

# MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT

April  
2025

Part of Independent Newsmedia, Inc., USA at  BayToBayNews.com

A monthly companion to the Daily State News

## Harrington dedicates first formal playground

State Sen. Dave Wilson, City Council member Jack Stewart, Mayor Duane E. Bivans, Acting Parks and Recreation Director Doug Poore, Assistant City Manager Amanda Marlow, Council member Darrin Simpson and state Rep. Shannon Morris take part in the April 4 ribbon cutting for a new children's playground behind the Parks and Recreation Department building. MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER



By Brian Trompeter

Milford Harrington Independent

HARRINGTON — The city of Harrington has lots of small recreational areas dubbed

parks, but officials said the new children's playground behind the Parks and Recreation Department's facility that they dedicated Friday, April 4, is

its first formal park.

The city obtained the Game Time playground equipment from Cunningham Recreation,

• See **Playground** on page 10

## Buzz Kill

### Mosquito control unit springs into action

By Brian Trompeter

Milford Harrington Independent

MILFORD — It's not as glamorous as swooping low over a marsh in a helicopter or soaring above fields and forests in a fixed-wing aircraft.

But, this time of year, dipping plastic containers into standing woodland water helps the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Mosquito Control Section determine where to target insecticides.

David Moore, an environmental scientist with the section, demonstrated the technique last month in a swampy tree line in the Milford Neck Nature Preserve.

Wearing rubber boots, he used a wooden pole to lower a white cup into the dingy, tea-colored water.

Sure enough, it was loaded with tiny mosquito larvae.

The Mosquito Control Section will spend late March and early April treating inland forested wetlands near populated areas — the idea being to kill as

• See **Mosquito** on page 8

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ON PAGES 12-13

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## NOTE TO READERS

# Extra! Welcome to the new Milford Harrington Independent

Just like our area, your local newspaper is growing and evolving.

This month, the Milford Chronicle becomes the Milford Harrington Independent.

The name change reflects the natural connection between the two communities – separated by about eight miles on the short drive along Route 14.

Many years ago, there was a train which carried passengers between the two cities. In fact, the bell off that train became the trophy for the annual Milford-Lake Forest high school football rivalry game.

The area is enjoying a period of change with new homes and new businesses emerging. Certainly, “progress” will be a hot topic in our coverage.

Community stories – a staple of our company’s style of journalism – will include people stories, event advances, school news and more.

Today’s edition includes information on one of Milford’s most well-attended events, the Bug & Bud Festival.

Coming up on the Harrington side will be coverage of the Delaware State Fair and its August event, Heritage Day.

The name change follows the titles of other community publications in the Independent Newsmedia group.

We will be distributing 10,000 copies each month, primarily in the mail to select areas. There will be a limited number of locations where the newspaper can be found on racks.

It will be a companion publication of the Daily State News and BaytoBayNews.com. To help support our journalism, visit BaytoBayNews.com/subscribe. For \$5 per month, you can read the daily newspaper and all of the content on the website.

Brian Trompeter, a journalist with three decades of experience, will be the lead reporter in the area. He can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.

Trompeter spent 29 years as a reporter, photographer and editor at several community weekly newspapers in Northern Virginia before moving to Delaware.

We welcome community submissions to the Milford Harrington Independent. Email news to newsroom@iniusa.org and post your events to baytobaynews.com/calendar.

— Andrew West  
Editor-In-Chief



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## COMMUNITY

# Family donates engraved Civil War sword to Milford Museum

Item will be stored until museum moves to new location

By Brian Trompeter

Milford Harrington Independent

MILFORD — The Milford Museum recently acquired an artifact that's literally quite sharp.

The family of Gaithersburg, Maryland, resident Amy Ardolina gifted the facility an ornately engraved, Civil War-era sword and scabbard, once owned by Union Lt. Benjamin F. Butler, her great-great-great-grandfather.

According to Taylor Reynolds, a Civil War historian and chief of cultural resources for Delaware State Parks, Mr. Butler enlisted for a three-



From left, Milford Museum executive director Tom Summers, Amy Ardolina of Gaithersburg, Maryland, and Delaware State Parks historian Taylor Reynolds display a Civil War-era sword owned by Ms. Ardolina's great-great-great-grandfather, Union Lt. Benjamin F. Butler. The Ardolina family recently donated the sword to the museum. PHOTO COURTESY OF MILFORD MUSEUM

month duty with the 1st Delaware in 1861 and mostly performed guard work at railroad stations.

A year later, he reenlisted as a sergeant with the 3rd Delaware, Company D, and was subsequently present for major events such as the Second Battle of Bull Run, Antietam and Hatcher's Run, as well as the Confederacy's surrender at Appomattox in Virginia, Mr. Reynolds said.

He added that Lt. Butler likely did not have the sword, which his unit presented to him in 1863, with him at those battles.

"This is more of a ceremonial sword," Mr. Taylor said.

After the war, Lt. Butler returned to Delaware and died in 1885. He is buried at Union Cemetery in Georgetown.

The lieutenant should not be confused with Union Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler, who played a significant role in President Andrew Johnson's impeachment following the Civil War.

Ms. Ardolina said she and her

family wanted the Milford Museum to have the sword because her grandmother used to work there.

"It means so much to my grandmother and my family that you'll take it," she told Tom Summers, its executive director. "I remember accompanying her to her office here many, many times as a child."

The sword will be put into storage until the museum makes its move from South Walnut Street to Northeast Front Street later this year, Mr. Summers said, adding that he and the rest of the staff are delighted with Ms. Ardolina's contribution.

"She felt it was important that we get this sword and have a piece of that history," he said.

Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at [btrompeter@iniusa.org](mailto:btrompeter@iniusa.org).



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## NEWS

# Milford City Council OKs Riverwalk Villas

## 27 three-bedroom town homes to be built

By Brian Trompeter

Milford Harrington Independent

MILFORD — Riverwalk Villas, a development of 27 town houses by the Milford Housing Development Corp., received unanimous approval March 24 from City Council.

The project will be built on 3.89 acres at Mispillion and Marshall streets, with the homes facing those roads.

