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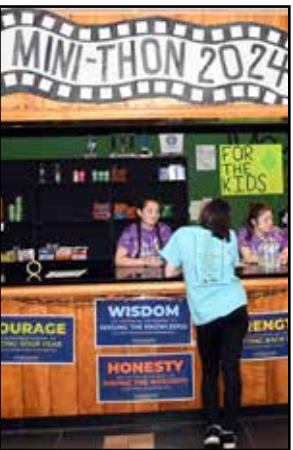


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PHOTOS:



**Bangor
Mini-Thon**

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**Pen Argyl
Mini-Thon**

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**North Warren
NJSSIAA 1st
Round, North
Jersey Section
1, Group 1**

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Bangor Battles Pocono Mountain East in the District 11, 5A Quarterfinals



Bangor took on Pocono Mountain East in the Boys Basketball District 11, 5A Quarterfinals on February 23rd. Bangor lost 56 to 51. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Pen Argyl Hosts Annual Mini-Thon



Pen Argyl held their annual Mini-Thon on February 24th to help raise money for Pediatric Cancer. Pen Argyl's final total this year was \$36,374.45. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Bangor Raises \$17,055.15 During Mini-Thon For Pediatric Cancer



Bangor held their annual Mini-Thon on February 24th, and raises \$17,055.15 for Pediatric Cancer Research. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Northampton County Division of Parks and Recreation Open Livable Landscapes Grant Applications

Northampton County Executive Lamont G. McClure and the Division of Parks and Recreation will begin accepting applications for the 2024 Livable Landscapes Grant Program on Wednesday, February 14, until 1:00 pm on Thursday, April 18, 2024.

The Livable Landscapes Grant Program provides grant opportunities for eligible applicants in land conservation, ecological restoration, education and outreach, park rehabilitation and development, and regional trails in Northampton County. Program priorities are consistent with the goals of the Livable Landscapes - An Open Space Plan for Northampton County.

The Division of Parks and Recreation will host a mandatory grant workshop on Thursday, February 15, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm in the Education Room at Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, 400 Belfast Rd, Nazareth, PA 18064.

2024 Livable Landscapes Grant Round Timeline:
- Wednesday, February 14, 2024 - Grant Application Round Opens
- Thursday, February 15, 2024, 9 am- 12 pm - Mandatory Grant Workshop to learn about the 2024 priorities and grant requirements and briefly discuss potential applicant's project intent
- June 2024 - Anticipated Grant Award by County Resolution. Grant Agreement start

date
- December 31, 2026 - Grant Agreement expiration date

Applications are due by 1:00 pm, April 18, 2024, electronically (PDF format). No hard copies. Email applications to Sherry Acevedo at sacevedo@norcopa.gov. For larger file sizes, please contact Sherry for more information

Schedule an individual meeting with Sherry Acevedo, Conservation Coordinator. If also applying to the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), a joint meeting needs to be scheduled with Sherry Acevedo and DCNR Recreation and Conservation Manager "Livable Landscapes

funding supports my priorities by enhancing outdoor recreation, regional trails, water quality, open space conservation, and municipal parks within the County," remarks Lamont G. McClure, County Executive. "Open Space plays an essential role in the quality of life in our communities by protecting clean air, land, water, and the environment to improve our health and wellness."

