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DREW AND BOROUGH SIGN AGREEMENT TO PRESERVE FOREST

Madison, NJ — [January 12, 2026] — Drew University and the Borough of Madison recently signed agreements that when implemented will permanently preserve the Drew Forest while allowing for the sale and strategic redevelopment of other university-owned land along Madison Avenue. These agreements represent the culmination of years of collaboration among the University, the Borough, elected officials, and community partners.

Under the purchase agreement the Borough of Madison will acquire the 47.3-acre Drew Forest Preserve to ensure its protection in perpetuity. In addition, the settlement provides for the sale of other surplus university land to support the development of multi-family, inclusionary residential housing, and includes the Borough's acquisition of the Madison House property.

The Drew Forest Preserve and Zuck Arboretum—an ecologically significant expanse of mature woodland and glacial ponds located within Drew University's 163-acre campus—plays a vital regional role. The forest contributes to groundwater recharge for the Buried Valley Aquifer and its preservation delivers environmental benefits and access to approximately 22 acres of public trails. Drew University will retain full access to the forest for academic purposes, including long-term research conducted by faculty and students.

This agreement reflects an historic level of collaboration among municipal leaders, higher education, community advocates, nonprofit partners, and representatives at the local, state, and federal levels including Governor Phil Murphy, Governor-elect and former Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, and U.S. Senators Cory Booker., State Senators Anthony Bucco and John McKeon, Assembly members, county leaders, and the Friends of the Drew Forest. By aligning environmental stewardship, community priorities, and institutional sustainability, the Borough of Madison and Drew University demonstrated how shared problem-solving and sustained dialogue can produce outcomes that are both visionary and practical. The partnership serves as a model for how communities and anchor institutions can work



*(above) Representatives from Drew University
and the Borough of Madison after signing the agreement.*

Courtesy Photo

together to achieve long-term public benefit.

"Preserving Drew Forest while responsibly redeveloping surplus campus land for multi-family residential housing is a win for everyone involved," said Governor Murphy. "I'd like to congratulate Drew University President Link, Mayor Conley and the Borough of Madison, Governor-Elect Sherrill, Senator Booker, Congressman Kean, Senator Bucco, Senator McKeon, the Morris County Board of Commissioners, Friends of the Drew Forest, local officials, and community and non-profit leaders for working together collaboratively over the past few years to reach this milestone agreement. By aligning community, environmental, preservation, research, and redevelopment goals, Madison Borough and Drew University are setting a model for how our municipalities and anchor institutions of higher education can work together to promote the common good."

"In Congress, I worked with state and local leaders to deliver millions of dollars in federal funding to preserve the Drew Forest, and I am excited that Drew University and the Borough of Madison have reached an agreement that both protects our natural resources while expanding access to housing that is affordable in Morris County. As Governor-elect, I look forward to continuing to collaborate with community leaders to deliver on the issues that are most important to New Jersey residents," said Governor-elect and former Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill.

"This historic agreement is the culmination of years of determined, collaborative work among federal, state, and local stakeholders who share

(continued on page 2)

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PRESERVE FOREST AGREEMENT (continued from page 1)

a deep commitment to protecting our invaluable open space,” said Senate Republican Leader Anthony M. Bucco. “By permanently preserving this land while allowing for reasonable development elsewhere, this agreement ensures the long-term protection of Drew Forest’s natural beauty and ecological significance. I commend the Borough of Madison and Drew University for striking the right balance between environmental stewardship and community development, and I am proud to have worked with our legislative partners at every level of government to help secure \$9 million in State funding that made this agreement possible.”

Mayor Robert Conley expressed his gratitude for the cooperation between the Borough and Drew University, saying, “This agreement is a testament to what can be achieved when we work together toward a common goal. We are thrilled to have reached this major milestone and grateful that the Drew Forest will remain a treasure for our community and region. I would also like to thank the Friends of the Drew Forest for their dedication and advocacy over these last few years, which ultimately helped us get to this point. Special thanks to Dillard Kirby, Ray Chambers, former Governor Tom Kean, and their professional team for their assistance in this joint effort.”

