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PROJECT AT PHIL RIZZUTO PARK COMPLETED

Groundwork Elizabeth

Phil Rizzuto Park, is located on the corner of Elizabeth and Union, N.J. Within the park the Trotters Branch of the Elizabeth River is an example of the result of decades of flooding and erosion. Sediments from an eroding tributary of the river hampered water from flowing freely into the main Elizabeth River as it makes its way to the NJ coastline, upsetting the fragile balance of natural plant and animal life and putting those who live nearby at risk.

There are ways to mitigate these challenges. Groundwork Elizabeth is an Elizabeth based nonprofit which has as its mission to build more sustainable communities, fostering everyone's right to a healthy environment. Youth volunteers from the Groundwork program became enamored with the natural landscape of a woodland/wetland within Phil Rizzuto Park as far back as 2014 and wanted to maintain its vitality. Their continued passion for the site encouraged the 501c organization to take the next steps to helping to restore and preserve it.

A number of funders and agencies stepped up to lend support for a restoration program that would help reduce flooding and foster native coastal watershed wildlife. Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery led the way followed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Impact Directed Environmental Accounts and Five Star programs), the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the USDA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Friends of the Great Swamp, the NJ Conservation Foundation, the NJ Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership and the Environmental Endowment for NJ. Together they assisted the Elizabeth based nonprofit in its mission to restore and conserve the wetland.

Some of the improvements to the park include:

- Improvement of the ecological functions as well as the streambank condition by the placement of large rock deflectors and plantings along the streambed
- Stabilization of the streambank erosion underneath pedestrian bridge.
- Improvement of .4 acres of stream habitat, stream channel to enhance water flow and quality, beginning at the site nearest North Avenue for 150 feet.
- Enhance fish and macroinvertebrate habitat while also improving sediment transport and overall stream health.
- Reestablishment of the thalweg (the line or curve of lowest elevation within a valley or watercourse) by creating/enhancing point bars.
- Addition of rock riffles installed and pools deepened to further restore and enhance the health of river
- Replace where invasive species were removed with plantings that help improve water quality and offer a better habitat for native plants, birds, salamanders, turtles, etc
- Introduction of permanent certified native grasses, native trees, legumes and /or forbs along with wildflowers and perennial plants that reduce sheet flow and provide habitats for native birds, butterflies, honeybees, and other native species.
- Construction of rain garden to complement area plantings to reduce runoff and provide habitat for native wildlife. A simple overlook for the public is at the site.

The park was closed for work from July through mid-November and is now open to the public. For more details about this project and more information on Groundwork, visit groundworkelizabeth.org.



(above) Groundwork Team joined by Phillips 66 team members at Trotters Branch of the Elizabeth River site.

Courtesy photos

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ALL HAD FUN AT WEBBY'S FUN FEST



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Over 40 people participated in Webby's Fun Fest on November 17 at St. Genevieve's Church. Hosted by Boy Scout Troop 23 and Cub Scout Pack 23, this event provided fun for children of all ages.

Webby, the Webfoot Duck, has been the mascot of Troop 23 since 1967. Activities at Webby's Fun Fest included cornhole, mini-golf, ring toss, Connect 4, Jenga, lawn dice, checkers, chess, Battleship, and dominoes. On the lawn outside the church hall, there was a campfire with marshmallow roasting. And the evening ended with participants enjoying an ice cream sundae!

The Scouting program instills character, good citizenship and physical fitness in youth through outdoor activities such as campouts and hikes, involvement in community activities, and just plain FUN! If you have a son or daughter,

nephew or niece, grandson or granddaughter, or neighbor who is anywhere between a Kindergartener and a high school senior, please suggest they consider getting in on the fun of Scouting.

Cub Scout Pack 23 and Boy Scout Troop 23 have been serving the youth of Elizabeth and the surrounding area for over 60 years. These units have earned hundreds of awards on the local and national level, have produced 80 Eagle Scouts, and have leaders who are well-known and widely respected by other Scout leaders across the country.

New members (regardless of religious affiliation) are welcome at any time, all year round. For more details, please contact Dan Bernier, Scoutmaster, at (908) 451-1948 or webfootroop@gmail.com.



(above) Boy Scout Troop 23 and Cub Scout Pack 23 hosted Webby's Fun Fest in St. Genevieve's Church hall.



