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PRESS



January 18, 2024

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Vol. 51, No. 26



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PHOTOS:



Bangor Girls
Basketball
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HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY CHARLES MULLER



Charles Muller of Frelinghuysen, NJ, celebrated his 100th birthday on January 13th. He was surrounded by four generations of family, and celebrated with a huge lunch and desserts.

North Warren Goes Head To Head Against Jefferson Township



North Warren went head to head against Jefferson Township High School in girls basketball on January 11th. However, North Warren was defeated by Jefferson, 56 to 32. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Bangor Wins Over Salisbury High School in Girls Basketball



Bangor took on Salisbury High School in girls basketball on January 11th. The Lady Slaters won, 47 to 21. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

From PA Senator Rosemary Brown: Once Again I Call Upon the National Park Service for Urgency

I recently contacted the Director of the National Park to call for the immediate prioritization of the required federal permit to begin work on Route 611 in Delaware Water Gap, which has been closed since Dec. 6, 2022. You can view the letter here.

The state has been ready with the necessary funding and crews to begin work since early 2023. We have made the reopening of this roadway a top priority and we are insisting this be a priority of the National Park Service, as well.

I have also been in communication with Congressman Matt Cartwright, and we will be convening a meeting next week with all stakeholders to plan a path toward reopening.

Since the initial road closure more than a year ago, the state has been compliant and reasonable throughout the permitting process



with the National Park Service and working to understand what they require. It is not always easy, however, the need for urgency must be reciprocated for the people in this region. They need to prioritize the information needed, the processing of that information, and make definitive decisions to meet their laws so we can move forward. It is extremely dangerous to have this roadway removed from our detour options based on its location parallel to Route 80. It is also doing more harm than necessa-

ry to our businesses.

One lane, safely opened, at this point is the goal, and the state is ready when the National Park Service says go.

View the full press release at: senatorbrown40.com/2024/01/10/brown-once-again-calls-upon-the-national-park-service-for-urgency/.

In July, I also issued a press release on this issue and a video regarding the urgency to begin the necessary work. That video can be found at: www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1434563947361595

Pen Argyl Faces Off Against Southern Lehigh in Boys Basketball



Pen Argyl went head to head against Southern Lehigh in boys basketball on January 13th. Pen Argyl lost, 66 to 34. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

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BANGOR (47) VS SALISBURY (21) GIRLS BASKETBALL



Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



Grove: Dem BEFC Plan Will Raise School Property Taxes, 46% State Income Tax Increase

House Republican Appropriations Chairman Seth Grove (R-York) reacted to the Democrat plan adopted by the Basic Education Funding Commission (BEFC) with significant concerns about its eye-popping costs.

“The adopted BEFC report calls for a \$291 million increase in spending for school districts (property taxes!) and more than \$7 billion in recurring revenue over the next seven budget cycles for the state,” Grove said. “When added with the current state structural deficit of \$1.8 billion – and without accounting for any other increases which may be in Gov. Josh Shapiro’s 2024-25 budget proposal – the Commonwealth needs to find \$8.9 billion in recurring revenue. Democrats would need to increase our state income tax by almost a percentage and a half in order to cover this spending spree, bringing the overall rate from 3.07% to near 4.5%. Even more concerning, this \$7 billion is a conservative estimate, other initiatives highlighted in the report have the potential for billions more in spending.”

“As I have previously warned, Pennsylvania’s bond rating will be tied to how the governor and legislature handle education funding moving forward following the Commonwealth Court decision in *William Penn SD v. PA Department of Education*,” Grove added. “In addition, the bond rating agencies have recommended against spending down our reserves to pay for recurring costs like the BEFC recommends; we must have stable revenue streams.”

S&P: We could lower the rating if the resolution of the education funding litigation required significant new spending and the commonwealth was unable to identify or agree on reoccurring funding sources in a timely manner.

Fitch: Failure to maintain improved operating performance, such as through material draws on reserves to support recurring needs or inability to maintain structural budget balance, particularly as the commonwealth addresses the findings of the school funding lawsuit.

Moody’s: Significant growth in leverage (debt or other unfunded liabilities) or the state’s fixed cost burden.