“This milestone ensures the long-term

protection of an extraordinary environmental and educational asset while also strengthening the University’s financial foundation and ability to serve future generations of students. This agreement comes at a moment of tremendous excitement and momentum for Drew as a national leader in innovating a liberal arts education for the future,” said Drew University President Hilary Link, PhD. “I am deeply grateful for the partnership with the Borough of Madison and look forward to our continued collaboration for the vibrant future of Madison and Drew University.”

At the signing ceremony Mayor Conley and President Link highlighted the Friends of Drew Forest’s private fundraising goal of \$5 million to complete Madison’s purchase package. As Mayor Conley stated, “It will be the commitment of generous donors of today that will complete the deal to save the forest for generations to come.” Now that a settlement has been reached the Friends are poised to launch the campaign

Additional information regarding implementation, redevelopment planning, and opportunities for public input will be shared as the process advances. The Borough of Madison and Drew University remain committed to transparency, public engagement, and ongoing communication as this landmark initiative moves forward.

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THE ORCHESTRA TO SOAR BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THERAYOUTH

At Dorothy Young Center for the Arts, Drew University, Madison, NJ • Saturday, March 21, 2026 • 4:00 PM

Pegasus: The Orchestra will perform at Drew University on Saturday, March 21 at 4:00 PM for the TheraYouth Foundation’s Third Annual Concert fundraiser. Held at the Dorothy Young Center for the Arts, the concert will unite world-class professional musicians with local student performers to raise critical funds for TheraYouth’s mission to provide needed physical, occupational, and speech therapy services to disadvantaged children who cannot otherwise access care.

Pegasus: The Orchestra pairs artistic excellence with social impact. Pianist, conductor and composer Karén Hakobyan founded the group in 2017 as a nonprofit dedicated to supporting exceptional musical talent, and to bringing world-class performances to underserved communities. True to its namesake, the ensemble empowers its musicians to soar artistically. Pegasus functions as a collective of artist leaders, resulting in performances that run the range of vibrant, driven orchestral performances alternating with intimate and chamber-like expression. The New York Concert Review calls Pegasus “a truly first-rate ensemble” and a “can’t miss” group, urging audiences to “get your tickets right away before they sell out.”

As a composer-arranger, Director Hakobyan frequently crafts orchestral works to showcase the unique musicality of the ensemble’s artists, as in this concert which Hakobyan specifically

wrote for this performance. The concert opens with the urgency of Haydn’s Symphony No. 59 (“Fire”), followed by the delicate, Three Armenian Miniatures by Komitas. Acclaimed Grammy-nominated cellist Sergey Antonov follows with Saint-Saëns’ Cello Concerto No. 1, where the audience can truly appreciate his masterful playing in the intimate chamber orchestra setting. Pegasus’s program continues with the soulful elegance of Rachmaninoff’s Vocalise before concluding with Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue, capturing the spirit of American jazz in an exuberant finale.

The Chatham High School Chamber Choir, directed by Kenneth Bryson, will perform the Interlude. This ensemble has performed at venues including the White House, the National Anthem at Citi Field to open a Mets game, the Empire State Building, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and appreciated for their

musical excellence.

The proceeds from this concert will support the TheraYouth Foundation, whose mission is to ensure that children are never denied critical physical, occupational, or speech therapy simply because their families cannot afford it. TheraYouth serves disadvantaged youth with treatable conditions, helping them gain strength, communication, and independence. Funded entirely through donations and fundraisers, every dollar raised supports life-changing therapy sessions for children who might otherwise go without the care they need to thrive.

“Every child deserves the chance to reach their full potential,” said TheraYouth founder, Dr. Irina Marcoff, DPT. “This concert not only raises vital funds but brings the community together around the belief that early, high-quality therapy can change the course of a child’s life.”

