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Everett Independent

Published by the Independent Newspaper Co.

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

City announces winter parking rules for 2026

During a snow parking ban, vehicles will park on the even side of the street this season

Special to the Transcript

With the snow season upon us, the City of Everett is prepared for winter operations. City staff met to confirm that procedures, staffing and supplies for snow removal and parking enforcement are fully in place.

All snow removal equipment – both City-owned and contracted – will be available for use throughout the season, including multiple snow blowers for City buildings. During ma-

jor storms, crews will work coordinated split shifts and utilize plows, sanders, bobcat front-end loaders and sidewalk plows to keep Everett's main arteries, side streets and sidewalks clear. In the days following major storms, the Department of Public Works (DPW) will continue plowing and coordinate additional snow removal as needed.

Parking Ban Notifications

The City has reaffirmed its strategy for notifying residents when a snow parking ban is declared. Once a decision is made, information will be shared through:

- Robo-calls through the Co-

See **PARKING RULES** Page 4

THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN



The Village Bar and Grill recently played host to the annual Village Reunion, a tradition of old friends from the neighborhood gathering for camaraderie, good eats and good times.

A BIRTHDAY SURPRISE AT THE CITY COUNCIL



Members of the City Council surprised Mayor-Elect Robert Van Campen with a birthday cake last Monday following his 51st birthday on Sunday.

\$5 Million gift will help Housing Families expand homelessness services

Special to the Independent

Housing Families, a housing and wellness services provider, which serves the communities of Everett, Malden and Medford, have announced that Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sánchez Bezos are recognizing the organization with a \$5 million grant from the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund. This investment is the largest gift in the nonprofit's history. Housing Families is part of the eighth annual cohort of organizations across the country receiving funding from the Day 1 Families Fund to deepen their work to help every family have a safe, stable place to call home.

"This grant comes at such a meaningful time," said Laura

Rosi, CEO of Housing Families. "As we enter the holiday season and witness so many families struggling, it gives us renewed hope. Our family shelter system has faced enormous challenges this year, and this support will allow us to help many more families find safety and stability and ensure that no family must sleep outside this winter. As we approach our 40th anniversary in 2026, it's an inspiring way to step into our next decade with greater impact than ever."

"Housing Families has been a lifeline for so many of our neighbors in Everett, offering compassion, respect and steady support during some of

See **HOUSING FAMILIES** Page 9

Everett

Independent

President: Stephen Quigley
Editor in Chief: Cary Shuman

Independent Forum

REMEMBER THOSE IN NEED
ON YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING LIST

Americans already have been spending a record amount of money thus far this holiday season, spurred on by the extended "Black Friday" (we are using quotes because Black Friday sales began in early November), Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday shopping days.

However, amidst our zeal to find the "perfect" gifts for our family members and friends, we hope that our readers make the effort, no matter how small, to remember those in need this holiday season.

Homelessness is at an all-time high in this country. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the number of unhoused Americans jumped significantly from 2023 to 2024 by about 18%.

It is estimated that homelessness in New York City has reached the highest level since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This past August, 103,391 people slept each night in NYC shelters. Even more depressingly, according to the Coalition for the Homeless, almost one-in-eight New York City school children experienced homelessness during the most recent school year.

The most vulnerable members of our society -- including people with disabilities, children, and older adults -- are experiencing homelessness at increasingly-higher rates. In addition, the proposed cuts to social safety net programs are expected to make the problem even worse.

The simple reality is that for far too many of our fellow Americans, the holidays bring little or no joy.

There are countless ways by which each of us can make the holidays brighter for those who are less fortunate, ranging from toy drives to food banks to Salvation Army Santas. With Christmas fast approaching, we urge everyone who has the means to do so to make that small effort to help those for whom the holidays are just another day.

TRUMP DELIVERS ON GLP-1 DRUGS

Back in January, we wrote an editorial entitled, "GLP-1 weight-loss drugs should be made affordable for all Americans."

We pointed out that the U.S. ranks among the most obese nations in the world -- an astounding 72 percent of Americans are deemed to be overweight. We also noted that the new GLP-1 drugs, which originally were designed to help persons with diabetes (by making sugary, salty, and high-fat foods less appealing), had the "side-effect" of bringing about significant weight-loss in the consumers of these drugs.

It also has been found that the GLP-1 drugs not only help to decrease users' appetite for food, but also to reduce their cravings for harmful substances such as alcohol, drugs, and even cigarettes, and to reduce the "food noise" for those with eating disorders.

Researchers also have established that the GLP-1 drugs improve the health of our cardiovascular system, liver, brain, and kidneys, and even help with sleep apnea.

In short, the GLP-1 drugs offer the potential of a life-changing medicine that could benefit tens of millions of Americans.

However, as we noted in our editorial in January, the GLP-1 drugs were prohibitively expensive -- about \$1300 per month -- for those not eligible for a prescription for their diabetes, which is the only condition covered by most health plans and Medicare for the drugs.

That all changed this past month with an agreement forged by President Donald Trump with the makers of these drugs, Eli Lilly (Mounjaro and Zepbound) and Novo Nordisk (Ozempic and Wegovy), by which they agreed to reduce their prices by more than 50%. For some consumers (who had been eligible for a previous 50% reduction off the \$1300 sticker price), this has worked out to a greatly-reduced monthly rate of about \$350 per month.

In short, President Trump's deal makes these drugs much more affordable for millions of our fellow citizens who now can begin to take advantage of this miracle medicine. Trump's efforts not only will benefit the health of individual Americans, but also promise to reduce our national healthcare costs in the years ahead.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT
EVERETT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Get ready for another exciting week at the Everett Public Libraries! From engaging after-school activities and specialized book groups to fun-filled storytimes and special holiday programs, there's something for everyone at both the Parlin and Shute branches. Check out the complete list of upcoming programs for adults, teens, and children below:

Be on the lookout in December! Some very special visitors from the North Pole will be making their way back to the Everett Public Libraries Children's Rooms. Our mischievous little elves will be arriving soon to spread holiday cheer.

Parlin Adult and Teens
Gaming Club Parlin YA Room. Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3pm. Join us for board games and video games at the library! Bring your own or play what we have here. For ages 12 and up.

Connolly Center Book Group, Connolly Center Meeting Room. Thursday, December 11th at 12pm. Discuss Kate Quinn's The Briar Club. See Kathleen for copies on her twice monthly visits, or call the Parlin (617) 394 2300 or Shute (617) 394 2308 libraries.

Parlin Childrens Study Buddies, Parlin Children's Room. Monday through Friday from 3-5pm. Need homework help? Come to the Shute Library and study with the Study Buddies, our free after-school program offering

See LIBRARIES Page 6

Everett

Independent

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NEWS IN BRIEF

CITY OF EVERETT INVITES VETERANS TO THE MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Mayor Carlo DeMaria and the City of Everett's Department of Veterans Services are pleased to invite all military veterans to a special luncheon dedicated to honoring their service on Thursday, Dec. 11 at 12 p.m. at the Edward G. Connolly Center (90 Chelsea St.).