(above) Scouts and their guests roasted marshmallows on an outdoor campfire at Webby's Fun Fest.

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FOSTER YOUTH JOIN FOREVER FAMILIES AT ADOPTION DAY

CASA of Passaic and Union Counties

On a recent fall morning, five youth ranging from three to 10 years old entered the courtrooms of Superior Court Judges Gavin Handwerker, Paul Nieves and Chanel Hudson as foster youth and, shortly after, emerged as official members of their new families.

Adoption Day is eagerly anticipated by many at Union County's Family Court, as ample smiles fill the courthouse – a juxtaposition to the daily navigation of complex issues fraught with loss or discord. This year, county dignitaries presented

families with proclamations and certificates, and festivities included performances by 30 high school students from Elizabeth's Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy A Cappella Choir; a former foster youth sharing her personal journey and adoption story; a roaming balloon artist; sheriff's officers dressed as superheroes and a Batmobile outside for visiting; furry greetings from Kenilworth's David Brearley Middle High School mascot bear; personalized cupcakes; and ice cream, face painting, and friendship-bracelet making stations.

CASA of Passaic and Union Counties presented family fun-themed gift baskets made possible in part from donations by David Brearley Bears That Care program and the Union County Bar Association. Baskets were given to all those finalizing on Adoption Day, as well as several families who adopted earlier in the year.

Cynthia Evans of Scotch Plains was among the CASA volunteers to attend the ceremonies for their assigned children. "The day was a long time

coming for these sisters, and it was amazing," she said. "I've been their advocate since 2020. Between their adoptive families and all involved, embraces and cheers were aplenty. My time as their CASA volunteer was both rewarding and challenging. I'm thankful I could help ensure their needs were met and services were provided while in care."

Adoption Day is a national movement to raise awareness of children in foster care. Since its inception 23 years ago, nearly 60,000 children have found permanency. More than 437,000 youth in the United States are currently in the child welfare system awaiting a permanent home, and the average wait is four years. For more than 23,000 youth, that doesn't happen, and they age out of the system, facing life on their own.

For details on CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, becoming an advocate for foster children or other opportunities to support the organization's work, log on to www.casapassaicunion.org.



(above, right) Event included a balloon artist; cupcakes; ice cream, face painting, and bracelets.



(left) Each family received a basket made possible by CASA of Passaic and Union Counties & the David Brearley Middle High School Bears That Care Program.



(above) Sheriff's officers dressed as superheroes, and maned a Batmobile outside the courthouse.

Courtesy photo



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MIRACLE ON WINFIELD SCOTT: A HOLIDAY NIGHT OUT IN ELIZABETH, NJ



The City of Elizabeth held a Citywide Tree Lighting event “Miracle on Winfield Scott: A Holiday Night Out”. The free event took place on December 12th, 2023, in front of Elizabeth City Hall.

To mark the beginning of the holiday season in Elizabeth, families were invited to enjoy an enchanting evening filled with live music, food, caroling, performances, and more, that capture the spirit of the season to create cherished memories and spread the joy of the season throughout the community.

Elizabeth, NJ welcomes locals and visitors to experience the magic of the holiday season. "Come discover one of America’s TOP Holiday Shopping Destinations in a whole new holiday light. This festive celebration embodies the spirit of the community offering a unique opportunity to visit the heart of Historic Midtown, one of our local shopping districts. Come revel in the joyous diverse ambiance of our vibrant city, join us, and discover all the wonders of the holidays in Elizabeth," said Jennifer Costa, the Executive Director of Elizabeth’s Official Tourism Office-GoElizabethNJ.



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STOCK UP NOW ON SCOUT'S FIREWOOD

Do you need firewood for your backyard chiminea, fireplace or wood-burning stove?. You can get well-seasoned split hardwood logs at St. Genevieve's Church, 200 Monmouth Road, Elizabeth, for less than what you pay in the supermarket. And at the same time, you will be supporting the camping program of Boy Scout Troop 23, including a campership fund that helps send financially-challenged Scouts to summer camp. Help yourself from Webby's Wood Shed, located behind the Rectory near the garages that face 818 Livingston Road. Follow the directions on the envelopes provided to make a donation. Thank you for your support!