The now-vacant land had earlier been approved for 48 apartments, but that permission expired before the applicant bought the property a couple of years ago, city officials said.

The town houses will be for-sale units, not rentals, and owners may

not sublease or resell them for the first 10 years, unless due to hardship, said David Moore, president and CEO of the Milford Housing Development Corp.

He added that the residences will be marketed to those making up to 80% of area median income.

Each three-bedroom unit will be “super-insulated,” Energy Star-rated and capable of supporting solar power in the future, Mr. Moore told council. They will also include balconies off the master bedrooms, fenced-in backyards, garages and two-vehicle driveways but no basements.

In lieu of a cash contribution for open space, the applicant will donate to the city 0.89 acres adjacent to the Mispillion Riverwalk.

Because that amount of land is more than what is required, officials

agreed to install some road upgrades — including missing curbs, sidewalks and handicapped-accessible ramps — on the south side of Mispillion Street, between Columbia and Marshall streets. The city also will widen that section of road and provide asphalt milling and overlay there.

On Mispillion Street’s north side, the applicant will be responsible for installing curbs and sidewalks, driveway entrances, storm sewers, water and sewer services, accessible ramps and road widening.

Council’s consent is also contingent upon an approval from the Sussex Conservation District for the project’s stormwater management design.

Additionally, Riverwalk Villas, which is within Milford’s Downtown Development District, will feature a

drainage swale and a stormwater parcel.

One meeting attendee, Thomas Chilton of Meadow Lark Drive, expressed concern about parking for the neighborhood.

“Please look at the size of the road when they do this, to make sure it’s wide enough, because people are going to park on the road,” he said. “They’re going to park on both sides of the road, and a firetruck’s going to have to get through.”

Ultimately, council uniformly supported the application.

“We definitely need affordable housing, so it will be a great addition,” said Councilwoman D. Madula Kalesis of Ward 1.

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*

## Short-term rentals, additional retail space approved at Milford property

By Brian Trompeter

Milford Harrington Independent

MILFORD — City Council voted 8-0 on March 24 in favor of a conditional use change requested by 39 N. Walnut LLC to modify the use of its downtown property.

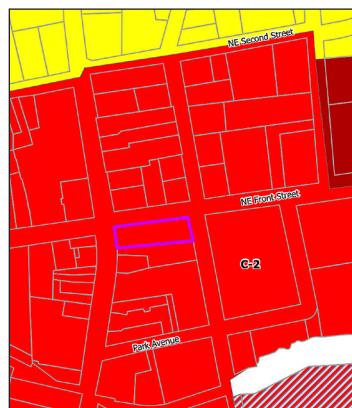
Council agreed to allow up to 10 commercial spaces on the 39 N. Walnut St. building’s lower level, up from the current seven, and permit possible conversion of four apartments on the upper floor into rentals for periods of up to 30 days.

“We would like the option to (have an) Airbnb unit or two” and have some lon-

ger-term tenants there, said Zachary King of Lincoln, the applicant’s representative. “The Airbnb essentially brings new people downtown on a semidaily basis (or) weekly basis. Almost all of those people go out, they shop, they eat, they spend money.”

Twelve-month tenants currently occupy three of the apartments, Mr. King said, adding that the number of units converted to Airbnb usage will depend on market demand.

The building — for which the applicant obtained a conditional use permit for its cur-



rent uses in August 2021 — is on 0.26 acres. It has been fully renovated and has fire alarms and a fire suppression system, Mr. King said.

It houses fondue. and June Bugs Beauty & Boutique.

And, while an office tenant has moved out, that space has been divided into smaller areas now occupied by a bookstore, photographer and cycling business, Mr. King said.

“Our goal has always been to get as many small businesses into downtown as possible,” he said. “The loss of an office tenant and the addition of three more retail-type businesses was a good benefit for the building, our other tenants in there and the town.”

Allowing Airbnb-style rentals makes sense for the downtown area, said Vice Mayor Jason James Sr. of Ward 4.

“When there are different events and everything going on downtown, someone may want to come and not drive out of Milford the same night,” he noted. “They may want to come and stay, which would be a great thing.”

Councilwoman Nadia Zychal of Ward 2 agreed.

“The expanded number of retail and office spaces, along with the flexibility of the living spaces above, add to the economic growth and development in a positive way for the downtown region,” she said.

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*



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### We Pledge

- To operate this newspaper as a public trust.
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- To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
- To disclose our own conflicts of interest or potential conflicts to our readers.
- To correct our errors and to give each correction the prominence it deserves.
- To provide a right to reply to those we write about.
- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.

### Our Purpose

The Milford Harrington Independent is published by Independent Newsmedia Inc. USA. Independent is owned by a unique trust that enables this newspaper to pursue a mission of journalistic service to the citizens of the community. Since no dividends are paid, the company is able to thrive on profit margins below industry standards. All after-tax surpluses are reinvested in Independent's mission of journalistic service, commitment to the ideals of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and support of the community's deliberation of public issues.

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## Mosquito

• From page 1

many mosquito larvae as possible in a concentrated area versus allowing them to grow into adults and scatter over a much wider area, said Tom Moran, the unit's administrator.

It focuses on spots where it can get the biggest return. And timing is crucial: Once leaves fill the trees, pilots can't see their targets, plus the leaves intercept much of the insecticide intended to hit the water, he added.

Fortunately for his staff,

"things are off to a dry start here, and this is a continuation of the drought conditions that we've been under in Delaware since the second half of last year," Mr. Moran said. "In our line of work, we have to have water to have mosquitoes."

He went on to explain that mosquito control is in the eye—or at least the itchy arm—of the beholder. While transplants from less buggy parts of the nation may pester the agency for service after a few mosquito bites, longtime residents often will absorb dozens before giving the division a buzz.

In addition, the section draws blood from sentinel chickens weekly, to determine where mosquito-borne diseases are being spread, Mr. Moran said.

The unit's work is headquartered in two field offices, one in Milford and one in Glasgow. About 14 employees work in those locations, supplemented by seasonal workers.

The agency contracts out its aerial spraying operations.