This complimentary event offers veterans an opportunity to connect with fellow service members, enjoy a meal together and learn about the various programs and services available through the City's Veterans Services Office.

Veterans Services staff will be present to answer questions, share valuable resources and help attendees access the support available to them.

"We're proud to host this luncheon as a way to show our gratitude to the men and women who have served our country," said Mayor Carlo DeMaria. "It's also an opportunity to strengthen the bonds within our veteran community and ensure every veteran knows about the resources and support the City of Everett provides."

Advance registration is required. To reserve your spot, please contact Veterans Agent Gerri Miranda by email at Gerri.Miranda@ci.everett.ma.us or by phone at 617-394-2320.

ABCD ANNUAL TOY DRIVE SUPPORTS LOCAL FAMILIES

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) has launched its annual Toy Drive, urging the community to help bring joy to neighbors in need

as the winter season approaches.

For thousands of families, juggling the costs of heat, rent, and groceries during the winter makes providing "a little holiday cheer" difficult. Every year, the ABCD Toy Drive distributes upwards of 6,000 toys to more than 720 families with the support of generous donors.

How to become a donor

Individuals, families, social or faith groups, businesses, or benevolent societies are invited to step up and join the effort.

To become a Toy Drive Donor:

Complete the online form at bostonabcd.org/service/toy-drive/. An ABCD staff member will then contact you to schedule the donation drop-off and other logistics.

For questions or more information, contact ABCD at 617-

348-6767 or holidays@boston-abcd.org.

How families register for toys

Families in need of toys this holiday season must register by calling one of the participating ABCD locations.

Registration is required, and all eligible households must have an updated and complete client file that includes:

- proof of income.
- proof of address.
- photo ID.
- proof of family size (birth certificate of children).

Once the completed application is received, ABCD will contact the family with details on when the toys will be ready for pick-up.

Please call the Mystic Valley Opportunity Center in Malden at 781-321-2501 to sign up to receive or donate a toy this holiday season.

The Mystic Valley Opportunity Center is located at 239 Commercial Street, Malden.

USPS REMINDS CUSTOMERS TO KEEP PATHS CLEARED FOR CARRIER AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The Postal Service is reaching out to communities throughout the region to raise public awareness of the importance of keeping walkways, sidewalks, and approaches to mailboxes clear from snow and ice so letter carriers can provide safe and timely mail delivery.

Mounds of snow and patches of ice in front of mailboxes create havoc for carriers trying to safely deliver the mail. Postal officials emphasize that residents maintaining a clear path to the mailbox — including steps, porches, walkways and street approach — will help postal carriers provide timely delivery service. Customers receiving curbside delivery should also ensure clear access to their mailboxes for letter carriers from the street.

See NEWS BRIEFS Page 4

DIDOMENICO MEETS WITH SEIU WORKERS AND CONSTITUENTS ABOUT PCA PROGRAM

Senator Sal DiDomenico met with dozens of constituents who are SEIU members working for the MassHealth's Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program, or

are individuals benefitting from the program. DiDomenico listened to them and told them, "Older adults and individuals with disabilities in my district

depend on these critical services and I will do everything I can to ensure this program and its workforce gets the funding it needs and deserves."



Senator Sal DiDomenico meeting with constituents and PCA workers with SEIU in his Senate office.

Everett Arts & Culture

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#givingtuesday

ARTS FOR EVERETT, INC.



is an artist-run nonprofit and community art space dedicated to making creative experiences available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

We will offer our Listening Works program, a paid arts apprenticeship program for youth ages 16-24 again beginning in January 2026.

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artlabeverett.org

SEND US YOUR NEWS: The Everett Independent encourages residents to submit birth and engagement announcements, news releases, business briefs, honor rolls, social news, sports stories, and photographs for publication. Items should be forwarded to our offices at 385 Broadway, Citizens Bank Building, Revere, MA 02151. The Independent also encourages readers to e-mail news releases to editor@everettindependent.com. The Everett Independent assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors in advertisements, but will reprint that part of the advertisement in which the error occurs. Advertisers will please notify the management immediately of any errors that may occur.

News Briefs // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Postal employees make every reasonable effort to deliver the mail in many difficult weather conditions. At the same time, we must insure the safety of our carriers along their routes. Carriers are not allowed to attempt door delivery when there is a heavy buildup of snow and ice on sidewalks, steps or porches. They are not allowed to dismount for curbside boxes blocked by snow and ice buildup.

If mailboxes are blocked off and conditions are difficult, letter carriers must always consider safety and accessibility first.

Letter carriers are instructed to not deliver to mailboxes and locations which are too hazardous or unsafe to access.

The U.S. Postal Service and postal letter carriers greatly appreciate your support.



City of Everett's Annual

**CHRISTMAS
TREE
LIGHTING**

**Friday, Dec. 5, 2025
5-8 PM
Everett Square**

Parking Rules // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

deRed Alert system.

- Everett Community Television (ECTV)
- Social media (Facebook: /cityofeverettma; Instagram: @cityofeverettma; X: @EverettGov_MA)
- The City website (cityofeverett.com)
- Activation of blue emergency lights along main arteries

Residents may also call 311 or 617-394-2270 for updates.

Winter Parking Rules for the 2025–2026 Season

For this snow season (December 2025 through March/April 2026), the year used for determining parking bans is 2026 – an even-numbered year.

During a snow parking ban, vehicles must be parked on the EVEN side of the street.

- Secondary streets: Parking is ONLY allowed on the side with even-numbered houses when a snow parking ban is in effect. This rule remains in place for the entire snow season.
- One-sided streets: Residents must continue to park on the side where parking is normally permitted.
- Main arteries: No parking is allowed at any time during a snow parking ban.

Main Arteries (No Parking During a Snow Ban)

- Alpine Ave. — Both sides
- Bellrock Avenue — Entire length
- Broadway — Boston line to Malden line
- Bryant Street — Entire length
- Bucknam Street — Norwood to Belmont Street
- Chelsea Street — Everett Square to Everett Avenue
- Elm Street — Ferry Street to Revere line
- Ferry Street — Malden line to Chelsea Street
- Fuller Street — Entire length
- Garland Street — Easterly side from Woodlawn Street to Lawrence Street
- Hancock Street — Broadway to Malden line
- High Street — Broadway to Ferry Street
- Lawrence Street — Entire length
- Lynn Street — Entire length
- Main Street — Sweetser Circle to Malden line
- Nichols Street — Ferry Street to Chelsea line
- Norwood Street — Bucknam Street to Everett Square
- Second Street — Entire length
- Tileston Street — Entire length
- Tremont Street — Entire length
- Union Street — Entire length

Failure to comply with snow parking ban regulations will result in ticketing and towing.