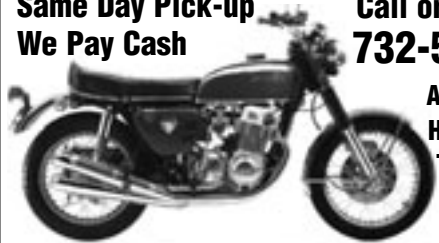
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SCOUTING FOR FOOD DRIVE A HUGE SUCCESS

Boy Scout Troop 23 and Cub Scout Pack 23 have been participating in the nationwide Scouting for Food drive in a big way since the program first began in 1988. Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of Elmora residents, the food collection on November 18 was again a huge success. Almost 4,300 pounds of food was collected and distributed to four different local food pantries.

With so many of our neighbors still in need, this food will help a lot of people. Thank you to everyone who contributed food items, frozen turkeys or cash (which will be converted to grocery gift cards). Your generosity is most appreciated!



(above) Boy Scout Troop 23 and Cub Scout Pack 23 delivered 4,200 pounds of food donations to four local food pantries.

DONATE UNWANTED BOOKS

Looking for a place to donate your unwanted books? Father Paul Prevosto, Pastor of Church of the Assumption in Roselle Park, announces the addition of a book donation bin located in the Church parking lot at 113 Coolidge Place (near the corner of Westfield Ave. and Faitoute Ave.)

All books must have an ISBN barcode on the cover. Hardcover, paperback, and textbooks are all welcome – no encyclopedias, magazines, or water damaged books. Your donation raises funds for the parish.

For more information, or if you wish to purchase books please visit NewLegacyBooks.com.



DJ DREWSKI & FRIENDS CONCERT AT THE UCPAC

Dj Drewski a radio host on Hot 97 fm and TV Personality hosted a Hip Hop concert that concert goers will never forget for years to come.

The Halloween themed concert was a huge success that sold out the UCPAC in Rahway NJ. Majority of its attendees were High School and college students who attend local schools in the New Jersey area. One concert goer said "Shout out to DJ Drewski because this has been the best show I ever seen!"

The attendees got way more than they bargained for when they got to witness some of the hottest hip hop acts hit the stage.

The show featured hip hop stars such as Sleepy Hallow, 41, Ron Suno & Dj Drewski (who is a Elizabeth NJ native.)

"I was extremely happy with the turnout and being able to use my platform to entertain and inspire the youth" said Dj Drewski.

"It was a great opportunity to bring the local youth to an incredible theatre like the UCPAC and show them they do not have to go out of town to see some of their favorite performing artists."

Solar, who is Dj Drewski's 2yr old daughter also joined the stage with him to celebrate such an incredible show. For Drewski, that was a full circle moment because as a child himself DJ

Drewski's father hosted a Rock & Roll concert at the same theatre years prior. Inspired by his upbringing in Elizabeth NJ, Dj Drewski plans to host more events and shows like this in the near future and is glad he was able to give both The City of Rahway and the surrounding communities a taste of what is to come.

Thank You to the Union County Police Department, Rahway Police Department and UCPAC for making sure everyone was safe and had a wonderful time.

To keep up with more of what Dj Drewski is doing follow him on social media at [@SoDrewski](https://www.instagram.com/SoDrewski)



NJ LIVER TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT HEADED TO 2024 ROSE PARADE®

NJ Sharing Network

NJ Sharing Network, the federally designated non-profit organization responsible for the recovery of donated organs and tissue for transplant in the Garden State, recently honored liver transplant recipient Missy Rodriguez of Short Hills, NJ, as she gets set to participate in the 2024 Rose Parade® in Pasadena, CA, on New Year's Day. Rodriguez was selected by the Sharing Network Foundation to ride on OneLegacy's Donate Life Rose Parade® float, which is recognized as the world's most visible campaign to inspire organ and tissue donation.

At the age of ten, Missy Rodriguez received a successful life-saving liver transplant. Today, Rodriguez is approaching the fortieth anniversary of her transplant – a milestone that will make her one of the longest liver transplant survivors in history. She thrives in her professional, social, and athletic pursuits.

