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12th Senate District

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YEAR-END E-NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2014



COMPLETED

New Castle area dike repairs completed

I'm pleased to report that the New Castle Conservation District and Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, with \$7.5 million in funding approved by state lawmakers, recently completed repair work on five crumbling New Castle City-area dikes located along the Delaware River. The improvements to the Gambacorta and Army Creek dikes feature a paved walking and bicycling path measuring nearly 1.5 miles. The 2,000-foot Red Lion Dike repair project added protection to contaminated sites targeted for cleanup.

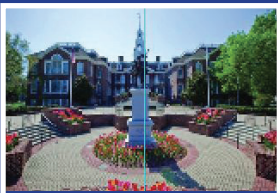
Other repairs were completed on the 1,400-foot long Broad Marsh Dike near historic New Castle and the 1,800-foot Buttonwood Dike, which protects the historic Buttonwood community and adjacent wetlands. New Castle City, the Trustees of New Castle Commons, and all of the private owners of the dike sections, worked closely with DNREC and the New Castle Conservation District on the repair projects.

Thanks to the students of Wilbur and Southern elementary schools, Delaware has a new state sport—bicycling



On Saturday, June 14, 2014, Rep. Valerie Longhurst, Gov. Jack Markell and I met with students of Wilbur and Southern elementary schools and their families to celebrate Delaware's new state sport by taking a bike ride between the two schools. When we reached Southern Elementary, Gov. Markell signed into law House Bill 235—which Rep. Longhurst and I sponsored—officially making bicycling the state sport. The students had earlier visited Legislative Hall to lobby for the legislation, giving them a chance to see the law-making process in action.

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Special needs students and families visit Senate in support of Senate Bill 229

During the 2014 legislative session, I was privileged to be the prime sponsor of Senate Bill 229 as amended, which was passed by the General Assembly in June 2014, and signed into law by Gov. Jack Markell. This new law will permit the state's most severely cognitively disabled students, with the consent of their parents and school officials, to receive special exemptions from taking either of the state's standardized assessment tests.

The academic progress of these students would still be measured in order to ensure that they are being challenged and provided meaningful instruction. In the photo at right, students and their family members sit in the Senate Chamber on June 10 to get a firsthand look as the legislation was considered by the Senate.



UD's Fran Fletcher helps families of children navigate their individual educational plans

When parents and schools find themselves at odds over a child's Individual Education Plan, they can take it to a formal hearing, or they can call Fran Fletcher.

Fran, an associate policy scientist in the University of Delaware's conflict resolution program, is the state-funded mediator for IEP's, programs designed to meet the individual needs of special education students. While schools sometimes seek mediation, most of the time she is called by parents who stumble upon the mediation program.

"They've been trying but they're frustrated; they're at the end of their rope and they don't know what to do," said Fran, who gets most of her calls at the end of grading periods or toward the end of the school year. "Most of the time, it's a problem with communications. They think everything is going well and suddenly they find out their child is in danger of failing."

I urge more families to use Fran's services. She offers a calming presence that can really help a family, whether they're navigating their first IEP or they've already been involved in the IEP program. This is a tremendous, under-utilized resource that more people should be made aware of.

Unlike many states, Delaware's state education department funds this program. "They see the value of it," Fran said. "And they're willing to invest in it."

I agree. I think it's tremendous that Delaware offers this service free of charge. It's just something that more families who are involved in IEPs should utilize because it can be very helpful.

Fran is willing to step in and try to help parents and schools find a middle ground to make alterations to get an IEP back on track. She won't do it unless both the school and parents are willing to come to the table. She'll also recommend that parents bring an advocate to help state their position.

"I want to make sure parents have the resources they need," she said. "But I don't take sides and sometimes that can be hard for parents to understand. My job is to bring the sides together, get them to talk, understand the issues and try to rebuild communications and trust."

Fran says that mediation can be a better option than going to a formal hearing before a three-judge panel.

"Sometimes that's the only option left," she said. "But if you can come to the table and work things out, there

The Conflict Resolution Program (CRP), a division of the University of Delaware's School of Public Policy & Administration, can be reached by calling (302) 831-8158.

