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*With The Up Most Honor & Respect We Thank Our
Veterans for the sacrifices they made to protect the freedoms
of our great Nation. To the men & women who served our
country, and continue to serve, We Thank You!
A very special thanks goes out to our very own veteran, Dale Young!*

Veterans Day Is November 11th, 2025

North Warren Girls Soccer Team Celebrates 2025-26 Senior Team Members



North Warren took on Phillipsburg High School during their girls soccer Senior Night game on October 29th. North Warren was defeated, 3 to 0. Senior Night photos can be found on pages 6 & 7. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Frances Muller of Frelinghuysen, NJ, Proudly Celebrates 100th Birthday



Frances Muller pictured left, with her daughter Doreen, and Frelinghuysen Deputy Mayor Kirk Perez and pictured right with Frelinghuysen Mayor Shannon Drylie and Committee Woman Debbie Natizak during her centurion proclamation. Happy 100th Birthday!

Surviving Member of 1st Battalion, 9th Marines (1/9), “Walking Dead” Participates in Wounded Warrior Elk Hunt



Buzz Anderson, a survivor from 1st Battalion, 9th Marines (1/9), “Walking Dead,” from the Vietnam War recently participated in the Wounded Warrior Elk Hunt in Wisdom, MT. “The Walking Dead” Marines of One-Nine earned their nickname after suffering the highest casualty rate of any unit during the war. More photos can be found on page 9.



New in the Bangor Public Library

Adult Fiction:
In the Family Way: A Novel by Laney Katz Becker; The Proving Ground by Michael Connelly; The Letter Carrier: A Novel by Francesca Giannone; The Christmas Ring by Karen Kingsbury; Always Remember: The Boy, The Mole, The Fox, The Horse and The Storm by Charlie Mackesy; The Things Gods Break by Abigail Owen; Indian Country: A Novel by Shobha Rao; Summer of Sara by Alexandra Rusch; Charms and Chapters by Alexandra Rusch

Adult Non Fiction:
Future Boy: Back to the Future and My Journey Through the Space-Time Continuum by Michael J. Fox; The Promise of Heaven: 31 Reasons to Get Excited About Your Eternal Home by David Jeremiah; The Perfect Horse: The Daring U.S. Mission to Rescue the Priceless Stallions Kidnapped by the Nazis by Elizabeth Letts; The Ride of Her Life: The True Story of a Woman, Her Horse, and Their Last-Chance Journey Across America by Elizabeth Letts; Joyride: A Memoir by Susan Orlean; Under Siege: My Family's Fight to Save Our Nation by Eric Trump

Large Print Adult Fiction:
The View From Lake Como: A Novel by Adriana Trigiani

Easy Fiction:
A Fall Day For Bear by Bonny Becker; Disney Zootopia 2 by Golden Books; The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses by Paul Goble; This Way, Charlie by Caron Levis; Steam Train, Dream Train Colors by Sherri Duskey Rinker; Flora and the Jazzers by Astrid Sheckels

Easy Reader Fiction:
Bear and Bird: The Secret and Other Stories by Jarvis

Young Adult Fiction:
Grim and Oro by Alex Aster; Morgana and Oz Volumes 1, 2 and 3; Lunar New Year Love Story by Gene Luen Yang; And the River Drags Her Down by Jihyun Yun

DVDs:
The Bad Guys 2; The Fantastic Four: First Steps; Mission Impossible: The Final Reckoning; Weapons

Brown to Host Two Grant Seminars for Non-Profit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations play an essential role in strengthening our communities; from supporting families and veterans, to improving education, public safety, and quality of life across northeastern Pennsylvania.

To help these organizations continue making a difference, I'm pleased to announce that my office will be hosting two seminars designed to help non-profit organizations learn how to find foundation grants, through the Keystone Advantage! Learn valuable tips on grant writing, funding opportunities, and how your organization can access support to further your mission.

Securing funds can often be one of the biggest challenges non-profits face. By hosting these seminars, my goal is to empower our local organizations with the knowledge and resources they need to continue delivering critical services and expanding their impact across our region.

Registration for these events is required, see the links and location information below before signing up.