“The Democrat BEFC report isn’t based in reality, nor is this a workable solution for our budget circumstances,” Grove added. “This will raise both local school property taxes and our state taxes – the prudent measures the General Assembly has taken over the past several years to ensure our sound financial footing will be evaporated as neither our General Fund nor our Rainy Day Fund reserves, nor a combination thereof, is enough to cover these recurring costs. Further, the report takes direct aim at effective alternatives for parents and students by attacking charter schools, and completely ignores options for school choice like Lifeline Scholarships.”

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NORTH WARREN (32) VS JEFFERSON TWP. (56) GIRLS BASKETBALL



Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Free Family Fun Nights Focus on Winter Crafts & Activities

Parents who are looking for affordable ways to entertain the kids are invited to check out the free Family Fun Nights hosted by Project Self-Sufficiency on Thursday evenings, January 11th, 18th, and 25th, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m., 127 Mill Street, Newton. Families are invited to enjoy classic family films, games, and crafts with a focus on fun winter activities. Dinner will be provided for all participants. Advance registration is encouraged by calling Project Self-Sufficiency, 973-940-3500. Family Fun Nights are a program of the Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency. "These weekly Family Fun Nights offer parents

and children a place to relax and have a good time together in a safe and supportive environment," explains Project Self-Sufficiency Executive Director Deborah Berry-Toon. "The focus on winter activities and crafts invites children to express themselves creatively while having fun with their family." 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, childcare and preschool, legal assistance

The Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency is a program of support which includes parenting skills training, economic self-sufficiency services, family activities, legal education services, information about health and nutrition, referrals, advocacy, and other services. All activities are free and open to the public. Family Success Centers offer services to children, youth, families, individuals, and communities. Funding is provided by the New Jersey Department of Children & Families.



and education, counseling and advocacy, referrals, and help with emergency 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.



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PEN ARGYL (34) VS SOUTHERN LEHIGH (66) BOYS BASKETBALL



Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

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Democrats' Partisan Basic Education Funding Commission Report Continues False Choice of Funding-Only Solutions For Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) said the report and recommendations approved by Democrat members of the Basic Education Funding Commission today continues the false choice that providing only more state funding will improve Pennsylvania's public schools.

"Pennsylvania's system of basic education is fundamentally broken, but it is a false choice to continually double down on a funding-only approach to improve

the inadequacies of our system," Cutler said. "This Basic Education Funding Commission had the ability to forge a path for transformational change in our system of public education that created real choice through innovative approaches to education while also providing necessary resources to ensure proven models of development can be successful. Unfortunately, the one-sided, Democrat-created report continues to toe the line of special interest rhetoric and will leave too many

Pennsylvania students on the same road to nowhere instead of on a new path to prosperity," continued Cutler. As a corollary to this report's shortcomings, Cutler pointed to recent PSSA exam results that showed, despite year after year of historic increases to basic education funding—including even more money to the most underprivileged schools in rural and urban Pennsylvania—student achievement has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. "Despite years of bipar-

isan support for historic amounts of increased funding for public education, including schools in rural and urban Pennsylvania suffering from the deepest poverty, our testing metrics show Pennsylvania's students are not climbing out of this learning deficit fast enough," Cutler added. "It is clearer than ever that money alone is not the answer, and it is equally clear that the partisan report approved by Democrats on the Basic Education Funding Commission is endemic of a system captured in

the sad cycle of its own failings." Cutler also thanked the Republican members on the commission, particularly House Republican Education Committee Chairman Jesse Topper (R-Bedford), Rep. Ryan Warner (R-Fayette), and Rep. Jason Ortity (R-Washington) for their deliberate and innovative alternative report. "I want to praise the Republican members of the commission for the thoughtful approach they took to their alternative report, which paid attention to the Common-

wealth Court opinion that said alternatives to education improvement outside of funding-only solutions can also meet the mandate of creating a through and efficient system of public education," Cutler said. "Their innovative approach to transformational education change is the kind of thinking we need to truly find common ground and consensus in creating a success-minded, child-first and family-focused education experience here in Pennsylvania," Cutler concluded.

Senator Parker Space, Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia, and Assemblyman Michael Inganamort Sworn in to Office, Begin Work for NJ's 24th Legislative District



Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia

Senator Parker Space, Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia, and Assemblyman Michael Inganamort today took the oath of office in Trenton to begin their service to the people of New Jersey's 24th Legislative District. Elected in November 2023, the new legislative delegation is prepared to ardently champion the interests and concerns of Sussex, Morris, and Warren County families.

