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# PRESS



February 20, 2025

GOD BLESS AMERICA

Vol. 52, No. 31



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## Slate Belt Heritage Center Announces March Program



Join us at the Slate Belt Heritage Center, on Sunday, March 9th at 2pm for our March historic educational program: "From Bangor, PA to Bangor, Wales: Marching to Harlech". Speaker John Reinhart will lead the audience through the synergy that led Bangor Area High School Slater Marching Band on a historical trip to Bangor, Wales in 2007. Approximately 500 students, parents, neighbors and staff members from the Bangor Area School District boarded planes and headed to the United Kingdom on a journey known as: A Tribute To Heroes Tour. Mr. Reinhart is the former Superintendent of the Bangor Area School District. The event is free and open to the public. The Center is located at 30 North 1st Street, Bangor, PA. For additional information please contact: Karen Brewer at 484-894-5661.

## Peterson Presses State Police over Murphy Claims of Shielding Illegal Immigrants from ICE

Assemblyman Erik Peterson sent a letter Thursday to Col. Patrick Callahan, superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, demanding answers about Gov. Phil Murphy's alarming claims that he used his taxpayer-funded security detail to shield illegal immigrants from federal immigration authorities.

At a public event at Montclair State University Saturday, Murphy said that he and the first lady were housing an illegal migrant above their garage and openly challenged federal authorities, saying, "Good luck to the feds coming in to try and get her." The governor's office

later walked back the remarks, calling them "misinterpreted," but Peterson points out that this is not the first time Murphy has made such claims.

"Following the election, [Murphy] told reporters that during the Trump administration, he visited an area 'at risk' for ICE raids with his security detail and 'just hung out there,'" Peterson wrote in his letter. "He added, 'Whether that scared them off, I don't know, but it gives you a sense that we're willing to try anything if it's contrary to our values.' These statements strongly suggest that the ICE cont'd on pg 4

## North Warren Wins Over Pioneer Academy In Wrestling



North Warren took on Pioneer Academy in Wrestling on February 10th. North Warren won, 54 to 14. Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## Parenting Workshops Offered at Project Self-Sufficiency



Parents and caregivers are invited to attend free in-person parenting skills workshops and groups at Project Self-Sufficiency to learn practical strategies for addressing common parenting challenges with children. The sessions will help participants identify their parenting goals, manage behavioral problems, and promote healthy child development by using the Triple P Positive Parenting Program, a comprehensive education initiative targeted to parents, healthcare professionals, educators, and caregivers of infants, toddlers, and school-age children.

In-person sessions will be held at 5:00 p.m. at Project Self-Sufficiency; pizza and childcare will be available. Attendees will receive a gift card for participating.

- Targeted parenting workshops will address a wide range of topics, including:
  - The Power of Positive Parenting, March 4th
  - Raising Resilient Children, March 11th
  - Raising Confident, Competent Children, March 18th
  - Developing Good Bedtime Routines, April 8th
  - Hassle-Free Mealtimes with Children, April 15th

- Managing Fighting & Aggression, April 22nd
- Dealing with Disobedience, April 29th

Parents who want to learn positive parenting strategies are encouraged to attend an in-person group course on Thursdays, March 13th – April 3rd, 5:00 p.m. For those who need personalized assistance, one-on-one coaching with experienced parenting skills educators is also available by appointment.

"The Triple P workshops and classes will give parents, caregivers, and educators simple and practical strategies to help build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage children's behavior, and reduce stress," explains Project Self-Sufficiency Executive Director Deborah Berry-Toon.

Interested participants are invited to call Project Self-Sufficiency, 973-940-3500, or register online, <https://www.projectsufficiency.org/parenting-classes>.

# New in the Bangor Public Library

February 7, 2025 to February 13, 2025

**Adult Fiction:** Love Redesigned by Lauren Asher; Tartufo by Kira Jane Buxton; Mask of the Deer Woman by Laurie L. Dove; Junie: A Novel by Erin Crosby Eckstine; The Oligarch's Daughter: A Novel by Joseph Finder; Isola: A Novel by Allegra Goodman; Grave Danger: Jack Swytek Novel by James Grippando; Deep End by Ali Hazelwood; Last Twilight in Parish by Pam Jenoff; The Dark Hours by Amy Jordan; Open Season by Jonathan Kellerman; The Bones Beneath My Skin by TJ Klune; Harlem Rhapsody by Victoria Christopher Murray; The Inheritance by Trisha Sakhlecha; This is a Love Story: A Novel by Jessica Soffer; Good Dirt: A Novel by Charmaine Wilkerson

**Adult Non Fiction:** Memorial Days by Geraldine Brooks; A Walk in the Park: The True Story of a Spectacular Misdadventure in the Grand Canyon by Kevin Fedarko; Source Code: My Beginnings by Bill Gates; Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis by J. D. Vance; Three Wild Dogs (And the Truth): A Memoir by Markus Zusak

**Large Print Adult Fiction:** The Crash by Freida McFadden

**Easy Fiction:** Otis and the Scarecrow by Loren Long; The Adventures of Little Nutbrown Hare by Sam McBratney; Me and Other Bunnies by Mo Willems

**Easy Reader Fiction:** The Cozy Home: Three-And-A-Half Stories by Ame Dyckman

**Junior Fiction:** The Bad Guys in Attack of the Zittens by Aaron Blabey; Elmer and the Dragon by Ruth Stiles Gannett; carecrow Walks at Midnight by R. L. Stine; The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb by R. L. Stine; The Haunted Car by R. L. Stine; The Werewolf of Fever Swamp by R. L. Stine; Night of the Living Dummy by R. L. Stine; Let's Get Invisible! By R. L. Stine

**Junior Non Fiction:** Sharks: Predators of the Sea by Anna Claybourne; What Was the March on Washington? By Kathleen Krull; Who Was the First Man on the Moon?: Neil Armstrong by Nathan Page

**Young Adult Non Fiction:** The Hiding Place: A Graphic Novel by Mario Dematteo

**DVDs:** The Substance; Venom: The Last Dance; Wicked

## Budget Hearings Begin Next Week to Examine State Budget Proposal

Governor Shapiro's \$51.5 billion budget proposal represents a 7.5% increase in spending—\$3.6 billion more than the current year—without a clear plan to address Pennsylvania's structural deficit. While there are areas of shared interest, I am concerned that this proposal relies on overly optimistic revenue projections and unimplemented policies, while depleting our reserves and leaving the state vulnerable to future tax increases and service cuts.

Without more responsible budgeting, Pennsylvania could face a \$27.3

billion shortfall within five years, with the Rainy-Day Fund and existing savings completely depleted. Additionally, the budget leaves a \$4 billion gap next year without identifying sustainable funding sources, raising serious concerns about potential tax increases.

Pennsylvanians deserve a responsible, transparent budget that ensures long-term financial stability. It is important to remember that the state budget proposal is simply the starting point of the budget process. Beginning next week, my colleagues and I on the

Appropriations Committee will hold three weeks of budget hearings, starting Tuesday with the Department of Revenue, Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, State Police, Department of Health, Department of State, and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to craft a budget that protects taxpayers, strengthens our economy, and keeps our state on solid financial footing.