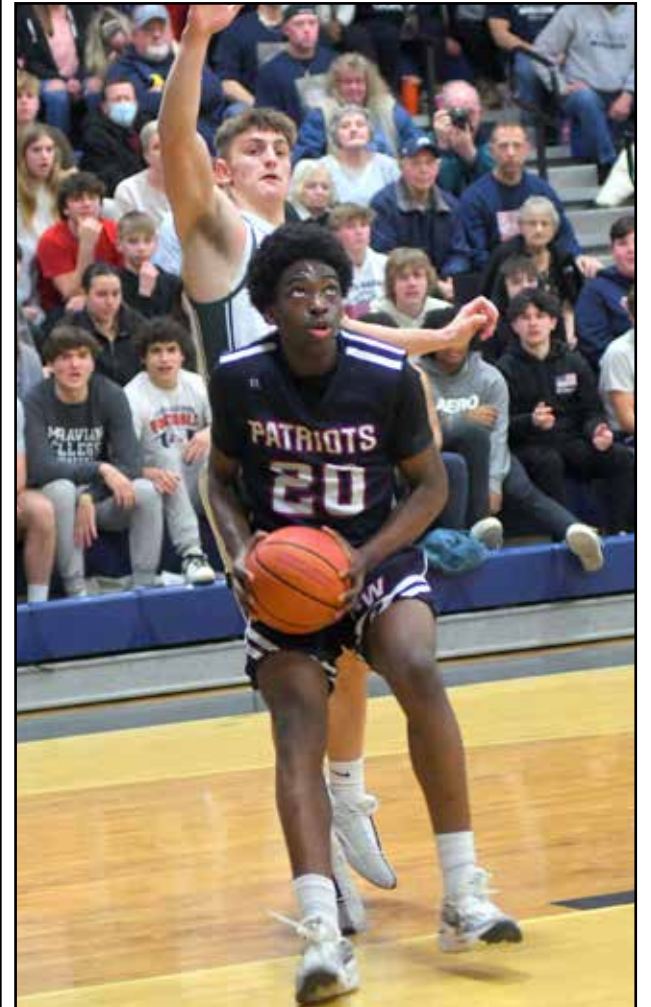
The purpose of the grant program is to protect the county's important natural features by assisting municipalities and organizations in acquiring, restoring, and enhancing permanently protected lands to conserve natural resources and provide

outdoor recreation for future generations. Since 2006, Northampton County awarded \$20.75 million in Livable Landscapes grants for successful local and regional park improvements, recreation, land conservation, ecological restoration, and trail projects.

Download grant-related forms on the new Northampton County website, Parks and Recreation page: www.norcopa.gov/livable-landscapes-grant. Updates will be posted on Northampton County Parks & Recreation's Facebook page.

For more information, contact the grant administrator, Sherry Acevedo, at sacevedo@norcopa.gov or 610-829-4872.

North Warren Takes On Kinnelon High School in the NJSIAA Section 1, Group 1, First Round



North Warren took on Kinnelon High School in the NJSIAA 1st Round, North Jersey Section 1, Group 1 tournament on February 22nd. North Warren was defeated, 52 to 42. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Bangor High School Mini Thon for Pediatric Cancer



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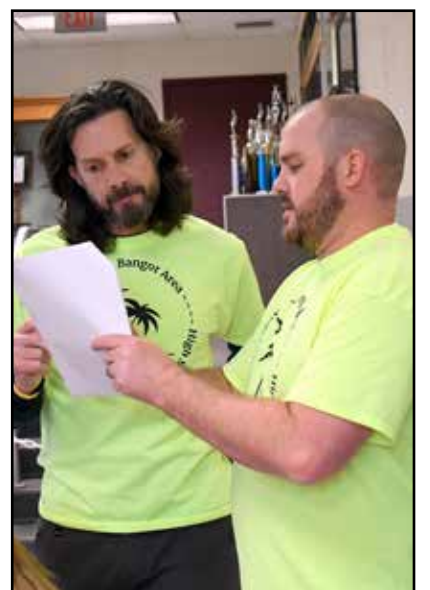
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Pen Argyl High School Mini Thon for Pediatric Cancer



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BANGOR VS POCONO MT. EAST DISTRICT 11, 5A BOYS QUARTERFINALS



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NORTH WARREN VS KINNELON HS NJSIAA 1ST ROUND NORTH JERSEY SECTION 1 GROUP 1 BOY BASKETBALL



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Kayden Weidman (pictured solo, far right) recently qualified in PJW tournament. He advances to the championship on March 23-24th at the Peterson event center on the campus of Pittsburgh University. Pictured above left: Coach Hawking Mathewson and Coach Edie; Middle: Tyler Mintz (2nd) and Kaden Weidman.

Assembly GOP Leaders Talk Taxes, Spending And Murphy's Upcoming Budget

Assembly Republican Leader John DiMaio and Conference Leader Christopher DePhillips denounced balancing the state budget through tax and fare hikes in advance of Gov. Phil Murphy's seventh budget message on Thursday. A budget deficit, shrinking tax revenue,

inflation and a loss of federal aid has Democrats proposing revenue-raising hikes on taxpayers, businesses and commuters. "Republicans in the Assembly in New Jersey are not in favor of tax increases at all," DiMaio (R-Warren) said. "The budget defi-

cit was \$1.5 billion last year. It could go up to \$2 billion this year. \$20 billion in additional spending in six budget cycles is going to hit the budget hard." To fill in budget holes, NJ Transit announced a 15% fare increase effective July 1 and the Murphy administration and