"It's an honor to continue representing the 24th Legislative District and work on behalf of its many families," said Space, who previously served in the State Assembly. "I'm eager to collaborate with Assemblywoman Fantasia and Assemblyman Inganamort and advocate for the issues that matter most to our constituents." "I'm humbled by the trust placed in me by the residents of our dis-



Senator Parker Space

trict," said Fantasia. "I look forward to being a strong advocate for our communities, addressing the concerns that impact the lives of our residents in northwest New Jersey and across the state." "Serving the people of the 24th Legislative District is a privilege," said Inganamort. "I am committed to working tirelessly to address the needs of our community, especially small towns that are getting



Assemblyman Michael Inganamort

squeezed by a growing state government." Senator Space, Assemblywoman Fantasia, and Assemblyman Inganamort will operate a shared legislative office located at 1 Wilson Drive in Spata. The phone number is (973) 300-0200. The legislators plan to open an additional office in Morris County in early 2024. Senator Parker Space served as an Assemblyman for over 10 years.

He is a farmer and owner of Space Farms Zoo & Museum. Previously, he was a Sussex County freeholder from 2010 to 2013 and a Wantage Township committeeman from 2004 to 2009, serving as mayor for three years. He has been a volunteer firefighter since 1989 and was fire chief from 2001 to 2002. Space resides in Wantage with his wife Jill and has three adult children and one

grandson. Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia served on the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders (County Commissioners) for five years and serving as Director for one year. She served on the Franklin Borough Council for three years, one as Council President. Dawn has worked in education for over 15 years as both an educator and administrator in public charter school districts. Dawn is the parent of three adult children. Assemblyman Michael Inganamort is the former mayor of Chester Township. He grew up in Sussex County and previously worked in the office of Congressman Scott Garrett. He is the youngest member of the New Jersey Assembly Republican caucus. Michael and his wife Lauren are the proud parents of three young daughters.

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DEP Receives \$3 Million From EPA to Develop Climate Action Plan, Proposes Grant Program to Reduce Emissions in Heavy Industry

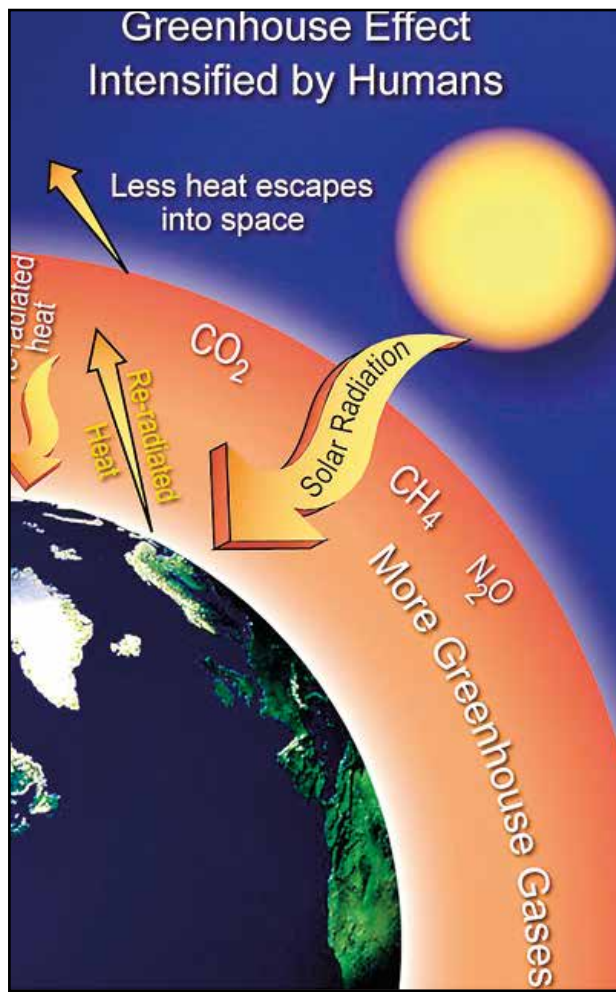
DEP is asking for input on designing and implementing a new program that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Pennsylvania's industrial sector

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has received \$3 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop a Priority Climate Action Plan focused on reducing emissions in the Commonwealth's industrial sector. Upon completing the plan, DEP will be eligible to apply for up to \$500 million to implement it. DEP's plan will focus on a statewide industrial decarbonization grant program, known as Reducing Industrial Sector Emissions in Pennsylvania (RISE PA), that will provide funding for industries to reduce carbon and benefit the health and safety of surrounding communities.

house Gas Inventory Report, the industrial sector is the highest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting sector, accounting for just over 30 percent of Pennsylvania's total GHG emissions. "RISE PA aims to help spur private sector investment in greenhouse gas emissions technologies by helping to offset the upfront costs of large-scale, transformative projects," said DEP Interim Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "We are not just reducing emissions but also reducing barriers by turning high abatement costs into high-impact solutions that shape a cleaner, more prosperous future for industry and Pennsylvania communities alike."