REGISTER: November 12th from 1-3pm at the Monroe County Public Safety Center at: <https://senatorbrown40.com/psrc-events/funding-111225/>

REGISTER: November 13th from 10am-12pm at Carbondale City Hall at: <https://senatorbrown40.com/psrc-events/funding-111325/>

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SCAN ME

Honoring Veterans, One Visit at a Time: How a Chance Encounter Sparked a Mission of Compassion

One day in the summer of 2024, honor guard members of the Harry F.W. Johnson American Legion Post 379 in Bethlehem stopped in at the St. Luke's Bethlehem Campus hospital to visit their post commander who was in the hospital. What seemed like a simple stop, prior to going to a military funeral to perform honors, has grown into an expansive mission that has now touched hundreds of lives.

When they were in the hospital elevator, a woman entered and asked if they would visit her father. They agreed. Then, another individual, who had a father in ICU, asked if they'd visit him too.

Inspired by these chance encounters, the Legion representatives reached out to St. Luke's Volunteer Services to explore the possibility of making veteran visits a regular occurrence. In December of 2024, this idea became a reality and now has touched over 500 veterans through weekly visits.

In addition to connecting with veterans through conversation and stories, each visit includes a special gesture: a gifted commemorative coin and a star, symbolizing gratitude and recognition.

The stories they've encountered are as diverse as they are powerful. One veteran served on a nuclear submarine for 84 days underwater, an-



other was a 100-year-old WWII veteran. They've met pilots, front-line fighters and even a member of the Italian Army who didn't speak English yet still shared the meaningful connection of military service.

"Some of the visits are extremely moving," said Craig Sostarecz, one of the participating Legion members. "I recall being deeply affected by visits with an amputee and a police officer battling cancer."

Some veterans have expressed humility, even apologizing for not serving in combat roles. But the team reminds them: when you sign on the dotted line, you become government property. Every role matters, every service counts, and every veteran deserves to be honored.

The impact extends beyond the veteran patients themselves. Families are deeply moved to see their loved ones recognized and remembered. For some patients, these volunteers are their only visitors—a reminder that they are not forgotten.

"We are grateful for

the service they gave to our country, and their dedication to this new mission, honoring those who served, one visit at a time," said Georgina Winfield, St. Luke's Network Director of Volunteer & Staffing Resources. "They've visited more than 500 veterans since they started this volunteer endeavor and have made meaningful connections with our veteran patients."

Post 379 includes representatives from the Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy. With 18-19 active participants, including seven shooters for the 21-gun salute and a live bugler, they continue to seek more volunteers from the veteran community to visit veterans in the hospital or volunteer to support their primary mission of honoring veterans through funerals and commemorations on Veterans Day, Vietnam Remembrance Day, and Pearl Harbor Day.

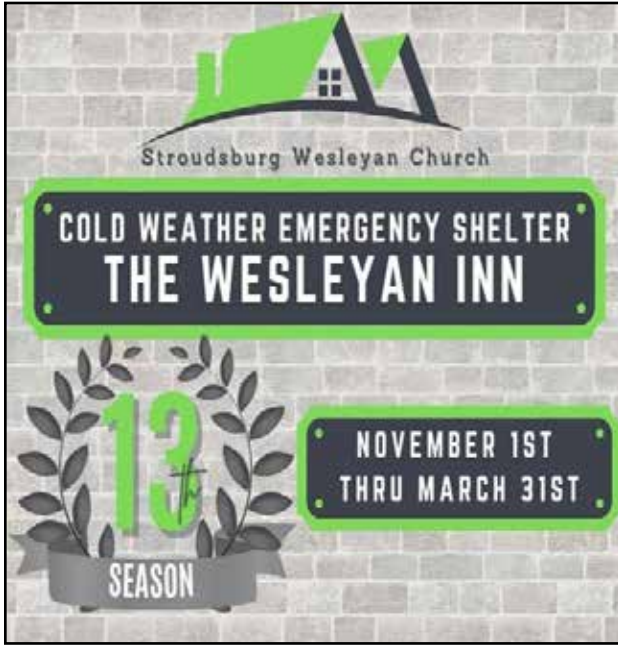
If you would like more information about volunteering at St. Luke's, please visit <https://www.slnh.org/volunteers> or submit a contact form

with your interests. For information on how to join the American Legion Post 379, please contact Craig Sostarecz at 610-248-8208.