Democrats are considering raising the sales, corporate business and gas taxes. "Trenton has an addiction to spending and taxation. The fact that there are voices out there talking about additional new taxes is completely unconscionable," DePhillips (R-Bergen)

said. "The residents of New Jersey want to hear about spending cuts, not spending increases and not tax increases." New Jersey's state budget increased from \$34.6 billion in 2018 to \$54.3 billion today. Last year, Democrats added \$1.5 billion to the final spending plan

to fund special projects. "Spending is so high that it is making it so unaffordable in New Jersey. Families are suffering. We will call out the problems and we will fight to make sure New Jersey is more affordable," DiMaio said.

Comments On Proposed Waterfowl Seasons For Pennsylvania Now Being Accepted

Hunters and members of waterfowl organizations have several options to ask questions and voice opinions on the 2024-25 proposed migratory game bird seasons. Questions or comments can be submitted to: waterfowlcomments@pa.gov, or a letter can be mailed to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Bureau of Wildlife Management, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. An online question-and-answer session will be held on the proposed seasons on Thursday, March 7 at 1 p.m. on the Game Commission's Facebook page. The briefing will be recorded, and a link will be avail-

able to view at www.pgc.pa.gov. "The Facebook Live event will include summaries of recent federal framework changes and other 'hot topics' with the opportunity for viewers to submit follow-up questions for real-time response," said Game Commission waterfowl biologist Amanda Hoyt. "It's a convenient option for hunters statewide to catch up on all things waterfowl without leaving home," she added. Those submitting questions or comments by email or mail should provide the species, zone (if applicable), and county or counties they're referring to. The comment period closes March 22.

A Waterfowl Open House will take place at the Game Commission's Northwest Region Office at 1509 Pittsburgh Road, Franklin, PA 16323, on Saturday, March 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Attendees will have the opportunity to interact with Game Commission staff and view proposed seasons presented. "For those able to travel to Franklin, the Waterfowl Open House will provide a weekend opportunity for more extended in-person discussion with Game Commission staff carrying out the research, regulation setting, habitat, and law enforcement elements of the agency's waterfowl management program," Hoyt said.

Each year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along with the states in the Atlantic Flyway meet to establish federal frameworks for migratory game bird seasons. These frameworks form the side boards that each state must set their season within. States can be more restrictive - fewer days or lower bag limits - but cannot be more liberal than the federal frameworks allow. Generally speaking, frameworks do not vary widely from year-to-year, but changes in habitat conditions or populations of migratory game birds may cause them to change. For the 2024-25 seasons, there is one change. The Atlantic

Population Canada goose season has been reduced from 45 to 30 days. "The Game Commission annually considers various types of public input when selecting waterfowl seasons within the parameters established by the federal frameworks," said Game Commission Wildlife Operations Chief Ian Gregg. "Results of periodic hunter surveys provide data on the general opinions of a broad cross section of hunters, while annual written comment periods and interactive events allow individual hunters to provide their specific preferences and concerns in more detail," he added. With public comments and results of surveys

considered, Game Commission staff will prepare and present the recommended 2024-25 waterfowl and migratory bird seasons, bag limits and related criteria to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for final approval. Final seasons will appear in the 2024-25 Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest, which hunters receive with the purchase of a license. The Pennsylvania Game Commission manages and protects wildlife and their habitats and promotes hunting and trapping for current and future generations. Visit www.pgc.pa.gov for more information about Pennsylvania hunting, trapping and wildlife.

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Parents as Teachers Awards \$1.75 Million in Grants to Home-Visiting Organizations

Investments Kick Off Organization's 40th Anniversary

Parents as Teachers, one of the nation's premier home-visiting program, announced the recipients of their 2024 Challenge Grants, marking the beginning of their 40th anniversary with their "Investing in the Power of Families" initiative. Project Self-Sufficiency was one of only two organizations from the state of New Jersey to be selected to receive a grant from Parents as Teachers, and one of twenty nationwide to receive a grant of \$50,000. The agency will allocate the funds towards the purchase vehicles for agency home visitors to use when they visit mothers of young children in Sussex and Hunterdon Counties.

This three-pronged initiative by Parents as Teachers aims to restore post pandemic family enrollments in affiliates' home visiting services, enhance mental and physical health support services, and foster systemic positive changes through engaged parent leaders.