DEP is seeking funding for RISE PA from the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). According to the 2023 Pennsylvania Green-

DEP is also looking for input from industry, academia, community-based organizations, and other interested stakeholders on issues related to the design and implementation



of RISE PA. DEP is specifically interested in receiving input on program design, size,

scope, scale, and award structure as well as the potential outputs and metrics, including emissions reductions and community benefits. If DEP receives CPRG funding for RISE PA, prospective projects would need to satisfy the following proposed criteria:

- Benefit (and not negatively impact) low-income and disadvantaged communities
- Achieve GHG emission reductions that are long-lasting and certain
- Incorporate high labor standards, emphasize job quality, and support equitable workforce development

"The Climate Pollution Reduction Grants present a unique opportunity for Pennsylvania to become a national leader in industrial decarbonization," said Brian Regli, Executive Director of Critical Investments. "By mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and curbing harm-

ful co-pollutants, RISE PA seeks to champion environmental protection and invites industry leaders to become pioneers in shaping a sustainable future." DEP is requesting responses to 10 questions to inform the development of program solicitation guidelines for RISE PA. Those questions, and additional information about the Department's general goals and objectives for RISE PA program development, can be found in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. Interested persons may submit information by e-mail to RA-EP-CPRG@pa.gov. Information must be received no later than Monday, January 22, 2024. For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, please visit website, or follow DEP on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn.

Senator Oroho and Assemblymen Space and Wirths Finish Term On Busy Note For NJ

Senator Steve Oroho, Assemblyman Parker Space and Assemblyman Hal Wirths (R-24/Sussex, Morris, Warren) finish up the current session with a final busy day of activity in Trenton. Governor Murphy signed three bills into law that were sponsored by members of the District 24 team. Each bill had some genesis or connection to residents who reside in the district. S-3201/A-111 is legislation that allows a farm or farm stand to sell firewood obtained from another property without being considered a lumberyard under municipal zoning regulations. This measure was inspired by a local farmer in Mount Olive Township.

S-652/A-117 is a bill that allows smaller municipalities to serve as its own board of health. This legislation was drafted to respond to a concern from Andover Borough. S-1503/A-1507 permits barbers or hairstylists to rent a chair in their establishment without having to bring an individual on as an employee. The legislators worked with a business owner in Franklin Borough on this measure. The three legislators also saw several bills clear the final legislative hurdle during the session's last day and get to the governor's desk for approval. S-4267/A-5909 is a proposal that assists fallen emergency respon-

ders with workers compensation benefits. This legislation was drafted to address a tragic situation of a volunteer EMT from Byram Township who died after responding to an accident. S-665/A-3642 was sponsored by the legislators after meeting with representatives of the deaf community who wanted to have a better system in place so law enforcement and deaf individuals have a greater mutual understanding when a deaf person is pulled over during a traffic stop. A lead organization from the deaf community is located in Mount Olive Township. S-4165/A-5806 provides monies to purchase properties for farmland and open space purpo-

ses in the legislative district. S-659/A-2014 helps promote manufacturing in New Jersey and utilizes our community colleges to better effectuate the bill's purposes. S-2249/A-4211 was introduced to create additional economic opportunities for disabled veterans. A-5227/S-3662 expands eligibility for the State's "fishing buddy license." The legislation is supported by sportsmen's groups. "As a joint office, we have consistently placed a high priority on constituent service," said the three legislators jointly. "Some casework cannot always be resolved through administrative action and requires the need for le-



gislation. We're pleased to see several more of our initiatives come to fruition via the legislative route at the end of this term." Senator Oroho and As-

semblyman Wirths are retiring after today and Assemblyman Space will be sworn into the Senate tomorrow when the new legislative session begins.