## Senate GOP Demand BPU Prioritize Affordability And Reassess Policies Related To Murphy Energy Plan

The New Jersey Senate Republican Caucus sent a letter to NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) President Christine Guhl-Sadovy, demanding the BPU to prioritize reliability and affordability amid the recent electric rate hike on New Jersey residents.

Having repeatedly warned that the Murphy Administration's Energy Master Plan would lead to higher costs for consumers, the caucus is also calling on the department to reassess its approach to future energy policies.

An excerpt from the letter reads:

"We realize part of the

blame for these higher rates are due to actions undertaken by PJM, but the energy policies championed by the Murphy administration are exacerbating an already untenable situation. The Board of Public Utilities must consider affordability whenever an electric utility seeks approval for additional rate hikes."

"More importantly, as the BPU works on the latest version of the Energy Master Plan, the board must rethink its policies of forcing the electrification of the building and transportation sectors. Requiring more costly electric vehicles and electric heat-

ing and cooling systems when ratepayers are facing ever increasing electric rates is simply bad public policy, which will have a deleterious impact on the State's residents and economy."

"The impact of these recent rate increases on New Jersey residents cannot be overstated. We have repeatedly warned the administration its detrimental energy policies would lead to higher electric costs for consumers."

You can read the full letter at: <https://www.senatenj.com/DocumentCenter/View/4514/Senate-GOP-Letter-to-BPU---Electricity-Costs>

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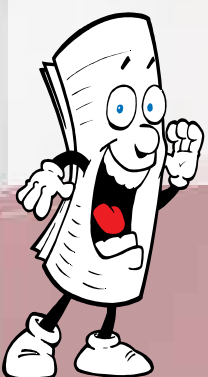
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## PUBLIC NOTICE

Upper Mount Bethel Township  
Northampton County, PA

The Upper Mount Bethel Township Board of Supervisors' will be having a Special Meeting on **Friday, February 21, 2025 at 7pm**. The purpose of the meeting is for a public discussion on the Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Plan.

The meeting is being held at the Upper Mount Bethel Township Municipal Building, located at 387 Ye Olde Highway, Mt. Bethel, PA 18343. The public is invited to attend.

Cindy Beck  
Township Secretary

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# Boscola Announces Nearly \$500,000 In State Funding For Fire Departments and EMS Providers

State Senator Lisa M. Boscola announced today that thirty-two grants were approved for fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) providers in the 18th Senatorial District totaling \$484,234.20 through the 2024-25 Fire Company and Emergency Medical Services (FCEMS) Grant Program, which is administered by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC).  
 "It is extremely important that our Commonwealth continue to provide critical financial assistance to the most vital organizations in our local communities: our fire and emergency medical services providers," Boscola said. "Our fire departments and EMS provide essential services

throughout our local communities that protect our citizens in their time of need."

In accordance with program guidelines for 2024-25 program, eligible projects for funding include facility construction or renovation, equipment, debt reduction, training, education, recruitment and retention, construction savings account (fire companies only), and overtime costs associated with backfilling positions while firefighters are attending training (career departments only).

Grants approved in Senator Boscola's District are as follows:

- City of Bethlehem – Fire - \$16,322.02
- City of Bethlehem – EMS - \$14,296
- Blue Valley Rescue



- Squad - \$12,018.46
- City of Easton Fire Department - \$16,322.02
- Columbia Fire Company - \$12,018.46
- Dewey Fire Company No 1 – Fire - \$15,676.48
- Dewey Fire Company No 1 – EMS -

- \$15,000
- East Bangor Volunteer Fire Co - \$12,233.63
- Easton Emergency Squad - \$10,000
- Hecktown Volunteer Fire Company No 1 - \$16,322.02
- Liberty Fire CPNY - \$12,018.46
- Lookout Fire Company No 1 - \$12,018.46
- Lower Mount Bethel/Sandts Eddy Fire Co - \$12,663.99
- Lower Saucon Fire Rescue - \$52,322.02
- Mount Bethel Vol Fire Company, Inc - \$13,094.35
- Nancy Run Fire Company of Butztown - \$8,394
- North Bangor Fire Company - \$12,879.17
- Palmer Municipal Fire Department -

- \$16,322.02
- Plainfield Township Volunteer Fire Co - \$15,676.48
- Portland Hook & Ladder Co #1 - \$12,018.46
- Rescue Fire Company #1 - \$12,448.81
- Second Ward Fire Company - \$12,448.81
- Suburban EMS Inc. - \$28,143
- Tatamy Fire Company - \$12,233.63
- Upper Nazareth Fire Department - \$15,030.95
- Vigilance Hose Company No 1 - \$16,106.84
- Washington Township Volunteer Fire Company - \$13,739.88
- West Easton Volunteer Fire Company No 1 - \$13,094.35
- Williams Township

- Fire Company #1 - \$14,170.24
  - Wilson Borough Fire Department - \$16,322.02
  - Wind Gap Ambulance Corps Inc - \$10,000
  - Wind Gap Fire Company - \$12,879.17
- Companies have until May 30, 2025, to submit their 2024-25 FCEMS Grant Agreements. More information on the Fire Company and Emergency Medical Services Grants program can be found online at <https://www.osfc.pa.gov/> or by contacting Senator Boscola's office at (610) 868-8667.

## Delaware Lehigh Amateur Club, Inc. Offers Free Classes To Obtain An Amateur License

The Delaware Lehigh Amateur Club, Inc. will offer free classes this spring for people who would like to obtain an amateur license. The class will run for 10 weeks and will prepare students to take the Federal Communications Commission's Amateur basic license examination.

Ham radio has played an important role in communications for more than 100 years and continues to do so. It is part of many emergency management plans because it

can be used to communicate if landline telephone lines, cell towers and/or electric grids fail.

It also is a fun hobby for people who enjoy talking with amateur operators locally and around the world, participating in contests and field days, and even making contact with the International Space Station.

According to the American Relay League (ARRL), the nationally recognized organization for operators, there are more than 700,000 amateur license holders in the

United States and more than 3 million worldwide.

Based in Nazareth, the Delaware Lehigh Amateur Club (DLARC) has more than 100 members. It is a non-profit 501(C)(3) charitable organization. Classes are offered as a community service.

The next session will begin on March 4. Classes will be held weekly on Tuesdays from 7-9 p.m at the Northampton County 911 Center. For details or to register, contact KE3AW@arrl.netnew or call 610-419-9286

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### The Greater Northern Lehigh Chamber, The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Community Unites to Raise \$12,065 for Local Fire Departments Amid Blue Mountain Blaze

The Greater Northern Lehigh Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce (GLVCC), organized a swift and successful emergency fundraiser in response to the ongoing Blue Mountain wildfire, which burned over 150 acres. This fundraiser aimed to provide critical support to local volunteer fire departments and emergency crews working tirelessly to contain the blaze under challenging conditions.