Snow Removal Reminders

The Department of Public Works asks residents to follow these guidelines to support effective snow removal:

- Do not throw snow back into the street; doing so is subject to fines.
- When possible, wait until the storm ends before clearing driveway entrances to avoid repeated shoveling.
- Using objects to reserve parking spaces on city streets is prohibited by ordinance.
- If snow banks make it impossible to place trash bins on the sidewalk, residents may place trash bags on top of the snow banks for pickup. This is only allowed when bins cannot be placed normally.

The Everett Fire Department also asks residents to clear at least three feet of snow around fire hydrants to help ensure quick access for emergency responders.

The City of Everett thanks all residents in advance for their cooperation and ask everyone to follow these regulations to help ensure a safe and successful snow removal season. For more information, please contact the Constituent Services Department at 617-394-2270 or visit cityofeverett.com/winter-2026.

DiDomenico celebrates local artist with Senate reception

Special to the Independent

Senator Sal DiDomenico hosted a reception in the Senate Gallery celebrating the work of his constituent, Adriana G. Prat, whose art exhibition is currently on display. As he presented his citation for Adriana, DiDomenico shared a few words, “Adriana is an impressive artist and scientist, and we are lucky to have her talent on display here in the Senate Gallery. Senators and visitors are already talking about how much they love and appreciate her work. I want to thank Adriana and our friends at the Multicultural Arts Center for introducing us and making this beautiful display come together.”

Adriana, an Argentinean immigrant who has settled in Cambridgeport is a biophysicist turned artist whose practice focuses on inspiring action on the environmental crisis. Drawing on her scientific background and a lifelong passion for the natural world from her childhood in Argentina to her research and artmaking here in Massachusetts, her work explores climate change through repurposed materials, mixed media, and vibrant, thought-provoking compositions.



Senator Sal DiDomenico presenting Adriana G. Prat with her Citation in the Senate Chamber.

You can learn more about Adriana and her unique approach to art and climate action on her website at www.agprat.com.

Adriana Prat’s statement about her art exhibition and the event

“I am deeply honored and grateful to Senator Sal N. DiDomenico for inviting me to bring a collection of my artworks to the iconic Massachusetts State House, and to the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives, offered by State Representative Mike Connolly, for their special recognition of my personal mission to bring action to the environmental crisis through my art. I extend my appreciation to the Senator’s and House’s staff that helped bring this exhibit to life.

As an immigrant who has called the U.S. home for over 35 years now, I am elated to have my paintings in this significant and relevant space in American history and its future. And especially at a time when we face a perfect storm, a metacrisis, that calls for urgent action to fight the environmental calamity humanity faces on a finite Planet. I hope the featured artworks -- most of them executed on repurposed surfac-



One of Adriana G. Prat’s art pieces in the Senate Gallery titled, “Re-birth Island”

es -- are not only happy, colorful images, but also reminders of land and ocean landscapes, of all its inhabitants, which we need to urgently heal and pre-

serve.

We owe it to the Earth. We owe it to Nature to which we must not forget we belong.”

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Middlesex Sheriff's Office honored with two awards at the 2025 Law Enforcement & Corrections Awards Ceremony

The Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) took home two of the top awards at the 2025 Law Enforcement & Corrections Awards Ceremony on Thursday, November 13.

This year, the MSO was presented with both the Innovation of the Year Award for the new Older Adult Re-Entry (OAR) Unit and Program of the Year Award for the Family Support

Services Unit (FSSU).

The ceremony was hosted by the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association at the State House in Boston and recognized individual, team and organizational excellence. Accepting the awards on behalf of the MSO were Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and staff assigned to the OAR Unit and the FSSU.

The OAR Unit was launched

in late 2024 with assistance from Boston University and UMass Boston and was created with programming and a structural layout specifically designed for incarcerated individuals ages 55 and older.

Like OAR, the FSSU, is a first-in-the-nation initiative. Launched in 2020, the FSSU is designed to enhance support for the loved ones of those incar-

cerated at the Middlesex Jail & House of Correction. The initiative, which has gained attention as a national model, has managed over 8,000 family interactions.

"The officers and civilian staff members who facilitate these vital programs are outstanding professionals who work tirelessly to make our communities better places to live and work," said Sheriff

Koutoujian. "Their commitment to implementing bold and innovative programs is changing lives for the better each and every day. That's why I am so proud to call them my colleagues and to share these awards with them."

To learn more about the Middlesex Sheriff's Office, please visit our website at www.middlesexsheriff.org.



PHOTOS BY THE MIDDLESEX SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian (right) and members of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office accepted the award for Innovation of the Year from Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association Vice President Nick Cocchi (left) at the Massachusetts State House.



Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian (right) and members of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office accepted the award for Program of the Year from Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association Vice President Nick Cocchi (left) at the Massachusetts State House.

Libraries // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

tutoring and academic support for students in grades K-8.

Lego Club. Parlin Children's Room. Mondays from 3-5pm. Come to the Children's Room after school on Mondays for some free-building lego fun. Open to all ages. Children under 6 years old must be accompanied by an adult. No registration required.

Storytime and Singalong with Karen, Parlin Children's Room. Wednesdays at 11am. Join us for a fun-filled morning of singing and storytelling with Karen! Suggested ages 0-6.

Drama Class. Parlin Children's Room. Wednesdays at 3pm. Do you have a drama queen or king at home? Drama Class in the Parlin Children's Department is the perfect opportunity for your child to put those acting skills to use with

our drama coach! Suggested ages 6-14.

Storytime Adventures with Mrs. McAuliffe, Parlin Children's Room, Thursdays and Fridays at 11:00 Join Children's Librarian Mrs. McAuliffe for our enchanting Story Time! You will be whisked away on magical adventures through the pages of your favorite books. Bring a friend or make a new one in our circle of friends.

Holiday Cookie Decorating, Parlin Children's Room, Thursday, December 11th at 3 PM. Join us as we prepare for the holiday season by decorating cookies. Cookies and frosting and sprinkles galore!

Friday Family Movies! Parlin Meeting Room. Friday, December 12th at 3 pm. Break out the popcorn! Come and watch Santa Buddies with your

friends and family. Fresh Hot Popcorn will be served.

Shute Adult and Teens

Ready Player One Games, Shute Meeting Room, Wednesdays at 2:30 PM. Level up your Wednesdays with our ultimate gaming hangout! Grab your friends and dive into fun Nintendo Switch and PlayStation games. No registration required. Recommended for ages 11 and up.

Purr Therapy, Shute Study Room, Thursdays at 3 PM. Take a break during your busy day to have a quiet and peaceful moment with our new feline library visitor, Gandalf! Thank you to the Pets & People Foundation for our new Pet Therapy friend.