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Warren County, NJ, Commissioner Jason Sarnoski Elected Second Vice Chair of North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Warren County Commissioner Jason Sarnoski was elected Second Vice Chair of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) at its January 8 Board of Trustees meeting.



"I want to thank my fellow Board members for electing me Second Vice Chair and I look forward to continuing to serve on the Executive Committee," Commissioner Sarnoski said. "The NJTPA plays an important role, coordinating regional transportation planning efforts and prioritizing funding while considering the needs of a diverse region of rural, suburban and urban communities. The NJTPA also funds much-needed studies, like the county's Complete Streets Policy Implementation Plan, which is underway."

The NJTPA oversees regional transportation planning and annually authorizes more than \$1 billion in federal surface transportation funding for 13 counties in northern and central New Jersey.

The Executive Committee provides guidance and leadership to the full Board on a wide range of planning, policy and administrative issues. It meets as needed to review financial, personnel and policy matters. Board membership is an uncompensated position.

Commissioner Sarnoski was elected in 2010 and joined the NJTPA Board of Trustees in 2011. He most recently served as Third Vice Chair, and first joined the Board's Executive Committee when he was elected to a two-year term as Secretary in 2020. He has served as Chair of the Freight Initiatives Committee and as Vice Chair of the Board's Project Prioritization Committee.

At the meeting, the NJTPA Board also selected four other members of its Executive

Committee. The elected members of the Executive Committee are: Ocean County Commissioner John P. Kelly, Chair; Middlesex County Commissioner Charles Kenny, First Vice Chair; and Morris County Commissioner Stephen H. Shaw, Secretary. In accordance with the bylaws, Chairman Kelly appointed Union County Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski to the position of Third Vice Chair.

The NJTPA is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for 13 northern New Jersey counties. Under federal legislation, MPOs provide a forum where local officials, public transportation providers and state agency representatives can come together and cooperatively plan to meet the region's current and future transportation needs. It establishes the region's eligibility to receive federal tax dollars for transportation projects.

The NJTPA Board consists of one local elected official from each of the 13 counties in the region (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren), and the cities of Newark and Jersey City. The Board also includes a Governor's Representative, the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the Executive Director of NJ TRANSIT, the Chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and a Citizen's Representative appointed by the Governor.



Blairstown Township Annual Reorganization Was Held On January 1st, 2024. On the agenda was the swearing in of the new members of the committee for 2024, the appointment of the mayor and deputy mayor and the officers of the blairstown hose company # 1.

Newly Elected.....Eric Lohman.
 ReelectedWalter Orcutt.
 Oath Of Office For Mayor.....Rob Moorhead.
 Oath Of Office Deputy Mayor....Walter Orcutt.

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Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Establish NJ State Parks and Open Space Foundation

Governor Phil Murphy today signed S1311/A594, which establishes the NJ State Parks and Open Space Foundation within the Department of Environmental Protection. The foundation will be incorporated as a nonprofit corporation and will be responsible for raising funds for the maintenance and development of New Jersey's state parks and forests, as well as county and municipal parks and open spaces.

"Thanks to this monumental legislation, our state's natural treasures will only become more invaluable as we continue to invest in their preservation, resilience, and accessibility," said Governor Murphy. "From Liberty State Park to Island Beach State Park, our state parks and forests will continue to attract visitors to the Garden State while providing physical and mental health benefits for countless New Jersey families."

"This is a game-changing moment for parks and open space in New Jersey," said Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn M. LaTourette, who oversees New Jersey's vast system of State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites. "By establishing this Foundation, Governor Murphy and our Legislature have created the avenue for passionate outdoor enthusiasts to champion improvements in the

parks and open spaces they love and the greater environment we share. With this new tool, we will create a lasting conservation and outdoor recreation legacy that brings people and communities together to enjoy our natural treasures."

"The establishment of a foundation for the continued maintenance of our public parks and open spaces will help ensure access to state, county, and municipal parks for future generations," said former Governor Richard J. Codey. "For years, many of our public places have been in dire need of additional funding to provide for both maintenance and the creation of additional recreational opportunities. This new law is a key part of addressing that need and providing the resources that are needed for our public places to best serve the public."

"New Jersey is fortunate to have beautiful parks all over the state, thanks to our prioritization of preserving open space and providing opportunities for families to spend time outside. Still, maintaining these parks can be costly," said Senator Shirley K. Turner. "Through the NJ State Parks and Open Space Foundation we will be able to raise funds to not only maintain our parks but also invest in outdoor recreational equipment to



get our kids moving for generations to come."