Post 379 will be leading St. Luke's Bethlehem Campus' flag raising in front of the hospital at 8 a.m. on Monday, November 10. The public is welcome. The flag raising will be followed by a free breakfast for veterans in the hospital cafeteria.

Other Veterans Day-related events will be taking place throughout the Network. For more information, see: St. Luke's University Health Network - List.

Cold Weather Emergency Shelter For Those Experiencing Homelessness, Now Open in Stroudsburg, PA



The Stroudsburg Wesleyan Church located at 915 North 5th Street, in Stroudsburg, PA, is gearing up for their 13th season of the "Wesleyan Inn." The Wesleyan Inn is a cold weather emergency shelter and is open nightly November 1st through March 31st from 7pm to 6am, to any adults ages 18 and older who are experiencing a season of homelessness. If you are interested in volunteering, please call the church office at 570-421-0750.

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(Please note due to certain holidays, supplies will be offered on the 3rd Saturday of the Month)

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Blairstown Halloween Parade



Photos by Bob Halberstadt/
The Free Weekly Press

Pictured Above:
Holland Tillman
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parade, quiet as a
mouse, and oh so
cute!



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Hello, fellow readers,

Last week, I shared the sad news that the Karen Ann Quinlan Home for Hospice in Fredon, NJ, will close on November 14, 2025. As you can imagine, my final visits as a volunteer come with a swirl of emotions.

On Friday, while chatting with the angel caregivers, a large flock of grackles lifted from the farm field beyond the living room windows—a spectacular sight. One of the nurses wondered aloud, “How do they never collide?”

I haven’t yet seen the swarms arrive on my property this season, but I adore the arresting sound of thousands of grackles descending into the yard, squawking and feeding for a few minutes before rising in a synchronized wave. Their takeoff sounds like the soft whir of a helicopter—glorious in

its volume and unity. It’s a stunning reminder that there’s power in numbers.

“Common Grackles move through our area this time of year, sometimes by the many thousands,” said my birder buddy Dennis Briede, Stewardship Manager of the Land Conservancy of New Jersey. “They like to raid cornfields, too.”

Feeding on fall remnants isn’t so bad, but grackles are also known for snagging newly planted corn and seedlings. Because of this, they’re sadly deemed nuisance birds under state and federal law. Though culling is regulated, millions have been killed.

Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*) are about the size of Mourning Doves, with long tails, yellow eyes, and black beaks. From afar, they appear solid black, but up close, they shimmer with iridescent purples, blues, and greens—like ornaments filling the bare branches where leaves once were. They nest in colonies of up to 200 and often migrate with other blackbirds, such as Red-winged Blackbirds.

But back to the nurse’s question: How do they never collide?

It’s fascinating how grackles and other flocking birds manage their flight. Scientists describe three key



strategies: separation, alignment, and cohesion—concepts that offer wisdom for humankind, too.

They maintain a safe distance, adjusting their speed and direction based on the six or seven birds closest to them—never losing awareness of their neighbors. When threatened, they instinctively shift slightly to the right and rise higher, all at once, moving as one.

Despite appearances, there isn’t a leader. Each bird makes its own choices, yet together they move as a single, cohesive unit. Their strength is in that unity—it’s hard for predators to single one

out among thousands. Their collective awareness becomes their protection.

Occasionally, collisions occur, especially during chaotic takeoffs, but harm is minimal. Larger, less agile birds are more prone to run into each other, yet they quickly regroup and continue on—another lesson for us.

Watching their synchronized flight, I couldn’t help but think about how often we do the opposite of what Mother Nature teaches us. Instead of maintaining respectful distance, aligning our actions with others, and moving cohesively toward shared well-being, we scatter in competing



directions.

Grackles don’t fly from ego or control. They respond instinctively to the needs of their flock—to protect their young, their food, and their future generations. Their movements are guided not by dominance but by connection.

Wouldn’t it be something if we humans could do the same—fly in the same flock, respecting space yet working in harmony to safe-

guard our families, our communities, and our world?

Maybe the grackles are here to remind us that strength and grace come not from going it alone but from trusting the rhythm of togetherness—the quiet awareness that, while each bird moves on its own, the sky is shared by all.

