

THE EASTFORD Communicator



OCTOBER 2026 EASTFORD.NEWS "Eastford: One of Connecticut's best small towns." - Carol Davidge VOL. 35, No. 3

Whitehouse named new town treasurer

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — At a special meeting held Tuesday, Aug. 25, the Board of Selectmen officially accepted the appointment of Amy Whitehouse as the new town treasurer, replacing outgoing treasurer Martha Burgess, who officially resigned on Aug. 3, along with Deputy Treasurer Kim Cyr.

The Republican Town Committee (chaired by Christopher Bowen) recommended Whitehouse's appointment, which will allow her to finish Burgess' current term. Burgess has served as Treasurer since her election in 2015 and was most recently elected uncontested in November 2025. According to the Board of Selectmen's minutes from the Aug. 25 meeting, Whitehouse will serve from Aug. 22 to Nov. 16, 2027. The 2027 election is slated for Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2027.



Amy Whitehouse

In a statement to the Communicator, Whitehouse said she is "excited and looking forward to this new opportunity to serve the Town of Eastford as town treasurer." According to Whitehouse, she has worked for the State of Connecticut for nearly 22 years in various financial positions. She is currently an Associate Fiscal Administrative Officer (AFAO) for the Department of Transportation in the Bureau of Finance and Administration. Before that, she worked in banking for four years at the Savings Bank of Manchester (now Key Bank).

Additionally, at the Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday, Sept. 14, selectmen accepted Whitehouse's recommendation to appoint Amber Pond as the new Deputy Treasurer. According to state statute, the Treasurer has the authority to appoint their own deputy.



Jeff Gordon



Ethan Werstler



Pat Boyd



Anthony Emilio

EXCLUSIVE ELECTION PREVIEW: INSIDE!

The General Election is upon us! On Tuesday, Nov. 3, residents from all around the state will head to the polls to decide the leadership of their districts. In Eastford, two races are up for grabs, as incumbent State Sen. Jeff Gordon (R-Woodstock) will face off against challenger Ethan Werstler (D-Woodstock) for the 35th State Senate District. Incumbent State Rep. Pat Boyd (D-Pomfret) will also go up against challenger Anthony Emilio (R-Pomfret) for the 50th State House District. To help prepare voters for Election Day, the *Eastford Communicator* has compiled questionnaires for all four candidates, which cover a variety of topics. Be prepared for Election Day, and check out our exclusive coverage on pages 22-25!

VOTER REGISTRATION SESSION NOTICE

A voter registration session will be held Friday, Oct. 16, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., in the lower level of the Town Office Building. Early voting for the 2026 election will start on Monday, Oct. 19, and continue until Sunday, Nov. 1, in the lower level of the Town Office Building. Hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays will be 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3, in the lower level of the Town Office Building.

ALL'S FAIR...



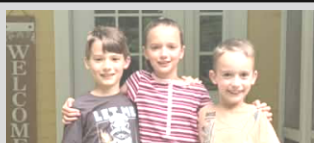
BROOKLYN — The *Communicator* reached out to our readers last month to ask them to send us their best photos of their families enjoying the local fair season, and you came through in spades! Pictured: Meadow and Logan Pacheco, of Eastford, enjoy a ride at the Brooklyn Fair. For more photos of Eastford residents at the fair, turn to page 21!

Courtesy photo

IN
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THE
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Communicator
LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1992

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Articles, calendar or event information, press releases, photos or questions may be sent to eastfordnews@gmail.com. Please send text in Microsoft Word format (not PDF), and high-resolution photos in JPG format. Send mail to Editor, Eastford Communicator, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242, by the 15th of the month preceding the next issue. All submissions to the *Communicator* are subject to editing. The *Communicator* reserves the right not to accept submissions. We do not publish Letters to the Editor.

To contact the *Communicator* by phone, call (860) 337-2481, and leave a message, and someone will get back to you as soon as we can.

ADVERTISING

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CIRCULATION

The Eastford Communicator is available online at <https://eastford.news/>, and in print, free of charge, to every home in Eastford. Out-of-town subscriptions are available by request, for an annual fee of \$50 (although additional donations are appreciated).

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

DEB RICHARDS

On Tuesday, Sept. 1, Eastford Emergency Management participated in the 2026 governor-mandated Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative (EPPI). The exercise focused on a severe weather event that progressed from flooding to high winds, road closures, and downed trees. Participants included James Roy, DEMD; Ben Schmidt, Public Works Supervisor; Bernie Dub, Communications Officer; and Deborah Richards, Emergency Management Director and First Selectman.

During the exercise, participants discussed

their individual roles during an emergency, the resources available to the town, and the recordkeeping requirements necessary to apply for FEMA recovery funds. After the drill, we discussed what we could do differently in future exercises and reviewed new forms to use through WebEOC.

Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed their time and expertise. If you are interested in participating in emergency preparedness activities or serving on the Emergency Management Committee, please contact deborah.richards@eastfordct.gov.

SUPPORT THE COMMUNICATOR VIA VENMO!

The *Eastford Communicator* is proud to serve our community by providing local news, event coverage, and stories that matter to Eastford. If you enjoy reading the paper and would like to help support our mission, you can now make a donation quickly and securely through Venmo! Simply scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera, or search for us on Venmo (@EastfordCommunicator), to make a contribution of any amount. Every donation helps us continue bringing quality content to our community. Thank you for your generous support!



venmo



Sometimes, the little things make the biggest difference. "Shout Outs" is your place to celebrate kindness, gratitude, and everyday heroes. Did someone brighten your day? Help without asking? Go the extra mile when no one was watching? Let's tell their story. Share your "shout out" and together, we'll spread some joy — one good deed at a time.

Send your "shout outs" to Managing Editor Adam Minor at eastfordnews@gmail.com, or send a message to us on our Facebook page with the label: "Shout Out." Please keep your messages to 75 words or less. The editor has the right to accept, reject, or edit any submission. Deadline to receive "shout outs" is the 15th of every month before the next publication.

Thank You!

A special thank you to these generous donors who gave a gift of more than \$500 to the Communicator this month!

Pursuit
AEROSPACE

Additionally, thank you to Steve and Karen Broderick for your generous donation!

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Bulldogs begin fall soccer schedule with mixed results



EASTFORD — The Eastford Bulldogs' fall soccer season began last month, and this year the school has two teams to cheer for, fielding both a boys' and a girls' team for the first time in several years.

Kullen Pacheco is head coach of the boys' team, while Jen Barlow is head coach of the girls' squad. Both teams are now in the midst of a 12-game schedule in the Quinebaug Valley Junior Conference (QVJC) Small School division, which this year consists of the following six opponents: Parish Hill, Canterbury, Thompson, Pomfret, Ashford, and St. James. The top four teams at the end of the regular season will play a two-round playoff (Semifinals and Finals) to determine the QVJC Champion. Playoff

schedules will be announced near the end of the regular season.

The boys' team started the season 2-0, with a 2-1 victory over St. James on the road on Tuesday, Sept. 15, and then a shutout, 2-0 victory over Parish Hill at home on Thursday, Sept. 17. Kameron Pacheco scored three times in the first two games, once against St. James, and twice against Parish Hill. Jack Kernan added a goal against St. James.

The Bulldogs would falter in the next two games, however, as they lost at home to Canterbury, 4-1, on Tuesday, Sept. 22, and then were shut out, 8-0, on the road at Thompson on Thursday, Sept. 24. Charlie Ellsworth added his first goal of the season against Canterbury.

As of press time Monday, Sept. 28, the boys' team is 2-2 (1-1 home, 1-1 away) with eight games left on the schedule.

On the girls' side, the Bulldogs have struggled offensively, losing 6-0 at home to St. James on Tuesday, Sept. 15, then narrowly losing to Parish Hill, 2-1, on the road to Parish Hill on Thursday, Sept. 17, with the lone goal of the season thus far being scored by Hayleigh Wooding. On Tuesday, Sept. 22, the girls were shut out 9-0 on the road at Canterbury, moving to 0-3 on the season (0-1 home, 0-2 away) as of press time.

See below for the remaining schedule and season goal leaders, and stay tuned to the *Communicator's* Facebook page for game-by-game coverage!

