

RepublicanAmerican



SUMMER WORK

Southington wins the 18th Southington Lineman Challenge, with Pomperaug finishing second as high school football players get ready for the season.
Page B1

SOX ROLLING

Boston rallies for its ninth straight win.
Page B1



BUSINESS LOOKS TO SHIFT SITE

A New Milford storage yard plan faces a wetlands review.
Page A3

INCOME GAP REVEALED

Darien, New Canaan and Greenwich top CT Insider's database of Connecticut school districts by per capita income, revealing stark disparities.
Leadout

CANDIDATE'S CHANGE

Shut out of the Democratic endorsement for her possible reelection, veteran state Rep. Jill Barry plans to run as a member of the Independent Party.
Page A4

COMMUNITY NEWS

Read all the news from your neighborhood including the Woodbury Junior Women's Club celebrating its community impact.
Page B8

HEAT WAVE

A dangerous heat wave threatens oppressive temperatures in the U.S.
Page B9

Kindergarten waivers phase out

What parents need to know about the state's starting age for children

By Crystal Elescano
STAFF WRITER

Some Connecticut families will no longer be able to seek early kindergarten admission for their children as school districts begin phasing out waivers ahead of the state's plan to eliminate them entirely.

Here is what you need to know about the phasing out of the waivers:

What is the current kindergarten age

requirement?

Currently, students must be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1 of the school year to enroll, though some districts may offer a waiver process for students who do not meet the age requirement. But soon, the waiver will be eliminated.

When is the waiver eliminated?

The waiver will be eliminated starting July 1, 2027, and go into effect for the 2027-28 school year.
School continues on A8



Dave Zajac/Hearst Connecticut Media
Hanover Elementary School in Meriden is shown on Aug. 28, 2024.

Service dogs aid survivors



Lemon Photo/Getty Images

Assistance dogs have been trained to help diabetics take control of their glucose levels.

Assistance dogs help trauma survivors and people with disabilities

By Tracey O'Shaughnessy
STAFF WRITER

Within days of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012, Abby Hill began getting the calls.

Families, first responders and Newtown residents flooded the Newtown dog trainer's voice mail, pleading for her to train their pets to offer support to their anguished children, families and neighbors.

Hill had been training dogs for 15 years, but this was different. She knew she couldn't just transform any pet into an emotional support animal, but she imag-



Typically, service dogs begin by living with a family that fosters the animal to help with its socialization.

ined that if she started with puppies — and give them enough training — it could be done.

For the last 10 years, she has been doing just that. Her Newtown-based organization, The Exceptional Sidekick Service Dog, taps into a capacity dogs have to alleviate or assist people through a human-canine bond that goes back millennia. Hill's mission: "providing psychiatric service dogs to disabled teens and young adults," according to her website. She works exclusively with teens and young adults, many of them still emotionally shattered by the events of 14 years

Dogs continues on A5

State towns revise zoning rules to define qualities, not 'character'

By Jordan Nathaniel Fenster
STAFF WRITER

Over the last five years, many towns and cities across Connecticut have been rewriting official zoning regulations to remove a single word: "character."

The change comes thanks to a 2021 law that followed several appeals of project denials throughout the state. It removes some of the subjectiveness in a project's denial and helps reduce the "exclusionary" connotation land use officials, including Milford City

Zoning continues on A2

Connecticut expands women's health efforts

By Cris Villalonga-Vivoni
STAFF WRITER

Connecticut lawmakers advanced several initiatives this year designed to expand access to women's health services and improve care statewide. This includes boosting re-

search on endometriosis, establishing foundational toolkits for providers, public awareness campaigns and more.

Here are some key takeaways and initiatives to watch for moving forward.
Health continues on A8

Advice/puzzlesB9-10
Community.....B8
Classified.....B5

ComicsB8
ObituariesA8
OpinionA6

Public noticesB5
Sports.....B1-4
Television.....B7



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Weather: Partly Sunny.
High: 85. **Low:** 68.
Page B10

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