Rodriguez went to great lengths to keep her medical history a secret for most of her life. However, in 2015, Rodriguez had a dramatic change of heart after she underwent emergency

surgery. She decided it was “her turn to give rather than receive.” Since then, Rodriguez has turned her passion into purpose as an advocate for organ donation. She serves as a mentor, priding herself as a resource for pre- and post-transplant patients.

Rodriguez is a certified volunteer for NJ Sharing Network and principal for Missy's Miracle Scholarship Fund. This Sharing Network Foundation program supports initiatives that raise awareness for organ and tissue donation and provides scholarships for high school students touched by the Foundation's life-saving mission. To date, she has raised over \$120,000.

Rodriguez is a well-recognized community volunteer and advocate for donation and transplantation. She has been featured in dozens of television and print news media spotlights and acknowledged for her charitable efforts by local neighborhood businesses, alliances, and religious institutions. Her efforts have also been publicly recognized by the Township of Millburn, NJ, with an official Proclamation. Rodriguez also

participates in the Sharing Network Foundation's 5K Celebration of Life and has won gold medals in tennis at the Transplant Games of America as a member of Team Liberty.

Rodriguez resides in Short Hills, NJ, with her husband, Brett, and their three sons, Jesse, Reece, and Mack.

ABOUT ONELEGACY'S DONATE LIFE ROSE PARADE® FLOAT

For over 20 years, OneLegacy's Donate Life Rose Parade® float has inspired people worldwide to save and heal lives with the powerful message of organ and tissue donation. The 2024 float, Woven Together: The Dance of Life, will showcase the culture of the Hopi, native to the American Southwest. Transplant recipients (including Missy Rodriguez) will ride on the float and living donors will walk alongside it. Memorial floragraphs honoring organ and tissue donor heroes will also be displayed on the float. The floragraphs replicate photographs and are made entirely of flowers, seeds, and organic materials.

ABOUT NJ SHARING NETWORK

NJ Sharing Network is the federally designated non-profit organization responsible for the recovery of donated organs and tissue for transplant in the Garden State. NJ Sharing Network provides hope for nearly 4,000 New Jersey residents currently waiting for a life-saving transplant, and it is part of the national recovery system for the over 100,000 people on the national waiting list. The generosity of New Jerseyans is providing hope for the future. In 2022, the number of organ donors and organs transplanted in a single year reached all-time highs. This marked the fourth consecutive year NJ Sharing Network has reported new records in the number of organs transplanted, underscoring the clear trend of increased support for organ donation. With headquarters in New Providence, NJ, the organization has been recognized by NJBIZ as one of the state's “Best Places to Work” for six consecutive years. To learn more, get involved, and join the National Donate Life Registry as an organ and tissue donor, visit NJSharingNetwork.org.

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Alpha is for everybody that wants to discuss seeking answers to life's big questions. Why are we here? Is this all there is to life? Where are we going? How do I attain peace of mind, heart, and soul? Whether you are young or old, have faith or are atheist or agnostic, Alpha provides a safe environment for exploring our big questions about life.

We begin by sharing a meal together and getting to know each other. We watch a video

together then break into small groups for uninhibited discussion about what is on our minds.

There is no cost to participate. The series runs for 12 weeks on Monday nights beginning at 7:30 p.m. and ending at 9:00 p.m. It will begin February 5th, 2024, and end May 6th, 2024. Three of the sessions are live in person and the remainder are on Zoom. You will need a desire for frank discussion, a willingness to participate and a commitment to attend. You will also need a computer or smartphone capable of Zoom sessions.

The live in person sessions will be held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 1571 S. Martine Ave., Scotch Plains, NJ 07076.

If you have any questions, please call (908) 889-2100.

To register go onto IHMParish.net/alpha.



Meet new people & explore faith together.

Alpha is a place to connect with other people who are open to exploring life, faith, and meaning. Each session includes a time to connect with others (often over a free meal), hear a short talk on an element of the Christian faith, and then a chance for each person to share their own questions with the group. We'd love to hear your perspective!

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If you have questions about Alpha, please contact the Nazareth Center Office at 908-889-2100 or send an email to office@ihmparish.net



(above) Missy Rodriguez is joined by her husband Brett and two of their sons, Reece and Mack, during a 'sendoff event' to 2024 Rose Parade® in Pasadena, CA, on New Year's Day.