"Transportation to and from our participants' homes is crucial to the success of our home visitation programs," re-

marked Project Self-Sufficiency Executive Director Deborah Berry-Toon. "We are looking forward to strengthening our outreach to mothers of young children in need and continuing to help these families to develop the skills for success, thanks to the funds received from Parents as Teachers."

The Challenge Grants, totaling \$1.75 million, were competitively awarded to 62 Parents as Teachers affiliates across categories, including Combating Maternal and Infant Mortality, Family Leadership Development, Workforce Development, Program Quality Improvement, Marketing/Communication Support, PBS Partnerships, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEIA).

Constance Gully, President & CEO of Parents as Teachers, shared, "We believe in the power of families to shape the future. These grants avail unique opportunities for our affiliates to make lasting impacts based on the voice of families in their communities."

This initiative is part of Parents as Teachers' ongoing commitment to



providing quality early childhood services, engaging families, and building stronger communities. As Parents as Teachers enters its 40th year, these grants symbolize a renewed dedication to the organization's mission and the families it serves.

In addition to the grants, Parents as Teachers has activities planned throughout 2024, celebrating this milestone year under the theme of "Born to Learn: Power of the Past- Building for

the Future." The organization also announced that they will not be increasing service fees for the 2024-25 program year and will be continuing to share more innovations and events in coming months.

The application process challenged affiliates with submitting proposals aligned to specific categories to the Parents as Teachers National Center, who carefully reviewed and selected organizations who provided.

Project Self-Sufficiency has assisted low-income individuals and families in northwestern New Jersey since 1986. Services offered at Project Self-Sufficiency include high school equivalency education, computer courses, employment skills training, job placement services, support groups, parenting classes, child-care and preschool, legal assistance and education, counseling and advocacy, referrals, and help with emer-

gency basic needs, like food and clothing. For more information about the programs and services offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, visit www.projectsselfsufficiency.org or call 973-940-3500.

Parents as Teachers builds healthy communities, thriving families, and children that are healthy, safe, and ready for school. It matches parents and caregivers with trained professionals who make regular personal home visits during a child's earliest years in life, from pregnancy through kindergarten. The internationally recognized evidence-based home visiting model is backed by 40 years of research-proven outcomes for children and families. Parents as Teachers currently serves nearly 180,000 families in all 50 U.S. states, 115 Tribal organizations, five other countries, and one U.S. territory. Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., is a non-profit organization headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. For more information, contact Jen Peters at peters@collaborativecommunications.com.

Career and Technical Education Month Celebrated with School Tour at Warren Tech



February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, so Warren County Commissioner Director James R. Kern III toured Warren County Technical School with faculty and student representatives to see firsthand the great work being done to prepare students for a successful future.

CTE Month celebrates and highlights the role that Technical Schools have in readying students for college and career success. Students in CTE programs participate in authentic and meaningful experiences that improve the quality of their education and increase their engagement and achievement while

having the chance to explore career opportunities early in their educational experience.

Culinary Arts teacher Pat Lilly, along with the student government president and vice president, showed Kern the different lab areas where faculty members explained the programs underway.

"I was happy to visit Warren Tech to celebrate career and technical education," Kern said, adding, "I am so impressed by the students, teachers, and staff at our school. By choosing a vo-tech school these students

will get a head start on developing the skills and knowledge their chosen professions require, and the curriculum at Warren Tech gives students the practical hands-on experience and relevant industry-specific skills that are in high-demand by employers. Teachers like Pat Lilly truly provide the inspiration for these students to succeed."

While on the tour, Kern presented Lilly, this year's Teacher of the Year for Warren Tech, with a Certificate of Merit from the Warren County Board of County Commissioners. Lilly

has taught Culinary Arts for 12 years, and before becoming an educator served in the U.S. Air Force.

Along the way, Kern visited Warren Tech's autobody shop with Automotive Technology instructor Raymond Danner; heard from Cosmetology instructor Tina Giraldo-Lynch about the program that

prepares students to take the New Jersey State Board of Cosmetology and Hairstyling exam during their senior year; got a look behind the scenes of the school's daily news broadcast with TV, Radio And Digital Media Production instructor Patricia Seugling; and saw other aspects of the Warren Tech program.