**TheraYouth Foundation**
THERAYOUTH Presents:
**PEGASUS:
THE ORCHESTRA**
KARÉN HAKOBYAN, CONDUCTOR
Haydn – *Symphony No. 59 “Fire”* es
Saint-Saëns – *Cello Concerto No. 1*
Komitas – *Three Armenian Miniatur*
Rachmaninoff – *Vocalise*
Gershwin – *Rhapsody in Blue*

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ROBOTIC PETS BRING COMFORT TO SENIORS IN COUNTY HOUSING

County of Morris

Morris County recently distributed robotic companion pets to seniors living in county-



(above) Morris County resident Ana Rios receives her companion pet dog.

supported housing as part of the “Joy for All” Companion Pet Program, sponsored by the Morris County Office on Aging, Disabilities and Community Programming and expanded this year to include the Morris County Housing Authority.

The Office on Aging partnered with the Housing Authority in 2025 to broaden the program’s reach to seniors residing in senior housing. As part of the expansion, the Housing Authority received 36 robotic companion pets, 26 of which have already been distributed to residents age 60 and older.

The companion pet program was launched in 2024 to help reduce social isolation, loneliness and cognitive decline among older adults by providing the comfort and companionship of a pet without the responsibilities associated with caring for a live animal. In its first year, the program distributed 110 robotic companion pets to eligible residents and facilities throughout

Morris County and partnered with the Morris County Sheriff’s Office Project Lifesaver program.

The robotic cats and dogs are designed to respond to motion and touch, offering realistic behaviors such as purring, rolling over, barking and wagging their tails.

“The companion pets have been the focus of rigorous, peer-reviewed studies demonstrating their effectiveness in reducing loneliness and social isolation,” said Christine Hellyer, director of the Office on Aging, Disabilities and Community Programming. “Recipients often name their pets and keep them as long as they wish, forming meaningful emotional connections.”

The program is funded through the Aging American Rescue Plan. To qualify, recipients must be at least 60 years old, homebound, and either socially isolated or living with dementia or a similar cognitive condition.

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OPERA AT FLORHAM PRESENTS VALENTINE SERENADE

Lenfell Hall, The Mansion, Fairleigh Dickinson University (285 Madison Ave, Madison, NJ • Sunday, February 15, 2026 at 2:00 PM

Opera at Florham invites audiences to celebrate Valentine's Day weekend with a concert of love on stage: Valentine Serenade, a special Sunday afternoon concert on February 15, 2026 at 2:00 pm at Lenfell Hall, The Mansion, Fairleigh Dickinson University (285 Madison Ave, Madison, NJ 07940).

Featuring beloved Opera at Florham favorites Sarah Barrera, Soprano, and Pedro Barrera, Tenor, this program showcases a married couple united on and off the stage, whose shared artistry brings rare intimacy and authenticity to every performance. The concert unfolds as a cinematic emotional journey - exploring love, longing, joy, and farewell through music that resonates deeply with the heart.

In past performances, the Barreras have captivated audiences with repertoire ranging from Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini, and Charles Gounod to Ennio Morricone, Stephen Sondheim, and other modern favorites, seamlessly bridging Opera, theater, and film in performances that are both emotionally rich and theatrically compelling.

WHY YOU CAN'T MISS IT

- A rare opportunity to hear a married couple perform together, bringing genuine intimacy and emotional authenticity to the stage

- A cinematic, story-driven program that goes beyond a traditional recital
- A unique blend of Opera, musical theater, and film music
- Performed in the elegant, intimate setting of Lenfell Hall at The Mansion, perfect for a Valentine's weekend experience

Tickets available online operaatflorham.org:

General Admission: \$30

Students (25 & under): \$10

FDU Students (25 & under): FREE

A Valentine Serenade is presented by Opera at Florham as part of its ongoing commitment to offering inspired, intimate performances in one of New Jersey's most beautiful historic venues. Reserve your seat online and early to enjoy this afternoon of love and passion, as limited tickets will be available at the door.

