

LOCAL TALK

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VOLUME 25 • ISSUE 30 * MAY 29, 2025 - JUNE 4, 2025

25¢

"LET'S TALK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR COMMUNITIES"

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

1576 Springfield Avenue • Maplewood, NJ 07040

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PATIENT PALOU WINS 109th INDIANAPOLIS 500

By Walter Elliott

SPEEDWAY, IN. - It is not known whether Alex Palou had attended any of Sunday morning's Indycar Ministry services here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway but he may have heeded Scriptural advice while winning that afternoon's 109 Running of the Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge.

It is written in Ecc. 9:11 that the race does not always go to the swift: instead, time and chance happen to all of them.

Palou and his Chip Ganassi Racing No. 10 DHL Dallara-Honda came from sixth starting place to become Sunday afternoon's 14th and last race leader.

The defending NTT Indycar Series champion ousted then-leader Marcus Ericsson on Indycar champ lap 187. He then used the two lapped cars ahead of him to build a .6822 sec. victory margin after 200 laps under checkered and yellow flags.

The three-time Indycar champ's 16th career victory is his first in the 500 and his first on an oval speedway. He has won his fifth race out of six run this season - a performance unseen since when AJ Foyt went on to win the 1979 USAC Indycar season.

"If you have to win your first oval race, here's the place to do it," said the first Spaniard to win the 500. "I've said that my career wouldn't be complete without winning here."

"I knew Alex was special when I hired him; he and the team communicate well," said team owner Chip Ganassi. "Now you have to put him up there with the other greats who drove for me: Scott Dixon, Juan Montoya, Dario Franchitti, Alex Zanardi and Jimmy Vasser."

Palou, as of press time, is shifting from his whirlwind media tour and preparing for next weekend's Detroit GP street race. He was whisked that Sunday night - in uniform wearing the victory wreath and holding his victory milk bottle in one hand - to the NBA Indiana Pacers-New York Knicks playoff intermission at the Gainbridge Arena.

Palou, in a suit picked up a record \$3.8 million winner's share Monday night at the victory celebration. He and the 32 other starting drivers were present to divide a record \$20 million purse.

Ericsson, sixth place finisher Kyle Kirkwood and 12th place finisher Callum Ilott were more than grinning and bearing their chagrin. Indycar officials overnight had demoted them to 31st-33rd places and their crew chiefs fined \$100,000.

IMS and Indycar President J. Douglas Boles said that post-race technical inspectors found "unauthorized modifications" to Engine Management System covers on Ericsson and Kirkwood's cars. Ilott's car was found to have one of its front wing end plates

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Editorial
Dhiren Shah
Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

If a politician is visiting your area, would you call him/her a people's person? I will not judge them by their visits. I will judge a politician by his/her previous work. Some politicians act like they are very close to the community, and as soon as they get elected, they act only for their family and friends. So, we all have to be careful who we elect. The main goal for an elected official should be to help the people and make laws which help the people, not helping family and friends.

There are hundreds of laws which are not useful, but they will not rescind them. I think any law not used for a certain period of time, five years or ten years, should be rescinded. So, in the future, the officials or the police department will not take advantage of citizens who are unaware the law even exists. As you all know, many of the elected officials do not have a basic knowledge of our laws, but they are very good orators and very good at pleasing lobbyists.

By controlling the majority of the elected officials, lobbyists can swing the laws (with new resolutions) and benefits to themselves or their relatives or friends. Many laws are made after an incident happens. I think it is good that after the incident they look carefully and protect for the future. But the elected officials who waste their time in

politics and listen to the powerful party bosses without thinking about the people are wrong. Watch and listen to the candidates, and then decide and vote.

The Trump administration has cancelled or stopped \$2.2 billion in grants to the most powerful and oldest institute, Harvard University, in the US, for not complying with demands to limit activism and changes to academic programs. Also, the Trump administration is asking all government agencies to terminate any outstanding contracts or programs not fulfilled yet with Harvard to redirect to other institutions. This amounts to over \$100 million.

I don't know where the world is going, but Trump should not have a vendetta against one individual institution. Also, Harvard, one of the most powerful institutions in the world, should be able

to foot some of the bill for foreign students, with its massive endowment of money.

California (The California Interscholastic Federation) is allowing LGBTQ in their states for more "biological female" athletes to participate in the championship meet this weekend after the Trump administration announced it would restrict LGBTQ females in the competition. It will be very interesting to wait for the result between the two giants. I think it is changing the world and it's becoming three genders (Male, Female and LGBTQ) and I think it is okay too. Like we are accepting new traditions in society, why not three gender rules?

Have a wonderful week.

I'll talk to you next week.

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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Cloudy / Rain possible	Cloudy	Scattered Storms	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
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AVIAN INFLUENZA CONFIRMED IN ESSEX COUNTY LIVE BIRD MARKET

TRENTON - The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's (NJDA) Division of Animal Health have confirmed a new Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) poultry case in an Essex County live bird market (city / town not released). The disease response is being coordinated between State and Federal partners.

The risk of HPAI to the general public remains low, and no live poultry were sold to the public that may have been infected. HPAI is highly contagious and often fatal in domestic poultry species.

State and Federal partners are taking prompt action to prevent the spread of disease. Depopulation of nearly 123 birds is underway at the market. After cleaning and disinfection, the market will remain temporarily closed for a prescribed period before the quarantine is lifted and they are restocked.

Individuals working in the markets are being assessed for exposures and will be monitored for symptoms by the local health department and New Jersey Department of Health. If any of the exposed individuals develop compatible symptoms, they will be evaluated for HPAI immediately.

Poultry owners, industry workers, and the general public are reminded to take precautionary measures to ensure the maintenance of a healthy flock.

HPAI poses a low risk to the general public and human infections have most often occurred after close or lengthy unprotected contact (such as not wearing gloves, respiratory protection, or eye protections) with infected birds or dairy cattle, or with places that the infected birds or animals have touched. No instances of sustained human-to-human transmission have been observed. Properly cooked poultry and eggs to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit are also considered safe to eat.

Individuals who have had

close, unprotected contact with infected birds should monitor themselves for symptoms for 10 days following their last exposure. Symptoms may include fever, respiratory signs (cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing) eye redness or irritation, headaches, muscle or body aches, and diarrhea. If symptoms develop, individuals should seek healthcare and notify their healthcare provider of the potential exposure.

HPAI is highly contagious and often fatal in domestic poultry species. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the recent HPAI detections in birds do not present an immediate public health concern.

Signs of HPAI in poultry can include:

- Sudden death
- Decrease in feed or water consumption
- Respiratory signs such as coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge
- Swelling around the eyes
- Open-mouth breathing
- Darkening of the comb/wattles
- Reddening of the shanks or feet
- Decreased egg production
- Lethargy

HPAI spreads through contact with bodily secretions, including feces, ocular, nasal, or oral secretions from infected birds. The virus can spread on vehicles, equipment, shoes, etc. Practicing good biosecurity can help prevent the spread of HPAI onto a farm.