Photo Courtesy of NJ Sharing Network

COME SING WITH US AT OUR OPEN HOUSE AT SHRINE OF ST JOSEPH

Hickory Tree chorus

Put some music in your life in 2024! Join the Hickory Tree Chorus for an Open House at Shrine of St Joseph, 1050 Long Hill Road, Stirling, NJ, which will include a meet-and-greet, movement warm-ups and, of course, some wonderful singing. Dates are January 10 and 17, 2024, from 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. The chorus sings a

variety of music, including old-fashioned love songs, Broadway, Disney, Beatles, and more in a fun, supportive community. Come sing with us and share the joy of music together! Stay for the friendship and fun!

Hickory Tree is an award-winning women's chorus singing four-part a cappella harmony in the barbershop style. We are passionate about

music, performance, fun & friendship. We believe every voice counts and encourage women singers of all ages, colors, ethnicities, and orientations to visit us and share our joy of music.

Please contact the Chorus for the Open House by email at info@hickorytreechorus.org.

Find more information at hickorytreechorus.org.



(above) The Hickory Tree Chorus invites the public to sing with them at an Open House, on January 10 and 17, from 6:45 to 9:30 p.m.



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(above) Check Presentation Jewish Family Service of Central New Jersey: The mission of Jewish Family Service of Central NJ, a non-sectarian health and social service agency, is to strengthen family life and encourage personal growth by providing specialized quality services to individuals and families in need in Union County. The Agency is a licensed mental health outpatient agency and a licensed and accredited homecare agency. A diverse staff who speak 11 languages provides a full range of services from mental health counseling, to Kosher Meals On Wheels, to an active Food Pantry and Urban Community Garden. Learn more at jfscentralnj.org.

(above, l-r) Adam Cadmus, Chief Experience Officer at The Atlantic; Carla White-Garrett, Community Engagement Representative at The Atlantic; Peter Jacob, Director of Housing Services at Jewish Family Service of Central NJ; Anthony Mero, Chief Executive Officer at The Atlantic; Tom Beck, Executive Director at Jewish Family Service of Central NJ; and Janine Grieco, Director of Member Engagement and Delivery at The Atlantic.



(above) Check Presentation St. Joseph Social Service Center: Since 1983, St. Joseph Social Service Center has served the materially poor and homeless community of greater Elizabeth, New Jersey, by providing basic human needs such as food, clothing and medications, as well as a wide range of services and programs to help them acquire the material goods and social services they need to live with dignity. St. Joseph Social Service Center's range of services include a food pantry, health and wellness programs, mental health counseling, an Adult Learning Center, access to clothing and household items, and more. Learn more at sjeliz.org.

(above, l-r) Mary Phillips, Development Director at St. Joseph Social Service Center; Bernadette Murphy, Executive Director at St. Joseph Social Service Center; Tama Hampton, Volunteer Coordinator at St. Joseph Social Service Center; Carla White-Garrett, Community Engagement Representative at The Atlantic; Anthony Mero, Chief Executive Officer at The Atlantic; and Adam Cadmus, Chief Experience Officer at The Atlantic.

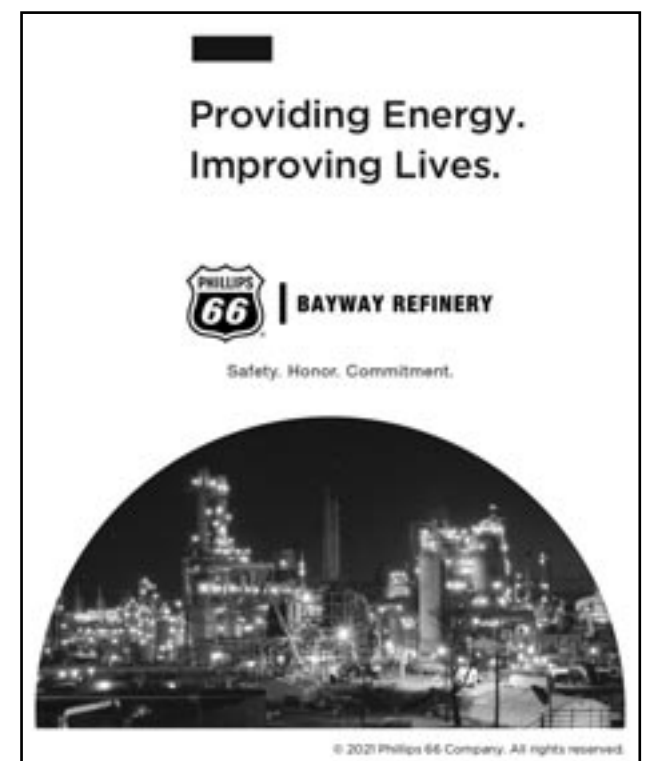
The Atlantic Federal Credit Union (“The Atlantic”) distributed \$50,000 in grant funding to five local nonprofit organizations through the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York Small Business Recovery Grant Program (“SBRG”). The SBRG is designed to support the financial security and health of organizations that have faced economic challenges due to the rate environment, inflation, supply-chain constraints, and/or rising energy costs.