"As the Garden State, it is our responsibility to take the lead in nurturing our environment and open spaces," said Assemblyman William Spearman. "The enactment of this bill sends a clear message to New Jerseyans about the importance of preserving the innate beauty that characterizes our great state."

"The establishment of the New Jersey State Parks and Open Space Foundation is a pivotal step towards long-term sustainability of our state's natural allure," said Assemblywoman Shama Haider. "The Foundation is a testament of our commitment to our state with pristine, well-maintained parks and open spaces, fostering a healthier and more vibrant community."

"One of the many things that makes our State the Greatest in the Country is the remarkable variety that exists in New Jersey's many landscapes," said Assemblyman Sterley Stanley. "From cities to suburbs and from foundries to forests one of our state's greatest assets is not only the incredible diversity of landscapes that exist

here but the proximity of those landscapes to one another. By creating the New Jersey State Parks and Open Space Foundation, we are recognizing our responsibility as lawmakers to take proactive steps to preserve this reality by protecting our state's natural wonders both small and large so they can continue to help define the place we are so proud to call home."

"New Jersey state, county and town parks and forests are beloved by millions – they are the place we escape for vacations, hikes, picnics or just an afternoon away. But they need more funding to handle their existing crowds – to say nothing of making them better. Whether it's Liberty State Park or the park down the street, this bill will help all of us by allowing private dollars to chip in to make our parks and wild areas even better and more accessible. We thank Sen. Shirley Turner and Asm. Bill Spearman for getting this bill done on the final day of session and Gov. Murphy for his support," said Doug O'Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey.

"New Jersey has one

of the best state park systems in the country. This legislation underscores New Jersey's commitment to environmental stewardship and ensuring public access to our natural wonders," said Barbara Brummer, The Nature Conservancy's New Jersey State Director. "We are grateful to Governor Murphy and the dedicated members of the New Jersey Legislature for their joint efforts in enacting this transformative legislation."

"Newark is proud to host the Greenway, one of our newest State parks, and I'm grateful to the Murphy Administration and the Legislature for giving communities across New Jersey an innovative new tool to ensure our parks have the funding they need to thrive through widening the tent of genuine stakeholders," said Evan Weiss, President and CEO of the Newark Alliance.

"Parks and open spaces are critical assets for the people and wildlife of the Garden State. We know that these assets need increased attention and resources," said Alex Ireland, New Jersey Audubon President & CEO. "We are supportive of actions that

will make our parks, safer, more welcoming, and more resilient in the years ahead."

"Having an accessible, safe, and well maintained park in your neighborhood has proven benefits to the health of our bodies, our minds, and our communities. This new foundation will help ensure parks are well kept for New Jerseyans to enjoy walking, hiking, birding, cycling, picnicking, and just getting outdoors," said Ed Potosnak, Executive Director, New Jersey LCV. "We applaud Governor Murphy and the Legislature for their commitment to green spaces throughout the state. While this bill will not supplant taxpayer support of open space and parks, it is important because funding through this new foundation will be both an environmental and economic boon for residents – especially for urban communities of color that have less access to green spaces for recreation."

"Parks and open space support our health and well-being and provide essential connections in our communities. As such, it is critical that the state's public land is well-maintained, accessible, and welcoming to all. This new law will ensure that New Jersey's parks and forests have the resources to benefit from robust investment and community engagement," said Kim Elliman, President and CEO of the Open Space Institute. "The Open Space Institute strongly supports this measure and applauds Governor Murphy, and leaders in the Senate and Assembly for their efforts to provide much-needed outdoor recreational resources for people throughout the state now and for future generations."