The wildfire, which initially started in Lehigh Township, rapidly spread due to dry weather conditions and strong winds, threatening local wildlife habitats, infrastructure, and natural resources. Emergency response teams from multiple counties, including Northampton, Lehigh, Carbon, and Berks, have been mobilized,



but the effort has placed a significant strain on local fire departments, which rely heavily on volunteers and tight budgets. While resources were not in short supply, the fire departments expressed that funds were urgently needed to cover the rising costs of fuel and machinery essential for battling the flames. This is where the community stepped up to show their support.

In a remarkable show of community support, local businesses and residents stepped in and stepped up, raising a combined total of \$12,065. The funds will be distributed by the Greater Northern Lehigh Chamber Board to the many regional fire departments within their footprint that responded and assisted during this emergency.

"We commend the

bravery and dedication of our local firefighters and first responders," said Jessica O'Donnell Gower, Executive Vice President of the Affiliated Chambers at the GLVCC. "The outpouring of support we've received from the community and our local businesses was heartwarming to see. So many come people coming together to help those who are working to protect our community."

The Greater Northern Lehigh Chamber will be presenting checks to the following fire departments for their hard work and support during this time:

- Lehigh Township Fire Company
- Germansville Fire Company
- Lynnport Fire Company
- New Tripoli Fire Company
- Laurys Station Fire

- Company
  - Schnecksville Fire Company
  - Neffs Fire Company
  - Tri-Clover Fire Company
  - Slatington Fire Department
  - Diamond Fire Company
  - Friedens Fire Company
  - Slatedale Fire Company
  - Emerald Fire Company
- The check presentation and photo opportunity will take place on Friday, February 21st, at 8:45 AM at The Neffs National Bank in Neffs, PA.

This fundraiser has been a major success, thanks to our community and the businesses who stepped up for others during this critical time. Together, we are showing the power of community spirit and how, when we unite, we can overcome any challenge!

# ICE

Continued from page 1

governor may have used his taxpayer-funded security detail to interfere with federal immigration enforcement operations."

Peterson is demanding clarity on whether the State Police have ever been involved in, directed to participate in, or are aware of any efforts by the governor to obstruct ICE operations. His letter includes the following questions:

- Has any member of the New Jersey State Police been involved in or made aware of Governor Murphy's claim that he housed an illegal immigrant?
- Has the State Police

ever been directed—implicitly or explicitly—to interfere with or deter federal immigration enforcement operations?

- Have state police resources ever been used to assist the governor in his efforts to challenge or obstruct federal immigration enforcement, such as the incident he described post-election?

- What measures are in place to ensure that the governor's protective detail remains neutral and is not used to advance political objectives?

"The New Jersey State Police should never be placed in the position of facilitating a political agenda," Peterson wrote. "Their duty is to protect the governor and uphold the law, not to shield individuals from lawful federal enforcement actions."

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# The Dark Days Of Winter Can Affect Your Mental Health, But Taking Care Of Your Body Can Combat Seasonal Affective Disorder.

By Lina Begdache

The annual pattern of winter depression and melancholy—better known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD—suggests a strong link between your mood and the amount of light you get during the day.

To put it simply: The less light exposure one has, the more one's mood may decline.

Wintertime blues are common, but about 10 million Americans are affected every year by a longer-lasting depression called seasonal affective disorder. Along with low mood, symptoms include anxious feelings, low self-esteem, longer sleep duration, constant craving for carbohydrates, and low physical activity levels.

I am a nutritional neuroscientist, and my research focuses on the effects of diet and lifestyle factors on mood and brain functions such as mental distress, resilience, and motivation.

Through my research, I have learned that seasonal affective disorder can strike anyone. However, people with a history of mood disorders are at a higher risk. In particular, young adults and women of all ages have an increased susceptibility.

Why seasonal depression happens

When daylight saving time ends each fall, the one-hour shift backward reduces the amount of light exposure most people receive in a 24-hour cycle. As the days get shorter, people can experience general moodiness or a longer-term depression that is tied to a shorter exposure to daylight.

This happens due to a misalignment between the sleep-wake cycle, eating schedules, and other daily tasks. Research shows that this mismatch may be associated with poor mental health outcomes, such as anxiety and depression.

Our sleep-wake cycle is



controlled by the circadian rhythm, an internal clock regulated by light and darkness. Like a regular clock, it resets nearly every 24 hours and controls metabolism, growth, and hormone release.

When our brain receives signals of limited daylight, it releases the hormone melatonin to support sleep—even though we still have hours left before the typical bedtime. This can then affect how much energy we have, and when and how much we eat. It can also alter the brain's ability to adapt to changes in environment. This process, called neuronal plasticity, involves the growth and organization of neural networks. This

is crucial for brain repair, maintenance, and overall function.

It is possible to readjust the circadian rhythm to better align with the new light and dark schedule. This means getting daylight exposure as soon as possible upon waking up, as well as maintaining sleep, exercise, and eating routines that are more in sync with your routine prior to the time change. Eventually, people can gradually transition into the new schedule.

The intimate connection between serotonin and melatonin

Serotonin is a chemical messenger in the brain that is a key player in regulating several functions,

such as mood, appetite, and the circadian rhythm. Serotonin also converts to melatonin with lower light intensity. As mentioned above, melatonin is a hormone that regulates the sleep-wake cycle and signals the brain that it's time to sleep.

Less daylight exposure during winter months leads to the conversion of serotonin into melatonin earlier in the evening, since it gets dark earlier. As a result, this untimely melatonin release causes a disruption in the sleep-wake cycle. For some people, this can cause moodiness, daytime sleepiness, and loss of appetite regulation, typically leading to unhealthy snacking. People with seasonal affective disorder often crave foods rich in simple sugars, such as sweets, because there is an intimate connection between carbohydrate consumption, appetite regulation, and sleep.

Strategies to combat the winter blues

In winter, most people leave work when it's turning dark. For this reason, light therapy is typically recommended for those who experience seasonal affective disorder, or even shorter periods of seasonal funk.

This can be as simple as getting some light shortly after awakening. Try to get at least one hour of natural light during the early

morning hours, preferably about one hour after your usual morning wake-up time when the circadian clock is most sensitive to light. This is true no matter what your wake-up time is, as long as it's morning. For people living at northern latitudes where there's very little sun in winter, light therapy boxes—which replicate outdoor light—can be effective.

You can also improve your sleep quality by avoiding stimulants like coffee, tea, or heavy meals close to bedtime. Exercising during the day is also good—it increases serotonin production and supports circadian regulation. A balanced diet of complex carbs and healthy proteins supports steady serotonin and melatonin production, and practicing downtime before bed can reduce stress.

Taking these small steps may help the circadian rhythm adjust faster. For the millions with mood disorders, that could mean happier times during what are literally the darkest days.

*This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article at: <https://theconversation.com/shorter-days-affect-the-mood-of-millions-of-americans-a-nutritional-neuroscientist-offers-tips-on-how-to-avoid-the-winter-blues-194417>*

## PHRC Discusses 2024 'No Hate in Our State' Report for Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) joined by state and local leaders at the state Capitol, discuss their newly released 2024 'No Hate in Our State' report, which details trending discrimination statistics throughout the Commonwealth. The speakers discussed programs and initiatives offered by the PHRC and others to help eliminate hate and build a community of support and understanding.

