

## Eastern equine encephalitis virus found in Plymouth County

BOSTON (AP) — The eastern equine encephalitis virus has been detected in Plymouth County for the first time this year, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health announced Wednesday.

The presence of EEE was confirmed by the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory in mosquito samples collected on July 13 from a single location in Carver in Plymouth County.

The findings mark the third time the EEE virus has been confirmed in tested mosquito samples in Massachusetts this year.

The two earlier findings of the virus were detected in samples collected July 1 and July 5

in Franklin County.

No human or animal case of EEE has been detected so far this year.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages and is generally spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.

There were 12 human cases of EEE in Massachusetts in 2019 with six deaths.

There's no human vaccine for the virus.

West Nile virus has also been detected this year in mosquitoes in Middlesex and Suffolk counties.

There were five human cases of West Nile virus in 2019.

No human or animal cases of West Nile virus have been detected so far this year.



## New Cape Cod bridges to be built in 3-phase process

BOURNE, Mass. (AP) — The \$1 billion effort to replace the two bridges that connect Cape Cod to mainland Massachusetts will be done in three phases, with construction not expected to start until 2025 at the earliest, state transportation officials say.

The multiyear process will include preliminary design, a 25% design and finally a handoff to a design and building firm for the construction phase, state Transportation Department officials tell the Cape Cod Times.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the owner of the current 85-year-old Sagamore and Bourne bridges. The Corps will maintain control of the existing bridges until the new bridges are completed at which point control of the new structures will be transferred to the state.

Funding for the project is still the biggest outstanding issue, but the state has hired a design firm to do preliminary engineering and permitting for the new bridges, Jonathan Gulliver, the state's highway administrator said.

Officials say there are no plans for tolls on the new bridges.

The new bridges will be able to handle more vehicle traffic as well as pedestrians and bicyclists.

## Mayor steps in to save wedding that was missing officiant

MASHPEE, Mass. (AP) — A couple gathered with family for a Cape Cod wedding found themselves without an officiant minutes before being wed, until a Massachusetts mayor wrangled special permission to perform the ceremony.

Carlo DeMaria, the mayor of Everett, Massachusetts, was on vacation near the venue in West Yarmouth on Saturday, when the mother of the bride asked if he could help.

The minister who was supposed to perform the ceremony had canceled at the last minute because of an emergency.

DeMaria said he called Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito to request special authorization to wed the couple, who recently moved to Cape Cod from Pittsburgh.

Matt and Naomi Kalliath are both are

physicians and will start positions at hospitals in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

"It really means a lot that they took time out of their Saturday afternoons to make this official for us," Matt Kalliath told the Cape Cod Times, speaking of the elected officials.

DeMaria officiated the couple's union at sunset wearing a polo shirt and shorts and reading their vows off a cellphone. The outdoor ceremony included the couple's dog.

"They're a wonderful couple, and the vows were truly beautiful," DeMaria told the newspaper. "It was a special day for them, and I was just happy being a part of it. I just want to wish them a lifetime of happiness."

On Tuesday, the newlyweds met DeMaria again for lunch to thank him for rescuing their special day.

## New peak of 71K US overdose deaths in 2019 dashes hopes

By CARLA K. JOHNSON  
AP MEDICAL WRITER

Nearly 71,000 Americans died of drug overdoses last year, a new record that predates the COVID-19 crisis, which the White House and many experts believe will drive such deaths even higher.

Preliminary numbers released Wednesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show the trend is driven by fentanyl and similar synthetic opioids, which accounted for 36,500 overdose deaths. Deaths involving cocaine and methamphetamine also are rising.

With billions of dollars devoted to ending the opioid epidemic, policymakers had hoped overdose deaths would continue to decline, or at least plateau, after 2018 showed a dip for the first time in three decades.

"We got it to stall out a bit. Now we need to grab on again and not let this get away from us," said Robert Anderson, who oversees death data for the CDC.

Assistant Secretary for Health Adm. Brett Giroir called the news "a very disturbing trend."

"We understand that there is an extraordinary amount of work to do, especially now as we are also dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic that could markedly affect

our nation's mental health and risk of substance use," Giroir said in a statement.

Initially driven by prescription opioid painkillers, the U.S. overdose crisis "has been shape-shifting," said Brendan Saloner, an addiction researcher at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Users migrated first to heroin and then to fentanyl, a cheaper, stronger drug that displaced heroin in many drug markets.

With more than 30 states showing rising overdose deaths in the new data, Saloner said, "I see a map of despair."

A small bright spot: A cluster of states in the Northeast — Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Rhode Island — saw declines. These are states that have shown commitment to preventing overdoses among active drug users and getting people into treatment when they are ready, Saloner noted.

What's ahead? With public health efforts focused on the pandemic, the outlook may seem bleak. But access to treatment drugs for opioid addiction has improved somewhat, with some government restrictions easing on buprenorphine and methadone. Evidence shows those medicines help people stay in recovery.

## Suspect in shooting of contractor turns himself in

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — The suspect in the fatal shooting of a contractor in Providence earlier this month has turned himself in, police said Wednesday.