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PA State Rep. Ann Flood Announces Nearly \$3 Million in Grant Funding Awarded Locally



Rep. Ann Flood (R-Northampton) today announced nearly \$3 million in state funding has been awarded by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) to benefit residents in Northampton County. The awards were considered at today's CFA Board meeting and approved through the Commonwealth's Small Water and Sewer Program (SWS) and Water Supply, Sanitary Sewer, and Storm Water Projects Program (H2O). "I am pleased our local community has secured this critical funding. This substantial investment will help to repair and maintain crucial parts of our local infrastructure," said Flood. "Keeping our sewers and water systems working efficiently is very important to the well-being of the community." Grant funding was awarded as follows: Bushkill Township - \$189,786 for repairing or installing new stormwater infrastructure at 10 sites located in Bushkill Township. Bangor Borough Authority - \$600,000 for wastewater treatment

plant improvements and \$150,000 for sewer main and pump station replacements in Bangor Borough and Washington Township. Portland Borough - \$424,708 for stormwater improvements located along Main Street and Market Street and \$425,000 for improvements to the sewage treatment plant in the Borough of Portland. East Bangor Municipal Authority - \$367,633 for the construction of a new water storage tank located in Upper Mount Bethel Township and \$150,000 for water meter upgrades in East Bangor Borough. Roseto Borough Sewer Authority - \$150,000 for televising and repairing the sewer lines located in the Borough of Roseto. The CFA was established in 2004 as an independent agency of the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to administer Pennsylvania's economic stimulus packages. The CFA holds fiduciary responsibility over the funding of programs and investments in Pennsylvania's economic growth.

Pennsylvania Winter Turkey Sighting Survey To Begin

The Game Commission is asking for the public's help finding turkey flocks to trap for ongoing turkey projects. Beginning next week, Pennsylvanians are encouraged to report the location of any turkey flocks they see. Information is being collected online at <https://pgcdatcollection.pa.gov/TurkeyBroodSurvey> from Jan. 15 through March 15. Visitors to that webpage will be asked to provide the date of the sighting, the location, and the type of land (public, private or unknown) where birds are seen, among other things. Game Commission crews will visit sites to assess them for the potential to trap turkeys. Turkeys will not be moved; they'll simply be leg banded and released on site. In four Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) some also will be outfitted with GPS transmitters, then be released back on site, to be monitored over time. Trapping turkeys during winter is part of the Game Commission's ongoing population monitoring, and provides information for a large-scale turkey study, as well. Just like the last four winters, the Game Commission will put leg bands on male turkeys statewide. Hunters who

harvest one of those turkeys, or people who find one dead, are asked to report the band number by either calling toll-free or reporting it online. "The data give us information on annual survival rates and annual spring harvest rates for our population model and provides the person reporting information on when and approximately where the turkey was banded," said Mary Jo Casalena, the Game Commission's turkey biologist. The Game Commission is also attaching GPS transmitters to a sample of turkeys in WMUs 2D, 3D, 4D and 5C; on approximately 150 hens and 100 males total. The four study areas have different landscapes, turkey population densities, and spring hunter and harvest densities. "We're studying turkey population and movement dynamics, disease prevalence, and other aspects that may limit populations" Casalena said. These studies are being done in partnership with Penn State University and the University of Pennsylvania's Wildlife Futures Program. The population and movement portion of that work is looking at how landscape and weather impact hen nest rates, nest success,



poult survival, predation, habitat use and movement. The disease prevalence varies based on landscape and impacts things like the survival and nesting rates of hens of different ages. This is accomplished by collecting blood, throat swabs, feces, etc. from turkeys that receive backpack-style transmitters at the time of capture. The study will continue next winter for females, so that, in the end, the Game Commission will monitor 400-plus hens and 200-plus male turkeys. Researchers from Penn State University and the University of Pennsylvania's Wildlife Futures Program will interpret the data collected. Maryland, New Jersey and

Ohio joined the study as well. "It is the largest turkey project we've ever conducted, with the hope of answering many questions regarding current turkey population dynamics," Casalena said. Finding birds to trap is key to accomplishing the work. That's where the public comes in. Fortunately, Pennsylvanians have a history of helping in this way. Casalena said participation in the Winter Wild Turkey Sighting Survey has been extremely useful for locating trappable flocks over the past two winters. "The public was so helpful the last two years and some even helped with monitoring sites and trapping," Casalena said. "We look forward to continuing this winter."

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Hello, fellow readers,
Once again, I was late tending to my garden, scurrying about just before the first snow. You've likely heard the phrase "a shoemaker without shoes." It's ironic how folks who provide a service often neglect to provide it for themselves. But one of the treasures of a fall garden clean up in early winter is coming upon seeds from the Bottlebrush Buckeye that dropped to the ground. I'm sure they've done so yearly (I've had

the plants for over ten years) and never noticed. *Aesculus parviflora* is one of my favorite native transition shrubs between woodlands and lawns, reaching 8 to 12 feet high in full shade to full sun. And A-rated in deer resistance, to boot!