PHRC Executive Director Chad Dion Lassiter said, "As the Commonwealth's civil rights enforcement agency, it is our responsibility to not only investigate all complaints of discrimination, but to truly live up to our vision, 'that all people in Pennsylvania will live, work, and learn free

from unlawful discrimination.'"

In 2025, the PHRC will mark 70 years since its creation. It was crafted from two pieces of legislation, the Pennsylvania Fair Employment Act of 1955 (later changed to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act in 1997) and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act of 1961. In general, Pennsylvania law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age (40 and over), sex, national origin, familial status (only in housing), disability, and the use, handling, or training of support or guide animals for disability. Retaliation for filing a complaint, opposing unlawful behavior, or assisting investigations is also illegal.

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# NORTH WARREN (54) VS PIONEER ACADEMY (14) WRESTLING



Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



## CWD-Positive Detected In Carbon County

The Pennsylvania Game Commission today announced an additional CWD-positive deer has been detected in the northeastern part of the state.

The deer, an adult male, was detected in Packer Township, Carbon County. This detection is the first in Carbon County and is more than 10 miles from any other confirmed CWD-positive deer. The deer was found dead by a landowner and was severely emaciated.

An always-fatal neuro-

logical disease caused by a misfolded protein called a prion, CWD is a threat to deer and elk. It's classified as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) and is similar to scrapie in sheep, mad cow disease in cattle and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans.

CWD spreads through direct animal-to-animal contact, as well as indirectly through prion-contaminated environments. CWD-infected deer shed prions through saliva, urine and feces, and in-

fectured carcasses contribute to environmental contamination. Once in soil, CWD prions remain infectious for decades. Therefore, feeding deer is strongly discouraged and is illegal within existing DMAs.

There is no evidence of CWD infecting humans or other species under natural conditions. However, much is still unknown about CWD, therefore the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends not eating the meat of a

CWD-positive deer.

The Game Commission will host an informational meeting to answer any questions from the public. It is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 27, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Penn State Hazleton, Graham Building Room 115, Parking Lot F. Penn State Hazleton Campus address is 76 University Drive, Hazleton PA 18202. Contact the Game Commission's CWD Hotline at 1-833-INFOCWD, email INFOCWD@pa.gov or visit www.arcg.is/1G4TLr for more information.

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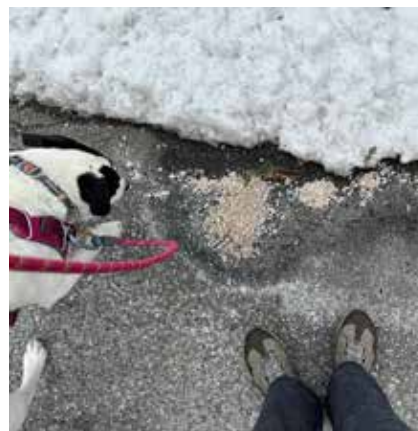
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Hello, fellow readers,  
Brine and road salt are not kind to concrete, though many paver manufacturers tout that theirs are resistant to both, primarily because they are made of high-density concrete, twice as strong and less absorbent as poured concrete. Still, the impact of road salt can be devastating, especially on plants, vehicles, and the environment. Thankfully, experimental alternatives are underway, and there are non-toxic home remedies.  
Road salt, also called rock salt or sodium chloride (NaCl), is a mi-

neral mined naturally. It is essentially the same as what's in our saltshakers, except it's less purified. It's only effective in melting snow and ice to about fifteen degrees. Below that, they add magnesium chloride or calcium chloride. And it's the chloride ions that cause much of the environmental damage, dehydrating plants and killing small aquatic organisms. It also corrodes our cars and hurts our canine kids' feet. However, calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is safe for natural stones and our pets' paws.  
We've all noticed the white lines of brine municipalities apply, cheaper than rock salt. It doesn't bounce off the road, can be sprayed before a storm, and remains effective for up to three days. In most states, brine is a combination of rock salt and magnesium chloride mixed with water. Auto experts claim magnesium chloride is far more corrosive than rock salt to cars and can find its way into the nooks and crannies, making it hard to wash off and causing our vehicles to corrode faster.



Experimental alternatives to brine are underway in hopes of being more environmentally friendly. One such alternative is beet wastewater from plants that process sugar beets. Because of the sugars in the wastewater, it works at lower temperatures and adheres better than brine alone.  
A recent article published by the Canada Salt Groups website reports that beet juice combined with road salt decreases salt usage, resulting in less environmental damage and harm to plants. "However, there are some concerns that it might raise the water's biochemical oxygen demand, which can impact aquatic life," the article said. So, it's not a perfect solution.



Cities have also been dabbling with pickle brine, effective in temperatures as low as minus six degrees. It keeps snow and ice from bonding with the road surface. Most promising is that it lessens the amount of chloride released into the environment by 14 to 29 percent. Then there's cheese brine from soft cheeses like mozzarella, primarily used in Wisconsin, where cheese is plentiful.  
Late winter road salt is the most damaging to plants. Beginning in early March, plants start breaking dormancy. Their roots begin absorbing nutrients and water from the soil for the soon-to-be leaves. Toxic chloride ions, which usually leach from the soil rapidly, are



more likely absorbed than when the plant is dormant. Avoid piling salt-laden snow around plants. When choosing new plants, select salt-tolerant species within 30 feet of salted roads. For existing plants, move the salt-laden snow from the root zone as soon as the thaw begins. On young trees, the root zone is about the width of the dripline of the branches. It can be twice to four times as wide on older trees. Of course, be considerate where you move the snow.  
When temperatures rise above freezing, hose fresh water around the tree or shrubs to flush out the salt. Sadly it will end up in our water sources—an ongoing dilemma.  
Better plowing, sho-

veling, and heated pavements can help. You can install radiant heat under paver walks and driveways, and there's testing underway to use solar panels to heat water in pipes installed under roads. Those sound less stinky and sticky than beet juice or pickle and cheese brine, but whatever works best for our safety, our dear Earth, and the wildlife we share it with.  
How about using cat litter, sand, coffee grounds, and cinders at home rather than salt? And maybe add a few prayers that Mother Nature will soon stop messing around with Old Man Winter (smile).  
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# DEP Enters Agreement To Reduce Combined Sewer Discharges In Three Bergen County Towns And Improve Long-Term Health Of Hackensack And Hudson Rivers

Building upon the Murphy Administration's efforts to ensure cleaner and healthier waterways across New Jersey, the Department of Environmental Protection recently signed an agreement with Hackensack, Ridgefield Park, Fort Lee and the Bergen County Utilities Authority that requires the municipalities to implement projects to reduce combined sewer discharges that impair water quality in the Hackensack and Hudson rivers.

The Administrative Compliance Agreement is part of a comprehensive Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plan strategy required by federal policy and implemented by the DEP to address longstanding threats to surface water quality caused by combined sewer discharges.