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NORTH WARREN (0) VS PHILLIPSBURG (3) GIRLS SOCCER SENIOR NIGHT



Addison Casey with her parents, Alicia and Bryan, and her brother, Brandon



Jocelyn Considine with her parents, Amanda and Tim, and siblings, Dylan and Raelyn



Morgan Curtis with her parents, Teesha and Christopher, Step-father, Clint, and siblings Camryn and CJ



Kayla Lobycz with her parents, Claudia and David, and her siblings, Catherine and Dylan



Mylie Peterson with her parents, Michele and Shaun, and her brother Haydn



Cassidy Petty with her parents, Becky and Brad



Photos on Page 6 & 7 were taken by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



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NORTH WARREN (0) VS PHILLIPSBURG (3) GIRLS SOCCER SENIOR NIGHT



Katelyn Galante with her parents, Stacy and Michael and her sister, Megan



Anna Haselmann with her parents, Heather and Ron, and her brother, William



Skylar Kays with her parents, Lisa and Kyle, and her brother, Myles



Alana Philhower with her parents, Coleen and Mark, and her brother Owen



Tayech Yawger with her parents, David and Renee



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WOUNDED WARRIOR ELK HUNT, WISDOM, MONTANA, 2025



The 2025 Wounded Warrior Hunt started as is it always does, with phone calls coming in August and September. This year 9 veterans participated. The elk herd was good on the Hirschy Ranch, which is approximately 100,000 Acres open range, willows and water with a few aspen trees. Chip Lane spent several weeks surveying the land, feeling good about the upcoming hunt. He has been helping with the Wounded Warrior Hunt since 2017, when a lifelong friend asked him to help out, he has felt a duty to those who put their lives on the line for our freedom ever since. On the first day Chip makes sure to get the men in a good spot for the hunt, by 10 or 11am they had taken down 3 Bulls and 1 Cow (Elk). After taking care of those 4 elk, the men went back out, and returned that evening with 3 more elk. By the end of the 3 day hunt they had taken down 12 elk total. Another great part of the hunt is hearing the stories, the men come from all over the US and all have a unique story, all equally as great. We kindly ask you to thank a Veteran today, without them we would not live in such a great Nation. "Special shout out to Buzz Anderson, a survivor of the "Walking Dead" Battalion, it has been an honor to get to know you," said Chip. He would also like to thank Hirschy Ranch for letting them hunt their land, Ranch foreman Gerri Weaver, Veteran Tim Thornburg, Veteran Marc Emerson, Veteran Dee Watson, Bill White, Brandon and family. The Wounded Warrior hunt is currently looking for donations to help purchase 1 or 2 side by sides and a 30'x40' wall tent, any contribution to help this cause is greatly appreciated. Please send donations to: M. Lane, P.O. Box 92, Anaconda, MT 59711. You can also contact Chip at Chiplane96@gmail.com or 336-528-0431.

Project Self-Sufficiency Programs Educate Public, Support Trauma Survivors, Promote Prevention

Project Self-Sufficiency will offer three workshops during November regarding adverse childhood experiences with the goal of educating the public, supporting trauma survivors, and offering tips for prevention and healing within the community. A virtual

"Understanding ACEs: Building Self-Healing Communities" presentation on Tuesday, November 11th, 3:00 p.m., will address the neurological and biological effects of adversity on development and its corresponding impact on the health of the overall population. The workshop and discussion series, "Connections Matter", which facilitates the conversation about issues surrounding childhood trauma, will be offered virtually in English, Tuesday, November 18th, 2:00 p.m., and in Spanish, Wednesday, November 19th, 2:00 p.m. Tips for protection, prevention, and promoting resilience within the community will also be discussed. All workshops are free, hosted on Zoom, and open to the public; interested participants are invited to call 973-940-3500 to receive log-in details.

During the Understanding ACEs workshop, parents, caregivers, and other communi-

ty providers will learn how childhood trauma impacts physical and neurological development and discuss methods for improving health and well-being across the lifespan.

The Connections Matter curriculum invites providers, parents, and community members to build caring connections to improve resiliency. Discussion during the workshops will focus on understanding adverse childhood experiences and demonstrating how caring connections can serve as a primary buffer in the negative effects of trauma. The training is appropriate for parents and providers raising and teaching school aged children. All three workshops are funded by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and led by Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey.