Those biosecurity practices include:

- Eliminating exposure of domestic birds to wild birds. Minimizing standing water and extra feed in the environment that might attract wild birds.
- Avoiding contact with other poultry.
- Keeping a specific set of shoes and clothing for tending to poultry. Disposable boot covers or a foot bath

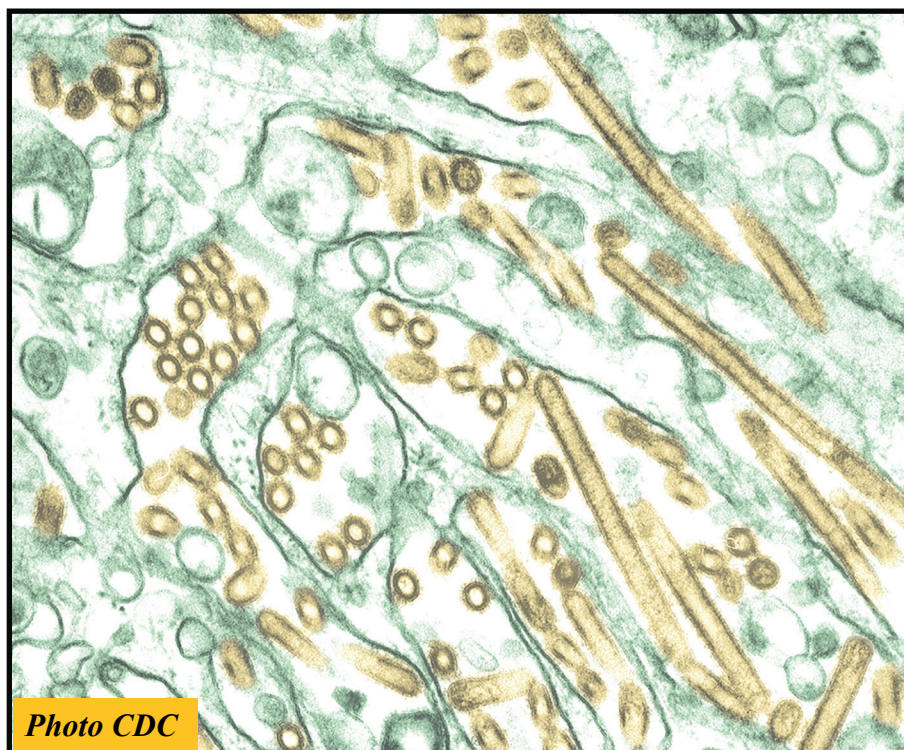


Photo CDC

that is changed regularly are other measures that can be used.

- Minimizing the number of people who visit the birds.
- Avoiding sharing equipment with other flocks and using appropriate disinfectants for equipment that must come onto a farm.
- PPE is available at each county's Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office. The county office contact information can be found at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/county/>.

HPAI is a reportable disease. Any individual who gains knowledge or suspects the existence of the disease in poultry/birds should notify this office without delay. Deceased birds suspected of having Avian Influenza should be double-bagged and stored appropriately for testing. Do not expose dead poultry to the environment, other poultry, or wildlife/wild birds. Wash your hands after handling sick or dead birds.

If you suspect HPAI in livestock, please alert the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at 609-671-6400.

If you suspect HPAI in a human, contact the local health department. Local health department information can be found at www.localhealth.nj.gov.

For additional information

about the disease and outreach materials, go to:

- <https://www.nj.gov/H5N1/>
- <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/ah/>
- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/ai>

Multiple Agencies Continue to Monitor HPAI in Wild Bird Populations

Multiple state and federal agencies continue to monitor the recent outbreak of wild bird deaths in various parts of the state attributable to avian influenza; however, the state is seeing a downward trend in both individuals reported and suspected cases. The resurgence began in December and is believed to have impacted various species of wild birds in all counties, including but not limited to waterfowl, raptors, and scavenger birds.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Fish & Wildlife and the USDA's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service continues to work with local officials, providing guidance on safe removal and disposal of dead birds in the wild suspected of having avian influenza. At this time, it is unlikely that every bird will be tested for avian influenza. In most cases, officials

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UNITED STATES



DOJ SUES FOUR NJ SANCTUARY CITIES

After years of being able to address migrants in the way they choose, four cities in New Jersey are now facing pushback from Washington.

On May 22, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against the cities of Newark, Jersey City, Paterson and Hoboken for proclaiming themselves as "sanctuary cities," in which they would not take action against individuals who are not legal residents of the country. The first three in that list represent the largest cities in the state.

The DOJ is making the case under the idea that sanctuary city policies present an unconstitutional violation of the U.S. Constitution's supremacy clause, in which federal law supersedes state law. Details about the breadth and width of the suit are sparse as, upon deadline, the Trump Administration has not issued a press release detailing the matter.

"The lawsuit against Newark is absurd. We are not standing in the way of public safety. We are upholding the Constitution, providing oversight, and following the laws and guidelines of the State of New Jersey. Nothing in our policies prevents law enforcement from doing their jobs. What we refuse to do is turn our city into an arm of federal immigration enforcement, which the courts have already ruled is not our role," Mayor Ras J. Baraka said regarding the Department of

Justice Lawsuit.

"The comments about safety are not only offensive, they are lies meant to create political scapegoats. Immigrants are far more likely to be victims of crimes than perpetrators, and there is no evidence whatsoever that sanctuary policies make communities less safe. In fact, the opposite is true - we have reduced homicides by 61 percent since I became Mayor. So our policies aren't just legal, they're working.

"When people are not living in fear, they are more likely to report crimes, access healthcare, and engage with the institutions meant to protect them. That makes all of us safer.

"We will continue to do what we have always done, protect the rights of all our residents, stand on constitutional ground, and reject fear-based politics that divide communities rather than strengthen them."

Meanwhile, Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop also chimed in, posting on X (fka Twitter), "Jersey City gets sued for being a sanctuary city - I guess MAGA ran out of conspiracy theories for the week. Here is the truth: Jersey City's policies protect families, reflect our values and have led to record low crime rates. As governor, I won't be bullied. We'll fight - and win."

Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla gave his take, posting on the platform, "The Trump administration is suing Hoboken (and Jersey City/Paterson/Newark) for our declaration as a 'Fair and Welcoming' city.

"Make no mistake about it - Hoboken will never aid Donald Trump's inhumane treatment of law abiding immigrants & residents. We will not back down."

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information from 5-27-2025

2025 Mass Shooting Stats: (Source: Mass Shooting Tracker, <https://www.massshootingsntrack-er.site/data/?year=2025>)

- Total Mass Shootings: 150
- Total Dead: 200
- Total Wounded: 593
- Shootings Per Day: 1.02
- Days Reached in Year 2025 as of noon May 27: 147

MIDDLE EAST



HEALTH SYSTEM IN DANGER OF COLLAPSE

WHO - Israel's intensified military operations continue to threaten an already weakened health system, amidst worsening mass population displacement and acute shortages of food, water, medical supplies, fuel and shelter.

Four major hospitals in Gaza (Kamal Adwan Hospital, Indonesia Hospital, Hamad Hospital for Rehabilitation and Prosthetics, and European Gaza Hospital) have had to suspend medical services in the past week due to their proximity to hostilities or evacuation zones, and attacks. WHO has recorded 28 attacks on health care in Gaza during this period and 697 attacks since October 2023.