Our Waters Worth It. The agreement details long-term schedules for construction of projects to separate stormwater and wastewater lines in the three municipalities that will reduce the flow of combined sewer discharges to the waterways and reduce sewer system-related flooding. The Bergen County Utilities Authority provides sewer and water treatment services for the three communities.

"The DEP is committed to helping communities identify and implement solutions to combined sewer discharges that for too long have impacted the health of our waterways and communities," said Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette. "My DEP colleagues

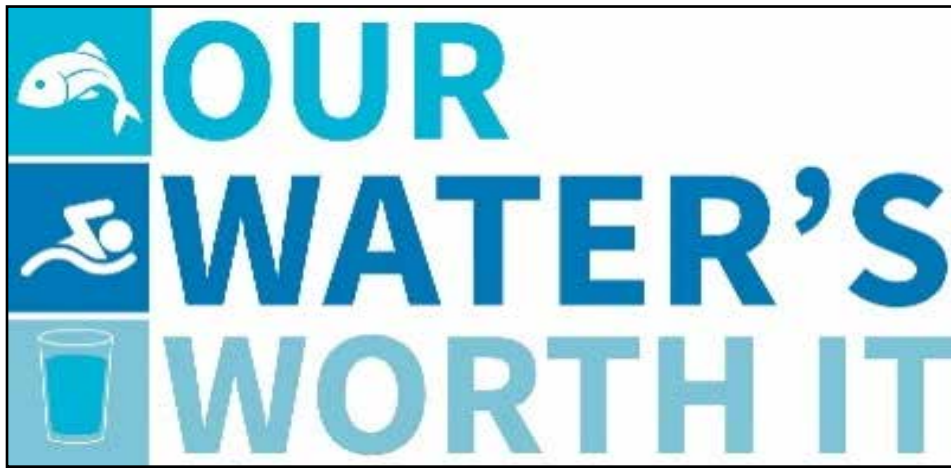
and I commend the City of Hackensack, Village of Ridgefield Park, Borough of Fort Lee and the Bergen County Utilities Authority for working together to improve the ecological health and vitality of the Hackensack and Hudson rivers."

In addition to working with communities to reduce CSOs, the DEP launched the Our Water's Worth It campaign last 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.

Threats from Combined Sewer Discharges Explained

Combined sewer systems were designed many decades ago to collect rainwater and snowmelt runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same piping system. New combined sewer systems are no longer permitted in New Jersey, but many older cities in the state are permitted to continue operating existing combined sewer systems.

Most of these systems are found in New Jersey's oldest regions, including in the New York-New Jersey Harbor region and in Camden and Gloucester City along the Delaware River in southern New Jersey. Discharges from these systems can pose public health threats by impairing receiving waterways and by causing flooding of streets with combined wastewater and stormwater. For more information on combined sewer



overflows and the steps the DEP is taking to address this problem, visit <https://dep.nj.gov/dwq/combined-sewer-overflow/>

Sewer Separation Projects in Detail: The signed Administrative Compliance Agreement demonstrates that the three Bergen County municipalities are undertaking projects to reduce or eliminate combined sewer overflow, some of which have already been completed and resulted in reduced flooding in affected areas.

Hackensack will implement projects over a 13-year schedule. These include completion of five partial sewer separation projects in the areas of Court Street, an ongoing combined sewer separation project that began in July 2024 on Anderson Street, and finalizing the design for a Clay Street combined sewer separation project.

"This agreement marks a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to improve water quality and reduce flooding in Hackensack," said Mayor John Labrosse. "By working collaboratively with the DEP, Bergen County Utilities Author-

ity, and our neighboring municipalities, we are making critical infrastructure investments that will have lasting benefits for our residents and the health of the Hackensack River. Clean water and resilient infrastructure are essential to our city's future, and we are committed to continuing this progress."

Ridgefield Park's 16-year project schedule primarily consists of sewer separation work. To date, Ridgefield Park has undertaken a program to inspect and clean a portion of its sewer system. It recently completed design work and awarded the contract for the first phase of sewer separation.

"The Village of Ridgefield Park is excited to be part of this Administrative Compliance Agreement (ACA) and appreciates the efforts of the DEP, the BCUA, and the municipalities of Fort Lee, Hackensack, and Ridgefield Park to bring the ACA and the CSO Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) to completion," said Village Commissioner Bill Gerken. "Next month, the Village will break ground on the first of our sewer separation projects, which will be-

gin a lengthy program to do our share to help improve the water quality in the Hackensack River."

Fort Lee plans a four-phase sewer separation project over nine years that includes two green infrastructure projects. Fort Lee also began a Bluff Road Netting Facility Improvement Project in 2023 – which will modify the netting facility to increase flow and reduce backups – as well as the design and installation of a new stormwater conduit for sewer separation.

"The Borough of Fort Lee is pleased to partner with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Bergen County Utilities Authority, City of Hackensack, and Village of Ridgefield Park, through the Administrative Compliance Agreement to address combined sewer overflow systems. We look forward to working collectively with the DEP and partners to address and alleviate these conditions," said Mayor Mark J. Sokolich.

Combined Sewer Discharge Reduction Progress Statewide: The DEP continues to work with the municipalities by pro-

viding low-cost funding to meet state and federal obligations to reduce CSO discharges. CSOs are regulated under New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits, which incorporate the requirements of the Clean Water Act and National CSO Policy by reducing or eliminating remaining CSO discharges in New Jersey.

The DEP continues to work with utilities authorities and municipalities on implementing combined sewer overflow controls through Administrative Compliance Agreements. The DEP is working with the Joint Meeting of Union and Essex Counties/City of Elizabeth and the North Hudson Sewerage Authority – River Road Sewage Treatment Plant regarding the implementation of CSO control measures for the hydraulically connected combined sewer systems.

In addition, the DEP continues to work with the Middlesex County Municipal Utility Authority/Perth Amboy, and Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission system on developing permits for water quality improvement projects.

The DEP has previously entered into Administrative Compliance Agreements with the North Hudson Sewerage Authority – Adams Street Sewage Treatment Plant and the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority/City of Camden/Gloucester City system. The DEP has also issued permits to the North Bergen Municipal Utilities Authority-Woodcliff/Guttenberg system and the City of Trenton.