Speakers will address the impact of adverse childhood experiences on social, emotional, and cognitive development, and offer tips and

strategies for building resilience. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are widely recognized as falling into three distinct categories, abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. Examples of negative behavior said to result from ACEs include smoking, alcoholism, drug use, absenteeism, and lack of physical activity. These behaviors can cause a cascade of physical and mental health problems, from diabetes to cancer to suicidal thoughts. It is estimated that approximately 67% of the population has experienced at least one adverse childhood experience.

Project Self-Sufficiency is bringing together professionals, providers, and parents who are committed to increasing awareness of the impact of childhood trauma on juvenile development, future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. "Our goal is to help make our community a place in which every child can thrive by providing education and training on adverse childhood experiences and assuring safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments," explains Project Self-Sufficiency Executive Director Deborah Berry-Toon. "Protection, prevention, and resilience promotion can profoundly improve health according to recent discoveries in neuroscience, epigenetics, and epidemiology. The tools identified in these workshops can positively impact public health, safety, and productivity, and reduce public and private costs now and for future generations."



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Pregnant Women can Receive Home Visits from a Personal Nurse

Project Self-Sufficiency announces that the popular Nurse Family Partnership home visitation program is now available to experienced mothers, in addition to those who are pregnant with their first child. Eligible mothers of all ages are paired with a nurse who visits them in the privacy of their own home throughout the pregnancy and up until the child's second birthday. The visiting nurses provide support, education and counseling on health, behavioral and self-sufficiency issues. Access to food, diapers, clothing, and additional resources for children are provided during each visit.

Nurse-Family Partnership is founded on the pioneering work of David Olds, professor of pediatrics, psychiatry, and preventive medicine at the University of Colorado in Denver. Olds' determination to help young children and families get a better start in life led to the development of a nurse home visitation program for first-time, low-income moms and their children. The voluntary program was tested extensively prior to its launch in 1996; the Nurse Family Partnership program currently serves more than 54,000 families each year in the United States, the Virgin Islands, and some tribal communities.

The initiative is one of three different home visitation programs for young mothers which is provided by Project Self-Sufficiency to families in northwestern New Jersey. Project Self-Sufficiency is the first agency authorized

in the state of New Jersey to expand the Nurse Family Partnership program to experienced mothers, as well as first-time moms.

"Our goal is to improve pregnancy outcomes, and to assist parents with improving early childhood development, while helping the family to move towards economic self-sufficiency," explains Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. "The Nurse Family Partnership program has been proven to prevent maternal health issues and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect, and we are delighted to be able to offer this ground-breaking program to more families. All the home visitation programs offered by Project Self-Sufficiency are designed to empower mothers to be the best parents they can be."

Nurse Family Partnership is one of the most rigorously tested programs of its kind. Mothers and children who have participated in the program have consistently demonstrated significantly improved prenatal health, fewer subsequent pregnancies, increased maternal employment, improved child school readiness, reduced involvement in crime, and less child abuse, neglect, and injuries.

Those who are interested in learning more about the Nurse-Family Partnership, or any of the other programs offered at Project Self-Sufficiency, are encouraged to call 973-940-3500, or enroll online at www.projectsselfsufficiency.org.

WMA of the Month (October) – Flatbrook Roy

The Flatbrook Roy Wildlife Management Area in Sandyston and Walpack Townships in western Sussex County is 2,093 acres acquired through Hunter and Angler Funding. This area is one of the most heavily used of all the state's Wildlife Management Areas, dating back to 1944 when the land was purchased from the Flatbrook Valley Club.

The tract, containing fields and uplands, is managed for upland game, deer, waterfowl, and fishing. The office, shotgun, and archery ranges are located on Bevans Road between Layton and Peters Valley.

Ranges

A hunter training range for clay birds and archery is maintained on the area and is open to licensed hunters at 189 National Park Service Road, Sandyston. A rifle range, located at 189 Walpack Rd, is also available to licensed hunters and was recently upgraded.