In warmer months, staff typically monitor and treat mosquitoes in coastal wetlands, such as stormwater ponds, ditches, saltmarshes and wet woodlands. They typically have only about a week to treat following rainstorms, before those larvae hatch, Mr. Moran said.

The rest of the year, the section seeks to control mosquitoes in inland areas. It also gives the public information on how to avoid being bitten and prevent the insects' breeding in residential backyards.

With Delaware's 57 species of mosquitoes, one-third are known to be aggressive biters of humans, mammals and birds. The insects can also spread West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalitis, the latter of which affects both people and horses.

Ultimately, the Mosquito Control Section has broad authority to do its work but prefers to obtain annual endorsements from municipalities, Mr. Moran said. For example, Milford City Council agreed last month to accept its services this year. Only a few localities, usually areas less conducive to mosquitoes, have opted out, he added.

As far as the insecticides used, most are outgrowths of agricultural pesticides.



**David Moore, an environmental scientist III with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Mosquito Control Section, demonstrates at Milford Neck Nature Preserve how agency members gather water samples to check for mosquito larvae.** MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER

"We pick the products we pick because of their effectiveness with mosquito control and also their environmental compatibility," he said. "I think we've got a pretty good track record here in Delaware because we've been vigilant about this. We don't have incidences of bird kills or even bees, for that matter."

And, after 34 years as a member of the Mosquito Control Section, Mr. Moran would know the bugs' background here.

Calling his career path an "interesting journey," he added, "I guess I like it enough to stay with it."

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*



**Thomas Moran, program administrator for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Mosquito Control Section, poses with some of the tools and chemicals the agency uses to kill adult and larval mosquitoes.** MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER



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## NEWS

# Council extends retiring city manager's contract

By Brian Trompeter  
Milford Harrington Independent

MILFORD — Because the recruitment process to replace retiring city manager Mark Whitfield will likely need more time, City Council has agreed to extend his contract until June 21.

That decision was made March 10, and it moved Mr. Whitfield's retirement date from April 30.

He informed city officials about his intention to retire Oct. 9, 2024. Upon the extension, he told council that he hopes the extra time will allow a transitional period, during which he could advise the incoming city manager.

It will also permit him to serve through this spring's budget process, due to wrap June 9, he said.

"Having a new person come on in the middle of the budget may be taxing, no pun intended," Mr. Whitfield added.

Mayor F. Todd Culotta said he sees the value in an overlap period between the two city managers but questioned whether hiring Mr.

Whitfield as a consultant on an hourly basis when needed would prove more effective.

Vice Mayor Jason James Sr. concurred, but Councilwoman D. Madula Kalesis said that extending the position's contract at least one more month during the complicated budget session makes sense.

Other members did not object to the change.

"The amount of the money with the overlapping, in the scheme of things, is not material," Councilman Daniel Marabello said.

Councilman Michael Stewart agreed, saying, "I'm fine with it almost being what I perceive as a mentor role, with the new city manager coming in," adding that Mr. Whitfield possesses considerable institutional knowledge.

"I understand that the applicants may have had a similar role elsewhere, but this is Milford. This is not elsewhere."

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*

## Playground

• From page 1

which installed it behind the department's building at 114 E. Liberty St.

"The Phase 1 total project cost was \$102,981, but we received a Game Time grant for \$19,876," said Acting Parks and Recreation Director Doug Poore.

The playground features equipment for children ages 2 through 12. Among the offerings are swings, slides, climbing platforms and two "spring rides," chairs decorated as a fire truck and train engine that are balanced on sturdy-yet-bouncy metal springs.

The playground "is our first what I call fundamental, functional park," said Mayor Duane E. Bivans. "This is one that has been a long time coming, but it's going to be something that the families can use during the time that the Parks & Rec is available. They also can use it on the weekends."

Mayor Bivans said he hoped in the near future the city would expand offerings at the site.

"Everything we're doing in our town, in our community, is for you the general public, for our citizens, for our community, for those who travel to and from Harrington," he said. "We could not have done any of this without the help of the citizen input."

State Sen. David Wilson, R-Harrington, thanked city leaders for bringing the project to fruition.

"You're doing really good things around here," he said.

Jennifer Hood, who is Mr. Poore's niece, brought her 3-year-old daughter Addi-



Harrington resident Addison Hood, 3, takes to the sky on a swing following the April 4 dedication of the new children's playground behind the Harrington Parks and Recreation Department building. Watching her is her mother, Jennifer Hood. MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER

son to the groundbreaking. Ms. Hood pushed her daughter higher and higher on a swing, then watched as she clambered over the playground equipment and repeatedly slid down a blue plastic slide.

"I've been a Harrington

resident my entire life, so to have something like this in the community is amazing for our kids," Ms. Hood said. "To have this literally five minutes from our house will be so nice."

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*





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Celebrate spring as the Bug and Bud Festival returns to downtown Milford on Saturday, April 26, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. With food trucks, live entertainment, the annual parade, Kids' Zone, over 100 vendors and the delight of Milford's downtown shopping and dining district, this free festival invites people to shake off the winter and welcome spring.

It is hosted by volunteers with Downtown Milford Inc. (DMI).

New for 2025, the costume/bike/pet parade will begin at 11 a.m. instead of first thing in the morning, to make things more convenient for people. Adults, children and pets are welcome to dress up and participate in the walking parade. Aim to dress as ladybugs, trees, flowers and insects. Plus, decorated bicycles are part of the competition too.

"We're hoping to have the parade go right down the main drag of Walnut Street just for everyone to see all the kids,"

said organizer and DMI Vice President Neyda Albarrán.

Line up for the costume parade on N. Washington Street, behind Penny Square. The parade then heads south on Walnut Street to the Milford Public Library amphitheater. The costume competition will begin here immediately afterward. Prizes for best costumes will be awarded in the following categories: Baby/Toddler, Child, Adult, Pet and Bike.

"It is just a refreshing experience as the sun is out, the temperature has changed, the whole town comes out and you get to see a lot of people from out of town as well—and enjoy the quaint, beautiful downtown that we have," said Albarrán.