Artisan's Circle, Shute Meeting Room. Thursday, December 11th at 5:30 PM.

A creative open studio with a relaxed, welcoming space for artists and crafters of all levels to work, connect, and get inspired! Bring your own craft and supplies (BYOC) and enjoy creating alongside a community of makers.

Shute Children's

Study Buddies, Shute Children's Room. Monday through Friday from 3-5pm. Need homework help? Come to the Shute Library and study with the Study Buddies, our free after-school program offering tutoring and academic support for students in grades K-8. Friendly tutors are here to guide you through tricky assignments, help you prepare for tests, and build confidence in every subject.

Study Buddies, Shute Children's Room. Monday through

Friday from 3-5pm. Need homework help? Come to the Shute Library and study with the Study Buddies, our free after-school program offering tutoring and academic support for students in grades K-8.

Miss Val's Storytime Pals Shute Children's Room. Mondays at 10 AM and Tuesdays at 12 PM. What's better than a good story? Sharing it with friends! Join Miss Val at the Shute Library for Fairytale Fun!

Shute Cinema Presents - Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Shute Library Meeting Room. Tuesday, December 9th at 4 PM. Get cozy and break out the popcorn: it's time for some movie magic! Join us for the first film in the Harry Potter series, based on the beloved books by J. K. Rowling.

MIDDLESEX SHERIFF'S OFFICE HOLDS HOLIDAY EVENT FOR FAMILIES OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Smiles, laughter and holiday spirit filled the Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) Training Academy on Saturday, November 22 as the office hosted an event for the families of incarcerated individuals.

The 2nd annual holiday event was hosted by the MSO's Family Support Services Unit (FSSU). It featured activities with staff from the Discovery Museum in Acton, balloon animals crafted by retired MSO Captain Drew Crawford and cookie decorating.

Additionally, each family was given a turkey donated by the Manolis Family Foundation, fresh eggs from the MSO's Project EARTH, and cookies baked by the MSO's culinary staff. The Wish Project from Chelmsford and the MSO's religious services staff also provided gifts that were distributed to children attending the event.

The event also featured a raffle of two bicycles donated by the family of an individual previously incarcerated at the Middlesex Jail & House of Correction. The family donated the bicycles as a thank you for the support they had

received while their loved one was incarcerated.

"I am incredibly grateful to our team, the Manolis family, The Wish Project and the Discovery Museum for making this event such an overwhelming success," said Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian. "Speaking to so many of the families who came, it was powerful to hear not just how much today meant to them, but how impactful their experiences with our Family Support Services Unit team are throughout the year."

"This was a great day," said FSSU Director Kerry Sullivan. "To see the happiness and know you're making a difference is powerful. Often times families are reaching out to us during difficult moments, so to be able to laugh with them and celebrate with them is something special."

Through the MSO's partnership with The Wish Project, the group is also working with the FSSU team to sponsor 40 families of individuals in the MSO's lower security programs (community work, work release and pre-release). Parents will be able to give these presents directly to their children during



Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian (fifth from left), members of the MSO, volunteers from the Discovery Museum, and representatives of the Manolis Family Foundation from Pridestar Trinity EMS stand behind a table filled with gifts at the Middlesex Sheriff's Office Training Academy in Chelmsford on Saturday, November 22, 2025.

upcoming visits.

To learn more about the Middlesex Sheriff's Office and the Family Support Services Unit, please visit www.middlesexsheriff.org.



The Manolis Family Foundation generously donated frozen turkeys to be distributed to the families of incarcerated individuals through the Middlesex Sheriff's Office Family Support Services Unit (FSSU).

MIDDLESEX SHERIFF'S OFFICE CELEBRATES THE GRADUATION OF 10 NEW CORRECTION OFFICERS

The Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) proudly celebrated the graduation of the 53rd Basic Training Academy (BTA) at Winchester Town Hall on Friday, Nov. 21.

Ten new correction officers were sworn in during a ceremony that featured remarks from Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and Winchester Police Chief Daniel O'Connell. 53rd BTA President Emily Magovern also

addressed those in attendance.

"Today represents commitment, growth, and pride," Magovern told classmates, family members and officials. "But most importantly, it represents responsibility - a responsibility not only to this uniform, but to the people we serve, our fellow officers, and our community."

The ceremony followed a rigorous academy process during which recruits underwent ex-

tensive training. The academy included both classroom and hands on work, as well as the mastering of policies, procedures, and skills needed to maintain safety and security.

The training focused on topics such as implicit bias, Mental Health First Aid, Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT), de-escalation and communication, first responder training and defensive tactics. In addition, all

10 recruits spent time working with veteran members of the MSO team during their on-the-job training at the Middlesex Jail & House of Correction.

"During this Thanksgiving season, we are proud to welcome these 10 new officers to our Middlesex Sheriff's Office family," said Sheriff Koutoujian. "Throughout their training, they displayed the character, commitment and dedication

to excellence that our team is known for. We look forward to the incredible contributions we know these officers will make throughout their careers."

The Nov. 21 graduation was the 19th held during Sheriff Koutoujian's tenure.

To learn more about the Middlesex Sheriff's Office and current career opportunities, please visit www.middlesexsheriff.org.



53rd Basic Training Academy President Emily Magovern addresses classmates, families and Middlesex Sheriff's Office officials during graduation on Friday, November 21



Members of the 53rd Basic Training Academy (standing) pose for a photo following their graduation. In the front row are Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian (center), alongside members of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office command and training staffs.

PHOTOS COURTESY BY JOSH LONDON

City alerts residents to CodeRED cybersecurity incident

Special to the Independent

The City of Everett is notifying residents of a nationwide cyber-attack targeting the CodeRED emergency alert system, which the City uses to provide alerts for snow emergencies, evacuations, water outages, and other service disruptions.

Information Compromised and Steps for Residents
CodeRED has reported that some personal information may have been compromised, including names, email addresses, phone numbers, and passwords. The company has not confirmed the total number of affected accounts.

Action Required:
Change Passwords Immediately: If you used the same password for your CodeRED account on other services (such as email, banking, social media, or work accounts), you must change those passwords immediately.
CodeRED Offline: Residents

cannot reset their CodeRED password yet, as the system has been taken offline.
CodeRED is transitioning to a new, secure platform that was not impacted by the incident. The City of Everett does not currently have access to the alert system. Updates will be shared via the City’s social media accounts and emails when the system is back online and passwords can be reset.
Important Note: This incident does not affect the federal Emergency Alert System (EAS), and residents may still receive EAS alerts on TV, radio, and cell phones in emergencies.



Carlo DeMaria
Mayor

CITY OF EVERETT'S ANNUAL

Toy Drive

Please bring new, unwrapped toys to the first floor of Everett City Hall during regular business hours. All donations will help bring holiday joy to Everett families in need.

