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GIRL POWER IN STEM



Hazleton School District ninth graders Johanny Paulino and Nelfy Peguero look at an animal skull at the DCNR Nescopeck State Park booth as Environmental Education Specialist Isa Salazar, not pictured, explains it during the Girl Power in STEM Spring Symposium at Penn State Hazleton on Wednesday. PHOTOS BY JOHN HAEGER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Event at Penn State Hazleton attracts more than 200 students

By Martin Repetto
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SUGARLOAF TWP. — Penn State Hazleton held its 8th annual Girl Power in STEM symposium Wednesday, and it was the biggest they'd seen yet.

Organized in partnership with the Greater Hazleton Partners in Education, a nonprofit based in West Hazleton, the event was a way to reach out to girls still in high school and educate them about career paths they may not have considered before.

When it was first held in 2018, organizers recorded 178 students in attendance; now, it has almost doubled.

"This symposium is the biggest event we hold in the entire year, and it's always amazing to see just how interested these girls are in what we have to offer," said Cathy Colangelo, the Executive Director of Partners in Education. "You can always tell when people start to fade out and lose attention in what's happening, and that didn't happen here. They're interested, they're curious in what we have to show them."

The event began with a motivational speech that instructed the audience on the challenges they would face as women in STEM fields and how to overcome them in the future.

The open speech was swiftly followed by a career fair segment where attendees could speak with representatives from universities, healthcare groups, government organizations, and local businesses to learn more about different STEM fields.

"These events are great opportunities for organizations to get their name out there and spread the word about what they offer," said Nonso Ezenwa, a



Hazleton School District ninth grader Johanny Paulino looks at a frog through a microscope at the DCNR Nescopeck State Park booth.

representative from the Temple Kornberg School of Dentistry, opening in Tamaqua this August. "Most of them are too young to seriously consider what school or field they'd like to go into, but they all have questions, and answering them makes coming here worthwhile for us."

At the start of the symposium, all attendees were given small postcards to write about what they individually learned that day. Then, at the end, they handed the cards back to the organizers, who will send the message back to them as a reminder of the event at a

random time in the future.

"All we want to do here is inspire these girls, and all we hope for them to do is stay curious about STEM as a career option," Colangelo said. "At the start of the event, we asked if any of them had ever felt they weren't smart enough for a STEM job, and almost all of them said they had. With these cards, we can help them to stay confident in themselves, and who knows, maybe in a few years they'll be here as panelists, talking to a new group of students about how the card helped them way back when."

HAZLETON FATAL OVERDOSE CASE

Prosecutorial misconduct alleged by defense attorneys

Statements attributed to city police detective at issue, suspect's lawyers say

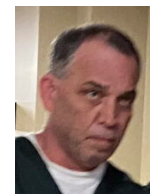
By James Halpin
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Defense attorneys for a Hazleton man accused of delivering a fatal dose of fentanyl to his wife argued for dismissal of the charges on Wednesday after alleging the prosecution's shifting theories in the case amount to prosecutorial misconduct.

Neal Forte, 59, is awaiting trial on charges of drug delivery resulting in death and drug trafficking stemming from the overdose of his wife, 27-year-old Brienne Wright-Forte, who died after going unconscious in the bathroom of his home at 1007 Seybert St. on Aug. 28, 2021.

His trial is slated to begin June 15, but during a motions hearing before Luzerne County Judge Michael T. Vough on Wednesday morning Forte's attorneys requested dismissal of the case after alleging constitutional violations by the prosecution.

"It's not isolated inconsistencies, your honor. It's a pattern," Scranton-based defense attorney Michael J. Ossont told the court. "It's



Forte

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HCA board gives city \$859,061 as share of land sales

By Kent Jackson
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The board of Hazleton City Authority will pay Hazleton \$859,061 received from selling land.

Three of four board members present at a meeting on April 7 voted to give the city half of proceeds from sales for land that the authority sold before its master service agreement with the city expired in 2024.

Board member John Keegan objected because he hadn't received a legal opinion on whether recent law permits the authority to make the payment and also didn't know if the authority will have to pay federal tax on the proceeds.

The agreement required the authority to pay half of proceeds from sales to the city and make annual cash payments of more than \$400,000 in return for services that the city provides.

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Butler Twp. prepares rules for data centers

Supers to introduce ordinance on April 14

By Kent Jackson
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BUTLER TWP. — The supervisors here are planning to introduce one of the most aggressive ordinances to regulate data centers in Luzerne County, the township's Solicitor Donald Karpowich said.

At a work session on April 7, Karpowich said the township based

its ordinance on a model from Food and Water Watch, but made modifications.

The supervisors plan to introduce the ordinance on April 14 at 6 p.m. and have scheduled a public hearing about it for May 12 at 6 p.m. after which they will vote whether to enact the ordinance.

No developers have presented plans for a data center in the township, but state law requires municipalities to provide for data centers and all other legal uses in their zoning ordinance.

As drafted and discussed at the

April 7 meeting, the proposed ordinance would allow data centers only in industrial zones, where they could be permitted through special exception, which requires approval of the zoning board.

The site for a data center would have to be at least 50 acres; buildings could be up to 50 feet tall and large as 250,000 square feet.

All buildings, cooling systems and accessory facilities would have to be 2,000 feet from any residential uses and 1,000 feet from other uses as well as from streams, wetlands or floodplains.

Developers would have to do sound studies before, during and after construction and further do studies of vibration, lighting and an environmental impact study.

The draft requires a 50-foot buffer around the perimeter of a data center with a fence and trees or shrubs at least 8 feet tall and sets requirements for fire suppression, evacuation and decommissioning the data center.

For electricity, a data center would require certification that a utility can provide the capacity required. If the data center plans

to generate its own electricity, the developer will need separate zoning approval for the power system, including solar, wind, nuclear or fossil fuel facilities.

Likewise, the developer requires certification that a public water supplier can provide what the data center requires. A water feasibility study is required if a data center is using nonpublic water sources.

Karpowich said he didn't think a data center would be drawn to the township.

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