Also, food trucks will be more easily located in two main parking lots, instead of scattered around the festival. "They're all together and you can try a little bit of everything," said Albarrán. One will be behind the Mispillion Art League, and another next to the State building near River-

front Theatre. "There will be a variety of food as well."

Vendors and informational tables will include nonprofits, crafts and businesses. Live entertainment will be scheduled all day long, particularly at the library amphitheater, and the Kids' Zone always has games and activities for the younger crew. Plus, downtown organizations often piggyback off the main festival by hosting special activities, from art exhibits to dinner specials.

"This is a long standing tradition and celebration of our community, and it's an opportunity to greet, to see, to learn and speak with the different businesses and organizations that are at work here in Milford and beyond ... and to taste different foods as well," said Albarrán. "It's a very walkable downtown, we have the beautiful river. If you're into taking selfies, we've got so many spots that will be so picturesque. We're known as a river town, an art town and a hometown, and you get all the feels when you experience any of our festivals. It's going to be a fun time!"

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# Schedule of Events

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## NEWS

## Ground broken for EMS facilities in Harrington, Frederica

By Brian Trompeter  
Milford Harrington Independent

Residents living near Harrington and Frederica will be served by a pair of new emergency medical services facilities by year's end.

The Harrington site will be at 501 Gordon St., while the Frederica location is set for 137 Milford Neck Road. Officials broke ground at both during back-to-back ceremonies March 18.

"This day marks a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to provide vital emergency services to our residents," said Kent County Levy Court President Joanne Masten. The facilities will "ensure that the residents of Kent County receive the critical care they need, when they need it most."

The \$5.3 million initiative, designed by Architecture & Interior Solutions, will be financed with American Rescue Plan Act funds. DEDC and the Becker Morgan Group served as consultants for the projects, which will be built by Bancroft Construction and likely completed in December.

"We can't wait to get started," said Rob Jadick, vice president and project executive with Bancroft, at



U.S. Rep. Sarah McBride (D-Del.) lauds Delaware's cooperative spirit during the March 18 ground-breaking ceremony for a new Emergency Medical Services facility in Harrington. MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER



Officials break ground March 18 for a new Emergency Medical Services building at 501 Gordon St. in Harrington. MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER

the Harrington ceremony. "A project like this one really does improve the community."

Both of the 3,700-square-foot, one-story buildings will use the same design, featuring two bunk areas with separate bathrooms, office space, kitchens and drive-thru bays, which will eliminate the need to back vehicles into the structures.

Speaking at the Harrington event, John Tinger, Kent County's acting public safety director, said the center there will represent more than just a building.

"It is a commitment to the health and well-being of our community," he said. "It is a promise that, when someone is in need, our paramedics will be there — trained, equipped and ready to respond at a moment's notice."

The stations will be staffed every day by two paramedics. Those personnel are currently sharing an area with crews at the Harrington Fire Co.

"For them to have their own space will be great," said Megan Cox, administrative captain with Kent County EMS. The Harrington spot is "perfect for the area, and the response times will be better. It's going to be a state-of-the-art building. We're really excited to see it go up."

Mr. Tinger added that paramedics "are the heart of this mission."

"Every day you answer the call,

often in the most challenging circumstances, and you do so with skill, professionalism and compassion," he said. "This station is for you. It is our investment in your safety, your well-being and your ability to serve the people of Kent County."

The location near Frederica will also have a 4,000-square-foot warehouse to store equipment, including a \$2 million command vehicle that's scheduled to arrive by the end of the year.

"It's basically a 911 center on wheels," Mr. Tinger said of the vehicle. "You can just take it wherever and function."

As Kent County's population grows, it's important to have EMS stations that can serve the public in times of crisis, said Sen. David Wilson, R-Milford.

"Having the ability to reach individuals suffering a medical emergency in a timely manner has the potential to make the difference between life and death," he said.

Further, Rep. Sarah McBride, D-Del., credited Delaware's collabora-

• See EMS on page 16



This rendering shows the design of two Emergency Medical Services facilities that will be built this year in Harrington and Frederica. PHOTO COURTESY OF KENT COUNTY LEVY COURT



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## NEWS

# Carlisle Fire to receive funds for ambulance equipment

By Brian Trompeter  
Milford Harrington Independent

MILFORD — City Council unanimously agreed to provide \$149,340 from its fire agency enhancement fund to finance equipment purchases by the Carlisle Fire Co. on March 24.

During council's meeting, Kevin Donovan, Carlisle's assistant chief and emergency medical services captain, said the Milford area is growing, and so is the number of calls fielded by the department.

Last year, it ran more than 5,000 ambulance responses, he added.

Two crews now staff the station around the clock, and leaders hope that, by this summer, a third will be available to work during the day, said Capt. Donovan, who noted that he lives about one-tenth of a mile from the agency.

"We had purchased an ambulance to replace an ambulance that we had, but due to our call volume and the



**Capt. Kevin Donovan, assistant chief of the Carlisle Fire Co., outlined the agency's equipment needs in a presentation to Milford City Council on March 24.**  
PHOTO COURTESY OF CARLISLE FIRE CO

amount of runs we're doing, we have decided that we want to keep the one ambulance we were going to replace as a spare unit," he said.

To enhance the fleet, Carlisle leaders asked City Council for funding

to properly equip a soon-to-arrive fourth ambulance.

Among the items to be purchased is a \$77,000 loader and cot, which can automatically place a person into the ambulance, avoiding injuries to the patient and crew.

"What this does is keep old guys like me in business," he said. "These things are wonderful. They lift up to 1,000 pounds."

Another vital purchase will be a \$17,000 LUCAS device, which can perform continuous compressions during CPR.

"Any one of us, probably after two minutes, would not be as effective as this machine is going to be," Capt. Donovan said, adding that the department's three other ambulances are equipped with these tools.

Milford's volunteer fire company fund is financed using one-quarter of 1% of building permit fees to expand floor areas, city officials said. There was

\$358,000 in the fund as of March 11.

## In other business

Also March 24, City Council unanimously approved an agreement to accept a \$90,000 community transportation fund grant from the Delaware Department of Transportation for a project involving traffic safety vehicles.