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Your opinions, please

The Everett Independent welcomes letters to the editor. Our address is 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151. Letters may also be e-mailed to editor@everettindependent.com. Letters must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for length and content.

MORE SCENES FROM THE GRAND OPENING OF EL VALLE DE LA SULTANA MARKET

The City of Everett congratulated El Valle De La Sultana Market on the opening of its new location at 335 Ferry Street. This exciting addition brings valuable food resource-

es to the community, offering residents greater access to everyday essentials, fresh foods and a wide variety of culturally imported goods.



Victor Gallego (right), owner of El Valle De La Sultana Market, gives a tour for the new supermarket to Mayor-Elect Robert Van Campen (left) and Councilor-at-Large Katy Rogers before the Nov. 20 ribbon-cutting ceremony.



CARY SHUMAN PHOTO

Enjoying the grand-opening celebration of El Valle De La Sultana Market, 335 Ferry St., are Ward 1 Councilor Wayne Matewsky, Lenny Jordan, Council President Stephanie Martins, Councilor-at-Large Michael Marchese, and Legislative Aide Michael Mangan.

Housing Families // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the hardest moments a family can face," commented Mayor Carlo DeMaria, "They bring hope, dignity and real pathways to stability for parents and children experiencing housing insecurity. This grant is a meaningful investment in that mission. We are grateful for their partnership and for the impact this funding will have on families in Everett and the surrounding communities."

Housing Families will use its Day 1 Families Fund grant to serve even more families experiencing homelessness in Greater Boston, with the goal of ensuring no child in our community sleeps outside. Specifically, Housing Families plans to use this one-time grant over the next five years to provide emergency housing for families unable to access the state's family shelter system and to help them transition into long-term housing. The investment will also position the organization to expand and sustain more permanent supportive housing solutions.

Housing Families was identified to receive this grant by a group of national advisors who are leading advocates and bring expertise on homelessness, housing policy and effective

approaches and solutions to family homelessness.

"This investment will allow us to take bold steps toward ending family homelessness in our region," said Kelley Hollis, deputy executive director of Housing Families. "It gives us the resources to move beyond temporary solutions and build pathways to permanent housing and stability. Every family we serve deserves the chance to thrive, and this grant helps make that vision possible."

Since its inception in 2018, the Day 1 Families Fund has awarded 280 grants totaling more than \$850 million to organizations serving families in

all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. The Day 1 Families Fund grant recipients have tremendous flexibility to use the funds in the ways that are most impactful in their communities, making the grant a game-changer for organizations on the frontlines of the family homelessness crisis. Recipients will use their funds to support families experiencing homelessness to access critical services, regain stable housing and achieve well-being.

This year, the Fund issued a total of \$102.5 million in grants to 32 organizations. The full list of awardees is available at

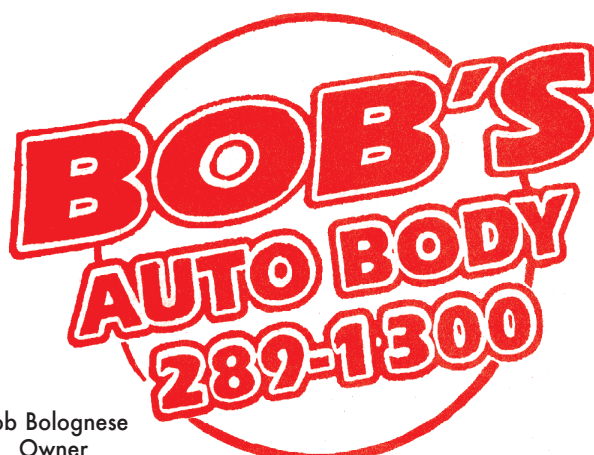
<https://bezosdayonefund.org/day1familiesfund>. Case studies of the impact selected grantees have made with their funds are available at <https://www.bazosdayonefund.org/case-studies>.

Since 1986, Housing Families has been providing housing and wellness services to the Metro North area of Boston and is expanding their geographic reach, now serving nearly 7,000 people each year. Housing Families provides homelessness prevention and legal services, emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing. In addition to housing programs, Housing Families offers wellness services

including food and grocery assistance, a therapeutic and academic out-of-school time program (EnrichEd) and clinical mental health services (CareCollective). Housing Families' mission is to ensure housing stability to strengthen families, individuals and communities.

Through the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund, Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sánchez Bezos issue annual leadership awards to organizations doing compassionate, needle-moving work to help families experiencing homelessness. For more information, visit www.BezosDayOneFund.org/Day1FamiliesFund.

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From the State House

DiDomenico acts to protect transit workers

Special to the Independent

Senator Sal DiDomenico took action to support public transit workers by advocating for and passing a bill that steps up penalties for people who assault them while they are on duty. DiDomenico is a co-sponsor and spoke on the Senate floor advocating for An Act relative to assault and battery upon a transit worker, S.2697, which responds to an increased number of assaults targeting workers on Massa-

chusetts' public transportation systems by ensuring a heightened minimum punishment.

"I was proud to co-sponsor and fight for the passage of the transit worker protection bill in the Senate," said Senator DiDomenico. "Transit workers have been increasingly targeted by assaults while on the job, and this bill ensures that these essential workers are explicitly protected while bringing people to their jobs, doctor appointments, schools, grocery stores, and keeping our com-

munity connected."

This bill has been enacted in the Senate and Rep. McGonagle's bill has been enacted in the House, which means it now advances to the Governor for her signature.

Jim Evers, President, Boston Carmen's Union Local 589

"This is a significant victory for everyone who rides or operates public transit. We are thankful for the Senate and the House for supporting this common sense legislation and look forward to Governor Healey signing it into law. Our MBTA bus and train operators deserve to be safe on the job and commuters deserve to know that public transportation is safe. This bill will ensure that those who assault public transit workers will be held accountable and that our valued transportation employees are protected. Our transit workers keep Boston moving every day and deserve our utmost respect. This legislation adds transportation personnel to the list of public employees who need extra protections so they can do their job safely and efficiently and improve our communities for all."

On the MBTA alone, work-



Sen. DiDomenico celebrating with Boston Carmen's Union members and Keolis workers outside the Senate Chamber after passing the bill through the Senate.



Senator DiDomenico hugging Bill Berardino, Vice President of the Boston Carmen Union Local 589, after passing the bill through the Senate.

ers in 2024 were targeted by 33 assaults with weapons and 72 physical assaults, according to testimony heard by the Legislature at a recent public hearing. The bill ensures that all transit workers are covered, including those who are not directly employed by the state, such as workers employed by Keolis, the state's contracted commuter rail operator.

Workers on the MBTA, commuter rail lines, regional transit authorities, and other public transit systems also face possible assault with bodily fluids, such as saliva. MBTA workers were targeted by 38 bodily fluid assaults in 2024. This legislation explicitly holds individuals accountable for bodily substance assaults in addition to other types of assaults."