Fishing

The Big and Little Flat Brook, two of New Jersey's most famous trout streams, flow through the tract. Trout are stocked throughout the spring and in the fall. Special regulations apply to portions of the Big Flat Brook. Consult the Freshwater Fishing Digest for details.

Recreation

There are opportunities for birdwatching and winter cross-country skiing on the tract. The historic Walpack Inn is along the route.

Hunting

Rabbit, grouse, squirrel, and woodcock are the main small game species found here. NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's stocking program also provides in-season pheasant releases for additional recreation. The area contains some of the best turkey habitat in Turkey Hunting Area 2; however, it is also heavily used by spring turkey hunters. This area is

a natural deer range in DMZ 1, with large herds found on the rugged tract. Bow hunters and firearm hunters consider it an excellent area when willing to cross heavy terrain. The marshy area provides good hunting opportunities for wood ducks, mallards, and black ducks early in the fall migration.

Access

Owned by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Fish & Wildlife, the Wildlife Management Area System is comprised of more than 360,000 acres in 122 areas throughout the state, which is more than 44% of New Jersey's state-owned public open space. WMAs are maintained and supported with funding from hunting and fishing license sales, the Federal Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and the Wildlife Habitat Supporter Program.

Support the maintenance of New Jersey's Wildlife Management Areas by becoming a Wildlife Habitat Supporter

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In addition to a fenced area with various obstacles for the dogs to train and practice, the nearby buildings of the Warren County Fire Academy - including the burn tower with many rooms - and wooded areas of the property will offer

"I'm grateful for the collaboration with Washington Township that will allow Warren County to host all our K-9 officers from across the county," Commissioner James R. Kern III said. "Providing our K-9 units with a dedicated, private training area will help reduce stress and travel time for both officers and their K-9 partners. I look forward to continued cooperation and teamwork within our law enforcement community," Kern added.

Commissioner Lori Cjesla noted, "By ope-



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Halloween in Downtown Bangor



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Murphy Administration Invites Local Governments And Nonprofits To Apply For Parks And Open Space Grants

The Murphy Administration today announced that it is accepting applications for park development and open space preservation projects through the Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program.

As part of the 2026 funding round, the DEP is making significant changes to the Green Acres Program's eligibility requirements and grant funding levels that will substantially enhance the ability of local governments and nonprofits to provide park development and open preservation opportunities for residents. For the first time, each of New Jersey's 564 municipalities will be eligible for a minimum of 25% grant funding.

The 2026 funding round also opens with more opportunities for project eligibility and the number of applications that can be submitted. Local governments and eligible nonprofits may now submit up to one application for each of three categories: land acquisition, park development, and stewardship. Previously, applicants could only submit a funding request for either an acquisition or a park development project, in addition to a stewardship initia-

tive.

"Every resident of our state deserves well-designed and welcoming parks in their community and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors close to home," said Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette. "The changes to this year's application process, as well as expansion of funding and eligibility criteria, strengthen our commitment to these ideals for all. We are excited to continue New Jersey's strong national legacy of open space preservation and commitment to high-quality recreation through the next round of Green Acres projects."

Under the Murphy Administration, New Jersey has invested more Green Acres funding – more than \$510 million — for land acquisition, park development, and stewardship than under any previous governor. The investment demonstrates the Administration's commitment to ensure that every community has access to quality recreational amenities and plentiful open space.

The Murphy Administration has prioritized environmental justice, with added focus on communities long overburdened by

a variety of environmental and public health stressors, to help improve quality of life. Across New Jersey, Green Acres funding has established, expanded, or revitalized new and existing parks, improved waterfront access, developed athletic field and playgrounds, and acquired land to preserve natural, historic, and cultural resources.

In addition to fewer limitations on Green Acres funds for the 2026 application round, there also is an expansion of minimum grant funding levels for parks projects sponsored by counties and municipalities, and removal of geographic limitations on nonprofit park development projects.

The funding expansion makes Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Salem, Sussex, and Warren counties newly eligible for 50% grants for county-sponsored park development projects through the Green Acres Program.

Also, all municipalities are now eligible for a minimum of 25% grant funding for park development projects, which extends grant funding opportunities to an additional 402

municipalities that were previously only eligible for loan funding because of their population levels.