RESULTS AND UPCOMING SCHEDULE

(Please note that the schedule and goal totals are accurate as of press time the morning of Monday, Sept. 28)

GIRLS

- Tuesday, Sept. 15, vs. St. James, L, 0-6
- Thursday, Sept. 17, at Parish Hill, L, 1-2
- Tuesday, Sept. 22, at Canterbury, L, 0-9
- Monday, Sept. 28, vs. Thompson, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School
- Tuesday, Sept. 29, at Pomfret, 3:30 p.m., Pomfret Community School, 20 Pomfret St., Pomfret Center
- Thursday, Oct. 1, vs. Ashford, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School
- Thursday, Oct. 8, at St. James, 3:30 p.m., Route 101, Killingly (right before QVEC: Quinebaug Valley Emergency Communications)
- Tuesday, Oct. 13, vs. Parish Hill, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School
- Thursday, Oct. 15, vs. Canterbury, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School
- Tuesday, Oct. 20, at Thompson, 3:30 p.m., Thompson Middle School, 785 Riverside Dr, North Grosvenordale
- Thursday, Oct. 22, vs. Pomfret, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School
- Tuesday, Oct. 27, at Ashford, 3:30 p.m., Ashford Elementary School, 440 Westford Rd., Ashford

SEASON SCORING TOTALS

Hayleigh Wooding: 1

BOYS

- Tuesday, Sept. 15, at St. James, W, 2-1
- Thursday, Sept. 17, vs. Parish Hill, W, 2-0
- Tuesday, Sept. 22, vs. Canterbury, L, 1-4
- Thursday, Sept. 24, at Thompson, L, 0-8
- Tuesday, Sept. 29, vs. Pomfret, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School
- Thursday, Oct. 1, at Ashford, 3:30 p.m., Ashford Elementary School, 440 Westford Rd., Ashford
- Thursday, Oct. 8, vs. St. James, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School
- Tuesday, Oct. 13, at Parish Hill, 3:30 p.m., Parish Hill Middle/High School, 304 Parish Hill Rd., Chaplin
- Thursday, Oct. 15, at Canterbury, 3:30 p.m., Robert Manship Park, 50 Lovell Lane, Canterbury
- Tuesday, Oct. 20, vs. Thompson, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School
- Thursday, Oct. 22, at Pomfret, 3:30 p.m., Pomfret Community School, 20 Pomfret St., Pomfret Center
- Tuesday, Oct. 27, vs. Ashford, 3:30 p.m., Eastford Elementary School

SEASON SCORING TOTALS

Kameron Pacheco: 3
Jack Kernan: 1
Charlie Ellsworth: 1



Upcoming auction set to support eighth-grade Washington, D.C. trip

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — Every spring, eighth graders from Eastford Elementary School make a pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. for a multi-day field trip that brings our nation's history alive and creates memories that last a lifetime.

Planning for the field trip happens year-round, and over the years, the trip has grown increasingly expensive to pull off — especially since funding is traditionally raised so no students have to pay out of pocket.

Thankfully, this is where the annual Goods and Services Auction comes in.

This year's event, which is in its 19th year, is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 14, with doors opening at 5 p.m. Along with a live auction, silent auction, and raffles, the event will include a bake sale, food by Pizza 101, and much more. Last year's event, which benefited both the seventh- and eighth-grade trip last May (classes were combined for the trip due to small class size), raised approximately \$15,000, and according to Lauren Barlow, who co-chairs the Auction Committee with her husband, Jeremy, increasing costs are making the success of the auction even more important this year.

"The goal has always been to fully fund the eighth-grade class trip to Washington, D.C.," she said, adding that last year's trip cost nearly \$30,000 just for transportation and the group's hotel stay. The auction helped

relieve some of that pressure, but it could no longer be relied on as the sole source of fundraising revenue. Thankfully, local parents stepped up to fill the gap, holding a "Someone Special Dance," chocolate sales, and Pampered Chef fundraisers to fill the remaining funds.

"The auction is a single event," Barlow said. "It cannot sustain the trip long term [anymore]. That doesn't mean we are ready to throw in the towel."

One of the major keys to the auction's success is getting local businesses to donate gift certificates, services, and other items.

"Participation is key," she said. "The big gap means we need people to go out and solicit businesses. We need people to take specific towns. The other thing is, we want to get more people that have never attended the auction before. We put out signs and publicity, but if anyone has friends and family from surrounding towns, bring them."

Gift cards from businesses all around the Quiet Corner and beyond are a staple of the auction, but Barlow said she is particularly interested in items from local artists.

"I want to see more unique artisan pieces," she said, adding that the Eastford Public Library has been particularly helpful in finding talented artists.

While the items themselves are a reason to participate, Barlow added that businesses have an added incentive to join in, as the event gives them a chance to get their names out to local residents.



Jeremy Barlow acts as the auctioneer during last year's Goods and Services Auction. This year's event is slated for Saturday, Nov. 14, at 5 p.m. File photo

"This is a great chance to showcase local business," she said.

The main event of the evening will be the annual live auction. Barlow said the Auction Committee has already collected various items to be auctioned off, including a hockey puck signed by Boston Bruins defenseman Jordan Harris, tickets to Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, right field tickets to the Hartford Yard Goats, a family pass to Beardsley Zoo, a four-person voucher to the Essex Steam Train, New York Giants memorabilia, and more school-related experiences, such as a ride to school on a fire truck, a VIP Graduation experience, Principal for a Day, and an opportunity to pie a Board of Education member in the face. Pizza will be provided by Pizza 101, and a bake sale will also be available.

The next Washington, D.C. trip

will be held in spring 2028, as this year's eighth graders joined last year's trip as seventh graders. But while there is additional time to raise money for the 2028 trip, Barlow said this does not mean the Auction Committee is planning to take their foot off the gas pedal.

"Come to the auction," she said. "And bring two people that have never been before. Otherwise, we are doing this in a vacuum. We need people who haven't been here before to generate more interest. You will have a fun time. It is entertaining, and it is a good time to shop before Christmas and the holidays. You might even end up getting a really good deal on something pretty cool and unique."

For more information or to inquire about donating an item for the auction, contact the committee at auction@eastfordct.org.



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Local author visits library to discuss 'Back from Suicide'

EASTFORD — On Wednesday, Sept. 16, the Eastford Public Library hosted Lisette Rimer, of Pomfret, the author of "Back from Suicide: Before and After the Essential Patrick." Joining her was Patrick's twin sister, Libby Antoinette Wood. Patrons and guests entered to the strains of Patrick's classical piano music playing quietly in the background. The book chronicles the life and tragic death of Patrick Wood, a valedictorian, AP Scholar, and National Merit Scholarship winner with perfect SAT scores who graduated from Stanford. Despite being talented and successful, Wood struggled with depression and tragically died by suicide in 2006. Rimer wrote the book to educate readers about the biology behind depression and the lessons she has learned since.

Courtesy photos



Colonial Days Summer Reading Program participants honored

EASTFORD — Eastford Public Library recently honored adults who completed the Colonial Days Summer Reading Program. Each person worked to complete various reading and historical prompts on their America 250 BINGO cards. The big winner was Kathy Healey, who completed the entire BINGO card. Next was Ronald Jordan, who came in a very close second. Heather Riel and Rebekah Budd (along with her husband John Shatos) came in third and fourth place, respectively. Each winner received Early American-style gifts in recognition of their commitment, love of reading and history, and 1776 spirit. A very special thanks to the Woodstock Country Shoppe for their generous donation and colonial inspiration.

Courtesy photos



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT: DONNA LEAKE

As summer gave way to fall, important things were happening in our school community. We moved beyond the initial flurry of the first few days of school and into that exciting time of year when routines become habits and real growth begins to take off. Our classrooms are alive with learning. The engaging sounds of teacher-to-student and student-to-student conversations spill into the hallways. Our soccer teams have played their first games, and throughout our schools there is a sense of energy, purpose, and possibility.

During these first several weeks, I have been reminded of just how much work goes into creating a successful school day. Our teachers and staff arrive each morning ready to give their very best to our students. Our students, with their personalities, questions, ideas, and humor, bring energy back into our schools. Our custodians, bus drivers, office staff, paraeducators, administrators, and countless others work together to keep our schools safe, welcoming, and ready for learning each day. I am deeply grateful for each of them.

I am equally grateful to our families. We recognize that the partnership between home and school is so important to a child's success. Thank you for trusting us with your children, supporting

their learning, asking questions, and working with us when challenges arise. Strong schools are built through strong partnerships, and we welcome our families and community members as active partners throughout the year.

Many opportunities have already taken shape. The staff of Eastford Elementary School hosted an Open House on Sept. 22, giving families an opportunity to connect with teachers and staff and learn more about the year ahead. At its Sept. 10 meeting, the Board of Education continued its discussion about selecting a designated high school. Eastford families and community members were also invited to participate in the Community Conversation on Sept. 24 (which occurred after this article was sent to the Communicator) and share their thoughts as this important discussion continues.

Additional opportunities for family and community engagement will be available throughout October. The Board of Education will hold its next meeting on Thursday, Oct. 8, at 6 p.m., and parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for Oct. 29 and 30. I encourage our families and community members to stay connected, ask questions, and share their perspectives with us throughout the school year.

Eastford Elementary School is also pleased to continue, for another year, as a recipient of grant funding for our Eastford CARES Program. Implemented after school, CARES provides varied and exciting opportunities for students and their families, with activities led by both staff and community partners. This fall's offerings include academic support, an art club, games and crafts, creative movement, sports, and an explorer club. We are fortunate to have many community partners who help make these opportunities possible, including the Congregational Church of Eastford, the Hale YMCA, Ragged Hill Woods, Mystic Seaport, the Roger Williams Park Zoo, the Connecticut Science Center, and the Connecticut River Museum. On Oct. 22, Eastford families are invited to join us for a fun and engaging family game of live Family Feud at 5:30 p.m., with a light supper provided. Please contact the school at (860) 974-1130 for more information about the CARES Program or specific events.

As I reflect on these first several weeks, I feel optimistic about the year ahead. There will certainly be challenges. There always are. But there will also be countless opportunities for our students to learn something new, discover a

talent, build a friendship, overcome an obstacle, and surprise themselves with what they can accomplish.