DIDOMENICO CELEBRATES FORMER SENATE PRESIDENT CHANDLER

Senator Sal DiDomenico joined colleagues and friends for former Senate President Harriette Chandler's official portrait unveiling at the State House. "Senate President Chandler spent her illustrious career fighting to improve public health, education, and our Commonwealth for every resident and we will all continue to benefit from her contributions for years to come," said DiDomenico. "President Chandler

was a mentor and someone I looked up to as a new member of the State Senate. She was so kind to me and my staff, and I was proud to serve on her leadership team during her time as our President."

Senator Chandler represented the 1st Worcester District in the Senate for over 20 years. She also served in the House of Representatives as a member from 1995 - 2001.



Former Senate President Harriette Chandler's official portrait is unveiled for the first time.



Sen. DiDomenico with former Senate President Harriette Chandler in front of her official portrait in the Senate reading room.

Massachusetts House passes Supplemental Budget to close FY25

Special to the Independent

The Massachusetts House of Representatives have passed a supplemental budget to address deficiencies, to make new necessary investments, and to close the books on Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). The legislation appropriates \$2.25 billion in gross spending, at a net cost to the state of \$750 million, representing a reduction of almost \$200 million from the Governor's original proposal.

"This supplemental budget closes the books on FY25, and aims to fortify the Commonwealth's finances, bolster economic development, and ensure continued access to critical health care services," said House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy). "In the face of unrelenting attacks

from the Trump Administration that will strip health insurance coverage from millions of Americans and deny access to lifesaving vaccinations, this supplemental budget will help vulnerable residents prepare for, and avoid, a lapse in coverage, and ensure continued access to vaccines for every child in Massachusetts. I want to thank Chairman Michlewitz for his hard work, and all my colleagues in the House for recognizing the importance of the investments that are included in this legislation."

"This supplemental budget will close the books on FY25 in a balanced and fiscally responsible manner. By making critical investments into much needed programs in healthcare,

See BUDGET Page 15

IN THE ARTS

BLO presents ‘Must the Winter Come So Soon?’ at the Boston Public Library

Special to the Independent

The Boston Public Library and Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) are joining forces to present a special Opera Night titled "Must the Winter Come So Soon?" on Thursday, December 4, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The free event, which welcomes all audiences—no prior opera experience necessary—aims to bring warmth, light, and connection to the cold winter season through music. The concert and conversation will be held in the Rabb Lecture Hall at the Boston Public

Library Central Branch (700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116).

Program Highlights

The program will feature the moving and expressive music of 20th-century American composer Samuel Barber, celebrating music's power to transform difficult emotion into beauty. The evening will also honor Boston's legacy as a hub for revolutionary American artistry and musical innovation.

Featured performances will include:

Excerpts from Barber's opera Vanessa.
Luminous art songs.
A string quartet performance.
An engaging audience Q&A.
The featured artists include:

- Josie Larsen (soprano)
- Mary Kray (mezzo-soprano)
- Brendon Shapiro (pianist)
- String Quartet: Sarah Atwood (violin), Hikaru Yonezaki (violin), David Feltner (viola), and Melanie Dyball (cello)

While registration is welcome, it is not required to attend this free public event. You can register online at <https://tinyurl.com/ING-BPLOpera>.

MFA Artisan Market returns, celebrating handcrafted community

By Eva Mazzara

As friendly faces gathered and amber afternoon sunlight streamed into the Shapiro Family Courtyard in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts on a recent Saturday afternoon, a community bound by a passion for art began to take shape.

"There's so many big-box stores, and chain(s) (stores), that just (don't) have soul," said Sue Fish, 65, owner of Women's Peace Collection, one of the market's 12 vendors who set up shop at the museum's Artisan Market. "I think that when you have handmade goods, it really does bring a sense of community because it's special, it's unique, it's creative."

The Artisan Market attracts designers from diverse backgrounds to a central courtyard in the museum each year, where they sell items such as handcrafted jewelry, intricately designed clothing and other eclectic pieces. The event last month was the first since COVID-19.

Fish discovered her love for fair trade — a partnership between companies in developed countries and producers in developing countries — after graduating from Tufts University in 1982 and spending six memorable months in Peru. After returning to the U.S., Fish studied to become a therapist,

a career that spanned 35 years. However, her time in Peru and the lingering idea of working with international artisans never faded. Fish bought the Women's Peace Collection in 2014, a business that sells products such as alpaca hats, gloves, cashmere wraps, scarves and baskets.

Fish works with marginalized international communities, including silversmiths in Bali, who have been practicing their art form for generations. She says she remains involved in the creative process by making frequent trips to the Indonesian island.

"One of the things we love about fair trade is the story," Fish said. "Like, we know these people in Bali, they're family to us. They're the nicest people I've ever met."

The Artisan Market debuted in 2017 and ran annually until COVID-19 forced its closure in 2020, according to Ellen Bragalone, the museum's director of retail. The market is operated in conjunction with Bragalone's fashion and textile buyer, a position that has been vacant since the pandemic.

"I just recently got it (the job) filled, so we decided to bring back the Artisan Market," she said. "It's always been very successful, so we really wanted to start it up again."

Centered squarely in the middle of the museum, the

courtyard provides a space for vendors to showcase their pieces, and room for customers to browse.

More than 5,200 people visited the museum on a recent Saturday for the Homer exhibition and other displays, and many of them stopped by the market. Sarah Basu, a customer and local artist, hopes the market will be a recurring event.

"There's a possibility, but we're trying to work out the details on that," said Bragalone. "It may happen. I can't confirm it, but it might."

When it comes to choosing vendors, Bragalone tries to assemble a marketplace that features a variety of price points, and a diverse range of goods. "That's why we tried to make sure that everybody had a very different look and feel to what they were selling," she said. "That's important for us."

The market's appeal lies mainly in its originality, said Jan Chen, a Newton therapist, as she browsed the tables recently.

"You cannot necessarily find exactly the same thing online," said Chen, showing off her newest purchase — a chunky necklace filled with anomalous designs and vivid, alternating colors.

Some vendors' businesses are new. Michelle Yozzo Drake, owner of Stonington

See ARTISAN MARKET Page 14

Healey-Driscoll Administration releases statewide high school graduation framework

Special to the Independent

The Healey-Driscoll Administration has released an initial statewide graduation framework designed to set nation-leading expectations and prepare all students for success after high school, regardless of their chosen career path. This framework, developed with the K-12 Statewide Graduation Council, represents the state's most robust education standards ever.

Key Principles and Changes

The new system moves away from reliance on a single high-stakes test. Key changes include:

- Phasing Out 10th Grade MCAS: The 10th Grade MCAS exam would be phased out as part of the new framework.
- No Single Barrier: No single test will represent a barrier to graduation for any student.
- Comprehensive Approach: Massachusetts will be the first state to implement such a comprehensive approach to setting high educational standards.