Opera at Florham has been northern New Jersey's leading Opera company since its founding in 1982. This 2023-2024 Season, we present six concerts, including the International Vocal Competition, and the educational series Opera Talk. Our concerts are performed by professionally trained artists singing Opera Arias and excerpts from Broadway musical theater and The Great American Songbook.

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Valentine Serenade



Sunday, February 15, 2026
2:00 pm
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Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, NJ

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MORRIS COUNTY LIBRARY FEBRUARY EVENTS

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The Georgia of the North

Tue., Feb. 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Black Women & the Civil Rights Movement in NJ: Centering New Jersey as the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement, The Georgia of the North highlights the critical role of Black women intellectuals of the Garden State in the long fight for Black freedom. Join us for a talk with author Dr. Hettie V. Williams as she discusses the work of Black women in affecting civil rights legislation, legal equality, and integration, from the Great Migration to 1954.

Registration (required)

Speed Book Dating

Thu., Feb. 5, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Get ready for a fun and fast-paced in-person event where book lovers check out new books! You'll spend a brief amount of time with one book, just to see if you hit it off, then move on to the next book -- no strings attached! At the end of the hour, we hope you'll leave with at least one new book you can't wait to read!

Spaces limited; registration required

Teen Dating Violence Awareness

Tue., Feb. 17, 7:00-8:00 p.m. via Zoom.

A representative from JBWS will talk on teen dating violence, awareness, signs, and what you can do about it. Open to all. There will be time for Q&A. Registration is required

ADULTS

Computer Classes

Registration required for all classes. For more info about and to register for any of our computer classes, visit www.mclib.info. Classes held in the Computer Lab on the second floor. This month's classes include: Intro to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel (series) I, II & III, and Intro to Excel Tables.

Tech Help Mondays

Mondays, Feb. 2, 9 & 23, 2:00-4:00 p.m. on the second floor. (We are closed Mon., Feb. 16 for Presidents' Day.)

Drop-in for help with your device, general internet instruction, and how to use library catalogs, databases, and apps.

Friday Afternoon Movies at 2:00 p.m.

No registration needed:

2/6: "Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale"

2/20: "A Beautiful Mind"

2/27: "CODA"

Tuesday Book Club

Tue., Feb. 10, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

This month we're talking about Valiant Ambition: George Washington, Benedict Arnold, and the Fate of the American Revolution by Nathaniel Philbrick. For more info or to reserve a copy of the book, please call 973-285-6970. No registration needed.

Medieval Book Club

Wed., Feb. 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

This month we're talking about El Cantor del Mio Cid: The Song of the Cid. For more info or to reserve a copy of the book, please call 973-285-6970. No registration needed.

Socrates Cafe

Wed., Feb. 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

A discussion group using the dialogue of the Socratic Method. The only requirement for this program is a willingness to listen respectfully. Speaking is not required, although encouraged.

No registration required.

True Crime Chat (Via Zoom)

Thu., Feb. 19, 7:00-8:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Virtual true crime discussion group meets via Zoom. The Zoom link will be emailed to you shortly before the program start time.

Registration required. February topic: Stalking

Mystery Book Club

Mon., Feb. 23, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

We read and discuss books chosen by the group.

No registration necessary. This month's book:

Murder Crossed Her Mind by Stephen

Spotswood. To reserve a copy of the book, please call 973-285-6970.

CHILDREN

Preschool Storytime & Music

All Tuesdays in February, 10:00-10:30 a.m.

w/Mr. Laurence: Stories, fingerplays and music with Mr. Laurence. For ages 2-5.

No registration needed.