One month into the school year is the perfect time to remember that our school is so much more than curriculum or classrooms. A school is not just a building — it is a community of people. I am reminded of the often-shared words attributed to Maya Angelou: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

That idea of human connection is at the heart of what we do. Our dedicated staff, wonderful families, incredible students, and supportive community members are the heart of our schools. Every day, it is the relationships we build — with one another and with our students — that help create a place where children feel known, valued, supported, and ready to learn.

Thank you for making my first month in this school community so welcoming. I am grateful to be on this journey with our students, families, staff, and entire community. I look forward to seeing — and learning from — all that the coming months will bring.

As always, please never hesitate to contact me at dleake@eastfordct.org.

THE PASTOR'S PEN TIMOTHY R. HOWARD JR.

There is something special about October in New England. The changing leaves, cooler afternoons, and familiar traditions give us reasons to slow down and enjoy time together. Beyond the season's beauty, one of the greatest blessings of living in a small community is the chance to know our neighbors.

At Eastford Baptist Church, we want to help create those opportunities. That is why we are excited to invite you and your family to our first-ever Fall Family Festival on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of bounce

houses, games, free food, trunk-or-treat, and a costume contest for children from birth through sixth grade. Whether you come with young children, bring your grandchildren, or simply want to meet your neighbors, we would love to see you. You do not have to attend our church to join the fun. This is an invitation to our whole community!

An afternoon like this offers something we all need — time together. With busy schedules and so much of life happening through screens, it is easy to live near people without really knowing them. Sharing a meal,

watching our children play, and taking a few minutes to talk can start a friendship.

As Christians, we believe that loving our neighbors begins with the love God has shown us through Jesus Christ. We want that love to show in how we welcome people, care for families, and serve our town. We hope this festival gives you an opportunity to enjoy an afternoon with your family and get to know ours.

Of course, our invitation extends beyond Oct. 24. Every Sunday, we offer Bible studies for all ages at 9:15 a.m., followed

by worship at 10:30 a.m., including prayer, singing, and verse-by-verse preaching from the Bible. On Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m., our midweek ministries include Bible study for adults, children, and teenagers. Whether you are looking for a church home, have questions about Christianity, or simply want to get to know us, you are welcome at Eastford Baptist Church.

This October, make some time for your neighbors. Bring your family, invite a friend, and join us for our first Fall Family Festival. We look forward to meeting you!

FROM THE EASTFORD INDEPENDENT FIRE COMPANY #1 INC.



Where The EIFC wishes Eastford Elementary School a happy and safe 2026-2027 school year. Car drivers, bicycle riders, and walkers — use caution when moving around town. Eastford may be small in population compared to some towns, but we can experience the same traumatic events, so be cautious!

Happy Fall on Sept. 22, at 8:04 p.m.!

The department responded to 24 “911” emergency calls in August.

All members are participating in a mandated physical examination in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association’s NFPA 1582 Standard. The physical is a structured medical and fitness evaluation designed to ensure that firefighters remain physically, mentally, and emotionally capable of performing their duties safely.

Eastford’s upcoming social event for all ages alike is Halloween! Ghosts, ghouls, and monsters aren’t the only things to be afraid of on Halloween. Accidents and mishaps increase dramatically when children trick-or-treat. To avoid the many dangers children and adults face while trick-or-treating, use common sense. Be aware of potential hazards and take precautions to eliminate them. Consider participating in

sanctioned large and town-wide events to bypass any chaos or danger.

In keeping with NFPA Standards, smoke alarms at home, carbon monoxide safety, and escape planning should be the norm for the fall and winter seasons.

- **Smoke Alarms at Home:** Smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan. When a fire starts, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly. Fact: Smoke alarms should be installed inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level. Roughly two out of three fire deaths happen in homes with no working alarms or not working. Test alarms at least once a month, replace conventional batteries when the time changes, and replace any smoke alarm that is more than 10 years old.

- **Escape Planning:** Plan ahead! If a fire breaks out in your

home, you may have only a few minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Everyone needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire. Fact: Only one of every three households has actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan. Practice the escape plan at least twice a year when seasons change.

- **Carbon Monoxide Safety:** Often called the silent killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burns fuel can produce carbon monoxide. Fact: A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a longer period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time.

-Submitted by Jeannine Spink

FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EASTFORD: MIKE MORAN

Greetings Eastford! I grew up in the Sun Belt, so I missed out on those deep Yankee roots that so many of you have. Even after coming to Connecticut 45 years ago, I still cannot get used to how dark it gets here in the winter. That said, I love the fall here (except the leaf raking). We see the stunning beauty of the fall foliage—a spectacle my southern and western upbringing never afforded. Its beauty is a clear reminder that God is a master Creator and the One who created us all. I offer that our right response is to worship our great God.

Back to the shortening of the days. The beauty of autumn will fade, and with it comes a foreboding sense that dark and

cold will be upon us soon. Too soon. In our souls we know that light is life and that darkness is not OK. Have you ever met a little kid who was afraid of the dark? Me too — I was one. How about a child afraid of the light? Only naughty ones. Darkness is where evil hides. It is where death abides. Darkness is where we cannot see the truth — it is the realm of deceit.

Light is the opposite of all that, bringing goodness, life, and truth. Jesus said these words: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

For me, when I met Jesus at the age of 39, His light blazed into my life, and everything changed.

Our prayer at the Congregational Church of Eastford is that His light might shine in your life as well. A few nights ago, we had a power outage, and there was no moon. Getting to the bathroom was a real “toe stubber.” Even a little light would have been great. Come check out Jesus.

Join us for worship any Sunday at 10 a.m. Please check our website (ceastford.org) to find out where, as we will soon be transitioning from the Eastford School to our new building at 54 John Perry Road (building construction schedules are tricky, so watch for an “Opening Sunday” event later in the fall).

As far as getting acquainted with Jesus, Eastford is blessed

with two churches that proclaim his excellencies—ours and Eastford Baptist. Our differences are subtle, as we follow the same Bible and the same Jesus.

A final note. As we move into our new building soon, we are overflowing with gratitude to you, our community, for your kindness and generosity. We lost our historic church building to a fire, rendering us homeless for 3 1/2 years, and have been so very blessed to have space to meet and financial gifts to help us rebuild. Our blessing has come from you — and we say “thank you” with all our hearts. The way our community cared for us is also a beautiful testament to what a wonderful people inhabit Eastford.

IN THE GARDEN: SUSAN BURNS

I was speaking with a friend recently. She mentioned how her entire yard is filled with plants. As a result, she is constantly working outside. We talked about changing that in order to create areas for sitting. Doing this doesn’t have to cost a lot of

money. You can “pave” an area with pine needles, traprock, bricks, Trex, concrete pavers, bluestone, wood chips, or even sand. Then add a few chairs and a table for your beverages, and you instantly have a place to relax instead of weeding, watering, or

deadheading.

In these times of drought or deluge, tending to a garden is becoming more and more of a chore. This year’s summer was the hottest on record. This made gardening extremely challenging. We need a place to cool off, rest,

and look at the garden instead of working in it.

Oh, and one more thing — don’t forget to finish your maintenance of grass before Oct. 15. After that, planting seed, liming, or feeding will be too late.



DID YOU KNOW?

Just like humans are right- or left-handed, dogs can be right- or left-pawed!



DOG OF THE MONTH

Meet Miss Piggy! She is a 34-pound mix that loves other dogs and has been in the shelter for more than two months. She's spayed, about 2 years old, and medically up-to-date. She's adorable and is so hoping for a family of her own! PawSafe is located at 348 Old Colony Rd., Eastford. Learn more at www.pawsafe.org.

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE: AUDREY CARABEAU

The Eastford Food Pantry is located at the Eastford Baptist Church, 133 Union Rd. Please see our hours of operation below.

If you live in Eastford and need food assistance, call Audrey Carabeau at (860) 933-7685 to sign up. We have the resources to help you! All referrals are kept confidential. Delivery is available to those who are homebound.

Thank you to everyone who donated food, home goods, and money in September. Our pantry families greatly appreciate your donations. The Eastford Food

Pantry relies on community donations. You can drop off all donations at Bowen's Garage or the Town Office Building during regular business hours. You can mail checks to: Eastford Food Pantry, 16 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242.

Donation suggestions: Hearty soups, rice mixes, healthy snacks, deodorant, laundry detergent. Thank you for your support!

Eastford Food Pantry hours for October are: Monday, Oct. 5, 8-10:30 a.m.; Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2-4 p.m.

RECREATION UPDATE

With fall in the air, we're excited for our Halloween Trunk or Treat on Saturday, Oct. 31, at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building parking lot. Bring the kids and enjoy. Or you can decorate your trunk and come help out. If you want to bring your trunk, please register in advance at <https://www.eastfordct.gov/recreation-commission>.

This event is a great way for your kiddos to enjoy a safe Halloween experience with all their friends.

We are also looking forward to next year's Experience Eastford in June. We will be gathering a planning team later in the fall. We plan to move the 5K and Fun Run to a fall date.

Finally, we are excited about new ways we can bring recreation events and fun to Eastford. To do so, we need to grow our team. Maybe you would like to help? Our meetings have moved to the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Come to a meeting and see what it's like.

TIPS FOR TODAY: LIZ ELLSWORTH

Have you heard the owls hooting at night? On cooler autumn evenings, you can hear the owls calling out to each other.

