishing and boating, promoting healthier lifestyles and a love and appreciation of the natural world."

Recipients of the PFBC R3 Education Grant successfully applied for and demonstrated ways in which their new or expanded projects progress R3 initiatives and connect Pennsylvanians with Commonwealth waterways. Funds awarded through the grant program will be used to purchase equipment and educational resources, provide transportation, and cover other costs associated with the development and delivery of R3 education programs.

All projects funded for this round of grants must be completed by June 30, 2025.

The 2024 R3 Education Grants include (by county):

- Allegheny: Steel City Rowing Club, Paddling Fleet Revitalization
- Allegheny: Venture Outdoors, Inc., Vamos Afuera, Pittsburgh
- Blair: Claysburg-Kimmel School District, Female-Friendly Fly-Fishing Trip
- Butler: Seneca Valley School District, SV Fishery
- Centre: Bellefonte Area School District, Back to Nature Fly Fishing and Fly Tying
- Chester: Stroud Water Research Center, Inc.,



Connecting Youth and Families to Boating and Angling Opportunities in Local Public Parks

-Clarion: Clarion Conservation District, The Wonderful World of Fishes

-Crawford: Conneaut School District, CAMS

Fishing for Fun

-Fayette: Mountain Watershed Association Inc., Expanding Access to Outdoor Recreation: Engaging Youth and Families in Fishing & Boating Activities in the Youghiogheny River Watershed

-Forest: Forest Area

School District, Forest Area School District Stream and River Exploration

-Lackawanna/Wayne: Camp Freedom Inc., Camp Freedom Freshwater Fishing Project

-Lancaster: Glossbrenner United Methodist Church, Glossbrenner Experiential, Adventure and Responsible Unique Pursuits - Department of Experiential Education & Programming (GEAR-UP/DEEP)

-Lawrence: Ellwood City Area School District, Reel Adventures: Hands-On Fishing Seminar for Ellwood City Students

-Montgomery: College Settlement of Philadelphia, Second Century of Fishing on Friendship Lake- Teaching Thousands of Underserved Youth and Girls How to Fish

-Montgomery: Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy, Floating Classroom Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program 2.0

-Montour: Danville Area School District, Danville High School Fly Fishing Club

-Potter: Northern Potter School District, Northern Potter Fly Fishing Club: Casting Connections - Exploring Fly Fishing and Tying Together

Statewide: Pennsylvania Trout, Inc., Supporting & Expanding Trout in the Classroom

Westmoreland: Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited, Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited Education and Outreach Programs for Schools, Scouts, Adults, Military Veterans and First Responders

More information on the R3 Education Grant Program can be found on the PFBC website (FishandBoat.com).

Slate Belt Heritage Center Presents August Program Titled "Scuba Diving in the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers"



The Slate Belt Heritage Center will present an interesting program titled "Scuba Diving in the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers" on Thursday, August 8th @ 7:00 PM. Speaker Joe Fiorention will share his experiences scuba diving in the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers and speak about the wildlife and history of popular diving sites. Topics to be shared include the wildlife in the Delaware Water Gap, remains of the collapsed bridge from the 1955 Floods under the Northampton Street Bridge (Free Bridge) in Easton and prohibition era artifacts from the Lehigh River in Bethlehem. Joe Fiorention is an accomplished SCUBA instructor and shipwreck explorer. He has led divers to many of the popular wrecks off the coast of New Jersey, as well as expeditions to Nova Scotia Canada to locate colonial shipwrecks as part of an archeological team. Joe is a PADI Master SCUBA Diver Trainer, a National Member of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Explorers Club and a Washington Township resident. The program is free and open to the public. The Heritage Center is located at 30 North 1st Street, Bangor, PA. For additional information please contact: Karen Brewer at 484-894-5661.

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Women With Ovarian Cancer Explain Why They Support Approximately \$8 Billion J&J Talcum Powder Settlement Plan But Time is Running Out for Others to Vote to Support Plan Deadline to Vote is 5pm ET July 26th

(NAPSI)—Women suffering from ovarian cancer after using Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) talcum powder products want others and their families to know that a critical deadline is approaching for victims of these products. They are urging the tens of thousands who contracted cancer as a result of using J&J talcum powder to take advantage of a unique opportunity and vote for an approximately \$8 billion settlement plan that would resolve years of fruitless litigation.

