



Remembering MLB player and Rhode Islander Davey Lopes

SPORTS, 1B

The Providence Journal

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The arrest of fugitive John E. Nunez on March 24 in Guatemala ended an eight-year manhunt mounted by the Rhode Island Violent Fugitive Task Force and led by local deputy U.S. marshals. Note: Image was provided to The Providence Journal with Nunez's face blurred. PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA

13 injured in fire, explosion at plant

East Providence mayor says no danger remains

Will Richmond
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Thirteen people were transported to a local hospital following an explosion at Aspen Aerogels in East Providence.

According to a news release issued by the city, East Providence police and firefighters responded at 8:14 p.m. Wednesday, April 8 to the Aspen Aerogels facility at 3 Dexter Road for a report of an explosion and fire inside the facility.

As of 10:15 p.m., there were no reports of major injuries, the release said. "A mass casualty incident has been declared, which activates mutual aid services from throughout the region and puts hospitals on notice in the region," the release said.

In a video posted to the city's Facebook page, Mayor Bob DaSilva said the explosion occurred in a "manufacturing, machinery area," which caused significant damage to the machinery.

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FINDING THEIR MAN

Fugitive suspect in 2017 Providence killing captured in Guatemala

Mark Reynolds
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

John "Big Lips" Nunez, whose mug shot was on the website of Rhode Island's Most Wanted, had evaded capture for more than eight years. But finally, fugitive hunters were closing in.

Considered dangerous and sporting forearm tattoos that included "401" as well as a snake and a grim reaper, the at-large Providence homicide suspect had found a hideout in Guatemala. A Spanish speaker, the 36-year-old had been able to "acclimate ... very well," according to Deputy U.S. Marshal Elden DaSilva.

Nunez, said DaSilva, was running a "business" from a single-family home; he was in a relationship with a woman; he had lots of dogs and drove a Ford Ranger pickup – although he didn't leave home that much.



Shawndell Burney-Speaks talks about the 2017 shooting death of her son Devin Burney during a 2020 news conference. DAVID DELPOIO/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

"He was very, very cautious, very careful," the fugitive hunter added.

DaSilva provided those limited observations on Nunez's lifestyle just days after a March 24 announcement that

the Rhode Island Violent Fugitive Task Force had leveraged assistance from an array of other law enforcement

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Lawmakers to consider a variety of gun bills

Katherine Gregg
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The two worlds of Rhode Island collided at the State House again on Wednesday, April 8, when hundreds of gun owners showed up in their signature yellow T-shirts to do battle against

proposed new restrictions on their firearms.

The lines were drawn between those who own guns, and those who want to ban certain types of firearms from Rhode Island.

One side of this now annual debate believes that the ownership of high-powered, semiautomatic firearms

makes Rhode Island more dangerous.

The other side believes that Rhode Island would become more dangerous if they had to live here unarmed.

On the sidelines is Attorney General Peter Neronha, with this message in his annual gun crimes report, which

See **GUNS**, Page 9A

Judge halts processing of cannabis licenses

Wheeler Cowperthwaite
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

None of the 20 promised dispensary licenses for new recreational cannabis stores in Rhode Island will be issued anytime soon after a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction against the state's law dictating how they will be awarded.

U.S. District Judge Melissa DuBose entered the preliminary injunction on April 8, blocking the state from:

- Selecting lottery applicants
- Processing any applications under the current licensing scheme
- Proceeding with the current applicants or licensing

See **CANNABIS**, Page 5A

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