The tough leather-like capsules that cover the smooth brown seeds were shed, and some of the taproots started to emerge, looking like tiny white fingers. Two were deeply rooted, sitting around their parent plants on the soil's surface. I let them be. Then I grabbed the others to disperse around the property, where I would love more waves of texture with its hefty leaves and lovely mounding shape. Plus, the feathery white flowers in summer that look like bottle brushes will attract bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

As the flurries began to fall, I dug in the Bottlebrush Buckeye seeds, planting them only one to two inches deep, about eight feet apart. I planted some near our boggy area in the higher regions that aren't always saturated, as the flexible fellow prefers well-drained, moist soil but tolerates flooding and moderate drought. And I dug others along the woodland edge near the feeder to the pond.

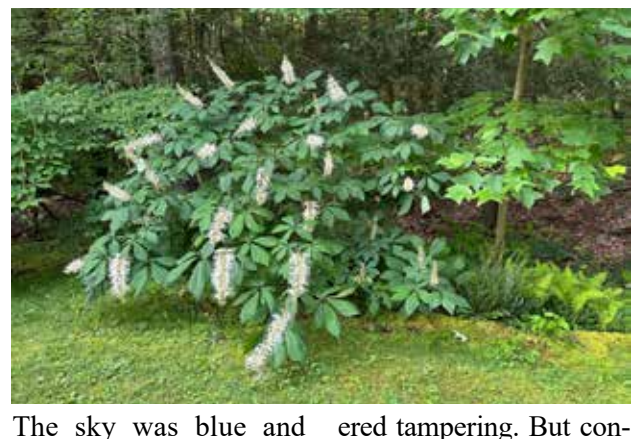


Beyond propagating by seed, Bottlebrush Buckeye colonizes by suckering. Shoots come from the roots or stems of the plant. Then, the shoots put out roots to form a new plant. You can move the babies by carefully cutting them away from the parent plant and transplanting them. Preferably, do that in early spring before the bud break or late fall when it's dormant. But before the snow. I'm just saying. (smile)

Looking around at nature's landscape after

the meltdown, I marvel over the swath of lime-green grass near the vegetable garden where the underground spring runs through, with remnants of snow and slush on each side.

On the morning walk, passing Jacksonburg Creek, which runs through our front yard, turned into a rushing river with racing currents. In front of it, a healthy young beech tree, unaffected by Beech Leaf Disease, with many tawny tan leaves still intact, dancing in the wind.



The sky was blue and then grew overcast, and spritzes of frozen raindrops, almost sleet, tickled my face.

On the return trip, I gathered remnants of cedar trees knocked off from the snowplow, reminding me of the story of decorating with "roadkill" long ago. I didn't dress the window boxes for winter yet (there was no roadkill until the snow), so now I have the treasures from the side of the road. I wondered why cedar trees rooted themselves where the hemlock once stood. It occurs to me they are from the previous pilfering of roadside treasures, spreading the seeds of life.

Moving tree remnants, including berries, to areas other than where nature intended may be consid-

ered tampering. But consider yourself a bird or a mammal (humans are, after all) and how wild-life transports seeds from place to place. It is part of the cycle of nature, the infinity of life.

In the winter months, cherish all the beautiful treasures around you, including family and friends, as we spend more time near home. Maybe gather some of your belongings you no longer or rarely use and pass them on to someone who needs or will enjoy them.

We come into this world with nothing (no things) and leave with no things, but we leave behind the love we give. It's the circle of life that never ends.

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County Executive Lamont G. McClure and The Northampton County Area Agency on Aging Advisory Board Are Seeking Nominees

County Executive Lamont G. McClure and the Northampton County Area Agency on Aging Advisory Board seek nominations for Northampton County's outstanding seniors. Nominees must be Northampton County residents aged sixty years or older who are passionate about helping others through outreach, personal action, inspiration, public service, sports, educational instruction, or humanitarian endeavors.

Nomination forms must be returned with an essay of 250 words or less with a description of why the nominee deserves recognition and a listing of their volunteer activities. You may nominate more than one person. Please return one form for each person with an attached essay to Melissa Titus at mtitus@norcopa.gov, or at the address below:

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Area Agency on Aging
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Nominations must be postmarked by Friday, March 15, 2024. The selected individuals will be announced in April.

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