Only 19 of Gaza Strip's 36 hospitals remain operational, including one hospital providing basic care for the remaining patients still inside the hospital, and are struggling under severe supply shortages, lack of health workers, persistent insecurity, and a surge of casualties, all while staff work in impossible conditions. Of the 19 hospitals, 12 provide a variety of health services, while the rest are only able to provide basic emergency care. At least 94% of all hospitals in the Gaza Strip are damaged or destroyed.

The increased hostilities and new evacuation orders issued across northern and southern Gaza in the past two days threaten to push even more health facilities out of service. This includes 1 hospital, 11 primary care centers, and 13 medical points within the evacuation zones, and an additional 5 hospitals, 1 field hospital, 9 primary care centers, and 23 medical points within 1000 meters of those zones.

North Gaza has been stripped of nearly all health care. Al-Awda Hospital is only minimally functional, serving as a trauma stabilization point. It faces an imminent risk of closure due to ongoing insecurity and restricted access. The hospital's third floor was reportedly at-

tacked on May 21, injuring a staff member. Hostilities in the area also damaged the water tank and pipeline.

On May 22, the hospital was attacked again. The third and fourth floors were reportedly hit, injuring two health workers. Patient triage tents, including one provided by WHO, caught fire, which also burned all medical supplies in the warehouse and destroyed vehicles in the basement. A WHO mission attempting to reach the hospital today was impeded.

The Indonesian Hospital is out of service due to continued military presence since 18 May, making it inaccessible. On May 21, a WHO mission to the hospital was forced to abort due to the security situation after waiting nearly four hours for clearance to proceed. WHO team had planned to deliver food and water to patients, assess their conditions, and identify critical equipment for transfer. WHO tried to reach the hospital again today, but the mission was impeded.

Kamal Adwan Hospital, which had the only center to treat patients with severe acute malnutrition in North Gaza, went out of service on May 20 after intense hostilities in its vicinity, forcing patients to evacuate or be discharged prematurely.

In southern Gaza, Nasser Medical Complex, Al-Amal, and Al-Aqsa hospitals are overwhelmed by a surge of injured people, worsened by a new wave of displacement to Deir al Balah and Khan Younis. The European Gaza Hospital remains out of service following an attack on May 13, cutting off vital services including neurosurgery, cardiac care, and cancer treatment - all unavailable elsewhere in Gaza.

Currently, across the Gaza Strip, only 2000 hospital beds remain available, for a population of over 2 million people, grossly insufficient to meet the current needs. Of these, at least 40 beds are at risk of being lost as they are in hospitals within newly declared evacuation zones, while an additional 850 could be lost if conditions deteriorate at facilities near these zones.

Continued hostilities and

(Continued on page 7)

WORLD NEWS (Cont. from page 6)

military presence inhibit patients from accessing care, obstruct staff from providing care, and prevent WHO and partners from resupplying hospitals.

With each hospital forced out of service, patients lose access to health care, and WHO and partners' efforts, to sustain Gaza's health system are undone. The destruction is systematic. Hospitals are rehabilitated and resupplied, only to be exposed to hostilities or attacked again. This destructive cycle must end.

Amid constant fear and insecurity, health workers, including those from national and international emergency medical teams, continue delivering urgent care in Gaza. WHO salutes their courage and commitment.

WHO calls for the active protection of health care. Hospitals must never be militarized or targeted.

UNITED KINGDOM



ANIMAL RIGHTS OVERHAULED

A major update was issued in rules for keeping animals in zoos, as the UK government has introduced new standards which will ensure the UK's famous zoos remain global leaders in the zoo industry.

Larger habitat enclosures for elephants, better training for staff to handle exotic animals, and improved public safety measures will be required as part of the new Standards of Modern Zoo Practice for Great Britain, published Saturday May 24th.

For the first time in over a decade, the rules protecting Great Britain's most loved zoo animals such as the majestic snowy owl and golden eagle, iconic elephants, and wonders of the sea like sting rays and octopus will be modernized to reflect the very latest in zoo best practice:

- Larger habitats will be introduced for elephants to better replicate the large territories elephants naturally inhabit.
- The practice of tethering birds of prey as a method of long term accommodation will be phased out, with a shift to large aviary enclosures.
- Aquariums will no longer be allowed to let visitors touch fish and cephalopods - creatures such as ray and octopus are highly intelligent animals and handling causes them stress.

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Animal Welfare Minister, Baroness Hayman said, "We are a nation of animal lovers, and our best zoos and aquariums are truly world leaders in setting the standard for how wild animals should be kept.

"Today's long-overdue reforms lay the foundation for an even stronger, even more compassionate future for all zoos and aquariums - and the animals they protect. This is the first step as part of our commitment to deliver the most ambitious animal welfare reforms in a generation.

"We're making sure all sectors have the tools they need thrive, which is vital in our mission to deliver economic growth and make lives better for people across the country under our Plan for Change."

Cam Whitnall, Managing Director of The Big Cat Sanctuary and star of CBBC's One Zoo Three, said, "For too long, zoos have been misunderstood as places of entertainment, but these new standards make it unmistakably clear: modern, good zoos put wildlife

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**NEW JERSEY TRANSIT CORPORATION
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2025 REQUEST FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, (IIJA), gives notice of its intent to apply for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 federal financial assistance, Federal Fiscal Year 2024, Federal Fiscal Year 2023 and Federal Fiscal Year 2022 carryover funds from the following programs: \$719.195 million under 49 U.S.C. Section 5307 for operating and capital assistance; \$582.862 million under Section 5337 State of Good Repair; \$60.162 million under Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities; \$35.375 million under 49 U.S.C. Sections 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities and Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program; \$705.208 million of Federal Highway Administration Flexible Funds; \$310.230 million of discretionary or competitive funding; \$3.850 million of Congressional Spending/Demo/Community Projects; for a total of \$2,416.882 million.

Federal operating assistance for Local Programs will be matched as required with funds provided by the State of New Jersey and local recipients in conformance with Federal and State guidelines. NJ TRANSIT intends to provide the non-Federal share of capital projects with transportation development credits, or funding available from the Transportation Trust Fund and other eligible sources. The Federal Fiscal Year 2025 Federal program is described below.

**FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2025 PROGRAM OF PROJECTS
Proposed Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program
(Millions of Dollars)**

PROJECT	FEDERAL
ALP-46A Electric Locomotive Overhaul (36)	\$0.012
Articulated Bus Purchase – 60 Ft. (201)	28.364
Brick Church SOGR Program – Special Project	9.434
Capital Lease Payments	99.948
Cumberland County Bus Program	2.040
Fare Collection and Fare Gate Modernization	14.000
Heavy Duty Vehicle Purchases	6.000
Kearny Point Bus Garage	25.000
Meadowlands BEB Solar Charging Facility	32.000
Mechanical Equipment Inspection Improvements	10.000
Multi-Level I Overhaul and Retrofit Program (329)	1.900
Multi-Level III Purchase Option B, C, D, E (200)	13.815
Newark Light Rail Branch Brook Park & Penn Station Switch Replacement	20.836
Newark Light Rail Broad/Fulton St. Switch Replacement	15.000
Perth Amboy Intermodal ADA Improvements	21.545
Preventive Maintenance-Bus	210.630
Preventive Maintenance-Rail	108.725
Replacement of antiquated 105RE Rail on Lower M&E and RVL MP	8.000
Secaucus Escalators	21.752
Track, Bridge, Mobility and Capacity Improvements	23.194
Traction Power, Catenary and Control System Improvements	19.100
Watsessing Avenue Station Accessibility Improvements	27.900
Total	\$719.195

**Proposed Section 5337 State of Good Repair
(Millions of Dollars)**

PROJECT	FEDERAL
ALP-46A Electric Locomotive Overhaul (36)	\$102.496
Kearny Junction #26.5 Switch Replacement	4.000
Multi-Level II Purchase Option B, C, D, E	94.644
Multi-Level III Lifts	10.000
Northern Rail Maintenance of Way Facility (Wood-Ridge MOW)	4.000
Preventive Maintenance-Rail	340.045
RiverLine Engine Re-Power	4.507
Secaucus-Meadowlands Transitway	3.170
Vital Harmon Logic Control (Electronic Logic Control) Device	20.000
Total	\$582.862

**Proposed Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities
(Millions of Dollars)**

PROJECT	FEDERAL
40 Ft. Transit Bus Purchase (550)	\$40.328
40 Ft. Transit Bus Purchase (265)	18.834
Bus Shelter Maint./Upgrades Program	1.000
Total	\$60.162

**Proposed Sections 5310 and 5311
(Millions of Dollars)**

PROJECT	FEDERAL
Local - Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	\$23.384
Local - Rural Transit Program Contracts	11.991
Total	\$35.375

**Proposed Federal Highway Authority Flex (FHWA)
(Millions of Dollars)**

PROJECT	FEDERAL
Bus Garage Resiliency Assessment	\$2.810
Hilton Bus Garage Modernization	68.100
Hoboken Division Phase 1 Resiliency Project Planning	3.200
Hoboken Yard Improvement	5.000
Long Branch Station Pedestrian Tunnel	7.900
Multi-Level III Purchase (113)	90.000

Multi-Level III Purchase Option B, C, D & E	64.000
Northern Rail Maintenance of Way Facility (Wood-Ridge MOW)	60.000
Off System Bridge - East 32 nd Street	20.200
Off System Bridge - Mountain Road	18.900
Off-System Bridge - Ohio Avenue	20.200
Off-System Bridge - Old Whitehorse Pike	18.900
Off-System Bridge - Yogi Berra Drive	20.200
Passaic Terminal	15.000
Peckman River Bridge Reconstruction	26.730
Portal North Bridge Multi-Level III Purchase	42.798
Rail Right of Way Green Infrastructure Study	0.670
Roselle Park Station	9.000
Secaucus to Meadowlands Transitway	180.000
Watsessing Avenue Station	31.600
Total	\$705.208

**Proposed Discretionary/Competitive Funding
(Millions of Dollars)**

PROJECT	FEDERAL
Belford Ferry Terminal (Monmouth County)	\$4.000
Bradley Beach Station Modernization	14.514
Brick Church Station Modernization	83.312
Floating Dock System (City of South Amboy)	6.018
Long Branch Station Pedestrian Tunnel	13.215
Meadowlands Outdoor Charging Facility	79.600
New York Waterway Ferry Vessels	14.242
Northern Rail Maintenance of Way Facility (Wood-Ridge MOW)	75.000
Pascack Valley Line Station Modernization (Phase I)	18.187
Paterson-Newark Transit Market Project	1.200
Paterson-Passaic Bus Network Design	0.600
Paterson Station TOD Master Plan	0.342
Total	\$310.230

**Proposed Congressional Directed Spending/Demo/Community Projects
(Millions of Dollars)**

PROJECT	FEDERAL
Bergen Hackensack Transit Connector Project (Bergen County)	\$0.250
Edison Light Rail Project (Township of Edison)	1.600
Elderly Veteran and Employment, Transportation Services (Sussex County)	0.500
Zero Emission Downtown and Community Mobility (Township of Woodbridge)	1.500
Total	\$3.850

A. Property Acquisition/Environmental, Economic, and Social Aspects

Any property acquisition or relocation that may be required will be conducted in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the law and regulatory requirements. As required by statute, the social, economic, environmental, and relocation aspects of the projects will be investigated. If required under applicable laws and regulations, interim findings may be presented at a future public hearing and further public comment will be solicited. Prior to the implementation of any of the projects and to the extent required, NJ TRANSIT may prepare an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to Federal regulations. The availability of this document will be made known by publication in the same manner as this notice. NJ TRANSIT will adhere to all Federal statutes and regulations affecting structures or properties eligible for or on the National Register of Historic Places.

B. Comprehensive Planning

NJ TRANSIT projects are developed in coordination with the following planning organizations: The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), which is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Northeast New Jersey urbanized area; the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), which is the designated MPO for Camden, Mercer, Burlington, and Gloucester counties; and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO), which is the designated MPO for Cumberland, Salem, Atlantic, and Cape May counties. The MPOs are the forums for local decision-making concerning the proposed projects. The projects are developed in consultation with local elected officials, interested citizens, and providers of private bus services.

C. Private Enterprise Participation

Through the comprehensive planning process administered by the MPOs and ongoing communication with NJ TRANSIT's Office of Private Carrier Affairs, NJ TRANSIT continues to discuss with private carriers their participation in the capital program. In addition, NJ TRANSIT encourages, to the maximum extent possible, the participation of the private sector in the development and implementation of public transportation in the State of New Jersey.

D. Senior Citizens and Individuals with Disabilities

Services to be provided will be consistent with NJ TRANSIT's program of reduced interstate and intrastate rail and bus fares for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. Every reasonable effort will be made to plan and design program elements involving facilities generally available to the public with careful consideration of the special needs of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities.

E. Public Input

NJ TRANSIT invites public comments on the above projects and its performance. Request for additional information on NJ TRANSIT's program of projects, written comments and/or requests for a public hearing should be sent to Rocio Munoz, Director, OPRA & Open Public Records Officer, NJ TRANSIT, 283-299 Market Street, Newark, New Jersey 07102 by **July 9, 2025**.

Based on comments received in response to this notice and information made available, NJ TRANSIT may modify the above program before final submission to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and will make a determination, pursuant to FTA regulations, as to whether a public hearing is in order. The final program of projects funded by the approved Federal Fiscal Year 2025 Section 5307 and 5339(a) grants will be published on the NJ TRANSIT website.

Kris Kolluri
President & CEO
New Jersey Transit Corporation



DISCLAIMER: The following items are primarily drawn from first responders. Responders' accounts may not be their full activity range. Grand juries hand down indictments when evidence presented them warrant a trial. Named suspects/defendants are innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

NEWARK - Among the five individuals and a men's basketball team honored here at the inaugural Essex County College Wolverine Athletic Hall of Fame induction ceremony May 9 was a recently deceased public official.