But time is quickly running out: the vote deadline is 5pm ET on July 26.

Nonnie Hightower, 53, of Milwaukee used J&J baby powder her whole life before getting ovarian cancer.

"We put it on our babies, used it to smell better, even to slip into form-fitting clothes in the 90's! Now I'm angry - for myself, for my daughter, and for my granddaughter. I wonder if I potentially harmed my own family by using baby powder on them. Battling cancer while raising my granddaugh-

ter was grueling. I'm supporting this settlement because there are many women waiting for justice, and financially, I need to."

A group of attorneys from across the country, The Ad Hoc Group of Supporting Counsel, representing more than 77,500 individuals harmed by J&J talcum powder products, is also urging claimants to take immediate action and vote for this historic talcum powder settlement before the deadline.

Under the J&J plan, ovarian cancer clients are likely to receive an average recovery of between \$75,000 and \$150,000, according to the disclosure statement submitted by J&J in support of the plan.

J&J and a subsidiary have agreed to pay approximately \$8 billion over 25 years (\$6.475 billion net present value) to people who were harmed by talcum powder products. The plan provides a way for people to receive compensation without the time and expense of going to trial. But 75% of the claimants voting on the plan must vote to support the plan

for it to move ahead.

People who believe they are sick from using J&J products containing talc (such as J&J Baby Powder and Shower to Shower) can vote on the plan by visiting www.OfficialTalcClaims.com or calling 1-888-431-4056 to learn more and request a solicitation package to determine whether they can vote on the Plan.

Tamika Evans, 47, of Chicago used J&J baby powder daily from age 13 until she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

"I thought it was safe and used it to stay dry and during sports. I loved the smell. Now, after five years of chemotherapy and missing out on work and family activities, I'm glad it's no longer for sale. I had to cut back on medical care because it got too expensive. I was forced to quit my job making medical supplies because of being sick. I support this settlement because it's about more than money - it's about acknowledging the impact on our lives."

"It's a highly democratic and efficient process

that gives our clients a voice, for the first time, about whether the plan goes through or someone else decides for them," said Anne Andrews, a member of the Ad Hoc Group and Founding and Managing Partner of Newport, CA-based law firm Andrews & Thornton.

Andrews represents Hightower and Evans and more than 10,500 other J&J talc victims. They have waited through years of frustrating and fruitless litigation with the global corporation.

Anna Maria Sanderford, 62, from Florence, Arizona, also represented by Andrews, says her mother used J&J talcum powder on her and her siblings growing up. She used it on her sons and herself as well.

"In the six years since my cancer diagnosis, my recovery has been long and slow. We need to get this settlement done so we can go on with our lives and do what we want with the time we have left. It's especially important for women of my generation who used talcum powder the longest. We're the ones who

have suffered the most. I don't want the legal process over a settlement to continue to drag on and use up even more of my time. I want to enjoy the life I have left."

"Without the settlement through the bankruptcy, it will take decades more for claimants to litigate their cases, with no recovery unless they win," said Andrews. "These women are growing sicker by the day and some have already died while waiting years for justice. I also urge the families who've lost a grandmother, sister, daughter or others to participate on behalf of their loved ones who've already passed away."

Rhonda McKey, 54, of Zachary, Louisiana, another client of Andrews, says baby powder was a part of her life since she was a baby but that now, after battling cancer, her life has completely changed.

"I've gone from being self-employed to being on disability, unable to work as I did before. Now, I'm not able to physically or financially help my family as I had wanted to and planned for. I support this settle-

ment because I've seen companies take years to resolve these issues. For those of us still here, it's important that J&J follows through. I don't want to just survive. I want to live. But it's not just about me—it's for all the women who have suffered, and for the families who have lost loved ones."

Plaintiffs with ovarian cancer cases have lost approximately 95% of cases tried against J&J to date, including every ovarian cancer case brought to trial in the last six years, according to Andrews. "Without the settlement through this plan, it will take decades for claimants to litigate their cases, with no recovery unless they win."

Andrews, Hightower, Evans, Sanderford and McKey urge claimants to take immediate action and vote for this historic talcum powder settlement before the 5pm ET on July 26 deadline by visiting www.OfficialTalcClaims.com or calling 1-888-431-4056 to learn more and request a solicitation package to determine whether they can vote on the Plan.