Owls have many attributes that make them keen hunters in the night sky. Their feathers are soft and have fringed edges, which make them almost completely quiet when they fly to sneak up on their prey. They can turn their heads three-quarters of the way around, or 270 degrees in either direction. They have sharp talons and forward-facing eyes and mostly feast on rodents. Owls live in many habitats, including swamps, pastures, woodlands, marshes, and along coastlines. The Barred Owl

(*Strix varia*), which is often active during the day, is the most common owl in Connecticut. Connecticut and Massachusetts have eight different kinds of owls. Mass Audubon has a great resource with facts about owls: <https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/birds/owls>.

If you'd like to learn how to build nest boxes and structures to encourage owls and other birds in your yard or in your community, use this great resource from CT's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP): <https://portal.ct.gov/deep/wildlife/fact-sheets/nest-boxes-and-structures-for-wildlife>.



Our next issue will be published on:

Nov. 1

Please send all submissions to eastfordnews@gmail.com by:

Oct. 15

CALENDAR

Calendar entries must be sent to the editor no later than the 15th of the month preceding publication. Please send all calendar content to eastfordnews@gmail.com. Please try to limit calendar submissions to 100 words or fewer.

OCTOBER

Thursday, Oct. 1

Eastford Public Library hosts "Story Time" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack, and time of free play.

Tuesday, Oct. 6

Eastford Public Library kicks off another year of our "Homeschool STEAM Hour" at 10:30 a.m. During the school year, this program is held on the first Tuesday of each month. Please register, as space is limited.

Thursday, Oct. 8

Eastford Public Library hosts "Story Time" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack, and time of free play.

Saturday, Oct. 10

Buell's Orchard will host its annual Harvest Festival on Saturday, Oct. 10, and Monday, Oct. 12, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Festival activities include wagon rides to apple and pumpkin picking, live music by Shady Creek Band, a chicken barbecue, apple cider donuts, face painting, and much more! A fun family time for all! This event will be held rain or shine, unless there are high winds or downpours. No pets allowed. No entry fee or parking fee! Buck's Soft Serve trailer will also be here all weekend. Some, but not all, of the festival activities will be available on Sunday, Oct. 11, between 1-5 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 11

On Sunday, Oct. 11 and 25, from 2-4 p.m., as part of Last Green Valley's "Walktober" event,

come check out the Florence Warren Latham Museum of Eastford History's new exhibit — an interactive 1/34 scale model of Eastford's 1823 Phoenix Stone Cotton Mill! Created by Michael Yurkovic and admired by folks at the Slater Museum in Pawtucket and the Mill Museum in Windham, it reflects the migration of early American industrial technology know-how and investment across Rhode Island and into Eastern Connecticut. Private tours Saturdays by appointment. Sponsored by the Eastford Historical Society. Visit eastfordct.gov/community/page/eastford-historical-society for more information.

Wednesday, Oct. 14

Eastford Public Library hosts "Maker's Night" from 6-7:30 p.m. where we will be making sweater pumpkins! Please register.

Thursday, Oct. 15

Eastford Public Library hosts "Story Time" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack, and time of free play. In the evening, the Friends of the Eastford Public Library will meet monthly at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

Saturday, Oct. 17

On Saturday, Oct. 17, Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp will hold its 5th Annual Fall Extravaganza from 2-4 p.m. During teen weekend, teens help decorate the cabins on the trick-or-treat trail and run games, hand out candy, and happily give tours to visitors at this fun event. Admission is \$5 per person, ages 2 and up. Your admission fee includes s'mores

and hot chocolate at the fire pit by the pond. We'll also have other games to keep visitors occupied, and some sweet treats will be for sale. The donut eating contest is always a hit. Everyone is welcome on the trick-or-treat trail and to get an early start on their Halloween candy collection. No worries about traffic or walking around in the dark. It is the perfect time to break in this year's costume and take some great photos. Proceeds benefit the Health Center Renovation. This is a great family event and a good chance to check out our camp facilities, enjoy the fall foliage, and meet some of our staff. Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp is located at 326 Taft Pond Rd., Pomfret Center, and may be contacted at (860) 974-1122 or online at www.4hcampct.org.

Thursday, Oct. 22

Eastford Public Library hosts "Story Time" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack, and time of free play. In the evening, stop in for our annual fundraiser, "Adopt a Book" at 5 p.m. If you are unable to attend, the remaining books will continue to be on display and available to purchase for donation to the library.

Saturday, Oct. 24

Eastford Public Library hosts a "Halloween Craft" for children at 10:30 a.m. Please register.

Eastford Baptist Church will host its inaugural Fall Family Festival on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 3:30-5:30 p.m., at EBC. Join us for trunk-or-treating, a children's costume contest (no violent or gruesome costumes, please), free

popcorn and hot dogs, music, and much more! Enjoy some great fellowship and some fall family fun!

Sunday, Oct. 25

Buell's Orchard will host its 7th Annual Trunk or Treat on Sunday, Oct. 25, from 2-4 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 27

Eastford Public Library hosts "Grim Reader's Book Club" at 6 p.m. This month is a double feature as we will be discussing two novels by Stephen King, "Pet Sematary," and "Cujo." Both books are on display and available to check out.

Wednesday, Oct. 28

Eastford Public Library hosts "A Paranormal Author Event with the Radikals," at 6 p.m. Please register for this spooky event!

Thursday, Oct. 29

Eastford Public Library hosts "Story Time" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack, and time of free play.

Eastford Public Library hosts "Trivia Night" at 6:30 p.m. with Jeremy Barlow. Please register for this popular adult program!

Saturday, Oct. 31

The Town of Eastford will host its annual Trunk or Treat event on Saturday, Oct. 31, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Eastford Elementary School and Town Office Building parking lot.

Happy Halloween! Eastford Public Library will be hosting a "Haunted Library" for families from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Please stop in.



Want to see the *Communicator* in its full-color glory? Download the latest PDF at:

eastford.news

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

August: 1

MARRIAGES

August: 0

DEATHS

August: 2

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

July 14: 187 Old Colony Rd., \$400,000, Steven C. Rose to Jennifer Ferguson

July 14: 204 Paine Rd., \$675,000, Anne M. Kelly to Kevin S. Haden

July 14: Pomfret Road, \$675,000, Anne M. Kelly to Kevin S. Haden

July 29: 117 Ashford Rd., Unit 3, \$310,000, Thomas Chenail to Douglas Mccray

POLICE LOGS - TROOP D

During the month of June 2026, Troop D Troopers responded to 21 calls for service in the Town of Eastford.

Of these calls for service, the most notable are:

Accidents: 1; Investigations: 2; Burglaries: 0; Larcenies: 0; Non-Reportable Matters: 18

In addition to the above investigations, troopers conducted the following motor vehicle enforcement:

DUI: 0; Traffic Citations: 0; Written Warnings: 1

During the month of July 2026, Troop D Troopers responded to 21 calls for service in the Town of Eastford.

Of these calls for service, the most notable are:

Accidents: 1; Investigations: 0; Burglaries: 0; Larcenies: 0; Non-Reportable Matters: 15

In addition to the above investigations, troopers conducted the following motor vehicle enforcement:

DUI: 0; Traffic Citations: 0; Written Warnings: 0

PUBLIC MEETINGS: OCTOBER

Monday, Oct. 5: Board of Selectmen, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, Oct. 6: Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Thursday, Oct. 8: Bowen's Field Committee, 6 p.m., Town Office Building; Board of Education, 6 p.m., Eastford Elementary School Library

Sunday, Oct. 11: Recreation Commission, 4 p.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, Oct. 13: Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m., Town Office Building

Wednesday, Oct. 14: Crystal Pond Park Commission, 6 p.m., Crystal Pond Park, 305 Crystal Pond Rd., Woodstock, CT 06281

Tuesday, Oct. 20: Transfer Station Committee, Town Office Building

Thursday, Oct. 22: Library Board of Trustees, 6:30 p.m., Eastford Public Library; Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

WHERE IS IT?



Where in Eastford was this photo taken? See the answer on page 17!

FROM THE GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Around 1960, the Grove Cemetery Association began selling plots to Eastford residents in the newly developed south section. At the time, only six-space, full burial plots were available in that section. If you or your family purchased one of these, you may have much more space than you would ever use. With family members moving out of town and the trend of cremation rather than full burial, we believe there will, unfortunately, be many vacant spots in the cemetery that can never be used.

To clarify, a single plot space measures 4 feet by 9 feet and allows one full vault burial plus two cremation burials, or three cremation burials. In other words, the originally purchased, six-space plot can accommodate six full burials, plus 12 cremation burials, or 18 cremation burials.

Since Grove Cemetery has no expansion room beyond its present borders, the Board of Trustees is urging plot owners to donate or sell (at the original purchase price) unused plot space back to the Grove Cemetery Association. Single spaces currently sell for more money (\$1,200) than they did 60 years ago, so the tax-deductible impact of donating plot space could be sizeable. Since unused plot space cannot be sold by the owner or inherited owners, or given away except to the GCA, please consider donating unused space back to the Eastford Grove Cemetery Association. Thank you!