Seven Elements of the Framework

The framework is structured around seven elements that focus on building a strong academic foundation, demonstrating mastery, and developing real-world problem-solving skills.

Strong Starts
Students must complete a set of coursework that aligns with admissions requirements for higher education.

Proven Skills
To show mastery of course content, students will complete:

- A limited number of end-

of-course (EOC) assessments. EOCs are a more targeted and relevant approach than the current high school MCAS.

Students do not have to pass an EOC to graduate.

- A capstone or portfolio.

Capstones are cumulative projects, typically including research, a written assignment, and a final presentation.

Portfolios are a collection of a student's best work demonstrating mastery in one or across content areas.

Bright Futures

This element focuses on future planning and literacy:

- Students create their own plan for college or career.
- Students must complete the FAFSA or MASFA (financial aid application).
- Students learn financial literacy.
- Students can earn seals of distinction, such as the State Seal of Biliteracy.

Stakeholder Engagement and Next Steps

This initial framework is the first step, following significant feedback from over 400 people who attended listening sessions, 6,615 respondents to a statewide online survey, and 103 district administrators.

The administration will continue to seek input from communities to refine the recommendations and work toward a final report next year. This work builds on the administration's existing "Reimagining High School Initiative," which includes expanding access to programs like Early College, Innovation Career Pathways, and MyCAP.

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EVERETT SERVES HUNDREDS OF MEALS AT COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER

Hundreds of residents gathered at the Connolly Center on Monday, Nov. 24 for Everett's first annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner, celebrating community, gratitude and togetherness.

Building on the tradition established by MassBadge and Zion Church Ministries, the City of Everett collaborated with the Everett Fire Department, Everett Firefighters Union Local 143, Everett Police Department, Everett Police Superior Officers Union, Fraternal Order of Police Everett, MA Lodge 40 and Zion Church Ministries to continue this meaningful community event. Attendees came together with first responders, City officials and staff, community organiza-

tions and volunteers to enjoy a warm meal and an evening of connection.

The complimentary dinner featured a traditional Thanksgiving meal with all the fixings, prepared and served by first responders and volunteers. After dinner, attendees enjoyed dessert and shared in the joy and spirit of the season.

All of the upcoming City of Everett events can be found by visiting the events calendar on the City website at cityofeverett.com/calendar/category/events/list. Residents can also follow the official social media pages on Facebook, Instagram and X (the platform formerly known as Twitter) to stay updated. Facebook: [/cityofeverettma](https://www.facebook.com/cityofeverettma) and [/mayorcarlodemaria](https://www.facebook.com/mayorcarlodemaria).

Instagram: @cityofeverettma and @mayorcarlodemaria. X: @EverettGov_MA and @Mayor_DeMaria. All are welcome to attend the upcoming events.

PHOTOS COURTESY THE CITY OF EVERETT



City Councilor John Hanlon and former City Councilor Al Lattanzi.



Director of Elder Services Dale Palma and Carol Garrett.



Everett Police Department staff served food to attendees.



Police Chief Paul Strong, Fire Chief Joseph Hickey, Zion Church Ministries Bishop Robert Brown, and Everett police and firefighters welcomed attendees to the Community Thanksgiving Dinner.



Attendees enjoyed the festivities by dancing to the music.



Volunteers ready to serve attendees.

PHOTOS COURTESY THE CITY OF EVERETT



'Tis the Season for Everett Christmas Kids Share your photo to be included in this year's **SPECIAL PAGES** **BY FRI. DEC. 19** Email your photos to **PROMO@REVEREJOURNAL.COM** Please include names with your photo. --- **PHOTOS RECEIVED WITHOUT INFO WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED** ---

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Trinity Financial named MassNAHRO 2025 Development Partner of the Year

Special to the Independent

Trinity Financial—long recognized for its work revitalizing public housing and strengthening neighborhoods across Boston—has been named the 2025 Development Partner of the Year by the Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (MassNAHRO).

The recognition comes during a milestone year for the company’s leadership: Trinity’s principals, James Keefe and Patrick Lee, were also recently presented with the Norman B. Leventhal Excellence in City Building Award for their contributions to creating vibrant, inclusive neighborhoods across Boston.

For East Boston residents, this honor underscores Trin-

ity’s leadership in delivering one of the neighborhood’s most significant housing investments in decades: Overlook Terrace at Orient Heights.

Formerly a distressed 15-acre state public housing site, Overlook Terrace was transformed into a 331-unit, state-of-the-art, sustainable residential community shaped through several years of resident and community engagement. The redevelopment replaces aging units with modern, energy-efficient homes and introduces safer streets, improved pedestrian connections, and high-quality open spaces planned around resident needs.

The project has also earned major industry acclaim. On May 21, 2025, Overlook Terrace received a National Recognition Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC). It also

received the ACEC/MA 2025 Silver Award for Engineering Excellence, along with achieving both LEED certification and Enterprise Green Communities Certification—demonstrating its commitment to resilient, environmentally responsible design.

“Trinity Financial’s work represents the very best of what public-private collaboration can achieve,” said Peter Proulx, president of the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (MassNAHRO). “Their commitment to residents and the very personal nature they bring to their projects make a real difference in communities across the Commonwealth.”

MassNAHRO cited Trinity’s resident-centered approach at Overlook Terrace as one of the key reasons for selecting the firm, noting that the redevelopment

serves as a model for how aging public housing can be upgraded while respecting and preserving the community that has long called it home.

“MassNAHRO plays an essential role in strengthening public housing agencies and advocating for residents across the state,” said Mike Lozano, Vice President of Development at Trinity Financial. “We’re honored to be recognized by an organization whose mission so closely reflects our own—building communities that empower residents, promote inclusion, and advance housing as a basic human right.”

In addition to its work in East Boston, Trinity has led major affordable and mixed-income housing investments across the city and state. But Overlook Terrace stands out as a once-in-a-generation effort that replaced outdated public housing with modern, sustainable homes—while ensuring that longtime East Boston families could remain in the neighborhood.

The 2025 Development Partner of the Year Award was presented at MassNAHRO’s Annual Conference & Exhibition recently, in Norwood, Massachusetts.

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Artisan Market //

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Designs, had always enjoyed painting, but her career as an assisted living executive director occupied most of her time.

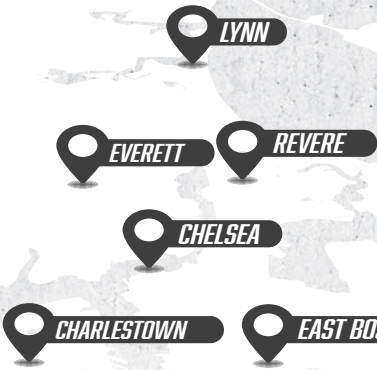
Drake left her job to care for her mother. When it was time to return to work, her husband suggested a different idea. “And that’s why I’m 64 years old ... doing this,” she said. As Stonington Designs blossomed, Drake started a military spouse weaving program that provides jobs for stay-at-home mothers. “My son is an Air Force pilot,” she said, “and I understand the struggle that the military families have.”