Felix Hernandez-Rosado, 18, turned himself in Tuesday, Maj. David Lapatin said.

Hernandez-Rosado faces murder and other charges in the July 1 death of Jorge Gonzalez Colon.

Gonzalez Colon, 37, was shot multiple times outside a Providence home he was working on in the city's Silver Lake neighborhood. He was taken to Rhode Island Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Hernandez-Rosado was thought to be with a missing 14-year-old girl, but she remains missing, Lapatin said. She is believed to be OK, he said.

Hernandez-Rosado is scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday. It's not clear if he has an attorney.

The death was the city's fourth homicide of 2020.

## Three marijuana dispensaries fined a total of \$800,000

WORCESTER, Mass. (AP) — Massachusetts regulators have fined three companies a total of \$800,000 for various infractions.

The Cannabis Control Commission levied the fines against Garden

Remedies Inc.; Healthy Pharms Inc.; and Acreage Holdings Inc., according to The Telegram & Gazette.

Garden Remedies Inc., which operates a recreational and medical dispensary in Marlborough, was fined \$200,000 for using pesticides and trying to cover up their use by falsifying invoices.

Garden Remedies said in a statement that it fired the employees involved — whose actions were unknown to the executive team.

Regulators also fined Healthy Pharms \$350,000 for pesticide use over several periods from July 2018 to February 2019, according to the commission.

"Once the company understood the violations, we worked quickly to correct them and have implemented procedures to prevent them from happening again," said Leo Gontmakher, CEO of Healthy Pharms parent company 4Front Ventures, said in a statement.

The Botanist, owned by Acreage Holdings, Inc., was fined \$250,000 for going forward with applications for licensure while trying to own or have a controlling interest in more than the allowed maximum of three stores. The Botanist has a medical dispensary in Worcester and plans to open two more.

An Acreage spokesman said the company has terminated its relationships with two other provisional license holders

## Man fraudulently sought \$13M in COVID-19 loans

BOSTON (AP) — A Massachusetts man is charged with fraudulently seeking for his information technology company more than \$13 million in government loans intended for businesses struggling because of the coronavirus pandemic, federal prosecutors said Wednesday.

Elijah Majak Buoi, 38, of Winchester, was indicted on four counts of wire fraud and of making a false statement to a financial institution.

Buoi, who was arrested last month, is free on \$5,000 cash bail.

Buoi, the president and CEO of Sosuda Tech, LLC, in April and June allegedly submitted fraudulent applications for more than \$13 million in forgivable loans guaranteed by the Small Business Administration for COVID-19 relief through the Paycheck Protection Program, according to the U.S. attorney's office in Boston.

He lied about his number of employees and his payroll expenses

and falsely certified that the United States was the primary residence for his employees, prosecutors said.

In the application for one loan, he claimed to have 353 employees, most within the U.S., according to an FBI affidavit. He actually had six employees, including himself, and the other five were in India, according to the affidavit.

Buoi ultimately received more than \$2 million in coronavirus relief funds, prosecutors said.

PPP funds must be used by businesses for payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent and utilities.

An email seeking comment was left Wednesday with Buoi's federal public defender.

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**EPA Proposes Partial Deletion of the 200 Presidential Way parcel from Industri-Plex Superfund Site**

Boston — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announces the proposed partial deletion of the approximately 10.7-acre 200 Presidential Way, Woburn, MA, (200 Presidential Way) parcel of the Industri-Plex Superfund Site (Site), located in Woburn, MA from the National Priorities List (NPL). The remaining areas of the Site will remain on the NPL and are not being considered for deletion as part of this action.

EPA and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have concluded that no Superfund responses under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) are required and no further cleanup is necessary for the 200 Presidential Way parcel. Moreover, EPA and the State have determined that there are no hazardous substances, contaminants or pollutants or associated exposure routes present on the 200 Presidential Way parcel which constitute a CERCLA risk, and the parcel is now available for unlimited use and unrestricted exposure and protective of public health and the environment. Because the 200 Presidential Way parcel contaminant levels meet unrestricted use and unrestricted exposure, no operation & maintenance activities or EPA Five-Year Reviews are required for the parcel.

The Federal Docket for the 200 Presidential Way parcel partial deletion contains the information to support the partial deletion. The public is invited to comment on the proposed decision to delete this 200 Presidential Way parcel of the Industri-Plex Superfund Site from the NPL. The public comment period will begin July 15, 2020 and extend for 30 days through August 14, 2020. Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID no. EPA-HQ-SFUND-1983-0002, by one of the following methods:

<http://www.regulations.gov> — Follow on-line instructions for submitting comments and viewing the supporting documentation in the Federal Docket.

Email: [Lemay.Joe@epa.gov](mailto:Lemay.Joe@epa.gov)

The Notice of Intent to Partially Delete and all publicly available docket materials are available either electronically at:

<http://www.regulations.gov>

<https://semspub.epa.gov/src/collection/01/AR66357> or

<https://go.usa.gov/xvvr6>

EPA site specific web page: [www.epa.gov/superfund/industriplex](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/industriplex)