Yes, I would like to help. Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Gift in memory of _____

Send to: Eastford Grove Cemetery Assoc., Inc. P.O. Box 284, Eastford, CT 06242

FROM THE FIRST SELECTMAN: DEB RICHARDS

The Ashford Road bridge over Bigelow Brook project is moving along quickly. With changes to reimbursement procedures from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT), along with changes to the contracts originally signed by the towns, Eastford and other participating towns now must assume many responsibilities previously handled by CT DOT. These responsibilities include financing the project in stages and then seeking reimbursement from the state.

To help manage this process and ensure Eastford maintains adequate cash flow, the town has advertised

for a financial advisor to review the funds and cash flow currently available to the town. We are also exploring a line of credit that we could use, if necessary, during peak periods of the reimbursement process.

Many surrounding towns have already been through, or are currently going through, this same process. We are learning from one another and working closely with the financial administrators at NECCOG to navigate these new requirements as effectively as possible.

Construction of the Ashford Road bridge is currently scheduled

to begin April 1, 2027. The town will post detour route information on its website as it becomes available. One year after construction begins on the Ashford Road bridge, construction is expected to begin on the Old Colony bridge over Bungee Brook.

I want to take a moment to recognize and thank the phenomenal people who work for the Town of Eastford. Every day, our employees give 110 percent to ensure that our town runs smoothly, efficiently, and effectively. Much of their work happens behind the scenes — work the public may never see or fully

realize. For that reason, I want to give all of our town employees a well-deserved standing ovation and a heartfelt thank-you for everything they do for Eastford and its residents. Your dedication, commitment, and hard work do not go unnoticed. We truly appreciate everything you do for our town!

The Town Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer positions have been filled. Amy Whitehouse has been appointed to fill the remainder of Martha Burgess' term, and Amy Pond has been appointed to fill the Deputy Treasurer position vacated by Kym Cyr. Welcome to the awesome Eastford employee team!

DID YOU KNOW? EASTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Did you know that Eastford opened its first public dump in the 1930s?

Until then, most rubbish a family generated could be used as mulch or compost, but the age of canned and pre-packaged food was dawning, and with it, the problem of rubbish disposal. An

ordinance was passed prohibiting roadside dumping, and a committee formed to locate a site for a public dump. Land was rented from Orlo Carpenter for public dumping for \$10 per year until 1939, when the town purchased it for \$250 from First Selectman Lewin Newth. Years

later, another committee formed to bring the "Dump" into the 21st century, and in 1991 the Eastford Transfer Station was established.

The Historical Society seeks community support to continue its mission of collecting, preserving, and sharing documents and artifacts that tell

Eastford's unique history. Kindly consider supporting our mission by becoming a member or renewing your membership. We would greatly appreciate volunteer and/or financial support. Donations may be mailed to: EHS, P.O. Box 350, Eastford, CT 06242.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE STATE SEN. JEFF GORDON

I continue to focus on affordability issues in a common-sense way. My free e-newsletters and social media posts have shared a lot of information about the work I have done over the past four years (more than 35 specific items). There is more to do, which is why I remain working on this important issue.

I have been rolling out my Affordability Plan full of proposals. Although not all of them may pass, my proposal includes a wide array of items we can work on to make Connecticut more affordable for you and your family. By extension, by continuing the work done to increase public and special education funding, town aid road money, and casino fund money, this would mean more money to our towns, including Eastford, that can offset the pressure on

property taxes.

Some people have talked about increasing taxes, but the state can better support our towns without raising taxes or cutting other important services if it refocuses and repurposes the tax money it already has toward core government responsibilities, like public education, instead of spending it on things it does not need.

As always, please reach out if I can help with a constituent matter, answer a question, or address a concern. You can call my office at (860) 240-8816, e-mail me at jeffrey.gordon@cga.ct.gov, check for news and sign up for my free e-newsletter at www.senatorgordon.com, or learn about what I am doing on Facebook at "Senator Jeff Gordon."

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www.cceastford.org

Visit calendar and event tabs for more!

Pastor Mike Moran and Associate Pastor Evan Burgess

10 AM Weekly Sunday Service
Held at Eastford Elementary School

Nursery (Birth – Pre-K)
Bible Explorers (Grades K – 4)
We'd love to have you join us!



Our new building is under construction but getting closer!
cceastford@gmail.com
(860) 974-0294

WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE EASTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY?

KATIE BALL

Get connected with a laptop
from your public library!

Introducing
**Laptop
ConneCT**



WHAT IS IT?

Laptop ConneCT establishes long-term lending of laptops and related accessories to eligible Connecticut residents through local public libraries.

The Laptop ConneCT Program is administered by the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in partnership with the Connecticut State Library. This program is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

You are eligible to receive a laptop if you:

- Are at least 18 years old
- Have a valid library card
- Participate in a qualifying state or federal assistance program

* If you need a library card or help signing up for assistance, your local library can help.

GET STARTED.

Find out if your local library is participating by scanning the QR code or visit portal.ct.gov/DEEP-laptopconnect.

To apply, visit your local participating library.



QUESTIONS?

Contact DEEP.Broadband@ct.gov



In partnership with the CT State Library, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has introduced the Laptop ConneCT Program. This statewide initiative aims to expand digital opportunities and connect more people to education, employment, healthcare, and essential resources. Eastford has received 12 Dell Pro 16 laptops that are available for long-term checkout (up to five years) to qualifying residents. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out.

Reminder! The Friends of the Eastford Public Library will hold their annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. All proceeds support the library!

Library hours are Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Stop in, we'd love to see you! You may reach us at (860) 974-0125 or at eastfordpublib@gmail.com. You can find upcoming events on the town page or social media. Please follow Eastford Public Library on Facebook and/or Instagram @eastfordpubliclibrary.



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Well, this is awkward!
We took way too many photos for this issue.
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Fax: 860-315-9635

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ralphc@amplisound.com



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NEARLY THERE



EASTFORD — The steeple of the brand-new Congregational Church of Eastford building on John Perry Road was installed Tuesday, Sept. 15. As of press time, no opening date has been announced, but Pastor Mike Moran has indicated a possible opening later in the fall.
Courtesy photo

TO THE HAPPY COUPLE!



MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Shay Gingras and Oren Thomas were married on Sept. 6 in Minneapolis, Minn., where they reside. Eastford parents are Brian (BG) and Nancy Gingras.

Courtesy photo

MIDWAY

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Ashford, CT

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EES announces free milk eligibility guidelines

EASTFORD — The Eastford School District has announced its policy for determining which children may receive free milk served under the Special Milk Program (SMP). Local school officials have adopted the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) for family size and income criteria.

Connecticut will use the following income guidelines from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027, to determine participants' eligibility for free milk in the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP).

Students residing in households with income at or below the levels shown in the chart below are eligible for free milk through the SMP. All households received a family application via mail. To apply for free milk through the SMP, households should complete the application and return it to the school. Only one application is required per household and an application for free milk cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions.

The information provided on the application is confidential and will be used only to determine eligibility and to administer and enforce the free milk program through the SMP. Additionally, all school-aged students in income-eligible

households can receive school milk benefits regardless of a student's immigration status and the district/school does not release information for immigration-related purposes in the usual course of operating the CNPs. Note that the district may share your eligibility information with education, health, social service, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules. School or other program officials may also verify this information at any time during the school year. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year.

No application is required if the district directly certifies a student based on a household member receiving assistance from the SNAP or the TFA program. All students in these households are eligible for free school milk through the SMP. The school district will notify households receiving assistance under the SNAP/TFA programs of their eligibility and all enrolled students residing in the household will be offered free school meals or free milk through the SMP unless the household notifies the determining official that it chooses to decline benefits. If any students were not listed on the eligibility

notice, the household should contact the district or school to have free milk benefits extended to those students. Households receiving SNAP or TFA benefits for their children should only submit an application if they are not notified of their eligibility by September 30, 2026.

Some students may be directly certified for free milk through the SMP based on HUSKY A (Medicaid). No application is required if the district directly certifies a student based on participation in HUSKY A (Medicaid). Students in these households are likely eligible for free milk benefits and will be notified of their eligibility and their children will be offered free milk through the SMP,

unless the household notifies the determining official that it chooses to decline benefits. If any students were not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the district or school to have free milk benefits extended to those students.

Additionally, some students may be eligible for free milk through the SMP if the students were determined to be eligible for Summer Electronic Benefits (S-EBT). No application is required if the district determines that a student is eligible for free milk due to participation in S-EBT. Students in these households are likely eligible for free milk benefits and will be notified of their eligibility, and their children will be offered free milk accordingly, unless the household notifies the determining official that it chooses to decline benefits. If any students were not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the district or school to have free milk benefits extended to those students.

If a student is not directly certified, the household should complete and submit a free application form. Households must provide proof of the SNAP or TFA client ID number. An adult household member's signature is also required.

Students in WIC may be eligible for free milk. Please complete and submit a free milk application or contact the determining official for more information.

When known to the district/school, households will be notified of any student's eligibility for free milk if the individual student is "Other Source Categorically Eligible" because the student is categorized as either: homeless; runaway as defined by law and determined by the district's or school's homeless liaison; or enrolled in an eligible Head Start or pre-kindergarten class as defined by law. Households with students who are categorically eligible under Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs should complete and submit a free milk application and check off the relevant box. Direct questions to the determining official.