Former Mayor and State Senator Sharpe James, who later died May 12, was honored for being ECC's first athletic director in 1968. The three-letter South Side/Malcolm X. Shabazz High School scholar-athlete played for and graduated from the now-Montclair State University with a degree in physical education.

The ceremony was held in the late Cleo Hill, Sr. Physical Education Building gymnasium. The former collegiate and professional basketball player was one of AD James' first hires as a basketball coach, who went on to a coaching career at Winston-Salem (N.C.) State, died at his Orange home in 2016.

ECC's 1974-75 men's basketball team were inducted for setting national community and junior college scoring records. Hill and James had to arrange practice times for them at the YM/WCA and city high schools.

Russell Rogers, now 86, hired as track and field coach in 1969, became the first African American national coach of the year five times in 1971-78.

Kerron Stewart, Melanie Walker and Novlene Williams-Mills - all Olympic medalists - were also enshrined for their ECC and later achievements.

IRVINGTON - A township man, already detained for a parole violation, was charged by Maplewood police March 15, in the shooting of a fellow Irvingtonian along their Jacoby Street May 31, 2024.

The Maplewood Police Department, in their May 20, 2025 release, said that Jerry Menard, 25, has been charged on two counts of aggravated assault with a firearm, criminal mischief and related weapons offenses.

The charges were made on Menard while he was - and still is - detained at an unnamed state prison. Menard was taken to that jail on a parole violation July 31.

MPD did not say how they had linked Menard to the 1130 p.m. shooting of another Irvington man along Jacoby Street, by Brown Street, May 31, 2024. That is where responding police and South Essex Fire Department EMS medics found a man lying on the street suffering from "multiple gunshot wounds." The residential location is about a 15-minute walk northwest of the Irvington border.

The 24-year-old victim was treated at the scene and was admitted to "a local hospital in stable condition."

EAST ORANGE - The city's teachers union and public school district - after three years' negotiation and a budget deficit-induced round of layoffs - have a new labor contract.

Members of the East Orange Education Association voted by a 5-to-1 ratio May 15 to approve a new labor contract spanning Sept. 1, 2022 - Aug. 31, 2027. 473 voted "Yes" and 86 "No."

The collective bargaining agreement covers the first three years' salaries already paid out but without any pay grade step-ups.

2022-23 salaries will be boosted two percent, payable by EOSD on June 30, 2025. 23-24 wages be hiked 2.25 percent, payable on July 15. 24-25 paychecks are to be upped 2.75, payable Sept. 1.

The 2025-26 paychecks will rise four percent, payable on Sept. 1, 2026 - with a one-step upgrade. The last year, 2026-27 features a two-step upgrade and another four percent pay hike.

The district had honored EOEA contract that had expired on Aug. 31, 2022 while talks

continued. A \$25 million EOSD 2024-25 budget shortfall, discovered Sept. 15, resulted in laying off or demoting 93 teachers and other union members.

ORANGE - Metcalf Park is midway through a May 16-June 30 closure for its latest round of renovations.

Mayor Dwayne Warren and work involves the DPW, in their May 15 handbill and online notice, said that the South Ward park between Chestnut and Valley streets is closed for "Construction and Environmental Remediation."

It appears that some of the work involves "The Baseball Field," going by the city's Facebook page. There is a nine-point outline of the work underway, including requiring the field's size to "proper dimensions" and the application of sod and other specialized earth for infield and outfield.

The question asked by neighbors is, "are you doing one or both baseball diamonds?"

Friends of Metcalf Park started a Moveon.com petition to have one of the two diamonds replaced by space for alternative use: soccer, Frisbee, cricket and the like. The petitioners cite the changing demographics of the neighborhood for the change.

The city used a \$481,500 DEP Green Acres grant in 2023 to revamp the basketball courts and install a dog part "at community request."

WEST ORANGE - About the only clear activity here at Mount Pleasant Plaza is that at least two stores will be leaving by Sept. 1.

No Limit Martial Arts is moving uphill to 1001 Mt. Pleasant Ave. The Metropolitan Plant Exchange is leaving Aug. 30. Loyal customers are left to travel to sister stores in Closter, Fort Lee or Paramus.

There are secondary sources who say that their space will be filled by Trader Joe's. A Trader Joe's spokesman confirmed that his company is looking at West Orange but not an address. Their nearest stores are in Millburn and Florham Park.

455-471 Mt. Pleasant started life as a Mid-20th Century A&P supermarket. A&P was building Colonial-styled supermarkets with parking lots.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - Paper in Plane Coffee of Montclair, who has a bar is South Orange's Baird Center since last year, is advancing further south to Maplewood's Jefferson Center.

Jonanthan Echeverry announced that he has the keys to the former Nelson's Garage at 145 Dunnell Rd., May 18 and intends to start opening the century-old building in phases by the end of summer.

"It has over 7,000 square feet of space, so we can open in stages," Echeverry told a reporter May 20. "We can open the front for grab-and-go fare."

"The front" was the customer lobby where Nelson's patrons would explain their automotive problems, make appointments and wait while Dave Germain and his two mechanics performed their maintenance and/or repairs.

Germain ended Nelson's 100-year run Nov. 30. He said that he could not cut back on hours and make the monthly rent. Echeverry intends to honor Nelson's with automotive-theme decoration. Paper Plane's latest outpost may have some ready customers given that the Maplewood Concierge, in its various forms, closed its Maplewood Station stand last year.

BLOOMFIELD - When Timothy Fox officially reaches the top of his profession July 1, his promotion will likely be followed by a homecoming here.

Fox, who was born and raised in Bloomfield through the Eighth Grade, will be succeeding the retiring Kieran Barrett as Montclair State University Police Chief and Associate Vice President of Student Development and Campus Life.

Timothy Fox, who joined MSUPD as a dispatcher in 2001 had worked his way up the ranks. He was promoted to Deputy Chief March 27.

Fox's beat as "Top Cop" includes MSU's main campus and, since 2023, Bloomfield College of MSU. MSU, a state university with NCAA since been Division III sports, has since been integrating with the Lutheran Church-founded Bloomfield College and its Division II sports.

Fox will be far from a com-
(Continued on page 14)



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Watch the Essex County College *Community Education Forum* TV Series, hosted by Alfred Bundy on  and 

WORLD NEWS (Cont. from pg. 7)

first. They are hubs for conservation, education, and world-leading animal care. I'm proud to be part of the UK's zoo, sanctuary and aquarium community, setting the global benchmark for the welfare of endangered species."

Other measures in the Standards include:

- Improved conservation - Clear steps to help enforce conservation standards with new requirements for record keeping - helping drive up standards across the whole sector. This could include breeding programs for endangered species, research into animal behavior and reproduction, and education to raise awareness about conservation issues. There will also be a curb on the sourcing of animals from the wild.
- Protecting the public - All zoos will need to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place if they want to keep dangerous animals, including double-gated entry systems, lone worker procedures, and the appropriate availability of firearms.
- Updated business plans - To ensure zoos are prepared to protect animals in the event of financial hardship, they will

now be required to develop clear business continuity plans

There is a two year timeline on zoos and aquariums to adapt to the changes, with further phased timelines for some species-specific changes. This gives enough time to implement the changes efficiently, while support and guidance will be available - keeping welfare at the heart of zoo operations.