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NJDEP Commissioner Latourette, Epa Administrator Garcia And I-Bank Officials Mark Billion-Dollar Water Infrastructure Milestone

The New Jersey Water Bank, a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank that provides low-cost financing for projects to improve local clean- and drinking-water infrastructure, has for the first time surpassed \$1 billion in fiscal year project financing, Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette, EPA Regional Administrator Lisa Garcia and Infrastructure Bank officials announced recently.

Our Waters Worth It Logo In Fiscal Year 2024, which concluded June 30, the Water Bank provided financing for 116 clean water projects (wastewater and storm-water treatment) totaling \$838 million and financing for 31 drinking water projects, totaling \$240 million. These projects represent a combined \$1.078 billion in infrastructure financing. The previous record was \$769.5 million in Fiscal Year 2021.

This record funding is being used to replace lead and galvanized service lines, install PFAS treatment systems, mitigate stormwater discharges, address combined sewer overflows, upgrade wastewater treatment, reduce flood-

ing, and more. The announcement was made during a news conference in Irvington, where New Jersey American Water has been using more than \$48 million in Water Bank financing to replace some 5,000 lead and galvanized residential service lines.

"In order to combat the effects of climate change, we must ensure the resilience of water infrastructure in the state," said Governor Phil Murphy. "With \$1 billion of new project financing, New Jersey's Water Bank is making transformational progress in securing our water resources to guarantee the safety of drinking water supplies and protecting public health. By funding these critical projects, we can support the health and wellness of New Jerseyans and provide vital support to communities that need it most."

"Safe and reliable water infrastructure is critical to the vitality of our communities," Commissioner LaTourette said. "This record-setting, billion-dollar investment in our water infrastructure throughout the state demonstrates the high level of commitment that our local governments and water systems are making to protect public health and the environment. It also underscores the proud and productive



partnership between the Murphy Administration and the Biden-Harris Administration to enhance the quality of life and create jobs through infrastructure investments."

It also points to the importance the Murphy Administration places on protecting water supplies. The DEP launched the Our Water's Worth It campaign earlier this year to raise public awareness about the fundamental importance of our water supplies, the threats they face, and the steps DEP is taking to ensure all New Jerseyans have access to clean drinking water and healthy waterways.

Billion-dollar Water Infrastructure Milestone "This project is a perfect example of the historic federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law providing vital funds to New Jersey to ensure that our communities,

and especially our children, have safe and lead-free drinking water," said Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia. "EPA is happy to partner with New Jersey as we prioritize getting the lead out. There is no safe level of lead exposure, and we know that the primary source of harmful exposure in drinking water is through lead pipes."

"This year's loan production is impressive not only for the sheer magnitude of the New Jersey residents impacted by the financed projects, but also for the number of construction-related jobs employing thousands of women and men across the State," I-Bank Chairman Robert Briant Jr. said. "The Water Bank makes the construction of water projects affordable, particularly for our State's disadvantaged communities. I want to thank the DEP and the I-Bank for their efforts

in creating a healthier environment for all New Jersey residents and fostering economic growth in the state."

"The accomplishments of the New Jersey Water Bank during this past fiscal year are a testament to the policies, effective collaboration and dedication of every federal, state, and local government employee involved in this program," said I-Bank Executive Director David Zimmer. "Providing low-cost and affordable funding to more than \$1 billion of projects for critical water infrastructure is a vital investment in safe drinking water, clean waterways, and a better quality of life for our communities."

"New Jersey American Water's lead service line replacement program prioritizes underserved communities first, and partnering with the I-Bank on these projects helps us double-down on that commitment," said New Jersey American Water Vice President of Operations Ben Morris. "Through I-Bank financing, we have been able to increase the speed and amount of lead service line replacements in Irvington, as well as eight additional overburdened communities we serve in the state, without increasing the cost for our customers."

Billion-dollar Water Infrastructure Milestone "Distributing \$1

billion in State Revolving Funds for water infrastructure projects over the last year is a significant accomplishment," said Deandrah Cameron, Policy Manager for New Jersey Future. "It is particularly fitting that the final project is a lead service line replacement in Irvington. Lead is a hazardous toxin that poses severe health risks, especially to our most vulnerable populations, and disproportionately affects black and brown communities. Its effects are irreversible; lead poisoning is 100% preventable. We must commend and acknowledge those who work tirelessly to safeguard the health and well-being of our communities. The Jersey Water Works and Lead-Free NJ collaborators are committed to centering the needs of communities impacted by lead service lines and assisting municipalities and water systems in pursuing a lead-free environment that ensures public health and safety. The strong partnership between communities and the state is why we are proud to be a national leader in lead abatement as a White House Get the Lead Out Partnership member. We support New Jersey communities by elevating these outstanding partnerships as best practices for the rest of New Jersey cities as we (continued on pg 9)

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NJDEP...Billion-Dollar Water Infrastructure Milestone (CONTINUED)

continue to lead the nation.”