For any student not listed on the eligibility notice, the households should contact the school or determining official about any student also eligible under one of these programs or should submit an income application for the other students.

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the determining official or school if it chooses to decline the free school

milk benefits. If the district/school does not notify households/students of their free milk benefits and they receive benefits under qualifying public assistance programs or Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs, the parent/guardian should contact the determining official at their school.

Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are categorically eligible for free school milk. A foster parent does not have to complete a free milk application if they can submit a copy of the legal document or legal court order showing that the student is a foster child. Additionally, a foster child may be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible for free milk benefits, the foster child can still receive free milk. A foster child's eligibility for free school milk does not automatically extend to all students in the household. Free milk application forms for all other households require a statement of total household income, household size, and names of all household members. Include the last four digits of the Social Security number of an adult household member, or a statement that the household member does not have one. The adult household member must also sign the application certifying that the information provided is correct.

Under the policy for determining eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals, Principal Carole McCombe will review applications and determine students' eligibility for free milk. If a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the determining official's ruling, they may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official informally. If they wish to make a formal appeal, they may submit a request, either orally or in writing, to Principal Carole McCombe at (860) 974-1130 or cmccombe@eastfordct.org for a hearing to appeal the decision.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if household size changes at any time, the household should contact the school to file a new free milk application. These changes may make the household's students eligible for free milk if household income falls at or below the levels shown in the Income Eligibility Guidelines.

For questions about the free and reduced-price school meals application process, contact the determining official at (860) 974-1130.

FREE MILK

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	20,748
2	28,132
3	35,516
4	42,900
5	50,284
6	57,668
7	65,052
8	72,436
Each additional family member	7,384

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WORLD

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worldinsurance.com**ATTENTION****OUT-OF-TOWN RESIDENTS**

There is an annual \$50 subscription fee for non-Eastford residents to receive the *Communicator*, which covers production and mailing costs. For uninterrupted service, if you would like to continue receiving the *Communicator* for the next year, please mail a check for a minimum of \$50 to *Eastford Communicator*, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242. We must receive payment no later than October 15.

Holiday Fair

The Friends of the Eastford Public Library invite you to embrace the season's spirit and discover a treasure trove of unique handmade crafts, a silent auction, delightful treats, and festive joy while supporting our beloved library.

Saturday, December 5th
9:00 AM-1:00 PM
 Eastford Public Library
 179 Eastford Rd
 Eastford, CT
free entry

PUMPKIN CARVING!**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2026****2:00 – 3:30 PM****Eastford Elementary School Gym****FREE EVENT!****REFRESHMENTS
PROVIDED****PUMPKINS &
SUPPLIES
PROVIDED****FOR ALL AGES!****Register at:****www.cceastford.org/events**

This free, community-wide event is
 sponsored by The Congregational Church of Eastford

Do you have:

- Photos? ☒
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- Events to promote? ☒
- Local sports results? ☒
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We'll take it!**eastfordnews@gmail.com**

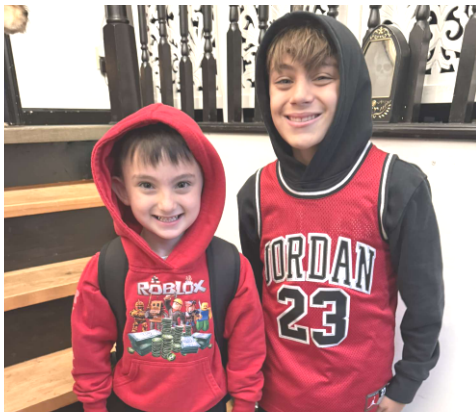
THE
EASTFORD
Communicator
 LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1992

Off they go! Eastford students head back to school

EASTFORD — The summer season is now nothing but a memory. Eastford Elementary School welcomed students back to class on Thursday, Aug. 27, which gave parents plenty of photo opportunities. With this in mind, The Communicator asked its readers to submit their best “back to school” photos of their kids, and as usual — they did not disappoint! All of us at *The Communicator* wish all EES students a great school year!



A'vriella (Grade 3) and Oaklen Barber (Grade 1) are all smiles as they head back to school.



Braxton Adair (left) started kindergarten, while Gian Simpson began seventh grade.



Myckenzie and Madyson Coldwell started their eighth- and sixth-grade years, respectively.



Dakota, left, Peyton, middle, and Savannah DeLay begin the school year with a smile.



From left, Hailey and Rylie Ravenelle on their first day of school. Mom Ashley says: “It’s great living in a small town.”



Madison Rose was excited to start her first-grade year!



Reese (Grade 3) and Rory Ball (Grade 6) are ready for school!



Logan, Sofia, and Nathaniel Gillett pose on their first day of school.



At left, Macy Haynes (Grade 8) and sister Scarlett (Grade 6) are ready to roll on the first day of school.



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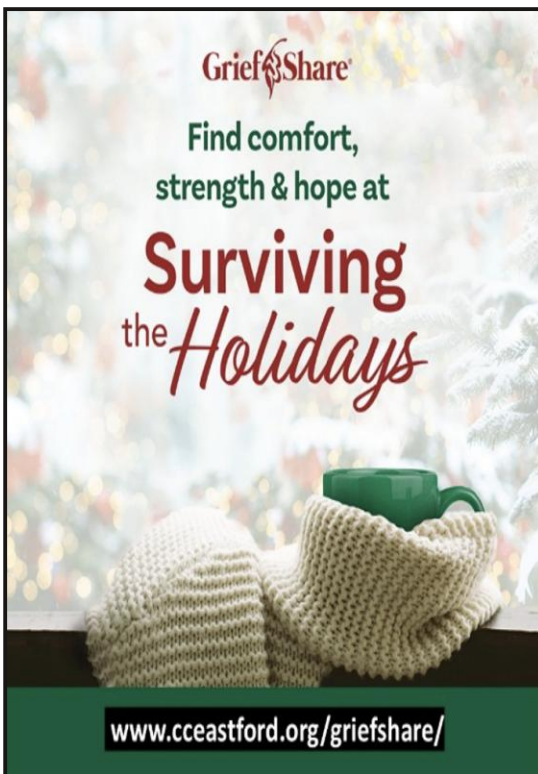


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WHERE IS IT?



ANSWER: The entrance to Grove Cemetery, Route 198.



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35TH SENATE DISTRICT

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Families enjoy the sights, sounds, and traditions of fair season

BROOKLYN/WOODSTOCK — Summer wouldn't be complete without an annual trek to the Quiet Corner's local fairs. The 176th Annual Brooklyn Fair took place from Aug. 27-30 at the Brooklyn Fairgrounds in Brooklyn, while the 165th Woodstock Fair took place on Labor Day weekend, Sept. 3-7, at the Woodstock Fairgrounds in neighboring Woodstock. Several families from Eastford enjoyed the fair, and The Communicator reached out to ask them to send us their best photos!

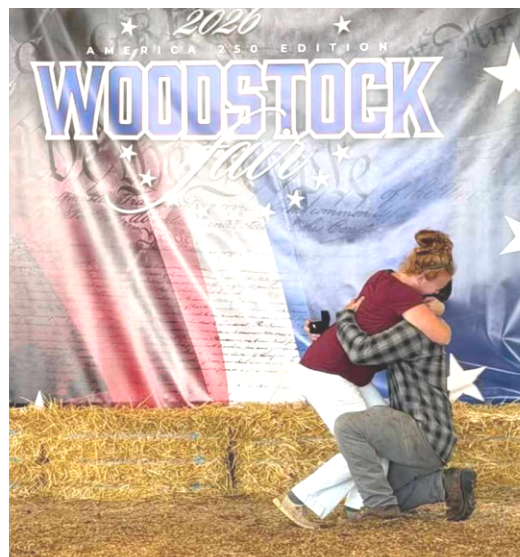
Courtesy photos



Remington Curtis shows off his first-place cattle ribbon at the Brooklyn Fair.



Meadow Pacheco won a unicorn balloon animal at the Brooklyn Fair.



Morgan LeClaire and Taylor Buell, of Eastford, got engaged at the Woodstock Fair! Congrats to the happy couple!



The Moore sisters did well at the Woodstock Fair! Grace Moore won a ribbon for her craft creation, an American Parade, in the "America Traditions" category. Liv Moore won a second-place ribbon for the coloring contest for her age group. Anna Moore was also a third-place winner in the 2026 Junior Baking Contest.



Freya and Ryden Hubbard, of Eastford, enjoy the rides at the Woodstock Fair.



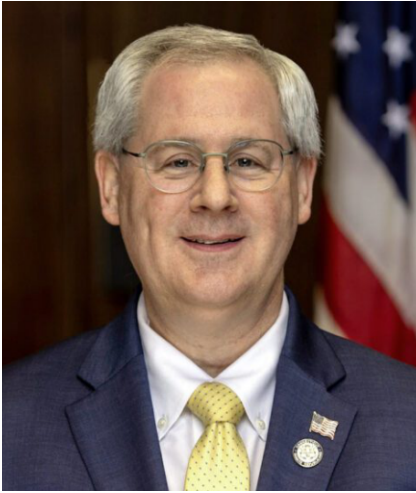
The Arpin boys got a bird's-eye view from atop hay bales at the Brooklyn Fair.