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The Kindness Project Aims to Continue Their Tradition of Spreading Easter Joy to Foster Youth

As Easter approaches, The Kindness Project, a dedicated nonprofit organization supporting foster families and the youth in their care across eastern PA, is gearing up for not one, but two exciting initiatives to brighten the holiday for those in the foster care system.

Each year, The Kindness Project hosts a special event cherished by foster families and children alike. The goal? To provide 500 FREE Easter Baskets for foster families to share with both their foster and biological children. This heartwarming event has become a cornerstone of support and joy for the community, and The Kindness Project couldn't be prouder to continue this tradition of love and generosity.

that our foster families and kids really enjoy each year. Our goal is to provide at least 500 FREE Easter Baskets for our foster families to give to their foster and biological children. We couldn't do it without you!" says Jenae Holtzhafer, Founder and Executive Director of The Kindness Project.

In addition to the Easter Basket giveaway, The Kindness Project is thrilled to announce the kickoff of their 6th Annual TKP Egg My Yard Fundraiser. This unique initiative allows community members to participate in a beloved Easter tradition while supporting a great cause.

Here's how it works: Orders are now open for residents to enlist the help of The Kindness Project's dedicated volunteer "egggers" who



will stealthily hide treat-filled eggs in yards on Easter Eve. It's an instant Egg Hunt on Easter morning that brings joy to families while supporting youth in foster care.

For those who prefer a more hands-on approach, there's an exciting new option this year: pick up pre-filled eggs and hide them

in your yard yourself! This streamlined option saves time and allows families to create their own Easter magic, all while contributing to a worthy cause.

"We're excited to introduce this new option for our Egg My Yard fundraiser. It's a convenient way for families to participate while still supporting kids and

teens experiencing foster care," explains Jenae Holtzhafer.

Orders are being accepted through an order form at www.mykindnessproject.org/eggmyyard But act fast! Easter is rapidly approaching this year! All orders must be placed by March 15th, so The Kindness Project can plan and prepare ac-

cordingly to serve every interested family.

If you're not interested in 'egging your own yard' this year, you can still make a difference! The Kindness Project is seeking donations and sponsorships to sustain its mission and cover supply expenses.

Sponsorship opportunities begin at \$25, which covers the expense of egging a foster care family's yard. Larger contributions go toward providing essential supplies to ensure the success of this event.

"All proceeds support kids and teens experiencing foster care so it's a win-win!" adds Jenae Holtzhafer.

For more information and to place your orders, visit www.mykindnessproject.org or contact donations@mykindnessproject.org.

Hobby Shops and Recreational Buildings Popping Up All Over

(NAPSI)—If you're like many homeowners seeking to enhance your property and support your lifestyle interests, adding a freestanding hobby shop, vehicle storage building or recreational facility can be a great idea.

For hobby enthusiasts, projects range from a small garage to an elaborate workshop to support a wide range of interests, such as wood-working, classic car restoration, various collections or simply for storage of equipment and tools, said Andy Brown, Morton Buildings suburban product line manager. Also popular are man caves and

she sheds, which offer a place to get away to relax and unwind, enjoy hobbies and spend time with friends.

"Our customers have used their Morton buildings for such diverse interests as an art studio, a family game room, a space for music and instruments, doing meditation and yoga, brewing beer and exercising," Brown noted. "Some couples split the space in their hobby building so they each have separate areas for their own interests."

Many owners of boats, RVs and other recreational vehicles, such as motorcycles and ATVs, he added, want

an attractive, well-designed storage facility to protect and enhance the enjoyment of those assets. Many of these vehicle storage facilities also have amenities, such as an office, kitchenette, lounge, bathroom and space for hobbies.

"Homeowners want a building that will not only support their hobby and recreational needs, but is also stylish and can be customized to complement the existing structures on the property with design features such as brick and stone, cupolas and porches," he said.

Save now through February on select new

buildings during Morton's Building Value

Days event. Visit mortonbuildings.com/projects/residential or call 800-447-7436 to learn more. Certain restrictions may apply.

Free Ham Radio Classes Start On March 5th

Starting on March 5, the Delaware Lehigh Amateur Radio Club, Inc. will offer free classes for people who would like to obtain an amateur radio 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 radio 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 Radio Relay League (ARRL), the nationally recognized organization for ham radio operators, there are more than 750,000 amateur radio license holders in the United States and more than

3,000,000 worldwide. Based in Nazareth, the Delaware Lehigh Amateur Radio Club, Inc. (DLARC) has more than 100 members. It is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Classes are offered as a community service.