FY 2024 Project Highlights

Examples of projects that received Water Bank financing in state fiscal year 2024 include:

The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission received more than \$116 million to increase treatment capacity for the purpose of reducing discharges of combined sewer overflows that impact surface water quality in the area. Construction began in March of this year and is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2028.

The city of Camden received \$55 million for the construction of granular activated carbon to treat PFAS and 1,4-dioxane and to upgrade the Morris-Delair Water Treatment Facility. Construction began in February and is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

The Bayshore Regional Sewerage Authority received \$31 million to construct backup power generation to the sewerage authority and the Monmouth County Bayshore Outfall Authority to safely treat and dispose of wastewater during prolonged power

outages.

New Jersey American Water received more than \$25 million to expand replacements of lead service lines in Irvington. Combined with financing for a 2022 project, the Water Bank has provided more than \$48 million in financing for the replacement of more than 5,000 lead and galvanized service lines in Irvington. Work is expected to be completed by the end of next year.

The city of Trenton received more than \$9 million to replace approximately 1,000 lead and galvanized service lines with copper lines. Construction is expected to begin soon and be completed by July 2026.

The Jersey City MUA received \$9.8 million to replace additional lead service lines in the city. Combined with financing received in FY 2023, the Water Bank has provided more than \$21 million for the replacement of approximately 1,600 lead service lines in Jersey City. Construction began in July 2023 and is expected to be completed by June 2025.

The full \$1 billion in project closings for 2024 can be found at the DEP’s Water Infrastruc-

ture Dashboard. Based on the current application pipeline, the Water Bank expects to again exceed \$1 billion in project financing in the current fiscal year. Last month, the Murphy Administration launched an interactive website to assist the public in tracking billions of dollars of overall Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investments in New Jersey.

Building on a History of Infrastructure Investments

Providing New Jersey residents with safe and reliable water is a top priority of the Murphy Administration and Commissioner LaTourette. The DEP works hard every day on programs that protect the long-term viability and safety of water supplies, with a focus on overburdened communities that may have some of most pressing infrastructure needs in New Jersey. Much of New Jersey’s water infrastructure, which was first developed in the nineteenth century, now faces new challenges, such as protecting the public from emerging contaminants that include per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

In January 2022, the

Murphy Administration launched the state’s \$1 billion Water Infrastructure Investment Plan (WIIP), an innovative effort to address the state’s water infrastructure challenges through short and long-term investments that will create good-paying jobs while advancing the state’s environmental justice and climate resilience goals. The WIIP is fueled by federal State Revolving Fund funding through the EPA. This funding received a historic boost from the landmark Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The WIIP builds on a strong tradition of infrastructure investment in New Jersey going back nearly four decades. The New Jersey Water Bank administers New Jersey’s State Revolving Fund programs and is a partnership between the DEP and the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank, also known as the I-Bank. The I-Bank is an independent state financing authority that provides and administers low-interest loans to qualified municipalities, counties, regional authorities, and water purveyors to finance water, transportation, and recently, resilient infrastructure projects.

The New Jersey Water Bank administers two programs, the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (focused on drinking water infrastructure and technologies) and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (focused on public wastewater and stormwater systems). The Water Bank provides below-market financing by offering borrowers principal forgiveness combined with zero-percent interest rate loans through the DEP and advantageous loan rates from the I-Bank’s AAA-rated bond proceeds. On average, borrowers are able to save more than 30 percent of their total financing costs by borrowing through the Water Bank.

The success of the Water Bank’s low-cost financing program involves the coordination of three different state agencies and authorities under Governor Murphy. The DEP oversees technical review and approval of projects, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs oversees budget and bonding approval and fiscal oversight of local borrowers, and the I-Bank oversees credit, legal, bond issuance and loan administration.