Fifth grader Beau Dubina shows his blue ribbon for his vegetable collection at the Woodstock Fair.



Katelynn Nijadlik won two ribbons for her sea glass art at the Brooklyn Fair.



**JEFF
GORDON
INCUMBENT (R)**

**ELECTION PREVIEW
35TH STATE SENATE DISTRICT**

The Eastford Communicator sent a questionnaire to both candidates, with the same questions, with the same rules. These answers are edited due to space constraints — but every care was taken to preserve points made by the candidates, in the interest of fairness.

In your opinion, what are some of the most important issues facing the 35th Senate District, and Eastford specifically?

“As a state senator, I have focused on affordability, with more than 35 actions to provide relief to people, small businesses, and our towns. Examples include the income tax cut, expanded tax exemptions for retirement accounts, child and caregiver tax credits, day care funding, lower taxes on electric bills, and reining in prescription drug prices. I stopped millions of dollars in education cuts. I helped increase education funding, town aid for roads, and money from the casino fund to ease pressure to raise property taxes. I have more than 25 affordability proposals to help people. We must repurpose taxpayer money to fund core government responsibilities, while still cutting taxes so people keep more of their money upfront.”

How do you hope to tackle these issues if elected to the State Senate?

“I continue my strong work ethic for which I am known as a state senator, and which guided me during my 16 years as a town official in Woodstock. Through my family, professional, and community experiences, I understand what is going on, which helps me work with others on the details of what can be done. I show up to get work done and to get

things done. I have a track record of working with people to find common-sense solutions for our shared issues and concerns, while supporting our values, individual and parental rights, and medical freedoms to decide, as law-abiding adults, what is best for ourselves and our families.”

Why did you decide to run for election to the State Senate?

“I was strongly recruited by the state senators before me and by many people in the community because of my 16 years of leadership on Woodstock’s Planning & Zoning Commission and as a state physician leader. I wanted to further my work for our communities. During the past four years as state senator, I have been involved in many different issues and have helped people directly through that work and through constituent services. This dovetails with my years of work helping people as a doctor.”

Talk about your background. What makes you stand out as the best choice for State Senator?

“I believe that my proven track record of common sense, working with others, listening to people, and working for people to get things done stands out clearly as to why I am the best choice to continue as state senator. I have life experiences that my opponent does not have at his young age. I have shown up to do the work and get things

done for everyone I represent. I spend a lot of time in all 13 towns of the 35th Senate District, which is not just a way for me to connect with people, but also to bring to my work at the Capitol an informed, grassroots perspective.”

Can you share a personal story or experience that highlights your commitment to public service?

“My many years as a doctor show me every day why it is important to fight to put people over profits, fight against insurance companies, and fight against corporatization of healthcare and hospitals. One of the many experiences I am proud of was when I fought and won against an insurance company that denied, time and again, lifesaving surgery for a constituent of mine. He now has an opportunity to live and to be with his family.”

What is the most important thing you would say to an undecided voter heading to the polls on Nov. 3?

“These are serious times. It requires serious people. It requires fighting for what is right and against what is wrong. It requires common sense. I have shown myself time and again to be that person during my years as a doctor, during my prior years as a town public official, and currently as a state senator. Leadership with experience matters. You cannot replace it, especially with people who do not have it.”

THE LIGHTNING ROUND

1. Coffee or tea?
Coffee

2. Early bird or night owl?
Night owl

3. What’s your favorite restaurant in the 35th District?
I like so many of them, so it is hard to choose — but I love pizza (which is why I created the 35th State Senate District Pizza Trail).

4. What song do you always turn up when it comes on?
“Take On Me,” by A-Ha, and “Born to Run,” by Bruce Springsteen

5. What was your favorite school subject?
Science

6. What’s one TV show you could watch over and over?
MASH

7. If you suddenly had a completely free Saturday, how would you spend it?
With my family, doing outside work in my gardens, or building LEGO. A trifecta would be to do all three in the same day.

8. What’s one thing you’re surprisingly good at? Any hidden talents?
Math and reading books.

9. What’s your favorite local place to visit?
Any of the parks in northeast Connecticut

10. Finish this sentence: “People might be surprised to learn that I ...”
Am a Lego fan and have a big collection that goes back to the 1970’s.



ELECTION 2026

ELECTION PREVIEW 35TH STATE SENATE DISTRICT

ETHAN WERSTLER CHALLENGER (D)

The Eastford Communicator sent a questionnaire to both candidates, with the same questions, with the same rules. These answers are edited due to space constraints — but every care was taken to preserve points made by the candidates, in the interest of fairness.



THE LIGHTNING ROUND

1. Coffee or tea?
Coffee

2. Early bird or night owl?
Night owl

3. What's your favorite restaurant in the 35th District?
Sweet Evelina's in Woodstock, before it closed.

4. What song do you always turn up when it comes on?
Blowin' in the Wind

5. What was your favorite school subject?
History and International Relations

6. What's one TV show you could watch over and over?
The Office

7. If you suddenly had a completely free Saturday, how would you spend it?
With my lovely girlfriend, of course!

8. What's one thing you're surprisingly good at? Any hidden talents?
I fancy myself a creative writer, and I am working on a collection of short fantasy stories I hope to read to my own children one day.

9. What's your favorite local place to visit?
Roseland Park in Woodstock.

10. Finish this sentence: "People might be surprised to learn that I..."
Grew up playing old-school Dungeons & Dragons — and love the hobby to this day.

In your opinion, what are some of the most important issues facing the 35th Senate District, and Eastford specifically?

"I hear many issues of great importance. Among them are rising property taxes levied to cover the growing cost of education and special education. Connecticut has relied for too long on property taxes to cover most of the costs of educating the next generation. This reliance pits our seniors on fixed incomes against our parents. It pits our working families against our students. We need to dramatically reform our education cost sharing (ECS) formula to better serve small towns like Eastford. Small towns are getting crushed under the current system."

How do you hope to tackle these issues if elected to the State Senate?

"For decades, there have only been fleeting moments where Eastford and the 35th Senate District have been represented by the majority party in the State Senate. Being relegated to the ("Super") Minority party has kept Eastford and this district from the table in Hartford. I would join other rural legislators to work within the majority party to deliver on important issues. Despite being nominated by the majority party, I would be dedicated to working on a bipartisan basis."

Why did you decide to run for election to the State Senate?

"Growing up in Woodstock, I got to live near my grandparents, in a community we could afford, and it was a blessing. But that same opportunity has become increasingly out of reach for seniors and young families in our district. I hear a shared concern: 'Does my family's Eastern Connecticut story end with me?' We need something more. And soon. I see so many of my peers turn away, believing this work is not meant for them. I believe anyone possessing the means and will to serve, regardless of age, must answer that call. I accepted this great challenge with open eyes and a full heart. The opportunity to serve my community would be my life's greatest honor."

Talk about your background. What makes you stand out as the best choice for State Senator?

"I am a proud product of Woodstock Academy and UConn. At UConn, I served on the university's Board of Trustees. I also fought for food-insecure students by creating a food assistance program called "Husky Market." After graduating, I spent four legislative sessions working in government relations in Hartford. Last year, I started a small business, coaching high school and college students about public speaking, negotiations, and leadership. I don't have tons of money. I am just a young man hoping to dedicate myself to your best interests."

Can you share a personal story or experience that highlights your commitment to public service?

"My grandparents were in their early 20's when they moved to Woodstock Valley with their two young kids, buying a house they could afford. Decades later, those two kids — my dad and my aunt — moved out and right down the street into Woodstock homes of their own. The greatest joy of my life was growing up with my family nearby. But when my grandparents talk about the future, they are looking for a place better suited for senior living. So many have moved away because they feel that there is no place for them here. My commitment to public service extends not just to my family, but to every person who has made the difficult but worthwhile choice to stay here."

What is the most important thing you would say to an undecided voter heading to the polls on Nov. 3?

"I would ask them: 'What do you expect from your state government?' We need someone who can influence decisions being made and one who will not be perpetually relegated to the minority. For too long, this district has been denied a seat at the table in Hartford. I ask voters to expect more. Real tax dollars flow from your pockets to Hartford, and then to other places in this state. I'd ask the undecided voter to finally expect more for a change."



ELECTION 2026

**PAT
BOYD**
INCUMBENT (D)

ELECTION PREVIEW

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: 50TH DISTRICT

The Eastford Communicator sent a questionnaire to both candidates, with the same questions, with the same rules. These answers are edited due to space constraints — but every care was taken to preserve points made by the candidates, in the interest of fairness.

In your opinion, what are some of the most important issues facing the 50th District, and Eastford specifically?

“Education funding and municipal support top that list. Rural Connecticut and small towns like Eastford, with limited tax bases, often fall through the cracks. Much of my time is spent educating my colleagues about rural Connecticut, including that Windham County is the poorest county in the state, that our schools and municipal budgets are lean and efficient, and that towns like Eastford should not be lumped in with other communities. Additionally, the cost of energy remains something the next Legislature must address.”

How do you hope to tackle these issues if elected to the House of Representatives?