Classes will be held on Tuesdays from 7-9 p.m. at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC - formerly known as the 911 Center) at 100 Gracedale Avenue in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. For details or to register, contact KE3AW@ARRL.NET or call 610-419-9286.

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National Grid: Improving Jobs with the Clean Energy Transition

(NAPSI)—Addressing climate change is an all-hands-on-deck undertaking. It requires a smarter, stronger, and cleaner energy grid that provides affordable, reliable power when and where people need it. The grid of the future will have to be at least twice the size of what it is today—most likely even bigger.

That means jobs—thousands and thousands of them across a wide variety of industries, from manufacturing technology, such as batteries and wind turbines, to electric vehicle construction and maintenance to consumer sales. The impacts on the workforce across the state and nation, and the economic effects on local communities, will be significant.

According to a 2023 U.S. Department of Energy (USDO) employment study, the energy workforce grew by nearly 300,000 jobs over the previous year—a faster rate than the overall U.S. workforce. Clean energy jobs specifically grew by 114,000, with every state seeing growth.

These new jobs present an opportunity to diversify the energy workforce and open doors to individuals who might not have previously considered the sector for a career. Women made up more than half of the energy jobs added last year, according to USDOE, and veteran employment outpaced that of the overall U.S. economy.

Examples of jobs necessary for a successful clean energy transition include:

- Offshore wind farm servicers
- Renewable energy engineers
- Solar panel installers and technicians
- Solar sales representatives
- EV production technicians
- EV charging station maintenance technicians
- Sustainable construction workers
- Robotics maintenance workers

The federal government offers a wealth of clean energy workforce development assistance. That includes a Clean Energy Corps with opportunities for engineers, attorneys, public policy specialists and other professionals, as well as career mapping tools that help people understand the roles available across energy sectors and their skills requirements.

New York is third in the nation for the most clean energy jobs, according to national business group E2, and state officials anticipate significant job creation in the coming years to help support climate goals. As of 2022, there were 165,200 clean energy jobs across the state.

The state Climate Action Council sees the potential for an additional 189,600 net jobs to be created by 2040. Resources such as New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's (NY-

SERDA) Clean Energy Workforce Development and Training platform provide labor opportunities to New Yorkers and organizations interested in contributing to the clean energy future.

And the state aims for a more robust, resilient, and reliable grid to enable more electrification and renewable power sources, utilities including National Grid also play a key role in creating economic opportunities in the clean energy future.

The Grid Collective supports this work with training through the Business Performance Institute (BPI) and other certified sites to help workers gain skills that align with New York's clean energy goals and allow them to take advantage of green economic opportunities at both the city and state level. That's in addition to workforce training programs and partnerships like:

- Coordination with five free SUNY Online Training Centers to provide young people more resources for their future education and careers, including \$3 million in gateway grants to students transitioning to the working world;
- Certified energy efficiency training in incubation and accelerator programs in partnership with Ascend Long Island and Bloc Power; and
- Grid for Good programming through which National Grid

employees volunteer to help connect young people with employment opportunities and

green technology job training.

For further facts, visit www.nationalgridus.com/project-c/Our-Pillars/Work-

force-Development and www.nationalgridus.com/project-c/Connect-as-Local-Leaders-and-Businesses/The-Grid-Collective.

DEP To Host Public Hearing on Proposed Warehouse Project in Monroe County



The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will host a public hearing for the proposed Warner Road Warehouse Project in Pocono Township, Monroe County. The hearing will be held on Monday, March 4, 2024 from 6:00 PM to 9:30 PM at the Pocono Mountain School District Swiftwater Elementary Center located at 135 Academic Dr, Swiftwater, PA 18370. Core5 Industrial Partners of Harrisburg (Core5) has applied for a National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) permit for a discharge of stormwater from construction activities. Representatives from DEP's Waterways & Wetlands Program, the Monroe County Conservation District, and Core5 Industrial Partners, LLC will be in attendance for the hearing.

Core5 plans to construct a 702,000 square-

foot warehouse building along Warner Road. The project also includes the construction of car parking lots, truck loading docks, trailer parking areas, access drives, stormwater basins, and on- and off-site utilities. The NPDES permit is for the discharge of stormwater to Pocono Creek, which is a High Quality-Cold Water Fishes and Migratory Fishes stream, and to Exceptional Value wetlands.