The money will be advanced to the Carlisle Fire Co. Because Delaware fire departments may not directly receive CTF monies, city and town governments often serve as third-party sponsors of the grants and pass them along to the agencies, city officials said.

The equipment being funded by DelDOT and the city's fund will expand Carlisle's ability to provide emergency services to Milford's residents and businesses, they said.

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*



**Kent County Levy Court President Joanne Masten provides opening remarks at the March 18 groundbreaking ceremony for a new Emergency Medical Services facility and warehouse near Frederica.**  
MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER

## EMS

• From page 14

orative spirit for getting shovels into the ground for these projects.

"Today is a reflection of what makes Delaware special," she said. "We are able to bring together the public sector and the private sector, the federal government and local government, civic community and first responders to make a day like this possible."

Such crews "every single day are demonstrating the best of this state," she added. "The least we can do as elected officials, as the private sector, is to come together to make your job easier."

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*



**John Tinger, Kent County's acting public-safety director, discusses the advantages of two future EMS facilities during a March 18 groundbreaking ceremony in Harrington.** MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER



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## NEWS

# Bivans, Tolson will be squaring off in Harrington mayoral race

By Brian Trompeter

Milford Harrington Independent

HARRINGTON — Unlike four years ago, Mayor Duane E. Bivans has picked up a challenger for his May 6 re-election bid.

That contender, Frank Tolson, a business owner and member of the city's Board of Adjustment, said he has been thinking about a mayoral run for "quite some time."

"I just want to see the city keep moving forward in the direction it's going in and (provide) some fresh ideas, hopefully," said Mr. Tolson, adding that he has attended every City Council meeting for the last several years.

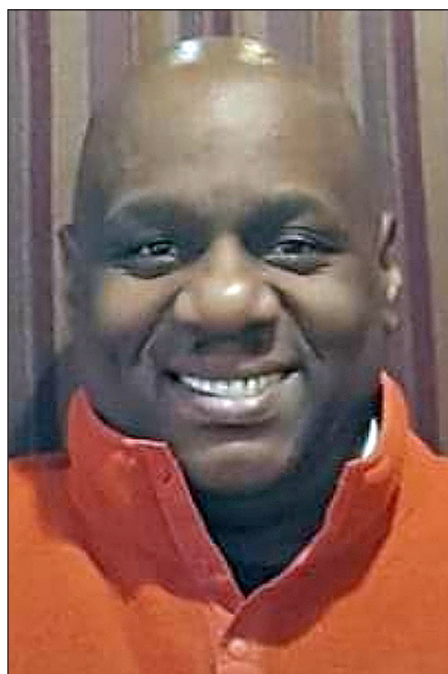
"I've always had a very good rapport with the city. I just love Harrington — so much so that I've already bought burial plots there."

A member of Trinity United Methodist Church, Mr. Tolson has owned The Clutter Box since 2010. The downtown Harrington store sells antiques and high-quality used furniture.

"The front of my store is like a fishbowl," he said. "I see everything that happens downtown."

A native of Kent Island, Maryland, Mr. Tolson moved to Ridgely, Maryland, at age 7 and graduated from North Carolina High School there. He has lived in Delaware 30 years — the last 22 in Harrington — and has also worked in real estate and construction management.

In addition, Mr. Tolson was board president of the Harrington Senior Center during construction of its new



**Harrington Mayor Duane E. Bivans will face challenger Frank Tolson in the May 6 election.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF DUANE E. BIVANS

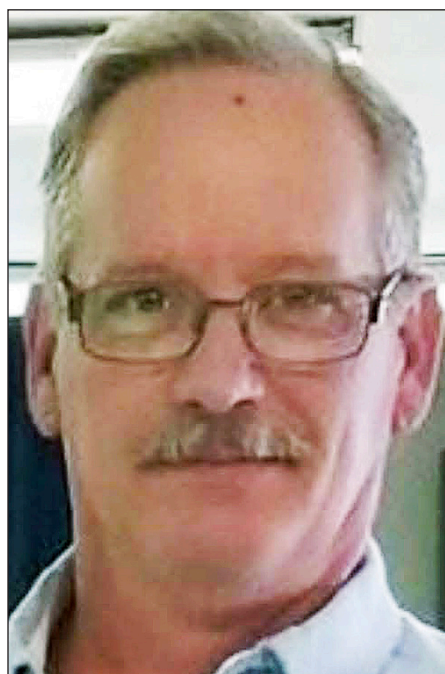
facility, which opened in November 2024.

He said he does not have any major issues with his opponent's performance as mayor.

"Mr. Bivans has done a good job," he said. "We talk. We're friends."

The current mayor, who joined City Council in 2010 and was appointed leader of the city in August 2020 after Anthony Moyer resigned for health-related issues, ran unopposed in 2021.

Mayor Bivans told the Daily State News that, if reelected, he and council would continue their effort to bring the community together and draw busi-



**Frank Tolson, a Harrington business owner and member of the city's Board of Adjustment, is running for mayor against incumbent Duane E. Bivans in the May 6 election.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF FRANK TOLSON

nesses in.

"We built it better than it was before," he said, citing recent accomplishments like the new library and the hiring of additional public safety staff. "It wasn't broken, but people felt their voices didn't matter. We have to remind ourselves, we are elected by the people."

Mayor Bivans said he and city officials have made themselves approachable and that he sometimes solicits opinions before identifying himself.

"People's voices are being heard and

recognized," he continued. "If it was important enough for them to bring up, it's equally important for us to address it."

Further, while a sign on U.S. 13 used to name Harrington as "The Hub of Delaware," Mayor Bivans said he prefers the new slogan: "Where Delaware Comes Together."

"We like to think we're the central location," he explained. "We want to become the place where people drive to, not just drive through."

Mayor Bivans went on to credit his grandmother, who lived to be 100, for instilling him with discipline and purpose, saying she didn't allow the word "can't" in her house.

And, while he is Harrington's first Black mayor, he said no one made a big deal when he held that same distinction as vice mayor.

"The only thing that changed was the seat," he said.

Harrington's election is May 6 from noon to 7 p.m. In addition to the mayoral seat, voters will choose council members for districts 1 and 3.