UKRAINE



RUSSIAN ATTACKS DECRIED

The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) has deplored a deadly wave of Russian missile and drone strikes that reportedly killed at least 13 civilians and injured 65 others, warning that the attack underscores the grave risks of using powerful explosive weapons in populated areas.

According to the UN mission, the overnight assault from Saturday into Sunday -

one of the largest of its kind since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 - resulted in civilian casualties and damage to homes and infrastructure across 10 regions of Ukraine, including the capital, Kyiv.

At least three children were among those killed and nine children were reported injured. The mission is currently working to verify the full extent of the casualties and the broader impact of the attack.

"With at least 78 people reported killed or injured across the country, last night's attack tragically demonstrates the persistent deadly risk to civilians of using powerful weapons in urban areas, including those far away from the frontline," Danielle Bell, HRMMU Head, said in a news release.

"It is yet another addition to the staggering human toll this war continues to inflict on civilians, with more families across the country now grieving their losses."

Matthias Schmale, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine, also voiced deep concern over the civilian suffering.

"I am horrified that yet again civilians - among them children - were killed in last night's massive attacks," he said in a statement posted on the social media platform X.

SPORTS WRAP



By William Hathaway, Jr.

The New York Red Bulls were on the road this past weekend, where they won a key game against a tough DC United 2-0 at Audi Field.

Cameron Harper and Mohammed Sofo spurred on the 6-6 -3 Red Bulls to the win. So far, Harper has scored in three straight matches at Audi Field, while Sofo scored his third goal of the year and goalkeeper Carlos Coronel recorded his sixth shutout this season. New York has won three straight matches on DC's home pitch.

In the NBA's Eastern Conference Finals, as of this writing, the New York Knicks lost the first two at home to the Indiana Pacers, but came back on the road to win Game 3 106-100. NJ native Karl-Anthony Towns scored 20 points in the 4th quarter to lead another 20-point comeback, while Jalen Brunson had 23 points. Leading the Pacers was Pascal Siakam with 21 points.

In the Western Conference Finals, the Oklahoma City Thunder defeated the Minnesota Timberwolves 128-126 to win Game 4 on the road and take a commanding 3-1 lead in the series.

Photo By NY Red Bulls



This came after OKC lost Game 3 by 42 points.

Finally, in local high school baseball action, Seton Hall Prep captured the Greater Newark Tournament this past weekend. By the final score of 6-0, SHP captured its 20th GNT title by defeating 2nd seeded Livingston

at Doc Goeltz Field in Verona.

In other news, the Bloomfield High School Unified flag football team took a state championship by beating defending champion Morristown 14-12 in a game played at the New York Jets practice facility in Florham Park.

NEWARK MAN ADMITS ROLE IN ARMED ROBBERY OF U.S. POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE

NEWARK - A Newark, New Jersey man admitted his role in an armed robbery of a U.S. Postal Service employee as well as firearms and drug trafficking offenses, U.S. Attorney Alina Habba announced.

Troy D. Corbett, Jr., 29, of Newark, New Jersey, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Claire C. Cecchi to one count of conspiring to interfere with commerce by robbery, one count of possession of ammunition by a convicted felon, one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, and one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. Sentencing is scheduled for October 8, 2025.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: In November 2023, four individuals – including Corbett – conspired to rob a U.S. Postal Service employee at gunpoint in Newark, New Jersey. The assailants stole the victim's cell phone, keys, and wallet – including a credit card and debit card. The robbery impeded the victim from delivering mail, which interfered with interstate commerce. Following the robbery, Corbett attempted to use the employee's stolen property to make purchases.

On January 18, 2024, in Newark, New Jersey, Corbett – who was convicted of a



felony offense in 2018 – possessed a Polymer80, Inc. Model PF940V2 9mm caliber privately made pistol, bearing no identifiable serial number, loaded with 16 rounds of 9mm Luger ammunition that was manufactured outside of New Jersey. Corbett possessed at the same time approximately 162 pills of methamphetamine, which he intended to distribute.

The count of conspiracy to interfere with commerce by robbery carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The count of possession of ammunition by a convicted felon carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine. The count of possession of

a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years in prison, which term must run consecutive to any other term of imprisonment that Corbett is ordered to serve, and a maximum penalty of life in prison.

U.S. Attorney Habba credited postal inspectors with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Christopher A. Nielsen, with the investigation. She also thanked special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Terence G. Reilly in Newark, deputies of the U.S. Marshals Service, under the direction of United States Marshal Juan Matos Jr., police officers and detectives of the Newark Police Department, under the direction of Public Safety Director Emanuel Miranda, officers of the New Jersey State Parole Board, under the direction of Chairman Samuel J. Plumeri, Jr., and special agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Newark Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge L.C. Cheeks, Jr.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Eli Jacobs of the Organized Crime and Gangs Unit in Newark.

JOINT SWEEP OPERATION TARGETS PRE-SUMMER CRIME SURGE

Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens II and Essex County Sheriff Amir Jones announced the results of a major joint law enforcement operation aimed at curbing violent crime ahead of the summer months. The multi-agency sweep started February 14, 2025, and concluded on April 30, 2025. It resulted in the arrests of 56 individuals including 14 known gang members.

The operation targeted individuals wanted for a range of serious offenses including homicide, assault, weapons violations

and endangering the welfare of a child.

Prosecutor Stephens said "This operation wasn't just about numbers - it was about protecting our communities by removing dangerous individuals from our streets. Among those arrested, nine were wanted for homicide, and many had ties to gangs such as the Bloods, Crips, and Latin Kings. This initiative is a targeted, strategic effort to enhance public safety, especially as we head into the summer months when violent crime often in-

creases. The message is clear: we are committed to keeping our neighborhoods safe."

Sheriff Jones added "Our communities deserve to feel the presence of justice not just when something happens but before it does. This is what partnership looks like. This is what proactive law enforcement looks like and this is only the beginning."

"On behalf of Mayor Ras. J. Baraka and the whole Newark Department of Public Safety we would like to thank Prosecutor Stephens, Chief McGuire and

Sheriff Jones for this collaborative effort. This is a true partnership that has worked for years." said Newark Public Safety Director Emmanuel Miranda.

Prosecutor Stephens and Sheriff Jones extend their gratitude to the dedicated men and women of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office and the Essex County Sheriff's Office, as well as to our local and state law enforcement partners, for their outstanding work and collaboration on this operation.

INDY 500 (Cont. from pg. 1)

too low.

Andretti Global, who fielded Ericsson and Kirkwood, and Ilott's Prema team are considering appeals as of press time.

Prema co-driver, Robert Shwartzman, received the 500 Rookie of the Race award mainly for his surprise earning the pole position from twice 500 winner Takuma Sato May 18, Shwartzman, who came from Europe's F1 feeder series, had never been to IMS or on an oval speedway before May.

