

NVL FINALS SET

NAUGATUCK DEFEATS ST. PAUL, 61-39, IN LEAGUE SEMIFINALS; GREYHOUNDS WILL FACE SACRED HEART IN FRIDAY'S FINAL, PAGE 16A



Ese Onakpoma

WILDCATS VS. CRUSADERS

SEYMOUR TOPS WOLCOTT, 51-42, AND HOLY CROSS DEFEATS WOODLAND, 64-48, TO REACH NVL GIRLS TOURNEY FINAL, PAGE 16A

Police: Man killed in hit-and-run

A 49-year-old Wolcott man was killed and a second person injured by a suspected hit-and-run driver in Waterbury on Tuesday, police said. PAGE 3A



Pilobolus is out of hibernation

After hunkering down during the pandemic, the Washington Depot-based dance troupe Pilobolus will host "BLOOM: A Journey" from July 21 to 25 in Bridgewater. PAGE 1B

Sense of smell aids dog's return

A New Milford woman's lost rescue dog roamed 10 miles to the home of a family friend in Washington Depot 12 days later and was reunited with the owner. PAGE 3A

Opposing views on proposal

State lawmakers heard opposing views Wednesday on a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow 16-year-olds to sign up early to vote. PAGE 11A

OPINION OF THE DAY: "The jury still is out on the longevity of the American form of government, but the odds are considerably lengthened absent an absolute faith in the validity of the voting systems underpinning our multiple layers of government."

— Michael McKeeman, Litchfield

READ THE FULL LETTER ON PAGE 10A

TODAY AT REP-AM.COM

- » HIGH SCHOOL HOOPS Watch video from the semifinals of the Naugatuck Valley League tournament on Wednesday.
- » AT THE MOVIES Watch trailers for "Shoplifters of the World" and "Nobody" on the Entertainment page. Reviews on Page 5B.
- » TELL YOUR FRIENDS Look for the "Share" button on stories at rep-am.com to send them to friends via Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites.

High **73** Early clouds will give way to sunshine; showers possible late tonight. Page 6C

Low **54**

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|----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Business 1C | Horoscope 8B | Public notices 2C |
| Classified 2C | Jumble 7B | Police blotter 2A |
| Comics 6B | Local 3A | Stocks 1C |
| Crossword 7B | Lottery 2A | Sudoku 7B |
| Dear Annie 8B | Obituaries 5C | Television 7B |
| Editorials 10A | People 8B | Weekend 1B |

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Truck tax to spur food cost

Proposed levy on big rigs could add \$500 to yearly grocery bills

BY PAUL HUGHES
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

State lawmakers were told Wednesday that a proposed heavy truck tax is going to add almost \$500 to the annual grocery bills for many Connecticut families.

Gov. Ned Lamont is anticipating raising \$90 million annually from taxing trucks weighing more than 26,000

"WE ESTIMATE THAT THE TRUCK TAX WILL COST AN AVERAGE CONNECTICUT FAMILY OF FOUR ALMOST \$500 MORE ANNUALLY FOR FOOD."

WAYNE PESCE, PRESIDENT OF THE CONNECTICUT FOOD ASSOCIATION

pounds for the number of miles driven in the state once the proposed tax fully takes effect. The proposed highway

user tax was a focus of a legislative hearing Wednesday on the nearly \$3.4 billion revenue package supporting the

two-year, \$46 billion budget plan that Lamont presented to the legislature in February.

The Lamont administration is estimating the truck tax will allow for capital investments of \$1 billion over the next five years for funding needed safety, traffic congestion and modernization projects.

See TAX, Page 7A

"In talking with the Realtors, one of the main reasons people from New York City are coming to Waterbury is affordability, good schools and access to rail."

— Waterbury Mayor Neil M. O'Leary

FAST TRACKING CITY'S FUTURE



STEVE VALENTI REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Gov. Ned Lamont answers a question during a news conference at the train station in Waterbury on Wednesday. Lamont has proposed a state budget that provides increased investments in the Waterbury branch of the New Haven line, allowing for a number of infrastructure improvements to be made on the commuter rail service.

State sees enhanced rail service revitalizing Waterbury

BY ANDREW LARSON
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — State officials say adding service to the Waterbury branch of Metro-North Railroad will help revitalize the Brass City

Visit rep-am.com to watch video from Gov. Lamont's visit to the city's train station.

and the corridor along the 28.5-mile passenger railroad, which runs between Water-

bury and Bridgeport.

Gov. Ned Lamont's proposed budget includes \$1.2 million to increase the number of daily trains from 15 to 22 starting in 2023. The seven additional trains will run during peak and off-peak hours,

in the morning and afternoon.

Mayor Neil M. O'Leary, chairman of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, calls the railroad, which has about 1,000 riders

See RAIL, Page 8A



ANNABELLE PAPE REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Laura Galanti, left, granddaughter Everleigh Gundersen and daughter Lauren Gundersen — representing three generations within one family — are all celebrating birthdays today.

3 in Wolcott family share same birthday

Mom, daughter and grandchild all born March 25

BY ANNABELLE PAPE
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WOLCOTT — The odds of winning the Powerball jackpot are roughly 1 in 292.2 million. The odds of being hit by lightning are about 1

Visit rep-am.com to see video of the birthday girls from Wolcott.

in 15,300 and the odds being attacked by a shark are 1 in 3,748,067.

The odds of three generations in a single family sharing the same birthday are 1 in 48,628,125. But that's the case in one Wolcott family.