Since 1987, the Water Bank has made more than \$10 billion in short-term and long-term loans to local water systems, saving participating borrowers more than \$3.3 billion and creating more than 177,000 direct construction jobs.

The record loan production for Fiscal Year 2024 is meaningful not only for the sheer magnitude of funded projects, but also because these funds are reaching disadvantaged and overburdened communities targeted by the Murphy Administration in the form of principal forgiveness funding. This is making critical infrastructure projects affordable, positioning these communities for a healthier environment and economic growth.

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Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



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Hello, fellow readers,
An exchange about the probable causes of an abundance of acorns dropping early leads to lessons in letting go, thanks to Chris from Blairstown, NJ, who asked if I ever saw acorns fall this early.

«Our trees in the back started dropping them about three or four weeks ago, and not a few, a lot.»

I hadn't noticed an abundance of acorns falling early, but a few always do. Oak trees have two rounds of dropping acorns, the first in the summer, dropping less viable or diseased acorns—a way of shedding those weighing them down. And in the fall, the mature acorns

drop. Chris sent photos of the dilemma; indeed, an overabundance of early dropped acorns are on his lawn. Perhaps the trees are shedding a surplus developed during the wet spring.

Or perhaps Spongy Moths, formerly called Gypsy Moths, could be the culprit as they defoliated trees in nearby areas. But Chris confirmed his oaks were not touched. Native to Eurasia, unlike many unfavorable insects that arrive here accidentally, Spongy Moths (*Lymantria dispar disparla*) were brought here intentionally in the 1860s as a possible source of silk fiber when the traditional silk moth became diseased at the same time that the Civil War affected the production of cotton crops.

A side note on the name change: the Entomological Society of America dropped the common names of the Gypsy Moth and the Gypsy Ant because "the names are inappropriate and offensive. The Romani people, or Roma, are Europe's largest ethnic minority and face discrimination. Gypsy is considered a pejorative term."



I always thought that the definition of a gypsy is somebody who moves from place to place in an adventurous kind of way. My mother called me a gypsy when I moved often as a young person, bringing my belongings and sending others forward through UPS. Names can mean

something favorable to one group and offensive to another.

Gypsy Moths are now called Spongy Moths due to their spongy egg masses. A favorite host is Oak, though they love to feed on many species of trees. In June, my clients' oak trees in Glen Spey, NY,

were leafless. I'll have to give them a ring and see if they have immature acorns all over the ground, too. It would make sense so the trees could put their energy into growing new leaves. Trees are indeed resilient, and they know what to let go of.

Acorns can drop early due to extreme weather conditions like our long run of excessive heat and dryness. The same is true for leaves.

Yesterday, while walking on the Paulinskill Rail Trail, I noticed golden leaves dropping from trees, shedding those that served their time. We can parallel the same concept in our lives, letting go of things that take too

much energy from our bodies or souls. I struggle with that and tend to hold on to things longer than I likely should, although being committed to routines, your work, and relationships is a good thing. But when they drain you, it's time to reevaluate.

What about you? Do you have difficulty shedding the old to make room for the new, or in the case of the oak trees, shedding the new that is a strain to sustaining your health? It's something to think about.

"Letting go takes a lot of courage sometimes. But once you let go, happiness comes very quickly"—powerful words by Thich Nhat Hanh, a well-known Vietnamese monk whose wisdom helped improve the world and still does with his writings left behind.

We can learn much from nature. We can let go of things that harm us while being kind and understanding that there are waves of hardships in people's lives. As we endure them, we can hold on to the expectation that after every storm, the sun will shine, and in that comes great hope.

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Charitable Impact Soars: Fidelity Bank and FNCB Bank Balloon Battle Fundraiser Makes Waves

The city of Dunmore and two local community banks, Fidelity Bank and FNCB Bank, hosted a “Bankers’ Balloon Battle” to raise funds for charity. The event took place at Dunmore Corners on Friday, June 28th.

Bankers from FNCB Bank and Fidelity Bank contributed funds for the chance to join the battle. In a lighthearted spirit, the two organizations drenched their “rival” by launching close to 3,000 water balloons into the air. Dunmore’s Mayor, Max Conway, presided over the event as emcee and judge, ultimately declaring the contest a friendly draw as both banks ended up equally soaked.

The recent event successfully raised \$1,854, all of which has been generously donated to Bread Basket of NEPA, a charitable organization that supports seven local food pantries. Bread Basket of NEPA is dedicated to serving individuals,



families, and Veterans throughout Lackawanna County, striving to combat hunger within our community.