“Principal for a Day” at St. Georges Technical High School



On Wednesday, Oct. 22, I had the privilege of serving as “Principal for a Day” at St. Georges Technical High School. I had the opportunity to meet with students and faculty at the school and get to see firsthand many of the great programs the students are pursuing. In the photo at left, I’m talking to students in the Culinary Arts program. At right, I’m observing students in the Health Services curriculum. The day was a wonderful opportunity to meet some great young people and see them preparing for their future careers.

General Assembly’s Joint Sunset Committee Report for 2014

As Co-Chair of the Joint Sunset Committee, I took part in hearings this year to review the operations and performance of various state agencies. These hearings resulted in six pieces of legislation designed to make state government more efficient. The mission of the Sunset Committee is to address duplication of services and government organizational effectiveness.

- SB 214 – Relating to the Delaware Association of Professional Engineers
- HB 354 w/HA 1 – Relating to the Diamond State Port Corporation
- HB 351 – Relating to the Freedom of Information Act
- HB 365 – Relating to the Cash Management Policy Board
- HB 381 – Relating to financial disclosures
- HB 359 – Relating to Physical Therapy and Athletic Training

Please visit:

<http://www.legis.delaware.gov>

to view any of the bills listed above or other bills considered this year that might be of interest to you.

Some Helpful Resources

A place for Mom is a free service connecting families to Senior Care.

To learn more, go to:

aplaceformom.com

Or call:

(888) 317-0503

Do you need help paying bills?

In today’s challenging economy many people need help paying bills and debt. Families need help so that they do not have to decide between paying their mortgage, credit card debt, food, rent, utility, or medical bills. For more information, go to:

<http://www.needhelppayingbills.com/>

A free, on-line clearing house for information about available programs.

LEGISLATIVE RECORD —

Some significant legislation sponsored or co-sponsored by Senator Poore during the 2014 session

Education:

SB-229: Changes student testing and assessment procedures, allowing severely disabled students to receive special exemptions from taking the state's standardized assessments and enabling them instead to take specialized assessments. The legislation also allows interventions for students who show evidence of having dyslexia, a condition that causes problems with reading and word recognition.

Economic Policy:

SB-185: Changes and makes uniform within the law the definition of employer from 15 or more to four or more when filing employment discrimination charges.

HB-373: Major overhaul of Worker's Compensation law to control the rate of premium growth in Delaware. Changes include a 33 percent reduction in medical costs, phased in over three years, that sets absolute cost caps as a percentage of Medicare per-procedure allowables, and increases independence for the state's Ratepayer Advocate and the committee charged with overseeing cost-control practices of carriers.

Criminal Law & Courts:

SB-197: Attacks the issue of human trafficking by making human trafficking [defined as recruiting, harboring, receiving, isolating or enticing a person into sexual servitude] a Class C felony or a Class B felony if the victim is a minor.

- Forced labor – using coercion to compel someone to provide services becomes a Class C or B felony;
- Patronizing a victim of Sexual Servitude becomes a Class D felony or a Class C felony in the case of minor;
- Develops fines and penalties for organizations involved in human trafficking and authorizes restitution for victims equal to a victim's gross income and value of labor under the Fair Labor Standards Act;
- Minors charged with prostitution may have the charges dropped if they comply with a treatment program;

- Allows victims to file civil actions against human traffickers;
- Establishes a Human Trafficking Coordinating Council to develop a plan to provide services for victims, coordinate efforts among agencies, departments and the courts, collect and evaluate data, create a public awareness campaign, coordinate victim services programs and prepare an annual report

HB-408: Updates rules governing the Victims of Violent Crimes Fund.

Open Government/Government Operations:

SB-207: Bars health insurers, health service corporations, health maintenance organizations or managed care organizations from setting allowable charges below the cost incurred by ambulance companies for providing runs and basic life support services.

HB-235: Designates bicycling as Delaware's state sport.

HB-311: Requires the newly-created Office of Animal Welfare in the Division of Public Health to develop uniform training and certification standards for animal control officers and animal cruelty agents.

Social Policy:

SB-182: Creates an income tax check box for the Protecting Delaware's Children Fund. Money will be used by the Delaware Community Foundation for public awareness campaigns that promote reporting child abuse cases.

Consumer Protection:

SB-206: Establishes a state version of the federal Servicemember's Civil Relief Act, empowering the Justice Department to enforce protections from default judgments, foreclosures and certain penalties, fines and fees while on a deployment. It extends those protections to members of the National Guard who are deployed on active duty for longer than 30 days.