Laura Galanti, 58, her

daughter Lauren Gundersen, 35, and Lauren's daughter Everleigh Gundersen, 1, all share the same birthday: March 25. Gundersen, a teacher at Benjamin Franklin School in Meriden, and Galanti, a teacher at F.J. Kingsbury School in Waterbury, are looking forward to celebrating their multigenerational birthday today.

See BIRTHDAY, Page 7A

Plaintiffs: State erred on trooper's DUI risk

Amended suit faults McDonald oversight

BY BRIGITTE RUTHMAN
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — An amended civil suit filed Tuesday against the state of Connecticut claims state police failed to act on a foreseeable risk before state police Sgt. John McDonald allegedly drove drunk and crashed Sept. 25, 2019, injuring a mother and daughter from Middlebury.

"They failed to take appropriate steps to investigate and remove its agents, servants and/or employees when it learned of their inability to carry out the duties of their employment," the amended

See LAWSUIT, Page 7A



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House panel backs rail plan to boost Waterbury branch

BY PAUL HUGHES
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

HARTFORD — State legislators on the Transportation Committee voted unanimously Wednesday to advance legislation proposing to increase the number and frequency of trains running on the Waterbury branch of Metro-North Railroad.

Roland J. Lemar, D-New Haven, the legislative panel's House chairman, observed Lamont was at the Waterbury train station highlighting his proposal to expand service on the commuter rail line as he recognized members of the bipartisan Waterbury Rail Line Caucus for their advocacy.

"There have been so many people who have been focused on this investment for a number of years, and the good news is while we are

having this meeting, the governor is announcing that he is fully supportive of this investment," he said.

Lamont proposed funding of \$1.2 million in his two-year, \$46 billion budget plan to increase the number of trains servicing the Waterbury line of Metro-North from 15 to 22 cars, starting in the 2023 fiscal year.

The legislation that the Transportation Committee approved Wednesday directs the state Department of Transportation to increase the number and frequency of trains running on the Waterbury line, as well as adding stops in Seymour, Derby and Shelton.

Senate Minority Leader Kevin C. Kelly, R-Stratford, and Sen. Eric C. Berthel, R-Watertown, sponsored Senate Bill 576. It does not specify how many more trains and

train runs should be added, or propose funding for the expansion.

There are two other House bills that also propose expansions of the Waterbury line.

More than two dozen legislators from Naugatuck Valley towns and neighboring communities are cosponsoring House Bill 5839 that would authorize \$6 million in state bonding to finance operational growth of the Waterbury line. Rep. Kara Rochelle, D-Ansonia, introduced House Bill 6077 that proposes to expand the number and frequency of trains like Senate Bill 576 without specifying any appropriations.

Both House bills were referred to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee on Jan. 28. There has been no action on either proposal yet.



STEVE VALENTI REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Waterbury Mayor Neil M. O'Leary, left, talks with Gov. Ned Lamont and others before the start of Wednesday's news conference at the train station in Waterbury.

RAIL: 22 trains to run daily in 2023

Continued from Page One

per day, "a critical link to lower Fairfield County and Manhattan."

He said more people are leaving New York City and moving to Waterbury and the Naugatuck Valley region — largely because of their proximity to passenger rail.

"In talking with the Realtors, one of the main reasons people from New York City are coming to Waterbury is affordability, good schools and access to rail," O'Leary said.

Lamont reaffirmed his commitment to the Waterbury branch during a news conference in the Waterbury Train Station parking lot Wednesday afternoon.

"We've discovered over this last year, as miserable as it may have been, that a lot of people realize Connecticut's an amazing place..." Lamont said. "But we've got to make it easier for you to get to and from. Maybe you don't have to be in New York City or Stamford every day, but we want you to be able to get there easier once or twice a week."

State Sen. Joan V. Hartley, D-15th District, said the increase in service is possible due to a \$116 million upgrade that involves signaling the Waterbury branch, which is set to be completed by April. Three passing sidings have been built on the single-track railroad.

The line has also been outfitted with signals, which direct traffic and prevent collisions, and Positive Train Control, a system that automatically enforces safety rules, such as speed limits, if the engineer fails to act.



STEVE VALENTI REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Gov. Ned Lamont speaks at the train station in Waterbury on Wednesday, urging the Connecticut General Assembly to approve his proposed state budget that provides increased investments in the Waterbury branch of the New Haven line, allowing for a number of infrastructure improvements to be made on the commuter rail service.

"What we're talking about here is something simple: two-way train service," Hartley said. "Hello! You can go north and you can go south. And yes, effectively that doubles our capacity."

While bidirectional train travel isn't a novel idea, Jim Gildea, chairman of the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council, said the new trains will provide more opportunities for people to go to work and school, and to visit places.

"I think I have real credibility when I tell you how exciting this is and how amazing this is," said the Derby resident, who has been using the Waterbury branch to commute to work

for the last 10 years. "For the Waterbury branch commuter, this is what we've dreamed about and thought about. To be able to have seven more trains a day is a game changer."

The Route 8 corridor between Waterbury and Bridgeport has a growing population of about 250,000 people. The state Department of Transportation has no plans of expanding the capacity of Route 8 any time soon.

"The only other transportation corridor we're talking about is not a state highway along this route, it's Route 8, and Route 8 is lovely, it's scenic, it's curvy, it's certainly never going to be an intersection," Hartley said.



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