Stonington Designs just released its newest collection, America 250, to celebrate the country’s semiquincentennial birthday.

Art resonates differently for every person. Basu believes the appeal of artistic creativity is universal, and that’s one of the reasons the Artisan Market works.

“The pieces are unique, and it really helps give ... locals a way to show their work,” she said, “especially (during) a busy time like today.”

Eva Mazzara is a student in the Boston University Journalism program. This story is a partnership between Everett Independent and the Boston University Journalism program.



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Everett INDEPENDENT

Budget // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

education, and housing to name a few, the Commonwealth will be in a strong fiscal position for FY 26 and beyond,” said Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair of the House Committee on Ways & Means (D-Boston). “I want to thank Speaker Mariano for his dedication to these issues, as well as all my House colleagues for supporting this initiative.”

"This supplemental budget closes the books on FY25, allocating important funds to programs that will help our residents," said Representative Adrian Madaro (D - East Boston). "In the face of devastating cuts and inaction from the federal government that will strip health insurance, take away access to care, and impact the quality of life for many across

the Commonwealth, the funding in this bill ensures that our residents will be protected and covered, while providing resources for everything from housing, to school meals, to clean water and snow removal this winter. I'm proud of the steady, responsible approach Massachusetts continues to take to ensure our priorities are funded".

The bill passed today appropriates \$10 million for Health Care for All to conduct a public awareness campaign, and to conduct health coverage enrollment assistance for communities at risk of losing health care coverage as a result of the new Medicaid reporting requirements that were put in place by President Trump and Congress through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. It invests \$10 million

for the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, and includes \$5 million in grants to reproductive health care providers. It also invests \$15 million for a new Sports and Entertainment Fund grant program, for which \$10 million will be set aside for the events related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The bill passed today also includes a policy section which authorizes the Department of Public Health Commissioner to determine routine childhood immunizations and vaccination schedules, rather than relying on the recommendations of the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

In addition to the appropriations, the bill also invests in the state’s future by depositing the remainder of the funds to an es-

crow account (\$337.7 million), to support pensions (\$18.8 million), and to the Other Postemployment Benefits Trust Fund (\$18.8 million).

Additionally, the House accepted an amendment from Chair John Lawn that updates and restructures existing assessments on Massachusetts hospitals used to fund the Health Safety Net and related hospital support trust funds. The changes modernize financial data used in the assessment, increase the amount hospitals contribute, and adjust how the resulting funds are distributed among hospitals.

The bill also addresses budget deficiencies, including:

- \$1.67 billion in gross spending (\$303 million net cost) for MassHealth
- \$60.7 million for

snow and ice removal

- \$35 million for Home-BASE
- \$14 million for the Section 35 program
- \$12.5 million for no-cost calls
- \$12 million for Universal School Meals
- \$7.2 million for Department of Correction (DOC) Facilities operations
- \$6.8 million for the Clean Water Trust Fund
- \$3.5 million for State Police operations
- \$700,000 for the Suffolk County District Attorney

The bill passed in the House of Representatives by a vote 141-14, and now goes to the Senate for its consideration.

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FRESH AND LOCAL

Inspired by street food

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

December is when entertaining friends and family adds to an already busy schedule. We suggest you choose to serve a meal inspired by street food. You could select a street food specialty that reflects your family's culture, features a family

favorite, or honors a guest.

Food designed for last-minute preparation, served from a cart, food truck, or small stall, is usually limited in ingredients and makes great party food. As a bonus, most street food can be eaten out of hand, from disposable serving items, with fingers or wooden spoons and

forks.

You can have one or two people play chef and prepare each person's choice to order. Or, make it self-serve. Set up a table of optional ingredients so your guests can be their own chefs.

Menu Suggestions

We consulted local food



A fill-it-yourself taco party could be a perfect theme for feeding a crowd.

truck menus and drew on our favorite items from the past to offer menu suggestions for your street food party. We also looked for items you could purchase if you have time to shop but not to cook.

If we were hosting a Vietnamese street food party, we would serve fresh rolls, bon mi sandwiches, and a big bowl of bun thit nuong (a noodle salad). Anyone who can build a sandwich can make a bon mi, and we have based parties around teaching friends to make fresh rolls. The preparation for this menu is mostly shopping and chopping.

One of our favorite food trucks, Mei Mei, has turned its menu into a dumpling business. You can buy their excellent products frozen and serve a selection of dumplings and sauces. Round out your menu with a takeout order from your favorite Asian restaurant.

Pennypackers is another well-loved food truck famous for its porchetta sandwiches. If you are a good home cook, you could make your porchetta in advance and surround it with a basket of bread, a tray of antipasto, and a big Italian salad.

Taco trucks are what sparked the street food scene in this country, and a taco party could be the perfect theme to feed a crowd. Even when we make tacos for two, we set up our dining bar as a taco assembly line. You

could offer a hot plate of fillings, including vegetarian and vegan options. Add salsas, shredded lettuce, cheese, and creamy toppings. Let everyone decide whether they want hard, flour, or whole-grain tacos, and fill them as they wish.

If you have a crew of less adventurous eaters, you could have a grilled cheese menu inspired by Roxy's Grilled Cheese truck. We geek out on grilled cheese by making them with an assortment of flavored breads from When Pigs Fly bakery. Or, you could duplicate Roxy's support of local businesses by choosing your ingredients from the vendors they proudly display on their website. Don't forget to have a simmering crockpot of tomato soup for dipping.

Do It Yourself or Have It Catered

One final note on this topic, many local restaurants and food trucks offer catering services. You could support a small business and have someone who's an expert in creating a popular street food menu handle the food for the party. The three who cater, mentioned here, are Mei Mei, Pennypackers, and Roxy's. If you have a favorite place for a favorite food, ask if they can cater your event. Small businesses can use the income and exposure, and you can use the free time!

VETERANS COMFORT DRIVE

This holiday season, help us bring warmth and comfort to the veterans living at the Veterans Home at Chelsea by donating new and unused essentials.

We're collecting items like:

- **Warm winter gear** (socks, hats, gloves & mittens)
- **Personal Care Items** (body wash, shampoo, lotion, toothpaste, razors, deodorant and similar toiletries)
- **Comfort essentials** (towels, bed sheets, pajamas, undergarments and any other clothing items in all sizes)
- **Everyday needs** (sneakers, shower shoes, laundry detergent and tissues)

Drop-Off Location

December 1-12 during regular business hours at the **Connolly Center (90 Chelsea St.).**

Questions?

Call **617-394-2270.**



Carlo DeMaria
Mayor

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