2014 has been a great year for high school sports in the 12th Senate District



Caravel Academy girls soccer team: After achieving a regular season record of 13-1-1, the Buccaneers defeated Archmere Academy 2-1 in the June 2, 2014 state championship match.

Both St. Georges Technical High School and William Penn High School football teams undefeated in regular season play

The St. Georges Hawks and William Penn Colonials both had perfect seasons, with the Hawks finishing the regular season 10-0 and the Colonials 12-0. The Hawks made it to the semi-final round of the Division II State Championship, while the Colonials won the Division I Championship by defeating Middletown 42-14.

Caravel Academy wins fourth state baseball championship

After building a regular season record of 14-2, the Caravel Academy Buccaneers baseball team won its fourth DIAA Baseball State Tournament championship, defeating St. Marks 8-0 in the championship game on June 1, 2014. Caravel also won in 1998, 2006 and 2011.

William Penn High School holds its first night football game

The William Penn High School Colonials football team hosted its first-ever night football game on Saturday, Oct. 18, defeating Concord High School by a score of 28-21. I want to commend Tri Supply and Equipment, Inc., of New Castle, for

making it possible for the school to get the necessary lights to enable them to play at night. Contributions collected at the "first night under the lights" event were donated to cancer research.

Have any friends who would like to get my e-mail newsletters?

Send their name and e-mail address to:

nicole.poore@state.de.us

to have them added to our e-mail list.

Thanks



Check out the Delaware State Senate Democratic Caucus Facebook Page at:

<http://www.facebook.com/delawarestatesenate>

Delaware State Senate Democrats' website:
<http://www.desenatedems.com/>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Adopt-A-Family — Serving Delawareans in Need

Adopt-A-Family has helped Delaware families in need since 1973 and is coordinated by the Division of State Service Centers in all three counties. The Adopt-A-Family program aids families in crisis - those struggling with illness, homelessness, domestic violence, poverty or unemployment. During a typical year, the Adopt-A-Family program, with assistance from the Human Services Councils of New Castle County and Kent/Sussex Counties, has provided urgently needed assistance to more than 4,500 disadvantaged Delaware families totaling more than 15,000 individuals. Most of the beneficiaries are single parent households, children and senior citizens.

Primary services include:



ADOPT-A-MOM: Throughout the year the Adopt-A-Family program provides families in crisis with critical household supplies or financial assistance to help them recover from a crisis. This is accomplished through obtaining donations of the needed items from members of the community and assigning the items to families referred to the program by public and private social service agencies in the community. The Adopt-A-Mom program provides moms with infant supplies.



SCHOOL SUPPLY PROGRAM: The Adopt-A-Student program runs May through September and provides necessary school supplies and uniforms, including book bags to needy students throughout Delaware. The goal of this program is to encourage a positive attitude toward school by helping each student start the school year with the necessary supplies to achieve success.



HOLIDAY GIFT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Each year Adopt-A-Family seeks volunteers to “adopt” an individual or family for the holiday season. These special donors or sponsors provide holiday gift certificates for children and the elderly living in poverty. Sponsors are anonymously matched to a senior or family of one or more children. Adopt-a-Family provides the sponsor with the age and gender of each child in the family and a brief description of the circumstances that led to the need for assistance. The sponsor then provides gift certificates for the head-of-household to use in purchasing holiday gifts.



EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE: There are times when a family is faced with a crisis that requires monetary assistance. Financial assistance is considered on an individual basis up to a maximum amount for specified needs. For these times, Adopt-A-Family accepts financial donations.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS can be made to: Human Services Council, Inc.
UNITED WAY DONATIONS can be designated by writing in one of the following codes on your check's memo line: New Castle: #9102, Kent/Sussex: #12774

**Mail donations to Adopt-A-Family, 3301 Green St., Claymont, DE 19703 for New Castle County;
or to Adopt-A-Family, 13 SW Front St., Milford, DE 19963 for Kent and Sussex Counties.**



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: Individuals, families, faith-based groups, youth organizations, civic associations and businesses statewide find meaningful opportunities to serve those in their community who are experiencing a crisis. Please contact the Adopt-A-Family office nearest you or visit www.volunteerdelaware.org for volunteer opportunities.

For additional information, contact the appropriate Adopt-A-Family program serving your county:

New Castle County Adopt-A-Family at (302) 792-9538

Kent/Sussex County Adopt-A-Family at (302) 424-7260