The SBRG began in 2017 in response to hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Program relaunched in 2020 and was made available again in 2021 to aid small businesses and nonprofit organizations facing challenges due to the Coronavirus pandemic. By participating in the SBRG this year, The Atlantic was able to grant \$10,000 each to Bianca F.L.O.W.E.R.S. Inc. in Plainfield, Jewish Family Service of Central New Jersey, Mobile Meals of Westfield, St. Joseph Social Service Center in Elizabeth, and The SHARE Alliance in Springfield.

“Thank you to the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York for their partnership and the opportunity to extend recovery grants within the communities we serve,” shared The Atlantic Federal Credit Union Chief Executive Officer Anthony Mero. “The SBRG funding will help our deserving recipients continue their selfless work throughout Essex and Union counties – ensuring community members in need have access to food, clothing, social services and other crucial resources through the holiday season and beyond.”

ABOUT THE ATLANTIC FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

The Atlantic Federal Credit Union was founded in 1935 as a not-for-profit financial cooperative to meet the savings and borrowing needs of Members. Today, The Atlantic Federal Credit Union exclusively serves Essex and Union counties in New Jersey with financial wellness resources, competitive rates and technology-driven solutions for personal and business banking. For full eligibility criteria and more information, visit TheAtlanticFCU.com.



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Short Hills MILLBURN MONTHLY NJ Qty: 8,200 Zips: 07041, 07078	Summit & Times NJ Qty: 9,600 Zip: 07901	Spirit of UNION NJ Qty: 6,800 Zip: 07083 (partial)	WARREN MONTHLY NJ Qty: 6,200 Zip: 07059	Watchung Post NJ Qty: 2,700 Zip: 07069	Westfield MONTHLY NJ Qty: 11,800 Zip: 07090

NEWSPAPER AD RATES

Units	Size	1 TOWN	3 TOWNS	6 TOWNS	9 TOWNS	12 TOWNS	15 TOWNS	18 TOWNS	21 TOWNS	24 TOWNS
1 Unit (Business card)	3.25" x 2"	\$60	\$150	\$250	\$350	\$400	\$450	\$500	\$550	\$600
2 Units	6.5" x 2" or 3.25" x 4"	\$100	\$250	\$400	\$500	\$600	\$700	\$800	\$900	\$1000
4 Units	3.25" x 8" or 6.5" x 4"	\$180	\$450	\$700	\$900	\$1100	\$1300	\$1500	\$1700	\$1900
6 Units	6.5" x 6.25" or 10" x 4"	\$240	\$600	\$900	\$1200	\$1400	\$1600	\$1800	\$2000	\$2200
9 HALF PAGE	6.5" x 9" or 10" x 7"	\$320	\$800	\$1000	\$1300	\$1600	\$1900	\$2200	\$2400	\$2700
12 Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700	\$3000
18 FULL PAGE	10" x 14"	\$400	\$1000	\$1400	\$1800	\$2200	\$2500	\$2800	\$3000	\$3400
2-PAGE SPREAD	21" x 14"	\$700								
BACK PAGE	10" x 14"	\$500								
FRONT PAGE BANNER	8.25" x 2"	\$320								
FRONT PAGE BOX	1.5" x 4.5"	\$240								

Rates are per month. Artwork included in price. Newspapers are black on white.

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**FLYERS
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PER 1,000**
**MENUS
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PER 1,000**

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Evaluate the return you are getting from your online marketing costs.
- **INCREASE ONLINE MARKETING RESULTS**
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