“Tackling these issues requires building upon the foundation we have established in past legislative sessions while maintaining a firm commitment to fiscal responsibility. Over the last nine years, I have held the line on taxes and continued to pay down our state’s legacy debt. At the same time, we must direct investment where it is needed most. I will work to expand the Special Education Fund, ensure the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant is fully funded, and advocate for an updated ECS formula. This adjustment will ensure that small, rural communities like Eastford receive their fair share of state resources.”

Why did you decide to run for election to the House of Representatives?

“In 2016, the incumbent state representative announced his retirement, and I have always felt that serving your community is important. I had never sought elected office before, but I recognized and appreciated that public service matters. I never wanted to be a ‘full-time politician,’ so I stood up and felt that I could serve my neighbors by being a voice for rural Connecticut. It has been a rewarding but extremely challenging role. It has been the honor of my life to serve in the House of Representatives, and I do not take the responsibility that you have given me for granted.”

Talk about your background. What makes you stand out as the best choice for State Representative?

“I have lived and worked in the Quiet Corner my entire life. I am a career educator and school administrator. For 21 years, I have served as Camp Director at the June Norcross Webster Scout Reservation in Ashford. I volunteer as a firefighter in Pomfret and am involved in the town’s Emergency Management efforts. In nine years in the Legislature, I have held leadership positions on the Committee on Children, Veterans and Military Affairs, and the Public Safety & Security Committee. This background helps me understand the challenges facing Eastford.”

Can you share a personal story or experience that highlights your commitment to public service?

“After joining the Volunteer Fire Service in 2008, I realized how fragile the system is. We have dedicated volunteers, but they need support to sustain the service. I have dedicated a significant portion of my service in the State House to developing solutions to recruit and retain firefighters, EMS responders, and law enforcement officers. I’ve been on calls in the middle of the night when an immediate response is delayed, and I’ve seen amazing, hero-like work happen without the public noticing. My commitment to these issues is shaped by my own experience on the ground.”

What is the most important thing you would say to an undecided voter heading to the polls on Nov. 3?

“We are in a highly politically polarized environment. We all watch Washington with curiosity. Connecticut is different. It’s all about the effort that you put into the work. I pride myself on having a reputation as a legislator who does not toss partisan mud, and as a result, I chair one of the most bipartisan committees in the House. I treat my counterparts with respect. Without someone like me in the room, decisions will be made by other areas of the state, which I fear will adversely affect rural communities like Eastford.”

THE LIGHTNING ROUND

1. Coffee or tea?
Coffee (Black)

2. Early bird or night owl?
Night owl

3. What’s your favorite restaurant in the 50th District?
Grill 37 in Pomfret

4. What song do you always turn up when it comes on?
“Island in the Sun,” by Weezer

5. What was your favorite school subject?
History

6. What’s one TV show you could watch over and over?
The West Wing

7. If you suddenly had a completely free Saturday, how would you spend it?
Volunteering to boil sap at the Maple Sugar House during the winter.

8. What’s one thing you’re surprisingly good at? Any hidden talents?
One of the Eagle Scout skills that stuck with me over the years is knot tying — sheepshank, anyone?

9. What’s your favorite local place to visit?
James L. Godwin State Forest

10. Finish this sentence: “People might be surprised to learn that I...”
Grew up on a farm, and you learn a lot from feeding and watering cows when it’s 5 degrees outside early on a Sunday morning.



ELECTION 2026

ELECTION PREVIEW

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: 50TH DISTRICT

ANTHONY EMILIO CHALLENGER (R)



The Eastford Communicator sent a questionnaire to both candidates, with the same questions, with the same rules. These answers are edited due to space constraints — but every care was taken to preserve points made by the candidates, in the interest of fairness.

THE LIGHTNING ROUND

1. Coffee or tea?

Coffee

2. Early bird or night owl?

Night owl

3. What's your favorite restaurant in the 50th District?

Pizza 101

4. What song do you always turn up when it comes on?

"Happy," by Pharrell Williams, or any Beatles song

5. What was your favorite school subject?

Animal science

6. What's one TV show you could watch over and over?

Seinfeld

7. If you suddenly had a completely free Saturday, how would you spend it?

Playing with my grandson or playing with my dogs

8. What's one thing you're surprisingly good at? Any hidden talents?

I'm good at demolition; my hidden talent is photography

9. What's your favorite local place to visit?

My pond

10. Finish this sentence: "People might be surprised to learn that I..."

Have traveled extensively to many countries through both my professional work and my involvement in dog events.

In your opinion, what are some of the most important issues facing the 50th District, and Eastford specifically?

"The most important issues are affordability, local control, strong schools, reliable infrastructure, and public safety. Families, seniors, and small businesses are feeling the pressure of high taxes, rising energy costs, and the overall cost of living. I will support responsible state budgeting, oppose unfunded mandates, and fight to keep more money in Connecticut residents' pockets. Eastford's rural character is one of its greatest strengths. Hartford must respect decisions made by local residents and town leaders — not impose one-size-fits-all policies."

How do you hope to tackle these issues if elected to the House of Representatives?

"I will approach these challenges with the same practical, business-minded discipline I have brought to my work and service in Pomfret. I will listen first — to families, local officials, educators, first responders, and small-business owners — then work across the aisle when it produces real results for our communities. I will advocate for strong local schools, safe roads and bridges, rural broadband, and dependable support for public safety. The 50th District deserves a representative who is accessible, prepared, and focused on solutions — not partisan talking points."

Why did you decide to run for election to the House of Representatives?

"I ran in the Republican primary because I believe our district deserved leadership rooted in respect, integrity, and common sense. I was honored to earn 80 percent of the vote, sending a clear message that hate and divisiveness have no place in our party or our state. My experience in finance, as a business owner, and through years of involvement in Pomfret civic life has prepared me to serve effectively in the House of Representatives. Serving in various town positions has shown me how state and local decisions affect families, small businesses, taxpayers, and our communities."

Talk about your background. What makes you stand out as the best choice for State Representative?

"I am a longtime small-business owner, and former insurance executive who understands the challenges families and employers face when costs rise and government becomes less accountable. My background in finance and business has taught me to make responsible decisions, balance priorities, and respect every taxpayer dollar. I have also served our community as a Pomfret selectman and Board of Finance member, which helped me understand local budgets, public safety, schools, infrastructure, and Hartford's impact on small towns. What sets me apart is a record of local service

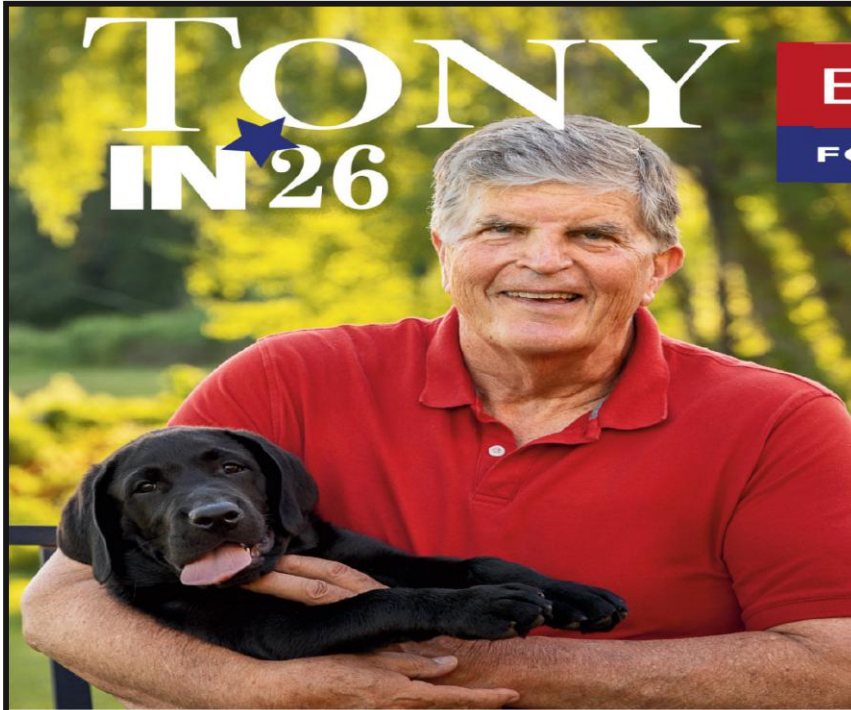
combined with real-world business experience."

Can you share a personal story or experience that highlights your commitment to public service?

"I have demonstrated a commitment to public service. In Pomfret, I served on local boards and commissions and chaired the Pomfret Fire building addition, which reflects my belief that effective public service often happens close to home. I have also supported healthcare access and community well-being through Day Kimball Hospital, where I served as chairman of the Development Committee. These experiences have reinforced my commitment to public service as practical, collaborative work."

What is the most important thing you would say to an undecided voter heading to the polls on Nov. 3?

"Your vote should be about who will work hardest for your family, your town, and the future of our district. I am running to bring practical experience, respectful leadership, and common-sense solutions to Hartford. Families are concerned about taxes, energy costs, schools, roads, and whether state government is listening to rural communities like ours. I will be accessible, and listen to every resident, putting the needs of the 50th District ahead of political gamesmanship. On Nov. 3, I respectfully ask for the opportunity to earn your trust and your vote."


EMILIO
FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVE

- ★ stop unfunded mandates
- ★ defend local control
- ★ support law enforcement
- ★ support farm community and small business
- ★ preserve District 50's rural way of life

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