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### Sparta Mountain Trail and Site Closure February Through March 2025

A 27-acre area that includes just over 1/3-mile of trail on the southern part of Sparta Mountain WMA will be temporarily closed to the public on or about February 1, 2025 through March 31, 2025 (see map). Please remove any tree stands, blinds, or other items remaining in this area before work begins, pay attention to the posted signs in this area, and do not enter the posted area. The purpose of the temporary closure is for a habitat restoration project that will open the forest canopy to allow for the growth of young oak and hickory trees, blackberries, sedges, and

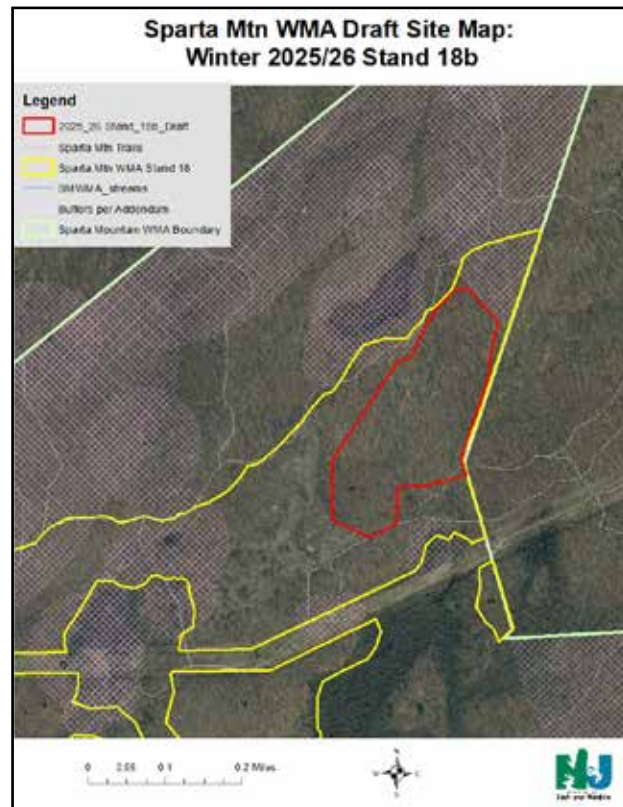
a variety of other native shrub and sapling plants. This habitat will become breeding and/or foraging habitat for numerous wildlife, including the 80 different bird species that have been observed using other sites of restored open-canopy forest on Sparta Mountain WMA. NJ Fish & Wildlife regrets having to close the area. However, during previous management activities, spectators entering the work area and disregarding posted signs created significant safety concerns that result in the current closure during the entire work period.

## Comment Period Open for Forest Management Activities on Sparta Mountain WMA - In Stand 18, Comments Due March 31, 2025

In accordance with the 2021 Addendum, forest management activities planned for next year (2025/26) is now open for comment. Please email comments to sharon.petzinger@dep.nj.gov by March 31, 2025.

As outlined in the 2017 Sparta Mountain WMA Forest Stewardship Plan, forest management activities in the form of a modified seed tree prescription will be implemented on 10 acres within Stand 18 next fall/winter (November 2025 - March 2026). This prescription will likely retain around 20 sq. ft. of basal area per acre across the 10-acre site to allow for the growth of young oak and hickory trees, blackberries, sedges, and a variety of other native shrub and sapling plants. This will also create breeding and/or foraging habitat for the 80 different bird species that have been observed using other managed sites on Sparta Mountain WMA.

Trees to be retained will likely be the co-dominant or dominant size classes that are of good vigor for longevity. In some instances we may retain clusters of trees -



some of which may not fit the above description if they have high wildlife value (i.e. stems with advanced decay, cavities or exfoliating bark). Desirable trees that are underrepresented in the area (e.g. white oak and black cherry) may also be retained for diversity purposes. Additionally, white ash stems that do not already exhibit characteristics of Emerald Ash Borer infestation may be preserved to re-

tain genetic diversity in the event those individuals are resistant to the insect. Maps of the draft location can be viewed and downloaded on our Sparta Mountain Updates Webpage. Please note the draft location depicted in the maps is larger than 10 acres in size and in compliance with the site-selection criteria (outside the buffers) outlined in the July 2021 Addendum

to the approved 2017 Sparta Mountain WMA Forest Stewardship Plan. Management activities this winter, however, will occur only on 10 acres within the designated area. The boundaries of the 10-acre boundary where management activities will occur will be finalized after March 31, 2025. Due to contract procedures and costs, and as identified in the 2021 Addendum, once the location is field marked no further comments or changes can be entertained.

Work will begin on or after November 16, 2025, and all tree felling will be completed by or before March 31, 2026. Any tree stands, blinds, or other items remaining in this area when work begins will be removed. For safety reasons, this area will be temporarily closed to unauthorized personnel while work is being conducted.

More information can also be found on our Sparta Mountain WMA websites: Sparta Mountain WMA Forest Stewardship Homepage; Sparta Mountain WMA Forest Stewardship Implementation & Sparta Mountain Updates

The shortest day has passed, and whatever nastiness of weather we may look forward to in January and February, at least we notice that the days are getting longer. Minute by minute they lengthen out. It takes some weeks before we become aware of the change. It is imperceptible even as the growth of a child, as you watch it day by day, until the moment comes when with a start of delighted surprise we realize that we can stay out of doors in a twilight lasting for another quarter of a precious hour.  
- V. Sackville-West, "Over winter's hump"

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# Murphy Administration Announces Availability Of \$35 Million For Local Government Vehicle Electrification Projects

The Murphy Administration today announced the availability of \$35 million in grants to help local governments electrify their shuttle, school bus and truck fleets to protect public health and the environment, leveraging proceeds from New Jersey's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).



The new funding is for the replacement of diesel vehicles owned by, or serving, local towns including shuttles, transit buses, garbage trucks, dump trucks and small school buses. Municipal and private fleets serving towns are encouraged to submit proposals for the Diesel Modernization Program, which accepts applications on a rolling basis. Grants that meet the eligibility requirements will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

"While trucks and buses account for only four percent of all vehicles on the road, they gener-

ate nearly 25 percent of our transportation-sector greenhouse gas emissions and emit pollutants that are especially harmful to vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly and those with heart and lung conditions," said Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette. "We encourage towns across the state, and the fleets that serve them, to take advantage of this funding to replace dirty diesel trucks with electric ones that will better protect our communities from harmful air pollution and bring us closer to meeting our climate goals."

Base incentive amounts reimburse the cost of purchasing a new electric vehicle and, if needed, a charging station and range from \$15,000 to \$270,000 depending on the size of the vehicle. Additionally, higher amounts are available for vehicles owned by small businesses and towns. Fleet owners are required to provide documentation that vehicles purchased with grant money replaced existing diesel vehicles.

Driving Change Through RGGI

Proceeds from New Jersey's participation in RGGI, a cap-and-trade pact among 11 north-

eastern states dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity-generating sector, will fund the projects. With this new funding, the state has invested \$176 million of RGGI proceeds in electric vehicles to date.

To complement these projects, the state also offers the New Jersey Fleet Advisor program, which provides zero-cost assistance to help small fleets navigate key decisions around fleet electrification. This includes vehicle recommendations, cost projections and on-site infrastructure assessments. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Both the RGGI funding opportunity and technical assistance program directly support New Jersey's Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) Rule, which was adopted in December 2021 to accelerate the large-scale transition to electric medium- and heavy-duty trucks. Through the rule, manufacturers are required to sell zero-emission trucks as an increasing percentage of their annual sales from 2025 to 2035.

State Electric Vehicle Progress

Since 2019, the Murphy Administration has awarded nearly \$540 million for the purchase of electric vehicles and charging equipment for personal, public, and fleet use. Last month, the Murphy Administration announced that New Jersey had reached a significant milestone by surpassing 200,000 electric vehicle registrations, demonstrating increasing consumer confidence in these vehicles and the availability of charging infrastructure.