"We are proud to expand Green Acres funding opportunities this round, to empower municipalities, counties, and nonprofit organizations to accomplish the projects that residents want in their communities," said Elizabeth Dragon, Assistant Commissioner for Community Investment and Economic Revitalization. "We look forward to increasing the State's open space inventory, developing trails, and enhancing recreation opportunities statewide."

Green Acres applications are now available on the Green Acres website. The application deadline for these funding opportunities is Feb. 27, 2026.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit project proposals to create or extend trails, which are the most requested recreation priority by the public in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan known as Outside, Together! The five-year strategic outdoor plan focuses on expanding open space, enhancing environmental stewardship, advancing climate resilience, promoting equity, and leveraging innovative technology to create a sustainable and resilient environment.

The three-year Jake's

Law Pilot Funding Program has ended but grant incentives for completely inclusive playground projects sponsored by local governments are available in this funding round under the park development category. Jake's Law, passed in 2018, encourages New Jersey counties to build inclusive playgrounds designed with standards that generally exceed those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Inclusive playgrounds are specifically designed to enhance the playground experience for those with physical, developmental, and intellectual disabilities.

Green Acres also has lifted a geographical limit on nonprofit park development projects. Instead of being limited to projects in urban or densely populated municipalities, eligible nonprofits now can apply for park development projects anywhere in New Jersey.

Requirements for public engagement have been clarified and expanded this round to ensure that public feedback is solicited and considered during the project planning stage. By engaging with the public earlier, Green Acres applicants will gain the input needed to design a park that maximizes community benefits and aligns with community goals and needs.

Virtual Information Sessions

Green Acres will host several virtual application information sessions to help local governments and nonprofit organizations understand the 2026 funding round changes:

Nov. 17 – New application overview and Q&A
10 to 11:30 a.m. for new Acquisition projects; and 1 to 2:30 p.m. for Park Development and Stewardship projects

Nov. 18 – Acquisition Supplemental Funding Requests Overview and Q&A
10 to 11 a.m. for applicants who have an open Planning Incentive or other open Acquisition project

Dec. 3 – Application Drop-In Q&A (no presentation)
10 to 11 a.m. for all projects

Dec. 17 – Application Drop-In Q&A (no presentation)
10 to 11 a.m. for all projects

Notices of these virtual application information sessions will be sent to stakeholders and are posted on the Green Acres website. The information sessions will be recorded, and the recordings will be posted on the Green Acres website.

To learn more about the Green Acres Program, visit www.NJGreenAcres.org



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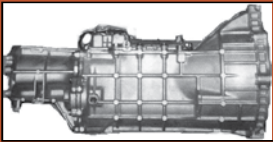
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RE/MAX Town & Valley Haunts Hope Township for the 4th Year in a Row

For the fourth consecutive year, RE/MAX Town & Valley joined in the spooky fun as Hope Township hosted its annual Halloween parade and celebration for local children. The real estate office, located at 329 High Street in Hope, once again transformed into a haunted walk-through attraction that delighted families from across the township and surrounding areas.

This year's "Haunted Office" was brought to life by Mason Scafati, son of RE/MAX Town & Valley agent Denise Waldron, and his friend Wyatt Flint, who spent countless hours planning and creating a frightfully fun experience. Together, they designed an interactive haunted space complete with fog machines, animatronics, and creative décor sure to startle and entertain visitors of all ages.

Set-up began days in advance, as Mason and Wyatt arrived with a trailer full of Halloween haunts. Among the main attractions were a towering 12-foot skeleton and a smoke-breathing dragon that greeted hundreds of families outside the office. Inside, guests were treated to scenes featuring Frankenstein and Dracula in their eerie laboratory, and even a spooky "children's playpen" that drew laughter and gasps alike.

Throughout the evening, RE/MAX Town &



Left to Right - Mason Scafati, Wyatt Flint, Mayor Timothy McDonough

Valley agents were on hand to pass out candy and join in the community festivities. "It's something we look forward to every year," said Waldron. "Seeing the kids' excitement makes all the planning worth it. We love being part of this wonderful community."

The annual Halloween event is just one of the many ways RE/MAX Town & Valley gives back to Hope Township. The office also organizes toy drives during the holidays, hosts "Pictures with Frosty" during the

Hope Township Craft Show, and collects food donations for local pantries throughout the year. From haunted fun to heartfelt giving, RE/MAX Town & Valley continues to show that community spirit is at the heart of everything they do.