The filing deadline for candidates was 4 p.m. April 1. The mayor's term will expire June 4, 2029; the terms for the elected council members will end June 4, 2028.

Harrington is among the few Delaware localities with term limits for its municipal officials. Those rules, implemented in 2017, limit mayoral terms to eight consecutive years and City Council members' to nine.

Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at [btrompeter@iniusa.org](mailto:btrompeter@iniusa.org).





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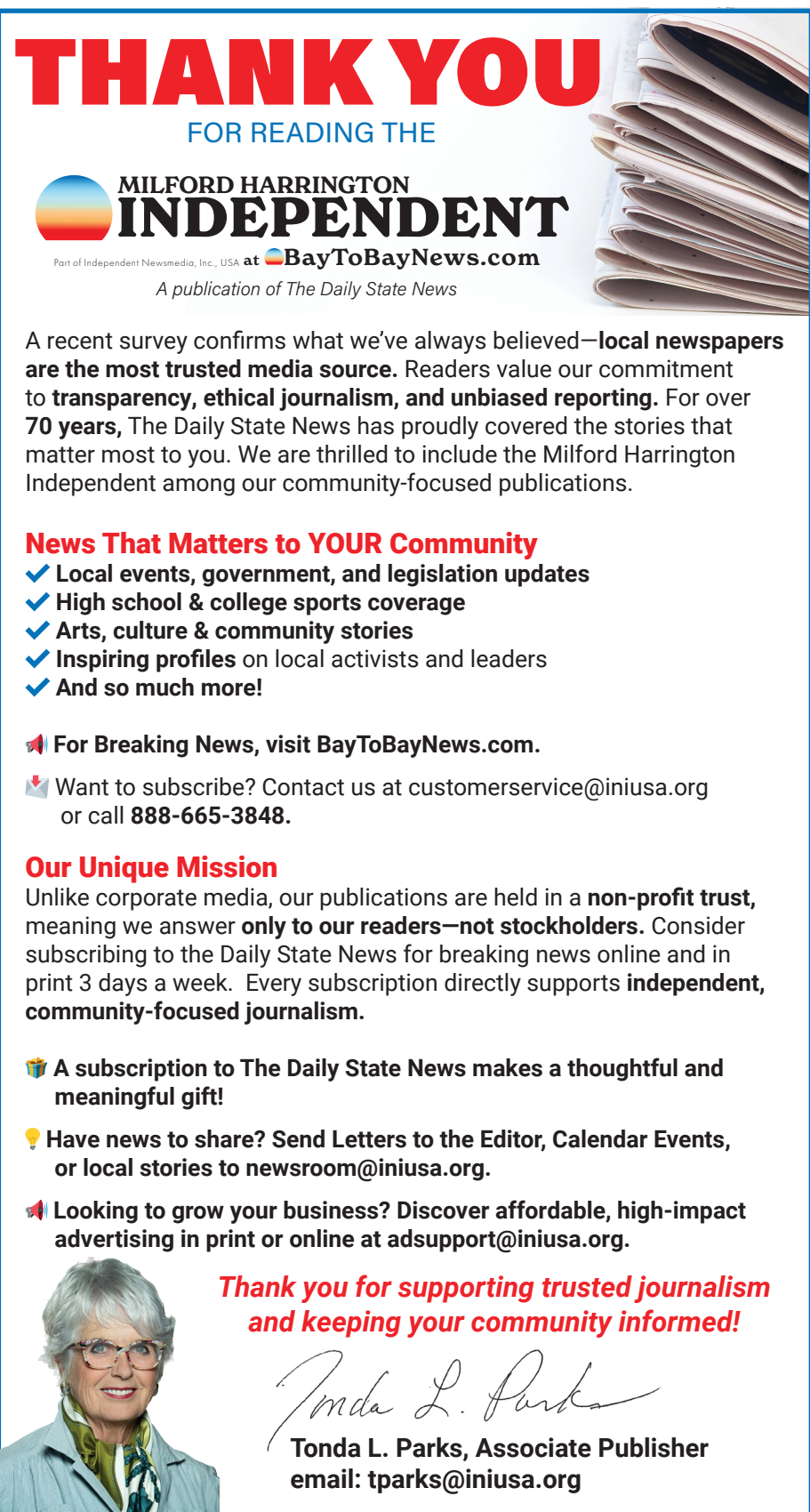
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## NEWS

# Milford to switch employee health care plan in FY26

By Brian Trompeter

Milford Harrington Independent

MILFORD — The city of Milford will be opting out of the state's health care coverage for employees during fiscal 2026 and switching to a different provider.

According to a March 1 memo from city manager Mark Whitfield to the mayor and Milford City Council, city officials filed a letter Feb. 28 with the State Benefits Office indicating the city's withdrawal from the state's health care plan. The deadline for such a withdrawal

was March 1.

The city withdrew "mainly due to the escalation in premiums that we saw this past year and the anticipation that the premiums were going to increase this coming year," Mr. Whitfield told the City Council March 10.

The new rate for the state's health care plan will not be known until after March 25, but an actuarial study done for the state estimated costs would rise about 4.1%, the city manager's memo read.

Milford officials on Feb. 25 re-

ceived an estimate from Delaware Valley Health Trust for Aetna health care coverage that would be virtually identical to that of the Highmark preferred-provider organization (PPO) now used by most of the city's employees, but at a cost of about 5% less.

Based on that information, the city withdrew from the state's plan and has begun discussions to join Delaware Valley Health Trust, which already counts as members Kent County, the city of Newark and town of Middletown, Mr.

Whitfield wrote.

The city will receive a proposal from Delaware Valley Health Trust as part of the budget process this spring, he told the council.

According to the city manager, officials in Rehoboth Beach, Lewes and Ocean View, as well as with the University of Delaware, also are considering withdrawing from the state's health care plan, he added.

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*

# Milford approves engineering contract for Riverwalk repairs

By Brian Trompeter

Milford Harrington Independent

MILFORD — Milford City Council on March 10 unanimously approved a \$35,000 contract with Greenman-Pedersen Inc. to address concrete damage to a section of the city's Riverwalk.