The check presentation ceremony featured representatives from Fidelity Bank, FNCB Bank, the city of Dunmore, and volunteers from Bread Basket of NEPA.

“Through this contest, we view it as a stellar demonstration of our collective achievements,” remarked Daniel J. Santaniello, President and CEO of Fidelity Bank.

“While FNCB Bank is our friendly competition, ultimately, we are united by our commitment to community service. This event provided an enjoyable and inventive opportunity for us to collaborate and support an organization that delivers essential services to our region.”

“We are thrilled to have participated in such a fun and meaningful event,” said Jerry Champi, President & CEO of FNCB Bank. “This friendly competition with Fidelity

Bank not only brought our community together but also supported a cause that is close to our hearts. The funds raised for Bread Basket of NEPA will make a significant impact on the lives of those in need throughout Lackawanna County. We are proud to stand alongside our fellow bankers and community members in this effort to combat hunger and support our local food pantries.”

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continues its mission of exceeding client expectations through a unique banking experience. It operates 21 full-service offices throughout Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lehigh, and Northampton Counties, along with a limited production commercial office in Luzerne County and a Fidelity Bank Wealth Management Office in Schuylkill County. Fidelity Bank provides a digital banking experience online at www.bankatfidelity.com, through the Fidelity Mo-

bile Banking app, and in the Client Care Center at 1-800-388-4380. Part of the Company’s vision is to serve as the best bank for the community, which was accomplished by having provided over 4,100 hours of volunteer time and over \$1.7 million in donations to non-profit organizations directly within the markets served throughout 2022. Fidelity Bank’s deposits are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation up to the full extent permitted by law.

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When Planning International Travel, Measles Vaccination is Peace of Mind for the Whole Family

By Dr. David Sugerman (NAPSI)—As a parent, I know that preparing for international travel with kids is more than just packing a suitcase. Whether we are visiting relatives we haven't

seen for a long time or helping our children see the world, we all can agree that protecting our family's health is the top priority. As a doctor, I know that beyond sorting out missing socks and packing suit-

cases, there is another important step to prepare for international travel: measles vaccination. Your whole family needs to be protected by measles vaccination, including babies as young as six months old.

While the risk for measles in the U.S. remains thankfully low due to high rates of immunization, measles can occur anywhere in the world, and you can be exposed during international travel. Every year, U.S. residents who are unvaccinated get measles while traveling internationally and get sick after they come home, often spreading it to others. Measles is more than just a little rash; it's a serious disease that can cause severe complications, especially in young children. Measles is also highly contagious. If one person has it, up to 9 out of 10 people nearby can become infected if they are not vaccinated.

The good news is that two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine provide

safe, long-lasting protection against measles. While most children receive their first dose of MMR vaccine around 1 year old, babies as young as six months old who are traveling overseas should get an early dose to help protect them when they are the most vulnerable. And while most children get their 2nd dose after the age of 4, children between 1 and 4 years of age should get a 2nd dose before traveling internationally to provide the best protection.

Why risk being exposed away from home when you can protect the whole family by vaccination? It takes about two weeks to develop protection from the vaccine, so now is the time to plan before you take a trip. If your trip is less than 2 weeks

away, you can still get a dose of MMR vaccine. As a reminder, college kids or young adults traveling might need a dose, too, if they didn't get all of them as a child. As a doctor, I hope you will talk with your own doctor, nurse, or clinic about measles vaccination to protect the whole family. As a dad, I might never find that missing sock—but I'll have peace of mind knowing my family is protected from disease by vaccination.

You can learn more about measles vaccination and how to plan for travel here at: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/travel/index.html>.

• Dr. David Sugerman is a medical officer in the Division of Viral Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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Henry Yeska & Son Septic Service Hiring CDL Drivers Class A & B and Laborers. Full time & part time available. Experience preferred but not required. Will train on the job. Please call the office at 610-759-3290. TS

Saturday & Day Shift Servers Wanted At Hunter's Lodge in New Jersey Please Call 610-888-6613

NOW HIRING FOR 2024 SEASON! Ground Men, Climbers & CDL Drivers Needed Call Us at 570-807-7746

Part Time Tree Helper Wanted! Must Have Valid DL. Call 610-588-1034 TS

HELP WANTED PART TIME FIREWOOD SPLITTER
Call Today: 610-588-1034

Safety Positions Needed

- Construction Safety Manager
- Forklift Instructor
- Crane & Rigging Instructor

Part Time Local Travel Ideal for retired professionals! Reply to: billie0215@gmail.com

Part time Outdoor Educators Wanted! Training Provided. Flexible hours. Pays \$17/hr. Call Sara at 908-362-8217.