With three office locations in Hackettstown (Panther Valley Mall • 908-852-1333), Hope, and Roxbury (211 Route 10 East • 973-598-1900), please keep RE/MAX Town & Valley in mind for all your real estate needs.

Livable Landscapes Grants Awarded To Palmer And Upper Mount Bethel Townships

Northampton County Executive Lamont G. McClure presented two Livable Landscapes Grant awards today to support local environmental restoration and recreation projects in Palmer Township and Upper Mount Bethel Township.

Palmer Township received \$50,000 for the Fox Run Park & Open Space Schooneck Creek Restoration Project, which will restore a section of the Schooneck Creek riparian buffer. The project includes stabilization and widening of the streambank, installation of native plantings, tree protection, and educational signage along a half-mile stretch of the creek. The Township will also monitor water quality and ecological improvements and implement a long-term maintenance plan.

Upper Mount Bethel Township received \$75,000 for Phase I construction of the Upper Mount Bethel Township Preserve, which will rehabilitate a former sand and gravel quarry into a public recreation area. Planned improvements include new entrances and trailheads, accessible trails, observation platforms, seating areas, and areas for fishing and kayaking. The project also includes native vegetation restoration and ecological monitoring.

"The Livable Landscapes Program con-



tinues to strengthen Northampton County's commitment to environmental stewardship and public recreation," said McClure. "These investments help our communities protect natural resources, improve water quality, and create beautiful spaces for residents to enjoy."

The Livable Landscapes Grant Program, administered by the Northampton County Parks and Recreation Division, supports projects that preserve open space, restore natural habitats, and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the County.

PHOTO CORRECTION:



JJ Rubas with Dina Cascioli and Ryan Bray

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Santa and Mrs. Claus To Ring In The Holiday Season in Washington, NJ

It's the ho ho ho man himself, Santa Claus! Yes, Santa is coming to town with Mrs. Claus for Hometown Holiday in Downtown Washington.

This has always been a very special night of exciting fun and activities, and of course, the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus is a big part of the festivities. This old-fashioned community event brings everyone together for three hours of memory-filled happenings.

This year's festive evening takes place on

Friday, Dec. 5 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. with DJ Rupe kicking things off with an array of holiday tunes. The annual WBID Tree Lighting ceremony with Santa Claus is set for Veterans Park in the center of the Downtown at approximately 6 p.m., following the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus at about 5:45.

This event, presented by the Washington Business Improvement District, includes many activities, something for everyone. In addition to shopping at



Washington's unique stories, this year also includes vendors for holiday shopping. There will be meet-and-greet photo opportunities (bring your cameras!) with Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus,

at Bricks, Bots and Bakers after the tree lighting. Santa's elves, and other seasonal characters will be on hand as well for memorable selfies. There will be other activities, too, including the lighting of the Menorah for Hannukah at M Galleries with members of the Jewish

Center of Northwest Jersey at 6:30. While supplies last, children visiting Santa will receive a special gift from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Among the other special activities planned that night are performances by the Little Brass Band of Lehigh Valley from 5:30-8 p.m., and the Warren County Community Singers, and the Girl Scouts will be hosting a children's activity as well as providing luminaries in the downtown. The Washington BID, host of the festivities, welcomes anyone from the Greater Washington

Area to this festive evening of holiday fun. Sponsors for this year's Hometown Holiday include Visions Federal Credit Union, Arctic Foods/The Meat Shoppe, Buddy's Auto, Warren County Cultural and Heritage Commission, and Swift Print Solutions. The Christmas tree is being donated by Kling's Farm and Ste-w's Auto Body is transporting it to Veteran's Park. For more information about events in Washington Borough, visit washingtonbid.org or check out the Washington BID Facebook page.

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Sliced Virginia Ham| Pineapple Glaze | Baked Sweet
Potatoes & Stuffing | Mixed Vegetables

Young Tom Turkey 27

Mashed Potatoes & Stuffing | Green Beans | Gravy |
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Stuffed Mushrooms 12
Sausage | Spinach

Jumbo Shrimp Cocktail 19
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