

'P-cards' under scrutiny after flaps

Stewart is the latest state public official cited for improper use

By Paul Hughes
STAFF WRITER

The controversy over the use — and possible misuse — of government-issued credit cards has introduced a new acronym into the lexicon of Connecticut politics — P-card, short for purchase

or procurement card. Purchase cards are specialized corporate credit cards issued to government agencies and employees to purchase supplies, services, meals, or equipment for official use. The questionable use of purchase cards by former New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart and former Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Chancellor Terrence Cheng has made headlines in the state over the last two years. Connecticut voters can now expect to hear a lot about P-cards during this

year's campaigns for governor and General Assembly because of those spending controversies. Stewart was consid-

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State officials respond to latest report about Erin Stewart. **A13**

ered a front-runner for the GOP nomination for governor until she dropped out of the race the day before the Republican State Convention after the release of a report detailing how she used her city-issued purchase card for personal and political expenses while



Stewart

mayor of New Britain. A city-commissioned investigation also detailed improper payments to Stewart for tuition costs and unused time off and the improper award of a city pension to **Stewart continues on A6**



Notre Dame-West Haven's Abdou Toure (23) slams down two points during a Panini Hoophall Classic game against Inglewood, Calif. on Jan. 17, 2025, at Blake Arena in Springfield, Mass.

764, other extremist groups are targeting kids in CT

What officials say parents should know

By Peter Yankowski
STAFF WRITER

In 2024, Vernon police announced the arrest of a 17-year-old whom they said was involved in a conspiracy to make bomb and swatting threats in several communities. According to police, the teen was also tied to a violent online group called 764. It was an organization few outside of law enforcement appeared to know much about. The group's exploits read like plumbing the darkest corners of the internet. Adherents to 764 and other organizations like it that the FBI calls "Nihilistic Violent Extremists" **Extremists continues on A8**

Ready to go Whole Hog

Notre Dame-West Haven's Toure, 2-time state player of year, begins his Arkansas career

By Bryant Carpenter
STAFF WRITER

WEST HAVEN — Abdou Toure remembers the first time he walked through the halls of Notre Dame High School.

Wait, back up: There were two times. The first was before school started, just a little tour, a sort of pre-season scrimmage.

But the actual first day, when it was game-on?

"I walked into the school and I realized there were actually no girls," Toure says. "And I remember dropping a tear — like, one tear — because there were no girls."

Oh, the tears that have been shed since. Perhaps by



Toure was the prototype of the modern high school basketball star. He also remained true to himself and his school.

a young lady or two. Most certainly by boys basketball opponents by the score.

In his four years of high school, Abdou Toure went from the halls of Notre

Dame to household name. He was a two-time state champion and two-time Gatorade Connecticut Player of the Year, a three-time GametimeCT Player of the Year, a five-star recruit.

He is off to the University of Arkansas after scoring the most points in Notre Dame history. He is, as ND coach Jason Shea said after Toure's final game, "one of the greatest players to ever play in Connecticut. Mount Rushmore."

Toure has conceivably appeared in as many photographs as Mount Rushmore. He was must-see and must-be-seen-with, in demand with kids who clamored for post-game auto- **Toure continues on A4**

Jury sees footage of homicide victim

By Ethan Fry
STAFF WRITER

BRIDGEPORT — Testimony began Thursday in the case of a Bridgeport man accused of stabbing a co-worker to death outside an East End social club.

Ricardo Maldonado, 41, faces charges of murder and carrying a dangerous weapon in the Nov. 1, 2024, death of Kyle Leblanc, a 29-year-old Southington resident with whom Maldonado worked at an Orange senior living facility.

Police say the pair went out to drink after work before getting into an argument outside the **Footage continues on A8**

Milford approves plans to convert vacant church into 20 apartments

By Brian Gioiele
STAFF WRITER

MILFORD — An Easton developer will soon begin work to transform a former church in the city's Devon section into affordable housing.

Stephen Shapiro, long a proponent of affordable workforce housing with projects in communities such as Westport, Stratford, Fairfield and Trumbull, earned Planning and Zoning Board approval to renovate the interior of the former United Church of Christ on Pequot Street into 20 apartment units.

The board, at its meeting Tuesday, voted 6-4 to approve the plans for the

red brick two-story, 16,500-square-foot building.

"The conversion of the church can provide more reasonably priced housing that the city and state desperately need," Shapiro said. "The church was glad to see the structure remain and the building to still be used for a good need that benefits people."

The building, listed for \$1.35 million and presently under contract, includes a large fellowship hall with a stage and full commercial kitchen, 11 classrooms and a lift for people with disabilities. There are 20 parking spaces on site with additional on-street parking.

There would be a mix of one- and two-bedroom units, with six set aside as affordable. Shapiro said the lift allows for units on the second floor that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Board Chair Jim Quish said he was pleased with the proposal, saying maintaining the "beautiful old church was a real bonus for the area."

The plans state the exterior of the building would be left untouched except for improvements to landscaping.

Shapiro has stated a large portion of the interior has classrooms, which makes creating units easier. **Project continues on A6**



A rendering of developer Stephen Shapiro's plans to renovate the interior of the former United Church of Christ on Pequot Street in Milford into 20 apartment units.