DEP received the NPDES application in July of 2023. The application was deemed administratively complete on August 11, 2023. Written public comments were received during the public comment period.

DEP requests that individuals wishing to testify at the hearing submit a written notice of intent to Colleen Connolly, Community Relations Coordinator at: coconnolly@pa.gov. DEP will accept requests up to the day of the hearing. DEP requests

that individuals limit their testimony to 5 minutes so that all have the opportunity to testify. DEP can only review comments made with regard to the NPDES application. All comments, whether delivered orally during the hearing or submitted in writing, will carry equal weight and consideration with DEP. Individuals attending the hearing will have the opportunity to testify if they so desire; however, individuals who preregister to testify will be given priority on the agenda.

Persons with a disability who wish to testify and require an auxiliary aid, service, or other accommodation should contact Colleen Connolly at: coconnolly@pa.gov or the Pennsylvania Hamilton Relay Service at (800) 654-5984 (TDD) to discuss how the Department can meet their needs.

The NPDES permit application documentation is available for review at the Monroe County Conservation District, located at 8050 Running Valley Road, Stroudsburg, PA 18360. It is also available on the DEP Northeast Regional Office Community Information Webpage at: CORE 5 Monroe County Warehouse or at the DEP Northeast Regional Office, located at 2 Public Square, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701, (570) 826-2511.

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Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



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I knew little about Straw Bale Gardening until I met Peg and Ed, entrenched volunteers of the Kearny Community Garden along the Passaic River in NJ, not far from Manhattan. Peg, a retired 6th-grade teacher of 52 years, is still teaching, but now her students are gardeners from age 8 to 93. She explained Straw Bale Gardens by Joel Karsten is her 'textbook.'

While a trend in urban areas, the raised bed technique works for folks with little space, difficult rocky or heavy clay soil, and those with lousy backs or who garden in a chair. Don't confuse hay with straw, though; beware of mislabeling too.

Hay is the entire harvested plant, including the seed heads, while straw is the plant stalk left behind after the seed heads are removed. A lawn will sprout from your bale if you inadvertently use hay bales. And

Hello, fellow readers, As we approach the end of winter, we begin to think about vegetable gardens. I hope to have an attractive fence this year rather than my workaround stakes and deer netting. Not so pretty, but the veggies are. In addition to the No-Till Gardening Technique, which I adapted thanks to Patty Doell (story archived on AskMaryStone.com) there's another way to forgo tilling and weeding using straw bales.



use organically grown straw to be free of pesticides.

When I met Peg and Ed nine years ago, they had 62 spots with five bales each at a modest cost per season that quickly sold out. I emailed the Kearny Community Garden via their Facebook page and hoped to hear back for updates, but I was excited to see they are still using the straw bale technique.

They prep the bales before planting by watering fertilizer into them for about three weeks. Peg says they use Cheep Cheep 4-3-3 by North Country Organics. Made of dehydrated poultry litter, as the name implies, it's reasonably priced and

approved for use in organic farming.

Each bale gets sixteen and a half cups of the stuff. That's over 5,000 cups over the 310 bales! The bales then decompose to the point that they will support plant growth, and the continued decomposition provides nutrients throughout the growing season.

"We want our garden to be a bridge for all the different groups in our community." Their Facebook page said, "Regardless of the language we speak, we can all get together around food. Everyone and anyone is welcome." United and one. Imagine that.

Digging further, I found an article about



the Pros and Cons of Community Gardening. The pros are fresh produce for less money, knowing the origin of your food, and building a community of gardeners. Plus, gardening is a stress-reducing activity for your body and mind.

But there could be cons. Bonnie Grant writes, "There are those who want the produce for themselves and will stoop to stealing your perfect tomatoes. Theft of tools is also common, as is vandalism. And not everyone is going to agree to the same rules, which can lead to arguments. But there are many pros of having a community garden that far outweighs any cons. So, join your local com-

munity garden today."

When you think about it, if we live by our true selves, of kindness and concern for the well-being of all, including nature, there wouldn't be a need for rules. And while they exist, rules will become less relevant, maybe someday irrelevant, if we live from our hearts. Imagine that. It makes me think of the song Imagine by John Lennon—the chorus—"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will be as one." What a beautiful chorus.

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You may also stop by the station during our weekly drills on Mondays at 7pm. Our station is located at 517 S. Northampton St. Bangor, PA.

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