Ongoing programs that support the transition to electric vehicles include:

The Electric School Bus Grant Program, which provides \$15 million per year for three years to replace diesel school buses with electric school buses. In the first year (2024), the program funded the purchase of 48 electric school buses and associated charging equipment at 14 schools. Another round of funding will be announced this spring.

Supporting this success are incentive programs for passenger vehicles and shared electric transportation, which include:

The It Pay\$ to Plug In program, which awards grants to offset the cost of purchasing and maintaining charging stations. Since its launch, the program has awarded over \$26 million in grants to fund the construction of nearly 3,000 publicly available Level 2 charging ports and 635 DC fast charging ports at 1,400 locations across the state.

The eMobility Grant Program, which provides funding for shared electric transportation. RGGI proceeds have funded nine electric ridesharing projects to date. Additionally, local governments and community organizations are encouraged to use the eMobility Planning Toolkit to better understand the transportation needs and preferences of their residents to develop community-driven solutions that may be eligible for eMobility grants.

To further support these ongoing efforts, DEP was awarded a \$10 million federal grant to deploy charging stations throughout the state. The funding will also provide infrastructure to support more zero-emission, shared transportation options, such as electric carshares, rideshares, and other eMobility services that often operate near transit hubs. A request for projects is expected to launch this spring.

In addition, New Jersey leads the Clean Corridor Coalition, a multi-state project to support freight truck electrification through the installation of public charging depots along the I-95 corridor and adjacent roads from Connecticut to Maryland. Last year, the project received a \$250 million investment through the federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program.

For more information on the state's initiatives and ongoing projects, visit [www.drivegreen.nj.gov](http://www.drivegreen.nj.gov) and [www.stopthesoot.org](http://www.stopthesoot.org).

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# Pheasant Released Recently Into Specific Regions

Pheasant hunters, don't put away your gear just yet.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission will be releasing approximately 8,400 pheasants, mostly hens, to provide additional hunting recreation in the last two weeks of pheasant season, which runs through Feb. 28.

"The Game Commission purchases the pheasant chicks raised on our game farms from a private sector supplier," said Wildlife Operations Division Chief Ian Gregg. "During the 2024 production season, we requested our supplier to raise additional pheasants to be held through the fall and early winter as an 'insurance policy' against any disease issues that might arise in the supplier's primary breeder flocks. Although highly pathogenic avian influenza is known to be present on the Pennsylvania landscape, and it is impossible to completely eliminate the risk of a future disease outbreak that could impact 2025 production, the primary breeder flocks have remained healthy to date and it is not feasible

for the 'backup' birds to also be held into the upcoming breeding season. Therefore, these surplus pheasants will be released a few weeks before the end of the pheasant season to provide late-winter hunting opportunities."

Releases were planned to occur during a two-day window, on Wednesday, Feb. 12 and Thursday, Feb. 13 at select locations in each of the Game Commission's six regions. Hunters should be aware, however, that logistical issues could result in last-minute changes to the planned schedule.

The locations expected to receive birds in the February stocking are as follows:

**Northwest Region:**  
SGL 95 (Butler Co.)  
SGL 330 (Clarion Co.)  
Buzzard Swamp area, Allegheny National Forest (Forest Co.)  
Shenango Lake (Mercer Co.)

**Southwest Region:**  
SGL 203 (Allegheny Co.)  
SGL 285 (Beaver Co.)  
Conemaugh Lake (Indiana Co.)  
SGLs 117, 232, 245,



and 297; Cross Creek Park; Hillman State Park (Washington Co.)  
Loyalhanna Lake (Westmoreland Co.)

**Northcentral Region:**  
SGL 333 (Centre Co.)  
SGL 87 (Clearfield Co.)  
SGLs 252 and 317 (Union Co.)

**Southcentral Region:**  
SGL 249 (Adams Co.)  
SGLs 48 and 97 (Bedford Co.)  
SGL 169 (Cumberland Co.)  
SGL 124 (Franklin Co.)

SGL 251; Raystown Lake (Huntingdon Co.)  
SGLs 258, 281, and 290 (Perry Co.)  
SGLs 188, 194, and 212 (Snyder Co.)  
SGLs 242 and 243 (York Co.)

**Northeast Region:**  
SGL 40 and Beltzville area (Carbon Co.)  
SGLs 58, 226, and 329 (Columbia Co.)  
SGLs 119 and 187; Butler Enterprises Hunter Access property; Nescopeck State Park (Luzerne Co.)  
SGLs 84 and 165 (Northumberland Co.)

Southeast Region:  
SGL 280/Blue Marsh (Berks Co.)

The Game Commission's regular pheasant stocking schedule extends from early October to early January, with over 240,000 pheasants released during that period in 2024-25 and similar

numbers planned for 2025-26.

"This year's February stockings should be considered experimental, and may or may not be repeated in future years depending on 2025 results, annual evaluation of disease risks, and agency budget constraints," Gregg said.

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## New Jersey State Parks Accepting Applications To Fill More Than 800 Seasonal Positions Ahead Of Peak Spring, Summer Months

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is accepting applications for more than 800 seasonal positions at state parks, forests and historic sites throughout the Garden State, and has increased salary rates this year at some locations, Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette announced today. These positions are critical for the safety and maintenance of some of the State's busiest tourist attractions.

Available seasonal job opportunities include lifeguards, general maintenance personnel, visitor service assistants, office assistants, naturalists and history educators. Bilingual applicants are encouraged to apply. Peak season generally runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day, with select state parks extending positions from April to October based on operational needs.

Salaries for most po-

sitions start at \$16 per hour. Positions at Liberty State Park in Jersey City, Hudson County, and The Greenway in Essex and Hudson counties start at \$20 per hour.

"These positions are more than the typical summer season job," Commissioner LaTourette said. "They make sure these highly visited destinations are safe and well-maintained for residents and tourists. They also offer a wide variety of skills that can be developed to help applicants kickstart a career in environmental protection, grow stewardship of our natural lands and build long-lasting connections to both people and nature. I encourage people of all backgrounds to apply for these opportunities."

Interested applicants for any position are advised to reach out to their preferred state park office by early March to learn more about specific

roles, schedules, and other job-related details. Applications should be submitted promptly through [nj.gov/dep/workinparks](http://nj.gov/dep/workinparks).

"From lifeguards to naturalists, a seasonal job with the State Park Service offers a unique chance to contribute to the experiences that New Jersey's state parks, forests and historic sites provide for millions of visitors," said John Cecil, Assistant Commissioner for State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites. "Whether maintaining park amenities or ensuring safety, every role plays a vital part in conserving New Jersey's natural and historic resources, while enhancing the visitor experience."

Liberty State Park and The Greenway

Liberty State Park in Jersey City, Hudson County is hiring general maintenance personnel, visitor service assistants, naturalists and office workers. All positions

offer a starting salary of \$20 per hour.

As New Jersey's most popular state park, Liberty State Park attracts more than 5 million visitors annually. The Murphy Administration has placed a special focus on Liberty State Park in recent years, formally launching the Liberty State Park Revitalization Program to explore how the park can better meet the needs of New Jersey residents and the millions of visitors from across the globe.