Firewood

Seasoned Firewood \$190/cord \$95/half cord 570-202-6902

Firewood for Sale. \$120 pick up truck load. Call Craig Wickett at 610-599-6882. Pick Up Only No Delivery!

Firewood for sale \$200 a cord All different sizes 14, 16 or 18 inches long. Call 610-588-7513

Firewood for Sale. Mixed Seasoned Hardwoods, \$450 per dump truck load, aprox 1 3/4 cord, Free Delivery within a 10mi. radius. Call Craig Wickett at 610-442-2996 or 610-599-6882.

Firewood Cut-Split-Delivered \$210 a Cord 570-202-6902

For Sale

Vintage Craftsman 100 Table Saw with Stand. Complete. Works. Fence & Miter Incl. 1HP Motor. All Original. \$300/obo Call Dan at 973-670-7826

Free

Bi-Fold Futon, wooden frame. Red & Black Cushion. Lightly Used in Great Condition. FREE for Pickup! 610-573-6257

Rentals

Office/Retail Space for Rent Heat, AC, Water, Sewer, & Garbage Included. \$550/mo. William St., Pen Argyl. Call 484-330-0093

10 x 20 Garage for Rent! Electric Overhead Door w/ Concrete Floor. \$125/mo. William St., Pen Argyl. Call 484-330-0093



Safety Positions Needed!

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- Crane & Rigging Instructor

Part Time, Local Travel, Ideal for Retired Professionals!
Reply to: billie0215@gmail.com



Classified Ad Order Form

Non-commercial classified ads (Misc., Vehicles, Recreation, Wanted, Pets, Yard Sales) are \$5 per week, per inch (1.8" W x 1" H). There is no charge for Free items. Services, Rentals, Real Estate, Homes For Sale and Help Wanted ads are \$15 per week, per inch. Please specify the category in which your ad should appear, the size your ad should be (boxes on right), and how many weeks your ad will run. Please PRINT ad information.

Ads with Photos! \$18

NAME: _____
PHONE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CATEGORY: _____

One inch (actual size shown here)

WEEKS RUNNING: _____ AMOUNT PAID: _____
Please PRINT Your Ad Information Below

Two inches (actual size shown here)

CLASSIFIEDS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN NOON ON FRIDAY IN ORDER TO BE PRINTED IN THE UPCOMING EDITION.

All classified ads must be paid in full, in advance. Credit cards are NOT accepted for charges less than \$25 Classifieds may be submitted by mail **PO BOX 606, Bangor, PA 18013** email: thepressads@gmail.com or fax: 610-599-1185. Classifieds are NOT accepted by phone Help Wanted ads are free for current advertisers.

Make Checks Payable to: The Free Weekly Press, LLC

SBRPD INVITES YOU :

FOOD TRUCKS
K9 DEMO
DUNK TANK
MUSIC & FUN!

MUSIC BY: **ROCKIN' RAMALEY**

AUGUST 6TH FROM 4PM-8PM
WIND GAP PARK - FREE TO ATTEND

ATTENTION

PUBLIC NOTICE

Monday, August 5th, 7pm

Frelinghuysen Will Hold Their Land Use Board Meeting At: 139 Lincoln Laurel Road, Blairstown, NJ

Decisions And Public Comments Will Be Made Regarding The Installation Of An Industrial Cannabis Factory In Frelinghuysen, NJ, On Rt. 94 Near The Elementary School

Relax

Let us handle your advertising needs, so you can spend more time doing the things you love!
Quick, Easy, and Effective - Contact Melissa Today

thepressads@gmail.com

Special Pricing Now - Aug 24th

NEW AD SPECIALS

- 1/4pg Ads ONLY \$125**
Reg. Starting Price - \$225
- 3x5 Ads ONLY \$95**
Reg. Starting Price - \$137
- 3x3 Ads ONLY \$68**
Reg. Starting Price - \$83

Regular Advertisers May Size Up For Special Pricing Just Ask!