Following a Feb. 12 snowstorm and a subsequent large rain event, a sinkhole developed along the Riverwalk east of the Washington Street bridge.

"We came in and there was a large settlement of concrete sidewalk," Parks and Recreation Director Brad Dennehy told the City Council March 10. "This is contiguous to the Riverwalk, sort of across from the pickleball courts."

After further investigation, city officials noted that the concrete wall had been severely eroded by the Mispillion River, possibly over an extended time period, he said.

"How long it's been like this, I don't know," Mr. Dennehy said. "It hasn't happened overnight."



Milford officials have awarded an engineering contract to design remediations for a water-eroded section of the city's Riverwalk just east of the Washington Street bridge. MILFORD HARRINGTON INDEPENDENT/BRIAN TROMPETER

In a March 5 memorandum to the mayor and City Council, Dennehy stated that after the river's tide dropped unusually low, city workers could see the concrete wall displayed large cracks, both horizontal and vertical.

"We believe the river is entering through these cracks and has caused the undermining of the concrete sidewalk above," he wrote.

Staff used temporary fencing to

prevent pedestrian access to the site and city crews removed the sidewalk sections and fill next to the wall to relieve pressure from the "seriously compromised" wall, Mr. Dennehy wrote.

With help from the city's Public Works Department, the Parks and Recreation Department began excavating concrete at the site.

GPI now will conduct field inspec-

tions of the site, perform a field survey and prepare a concept package for further repairs. That plan will include emergency fixes to the existing concrete pavilion, as well as a menu of options for permanent solutions and a cost estimates.

"In terms of trying to fix it, it's not just a question of peeling up the concrete sidewalk, putting in new clean fill and pouring concrete," Mr. Dennehy told the Council. "I wish it was that easy, but we're in a real jeopardy of losing that whole concrete wall."

GPI previously did the Walnut Street bridge, which has a new pedestrian crosswalk, he said, adding, "It's critical that we move forward on this ... Unfortunately, it's not going to be a quick fix. It's not going to be a cheap fix."

The contact will be financed using existing capital-improvement funds allotted to the ongoing Riverwalk Handrail/Concrete/Pavers Repair Project, Mr. Dennehy said.

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*



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## NEWS

# Renovations, maintenance set at Lake Forest schools

**By Brian Trompeter**  
Milford Harrington Independent

FELTON — Numerous renovations and upgrades to Lake Forest School District's facilities will be coming in the months ahead.

The district's building and grounds supervisor Karl Stahre outlined the projects at the board of education's March 27 meeting.

This summer's work will include installation of six replacement heating, ventilation and cooling units at Lake Forest High School.

W.T. Chipman Middle will receive a new boiler gun, updated flooring and paint, and asbestos abatement.

The Delaware Early Childhood Center will get new roofing over its administration area, while at Lake Forest East Elementary, workers will finish upgrading automation system controllers.

Meantime, Lake Forest Central Elementary's west corridor and lockers will be painted to match the school district's colors.

Lastly, at Lake Forest North Elementary, the reading wing will receive asbestos abatement, new flooring and paint. Bathrooms in the building's T-wing will be reglazed, the automation system software will be upgraded, and the facility will get a new boiler gun.

Year-round upkeep will continue. In June, the district will perform preventive maintenance for its facilities' HVAC systems. Workers also will change those machines' filters, check the coils and condensate drains, while chiller fans will be inspected biweekly through the summer.

In July, tasks will include preventive maintenance for kitchen equipment, checking and maintaining ex-

haust fans, inspecting roofs, clearing roof drains, and inspecting and repairing lights in the parking lots.

August's assignments will be to inspect variable frequency drives, which control the speed of electric motors, as well as to maintain boilers at Chipman Middle and North, East, South and Central elementary schools.

In September, all HVAC equipment again will be maintained, filters changed, and drains and condensate coils checked. The district's vehicles will also be serviced.

The goal is to "keep the facilities clean, safe and functional for all students," Mr. Stahre said.

He also spoke to the board about Senate Bill 270, passed in 2024, which directed the state Department of Education to establish an evaluation system for school facilities. An assessment tool allows districts to

review buildings in a standardized way, identify areas needing attention and schedule maintenance and repairs.

By May 1, Delaware school districts must submit facility evaluations and maintenance-repair plans approved by their boards of education. The Lake Forest's board will approve those items at its next meeting April 10.

Board member James Rau commented about the reports' detailed nature, telling Mr. Stahre, "I think there were good intentions behind it, but I don't think anyone who enacted this legislation knew what was going to go into it and be involved with it.

"It's one more thing they can put on your plate. ... We're fortunate to have you."

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*

# Harrington bans marijuana retail operations

## OKs annexation

**By Brian Trompeter**  
Milford Harrington Independent

HARRINGTON — City Council approved an ordinance on March 17 prohibiting the operation of marijuana retailers in city limits.

Though state law allows cannabis sales and distribution under regulated circumstances, individual municipalities can regulate land use and business activities related to the substance in their jurisdictions.

The resolution reads, "The City Council of Harrington finds that the operation of marijuana retail establishments is inconsistent with

the public health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of Harrington."

In other actions Monday, council:

- Approved an up-to-\$2,600 contract with KCI Technologies for planning services related to a potential boundary adjustment to Harrington's Downtown Development District. The district currently encompasses 93.52 acres and may be expanded up to 105 acres, according to a Delaware law pertaining to jurisdictions with populations of fewer than 9,000 people.

- Awarded an up-to-\$16,325 contract with KCI Technologies to conduct planning services to renew the

Downtown Development District for five years. The city adopted the district plan in 2016, and the designation expires Aug. 31, 2026.

- Annexed into the city three East Street parcels, totaling 5.25 acres, at the request of their owner, Kent Oil.

- Approved a personally identifiable information policy that details measures taken by city officials to collect, store, process and protect the personal data of employees, customers, vendors and others.

Under the policy, Harrington will only collect information to fulfill a specific purpose. Data will be stored securely, access to it will be limited to authorized personnel, and it will

only be retained for as long as needed to fulfill the stated purposes or as required by law.

Once the information is no longer needed, it will be destroyed securely or made anonymous.

