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The Intelligencer

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026 | PHILLYBURBS.COM

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Late freeze limits orchards, crops



Brian Smith, grower and owner at Solebury Orchards, said the combination of extremely warm temperatures followed by the late freeze on April 21 led to a severe loss of fruit crops heading into the 2026 picking season.
MICHELE C. HADDON / BUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES

Certain fruits will be missing from Bucks farms this year

Michele Haddon
Bucks County Courier Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Solebury Orchards opened to the public last week for the picking season, but things are a little different than years past.

"We're fortunate to have a decent blueberry crop, but cherries and peach-

es did not make it," said Brian Smith, a local grower who's owned Solebury Orchards and currently experiencing his worst season since opening in 1985 thanks to a late April freeze that's severely impacted fruit farmers across Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

In addition to cherries and peaches, Smith said they will not be able to offer

plums or pears for picking this year. As for apples, which is by far their largest harvest, only a tenth survived.

"We lost about 90-95% of our crops. In all my years of farming, this has never happened," said Smith, explaining that a "bad year" would typically consist of a 10-20% loss.

See FRUIT, Page 3A

Judge says lawsuit over Stanley cup attack may proceed

Jo Ciavaglia
Bucks County Courier Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

A lawsuit may proceed against the North Penn School District for a 2024 attack on a Pennbrook Middle School student who was beaten with a steel Stanley-brand cup in the school cafeteria.

A federal judge last month denied a motion to dismiss the lawsuit filed by the parents of a 12-year-old girl who was attacked and seriously injured by another student in what was described as a "state-created danger."

The school district and its former director of special education are named as defendants in the suit filed in the U.S. District Court of Eastern Pennsylvania in Philadelphia last year.

In its motion to dismiss, the district cited case law that public schools are generally not constitutionally required to protect students from violence by other students and that such incidents don't automatically constitute a due process violation.

A district spokesman said last year that it's not the practice of the district to comment on active litigation.

The parents of the victim alleged that the district failed to protect their daughter and ignored repeated warnings about violent threats the alleged attacker made before the assault.

The girl suffered serious head injuries as a result of the April 17, 2024 assault which sparked community outrage over the district's handling of the incident.

Among the allegations in the lawsuit is that the student attacker had a well-documented and lengthy history of violent behavior that required special attention.

The attacker was transferred to

See ATTACK, Page 3A

No issues reported with screenings at Bucks district court

Jo Ciavaglia
Bucks County Courier Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

The first day of new security screenings for visitors in the busiest Bucks County District court could not have gone better.

No backups. No complaints. No de-

lays. "No problems," Bensalem District Court Judge Joseph Falcone said. "Today everything was flawless."

Falcone estimated about 50 court visitors were screened July 6 at his court located in an office complex off Bristol Road.

The Bensalem court is among the

first five Bucks County district courts that will participate in a pilot program that will station armed county security guards at entrances and screen visitors and their belongings.

Bucks is the latest Pennsylvania county to implement some level of security in district courts, which handle traffic and landlord-tenant disputes, plus

non-traffic, civil and criminal matters.

This month Montgomery County is also stationing contracted security guards and metal detectors at some of its 29 district courts.

Four additional Bucks courts will add at least one armed security guard and

See COURT, Page 2A

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