Shwartzman never led a lap Sunday. He was running in the top 15 when his No. 87 Dallara entering his pit box too fast on lap 113. He injured a crewman's

ankle and left front suspension.

Sunday's race, held before the first sold-out crowd since 2016 and seven million Fox Sports viewers, took a while to get going. The starting green flag was delayed 42 minutes until any moisture on the 2.5-mile Brickyard oval had dried.

Overcast skies and 57-degree ambient temperature meant that it took drivers more time to warm up their tires. The first six of eight race cautions were held between laps one and 106.

IMS officials and fans paused to mark several anniversaries - including when Peter De Paolo and Norman Batten - a couple of Jersey guys - won the 1925 500.

De Paolo was the first win-

ner to run a 101 mph average speed and to win the race in under five hours. The Roseland resident led 117 laps and would have done more except for his blistering hands.

Team owner Fred Duisenberg ordered Pete to take a break and get bandaged at the infield medical center. East Orange native Batten drove De Paolo's car 27 laps as his relief driver.

FINISH: 1.) ALEX PALOU (HONDA), 2.) David Malukas (H), 3.) Pato O'Ward (Chevrolet), 4.) Felix Rosenqvist (H), 5.) Santino Ferrucci (C), 6.) Christian Rassmussen (C), 7.) Christian Lundgaard (C), 8.) Conor Daly (C), 9.) Takuma Sato (H), 10.) Helio Castroneves

(H), 11.) Devlin DeFrancesco (H), 12.) Louis Foster (Rookie) (H), 13.) Nolan Siegel (R) C), 14.) Colton Herta (H), 15.) Ed Carpenter (C), 16.) Will Power (C), 17.) Graham Rahal (H), 18.) Marcus Armstrong (H), 19.) Jack Harvey (C), 20.) Scott Dixon (H), 21.) Ryan Hunter-Reay (C), 22.) Josef Newgarden (C), 23.) Sting Ray Robb (C), 24.) Kyle Larson (C), 25.) Kyffin Simpson (H), 26.) Robert Shwartzman (R)* (C), 27.) Rinus VeeKay (H), 28.) Alexander Rossi (C), 29.) Marco Andretti (H), 30.) Scott McLaughlin (C), 31.) Marcus Ericsson (H), 32.) Kyle Kirkwood (H), 33.) Callum Ilott (C). *Awarded 500 Rookie of the Year.

BLOOMFIELD RESIDENT ADMITS ROLE IN OPIOID DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY

ESSEX - A Bloomfield resident admitted participating in a conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute opioids, as well as unlawful distribution of opioids, U.S. Attorney Alina Habba announced.

Danielle Molinari, 51, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Madeline Cox Arleo in Newark federal court to an information charging her with one count of drug conspiracy and one count of distribution of, and possession with intent to distribute, oxycodone, a Schedule II controlled substance.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: Between February 2019 and March 2023, Molinari participated in a conspiracy to obtain medically unnecessary prescriptions for oxycodone, an opioid pain medication. Once Molinari obtained the oxycodone

done through a prescription, she then sold the oxycodone to another individual in exchange for money. Over the course of the conspiracy, Molinari unlawfully distributed approximately 4,665 oxycodone pills.

The two charges of drug conspiracy and distribution of oxycodone each carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, and a fine of \$1 million. Sentencing is scheduled for November 4, 2025.

U.S. Attorney Habba credited special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Terence G. Reilly, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Chelsea D. Coleman and Jenny Chung of the Health Care Fraud and Opioids Abuse Prevention Unit in Newark.

AVIAN FLU (Continued from page 4)

presume the virus is tied to bird die-offs based on previous preliminary positive test results.

New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife recommends avoiding contact with sick or dead wildlife. However, if you have a dead wild bird on your property and are electing to dispose of the carcass, precautions should be taken. If removal can be done safely, personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn, including gloves, a mask, and eye protection. Avoid direct contact between you and the animal by using a tool such as a shovel or pitchfork to move the carcass. Double-bag each bird, close the bag using a zip-tie, and place in an outdoor trash bin inaccessible by pets or other wildlife.

Following disposal, immediately wash your hands with soap and warm water and disinfect any non-disposable items using a diluted household bleach solution. Allow the disinfectant to sit on the item for 10 minutes prior to rinsing off with warm water.

If you see sick or dead birds, particularly in groups of five or more, please report your finding in the Wild Bird Disease Reporting Form. It should be noted that wild birds, including waterfowl and shorebirds, are considered natural reservoirs for avian influenza. Since the beginning of the U.S. outbreak in January 2022, avian influenza has impacted wild and domestic birds in every state.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

WARRIOR SPIRIT (PART 1)

NINE AND COUNTING

Father's Day is fast approaching. In that regard, I thought that it would be awesome to dedicate the entire month of June to all those wonderfully amazing men out there. I am blessed to stumble across such Warrior Spirits quite often when waltzing around those Hoodscapes.

Kicking us off is Author Arthur DeBose. I was totally fascinated by his work and his love and dedication to children. Visit Localtalkweekly.com and read this article in its entirety. While you're at it, check out the archives. Follow me on Facebook and msdialect on Instagram.

Also support all those change agents that grace my frame as subjects. Like, comment and share. Join us and let's grow out loud together.

Author Arthur DeBose's Writing Journey

My Mantra: *My books motivate, educate and stimulate children of all ages as they learn and grow through different stages, keeping them entertained with poetic words and brightened illustrated pages* (www.arthurdebose.com)

My Published Works: I now have eight children's books published and one book of poetry. The book of poetry was my first book. Why children's books? First off, I love children.

I truly believe that the beginning is where you gotta catch people. If you do the research, you will find that most of your successful or wayward people - whether that outcome good, bad or indifferent - started in their beginnings.

My goal is to eventually open up a daycare center. As far as the writing goes, in my beginning I also wrote several songs. "Empathy" is my book of songs and poetry -My first book "Empathy Volume One".

What Inspired My Children's Books: What inspired me to write children's books - I mean, who inspired me to write



children's books - was my granddaughter. Initially, sometime in her life, her mother (my daughter) and her father were working, so I was available, so I was spending a lot of time with her. Just loving her.

Although chronologically it's "Boy Potty," "Girl Potty" and "Baby Sitter," "Babysitter" was my first book. It came about because she came over one day when my daughter was getting ready for work. She really didn't want to stay and she was wailing.

So I started playing with her and saying, "Hey DJ, you come over here every day and you have lots of toys and games to play, but all you ever say 'I want to go home.' Which you surely aren't, because have you forgot your mommy has to go to work? And when you cry when she leaves, it really, really hurts." I was trying to cheer her up. That's where it all came from - "CJ Goes to the Baby Sitter."

After that, we started potty training her. She had a potty at home and she had one at my house, and I started teaching her by talking to her in poetic form. And as I was selling "CJ Goes Potty," I came across a guy who requested that potty book for his son, so I wrote Ray Jay Gotta Go.

My fourth children's book is "CJ Goes to School," which is about a young lady who was going to school but she wasn't happy about it. It's hard on children when mommy, daddy, or grandpa and home is all they knew. So that prompted "CJ Goes to School."