Also Monday, Mayor Duane E. Bivans read a resolution proclaiming April 6-12 National Library Week in Harrington.

"During this week, I encourage all residents to visit their library, explore its resources, and celebrate all the ways that the library draws us together as a community," he read.

*Staff writer Brian Trompeter can be reached at btrompeter@iniusa.org.*



# CLASSIFIEDS



## AUTOMOTIVE, GARAGE SALES & MERCHANDISE RATES

**\$20** per market - 30 words

Your ad appears in the newspaper of choice plus online

\$5<sup>00</sup> for color and each additional photo

.25¢ extra per additional word

**\$40** two markets - 30 words

Your ad in 2 newspapers plus online

\$5<sup>00</sup> for color and each additional photo

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## BUSINESS/SERVICE DIRECTORY RATE

Starting at **\$30**

for one column by two-inch advertisement

\$15<sup>00</sup> per inch after (maximum size 9 inches)  
Logo and photos included  
4-weeks minimum

To place your ad call us at

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## EMPLOYMENT ADS

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for one column by two-inch advertisement

\$15<sup>00</sup> per inch after (maximum size 9 inches)  
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No minimum commitment requirement

## EMAILS

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Then select "PLACE YOUR AD"

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**DEADLINES:** DAILIES deadline the prior day by 3pm / Call for WEEKLIES and MONTHLIES / **OFFICE HOURS:** Call for Office Hours

## WELCOME MICHAEL LOCKERMAN, FNP-C

Beebe Healthcare welcomes **Michael Lockerman, MSN, RN, APRN, FNP-C**, as a family nurse practitioner at Primary Care Milton.

Michael Lockerman, MSN, RN, APRN, FNP-C, provides comprehensive primary care to patients of all ages, with the majority of his time devoted to annual physical and wellness exams, chronic disease management, and treatment for acute illnesses. He is especially interested in advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the healthcare environment and is a certified LGBTQ+ health clinician.

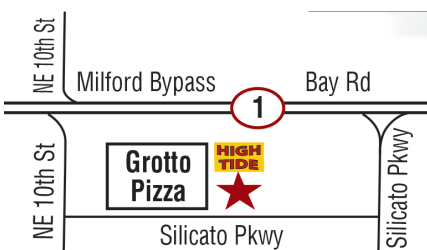


**Primary Care Milton** | 23900 Milton Ellendale Highway, Suite 101, Milton, DE 19968

**302-684-2033**







# HIGH TIDE

## Beer, Wine & Spirits

Friendly Knowledgeable Staff • Seasonal Beer & Wine

**302-491-7056**

104 Silicato Pkwy, Unit # B

Milford, DE 19963

Mon-Thurs 9am-10pm

Fri & Sat 9am-11pm • Sun 10am-8pm

**LARGE SELECTION OF BEER, WINE AND LIQUOR, NOW OPEN IN MILFORD!**

**\$1 OFF**  
ANY 30 PACK  
OF BEER

Must present this ad. Expires 5/15/25.

**20% OFF WINE**

Coupon Only: Excludes sale items. Minimum purchase of 6 wine bottles required for discount. Valid on 1.5L & 750ML size only. Cannot be combined with sale items or other special. Must present this ad. Expires 5/15/25.

**\$1 OFF**  
BOX & JUG WINE

3L, 4L, 5L  
Must present this ad. Expires 5/15/25.

**LAMARCA**

**\$16.99/750ml**

Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**M&R ASTI**  
**\$12.49/750ml**  
**\$22.99/1.5L**  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**KENDALL JACKSON  
CHARDONNY**  
**\$11.97**  
/750ml  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**MEIOMI  
PINOT NOIR**  
**\$17.99**  
/750ml  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**APOTHIC  
RED**  
**\$9.79/750ml**  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**FRONTERA**  
**\$7.99**  
/1.5L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**YELLOW TAIL**  
**\$9.99**  
/1.5L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**SUTTER  
HOME**  
**\$9.99/1.5L**  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**BAREFOOT**  
**\$10.99**  
/1.5L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**CAVIT PINOT  
GRIGIO**  
**\$12.99/1.5L**  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**WOODBIDGE**  
**\$9.99**  
/1.5L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**JAGERMEISTER**  
**\$36.99**  
/1.5L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**DON JULIO  
RESPOSADO**  
**\$54.99/750ml**  
**\$92.99/1.75L**  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**NOB CREEK  
BOURBON**  
**\$57.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**SEAGRAMS GIN**  
**\$19.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**JOSE  
Gold/Silver**  
**\$35.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**TITO'S  
VODKA**  
**\$31.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**BACARDI  
Superior or Gold**  
**\$21.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**SAILOR JERRY  
RUM**  
**\$24.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**MAKER'S  
MARK**  
**\$26.99/750ml**  
**\$48.99/1.75L**  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**SEAGRAMS 7**  
**\$19.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**SEAGRAMS VO**  
**\$22.49**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**JOHNNIE  
WALKER RED**  
**\$31.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**JAMESON  
IRISH WHISKEY**  
**\$50.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**DEWAR'S  
WHITE LABEL**  
**\$36.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.




**JACK  
DANIELS**  
**\$44.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**FIREBALL**  
**\$13.99/750ml**  
**\$22.99/1.75L**  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**LUKSUSOWA**  
**\$21.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**ABSOLUT  
VODKA**  
**\$29.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**KETEL ONE  
VODKA**  
**\$33.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**GREY GOOSE  
VODKA**  
**\$44.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**SMIRNOFF  
VODKA**  
**\$18.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**SVEDKA  
VODKA**  
**\$18.99**  
/1.75L  
Must present this ad.  
Expires 5/15/25.



**CORONA**  
**\$32.99**  
24 Loose Bottles  
Must present this ad. Expires 5/15/25.



**MICHELOB  
ULTRA**  
**\$26.99**  
24 Loose Bottles  
Must present this ad. Expires 5/15/25.



**YUENGLING  
LAGER/  
LIGHT**  
**\$19.99**  
24 Loose Cans  
Must present this ad. Expires 5/15/25.



Prices subject to change. Pictures may vary slightly from actual sale product.