The Greenway, an approximately nine-mile former rail line spanning Essex and Hudson counties that is poised to become New Jersey's newest state park, is seeking general maintenance personnel. Responsibilities include litter and debris removal, vegetation management, and assisting with public education and outreach. Salaries start at \$20 per hour.

Lifeguard Opportunities

Lifeguards are needed at swimming areas across the state, with salaries starting at \$18.50 per hour. Oceanfront lifeguards at Island Beach State Park in Ocean County earn a higher starting rate of \$19.50 per hour. Prior experience is not necessary, but candidates must pass running and swimming tests prior to employment. The State Park Service will train lifeguards in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, Automated External Defibrillator use, first aid and other safety skills. Each lifeguard will also receive a U.S. Lifesaving Association certification upon successful completion of training.

Island Beach State Park's swimming areas are scheduled to open on Saturday, May 24. All other swimming areas are expected to open in mid-June, when those locations begin to receive more visitors and swimmers.

Lifeguard opportunities are anticipated at High Point, Hopatcong, Swartwood and Wawayanda state parks in the northern part of the state, Cheesequake State Park and Round Valley Recreation Area in the central region, and Island Beach and Parvin state parks, along with Atsion Recreation Area (Wharton State Forest), Bass River and Belleplain state forests in the south.

The State Park Service also hires junior lifeguards who are at least 15 years old, at \$17 per hour. Junior lifeguards cannot perform lifeguard duties for the public until age 16, but the position provides a head start on training for when they can provide full lifeguard duties the following summer.

Other Positions

General maintenance personnel are vital to the State Park Service's summer operations. Applicants should expect to assist full-time staff in a variety of tasks that include mowing lawns, cleaning facilities and removing trash. Park improvement projects and other general main-

tenance functions are also required. Those with unique skills, such as carpentry or small-engine repair, are encouraged to apply for these positions. Salaries start at \$16 per hour.

Naturalists and history educators work with park naturalists and historians at interpretive centers and historic sites to educate visitors. Typical activities include leading or assisting with interpretive programs and teaching visiting camp groups. These positions may also be assigned specific projects by their supervisor. Salaries start at \$16 per hour.

Naturalist opportunities are available at Batsto Village Historic Site in Wharton State Forest and Island Beach State Park.

History educator positions are available at Waterloo Village Historic Site in the north, Wallace House and Old Dutch Parsonage Historic Site in the central part of the state, and Batsto Village Historic Site in Wharton State Forest, Double Trouble and Island Beach state parks in the south.

Visitor service and office assistants help register campers, collect entrance fees, respond to visitor inquiries, provide recordkeeping and conduct other customer service duties as required. In some areas, visitor service assistants work as trail stewards whose responsibilities include brushing and blazing trails, installing signs and fences, and performing general trail maintenance. Applicants may work with crowds and advise visitors about the Leave No Trace concept and parks regulations. Salaries start at \$16 per hour.

To learn more about New Jersey's Parks, Forests & Historic Sites, visit [www.njparksandforests.org/](http://www.njparksandforests.org/).

Like New Jersey's State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites page on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/newjerseystateparks](http://www.facebook.com/newjerseystateparks).

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# Boscola Applauds Shapiro's Budget Address, Emphasizes Key Investments in Education, Energy, and Economic Development

Senator Lisa M. Boscola (D-Northampton) applauded Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 budget address today, praising his focus on keeping taxes low, investing in Pennsylvania's future, and ensuring long-term economic stability.

"I appreciate that the Governor's budget does not propose any broad-based tax increases," said Boscola. "At a time when working families are feeling the strain of rising costs, government should not add to their burden. This budget takes a responsible approach by introducing new revenue sources, such as regulating skill games and recreational marijuana, while ensuring critical investments are made in education, energy, and economic development."

Boscola applauded the Governor's continued commitment to education funding, noting that school districts in the 18th senatorial district will see a combined increase of over \$18 million in basic education funding and adequacy dollars.



"Pennsylvania must move away from relying on property taxes to fund our schools," Boscola said. "Until we enact real property tax reform, families will continue to shoulder an unfair financial burden. I will keep fighting for a fairer funding system that provides every student the education they deserve, regardless of their ZIP code."

On energy, Boscola emphasized the urgent need to expand Pennsylvania's power generation capacity as demand surges due to artificial intelligence and electrification buildout.

"If we don't act now, our grid and household

budgets will be under serious strain," Boscola said. "The Governor's plan to cut barriers and incentivize new power plant construction, through initiatives like the EDGE tax credit, ensures that we keep energy reliable and affordable for Pennsylvania ratepayers."

Boscola also praised the budget's focus on economic growth, pointing to Governor Shapiro's success in attracting \$3 billion in private investment and his continued push to lower the Corporate Net Income Tax.

"We must keep our foot on the gas pedal when it comes to job creation,"

Boscola said. "Investing in our workforce, like the additional \$13 million in funding for community colleges, ensures Pennsylvania remains competitive in the industries of tomorrow."

Boscola concluded by calling on the General Assembly to work in a bipartisan manner to finalize a budget that prioritizes Pennsylvanians.

"Moving Pennsylvania forward, no tax increases, strong and solid investments in our future. That's what this budget was about," Boscola said. "Now, it's up to us in the legislature to move some of its packages forward and negotiate."

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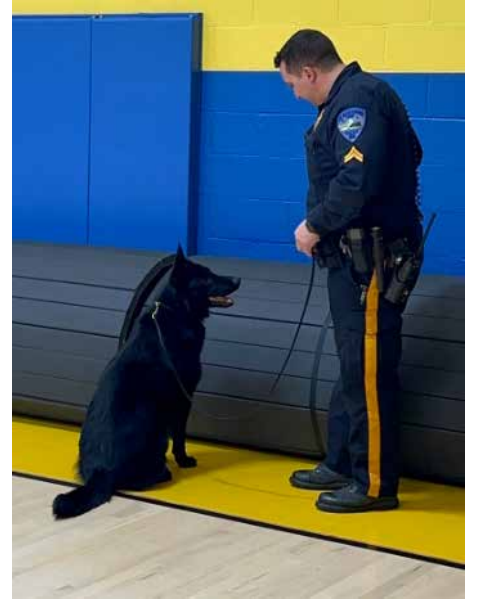
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# BLAIRSTOWN POLICE DEPT. HOLDS K9 DEMO AT BLAIRSTOWN ELEMENTARY



Blairstown PD brought K9 Riggs to Blairstown Elementary for an exciting and educational demo on February 14th! The teachers and students loved meeting K9 Riggs and learning about his important role in keeping our community safe. A heartfelt thank you to Belvidere, Washington, and Phillipsburg PD for attending, and to Dr. Jon, K9 Riggs' vet, for providing excellent care for him! We also want to extend our deepest gratitude to Blairstown Elementary and Tammy Messina for graciously hosting us and making this event so special! Photos courtesy Blairstown Police Department Facebook

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