My next book, "CJ New Friend Unity," is a book that's against racism. During that time it was around 9/11, and I was at the park and I was inspired by watching those children play with each other and they were really having a great time.

I was wondering at the time why there is so much prejudice in the world. We teach our children hate and racism - we plant that in our children. That's where "CJ Makes Friends" came from. Next it was "CJ Goes to the Dentist." That one teaches children how to take care of their teeth...

Read this article in its entirety at www.localtalkweekly.com and type The Observation Booth, Andrea Dialect and/or Entertainment Section in the search bar. If have any questions, comments or concerns, send them to localtalkandrea@gmail.com.

TOWN WATCH

(Cont. from pg. 10)

plete stranger when he returns to Bloomfield. He said that he has been developing relationships with his hometown's first responders and officials like he has been doing with colleagues in Little Falls and Clifton.

MONTCLAIR - Dr. Renee Baskerville confirmed, on May 15, that Chief Financial Officer Padmaja Rao will be leaving for a position closer to her home.

Rao, who had served this township, will be setting up shop in Piscataway. That town's council appointed Rao as their CFO and Financial Director at their May 6 meeting; their current CFO is retiring.

Rao may be best known for uncovering improprieties with the Montclair Fire Department's personnel timekeeping and that some council members were on the state health insurance plan while they were only part-time employees.

Rao and the township had settled her harassment and retaliation lawsuit in 2024. She claimed that the then-town manager, after presenting her findings to him, created a hostile work environment, including his cutting her out of meetings and other employee contact.

Montclair has since had four other town managers. Voters replaced the mayor and entire council in 2024.

GLEN RIDGE -Two middle school leaders have found them-

selves on indefinite leave for at least the rest of their school year in the wake of a claim that one of their teachers had been "grooming" one of their students.

Ridgewood Avenue Principal Michael Donovan and Vice Principal Jonathan Heitmann00, said Superintendent of Schools Kyle Arlington May 19, have been suspended "effective immediately."

The super and nearby Central School Principal Keshia Harris, as of May 20, will supervise RAS through June 30 in addition to their regular duties. Arlington mentioned "safety concerns" and working with law enforcement regarding "a complaint" for the change.

This comes after Glen Ridge Public Schools had a tort claim

levied against it in Superior Court-Newark Civil Part May 12. Westfield attorney Justin Drazin said he represents "Minor of Court" and her family.

Drazin said that an RAS teacher had had a developing non-consensual relationship with MOC from when she was an 11-year-old RAS student into Glen Ridge High School.

BELLEVILLE - The Belleville Board of Education Trustees - after a seven week nationwide search and scouting of 35 candidates - appointed Dr. Erick Alfonso as its latest Superintendent of Secaucus remains a bigger mystery.

Alfonso was unanimously appointed by those panelists who voted. Board President Gabrielle
(Continued on page 15)

MOTIONS FILED TO BLOCK ILLEGAL CONDITIONS PLACED ON BILLIONS IN FEDERAL FUNDING

TRENTON - Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin this week co-led a coalition of attorneys general in filing motions seeking injunctions that would block the Trump Administration's illegal attempts to withhold billions in federal funding for law enforcement, counterterrorism, emergency services, disaster preparation and relief, repairs to crumbling transportation infrastructure, and transit improvements.

"The Trump Administration's reckless attempts to take away billions of dollars in federal funding for law enforcement, emergency response, counterterrorism, transportation, and more will put our residents in harm's way. These threats to public safety funding are outrageous, and we are moving swiftly to block them and protect our residents," said Attorney General Platkin.

"President Trump should stop playing political games with critical funding that keeps our communities safe. Just as we have blocked other efforts by this Administration to harm our residents, we will continue to work tirelessly prevent the loss of this critical public safety funding. We'll see the Trump Administration in court."

Recently, Attorney General Platkin co-led a coalition of 20 attorneys general in filing two lawsuits: one against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, and a second lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and USDOT Secretary Sean Duffy. Each agency has imposed sweeping new conditions that would withhold billions of dollars in federal funding for public safety and transportation infrastructure unless the states and state agencies devote their scarce law enforcement resources to federal civil immigration enforcement efforts.

The coalition has now filed motions for preliminary injunctions in both cases, seeking orders from the courts in both cases that would block the Trump Administration from imposing these unlawful conditions on federal funding to New Jersey and the other states in the coalition.

In their lawsuits and preliminary injunction motions, Attorney General Platkin and the attorneys general explain that Congress has established dozens of federal funding programs administered by DHS and DOT. The money Congress appropriated to those programs funds pro-

jects that range from protecting the state from terrorism to disaster relief and flood mitigation to railroad, bridge, and airport construction.

New Jersey receives more than \$2 billion in federal funding annually for these critical programs and projects, and all of that funding is put at risk by the Trump Administration's threats to withhold this essential funding from the state. None of these funding streams has anything to do with immigration.

But in February, Secretary Noem directed DHS and its sub-agencies, including FEMA, to cease federal funding to jurisdictions that do not assist the federal government in the enforcement of federal immigration law. In March, DHS amended the terms and conditions for all new federal grants to require recipients to agree to assist in enforcing federal immigration law as a condition of receiving federal funding.

Soon after Noem's decision, DOT Secretary Duffy issued a letter to grant recipients informing them of his intent to require all state and local governments to assist in federal immigration enforcement as a condition of obtaining DOT funds, including for highway construction, public transportation maintenance, and airport and railway improvement.

In their request for a preliminary injunction against DHS and FEMA, Attorney General Platkin and the coalition point out that the conditions it has imposed on federal funding exceed DHS's legal authority. The coalition further explains that the conditions are unconstitutional because Congress appropriated federal funding to help states prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from catastrophic disasters.

The safety and well-being of New Jersey residents could be at risk if states are forced to forfeit hundreds of millions of dollars in federal emergency preparedness and response funds. Attorney General Platkin and the attorneys general emphasize these conditions will also damage the carefully built trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities that is critical to promoting public safety.

In their request for a preliminary injunction against DOT, Attorney General Platkin and the coalition point out that imposing an immigration-enforcement condition on all federal transportation funds, which Congress appropriated to support critical infrastructure projects, is beyond the agency's legal authority. The coalition

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states rely on DOT money to fund highway development and airport safety projects, to prevent injuries and fatalities from traffic accidents, and to protect against train collisions.

Attorney General Platkin and the attorneys general contend that withholding the federal funding will damage public infrastructure across the county and will undermine public trust and cooperation in criminal investigations. Now, Attorney General Platkin and the coalition are seeking a preliminary injunction that would prevent the Trump Administration from cutting this critical funding.

Joining Attorney General Platkin in filing these motions for a preliminary injunction are attorneys general from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, Wisconsin, and Vermont.

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

Bennett-Meany and Trustee Jeannie Gillis, without explaining, abstained.

Belleville Public Schools, as of May 27, has not posted Dr. Alfonso's salary. Whether he will get predecessor Dr. Richard Tomko's \$183,977 salary - which he accrued in his ninth and last year here - or more like the \$183,977 Secaucus had paid him remains a mystery.



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