LEGO Club

Sat., Feb. 14, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Create and build using LEGO! Your creations will be displayed in the Children's Room. For

ages 4-12. Registration (required) for all adults and children in your group opens Feb. 3

NEW PROGRAM! Paws for Reading

Thu., Feb. 19, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Read to a very patient therapy dog from Creature Comfort Pet Therapy! For ages 5-12.

Registration (required) begins Feb. 10

Anime Drawing Class

Mon., Feb. 23, 3:30-4:45 p.m.

Carlos Nieto from Anime Your Way will teach you how to create and modify an anime character using simple shapes and easy to understand instructions, no matter what your drawing level! For ages 6-15.

Registration (required) begins Feb. 17

TEENS & ADULTS

Spanish Conversation

Thu., Feb. 26, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Practice your Spanish language proficiency in a casual, small group environment. A basic level skill is recommended, however any skill level is welcome. No registration required.

TEENS

Teen Grab & Go Crafts!

Take mindful breaks this February and make time to be creative! One craft per teen per week, while supplies last, please. For ages 13-18. Pick up crafts throughout February at the Readers Services Desk.

2026 NJ CAMP FAIRS

connecting great kids with great camps



FREE ADMISSION 12-3pm
 RSVP and get a free gift at the fair!

Don't miss the area's biggest camp fairs. Parents are invited to connect with camp directors from a variety of camps: Traditional day and Sleepaway options, as well as specialty camps in Sports, Arts, STEM, Swim, Nature, Music, Academic and summer employment (CIT)

Feb 1: Montclair Art Museum, Montclair
Feb 7: Livingston YMCA, Livingston
Feb 21: Morris Museum, Morristown
Feb 22: Ridgewood Community Center
Feb 28: Menlo Park Mall, Edison

www.njkidsonline.com/camp-fairs

all fairs 12-3pm



RSVP

LIBRARY FEBRUARY 2026 PROGRAMS

You will receive Zoom instructions and online meeting information in your registration confirmation email in addition to a reminder email prior to the date of the program.

ABCs of Candy (Zoom)

Wednesday, February 4th @ 7pm

This program explores the history of a variety of different candies, including some that have been around for well over 100 years and some that are quite new. The program is conducted alphabetically, discussing a different "sweet" for each letter of the alphabet, but addresses broader themes, including when and why consumption of candy in the United States increased.

George Washington and Morristown ...Perfect Together

Wednesday, February 11th @ 7:00pm

(IN PERSON) Join historian Joel Farkas for "visual" walking tour connecting The Revolutionary War to Morristown NJ to George Washington. Learn and see what happened during Washington's two winter encampments in Morristown.

Adult Craft Club

Thursday, February 12th
@ 10:30am-12:00pm.

Join us for a fun evening of crafting and friendship. You will be making some fun greeting card. We will play with alcohol ink, paper punches and rubber stamps... Everything needed will be provided.

Knitting Club

Mondays from 1pm-3pm.

Join the knitters every Monday from 1-3pm for group knitting. All are welcome. No registration is required.

Vermeer's Love Letters and The New Frick

Thursday, February 12th @ 7:00pm.


(Zoom) The Frick Collection reopened and is hosting an intimate exhibition on Vermeer's Love Letters. To celebrate the newly renovated space two works by Vermeer from Amsterdam and Ireland will join the Frick's Mistress and Maid for our viewing pleasure. We will look at some of the renovated spaces and other important works by Vermeer.

Crack the Code: Affordable College Solutions

Wednesday, February 25th @ 7:00pm

(Zoom) In this workshop, participants will learn about: 529 Plans: Understand how these savings plans can benefit your family. How Does "The Big Beautiful Bill" Affect You: An overview of the legislation and its impact on college funding. FAFSA, CSS Profile, Financial and Merit Aid: Insights into the financial aid application process and available resources. Student Aid Index: we'll explain how this index affects financial aid eligibility. Alternative Savings Vehicles: Explore different options for funding your child's education.

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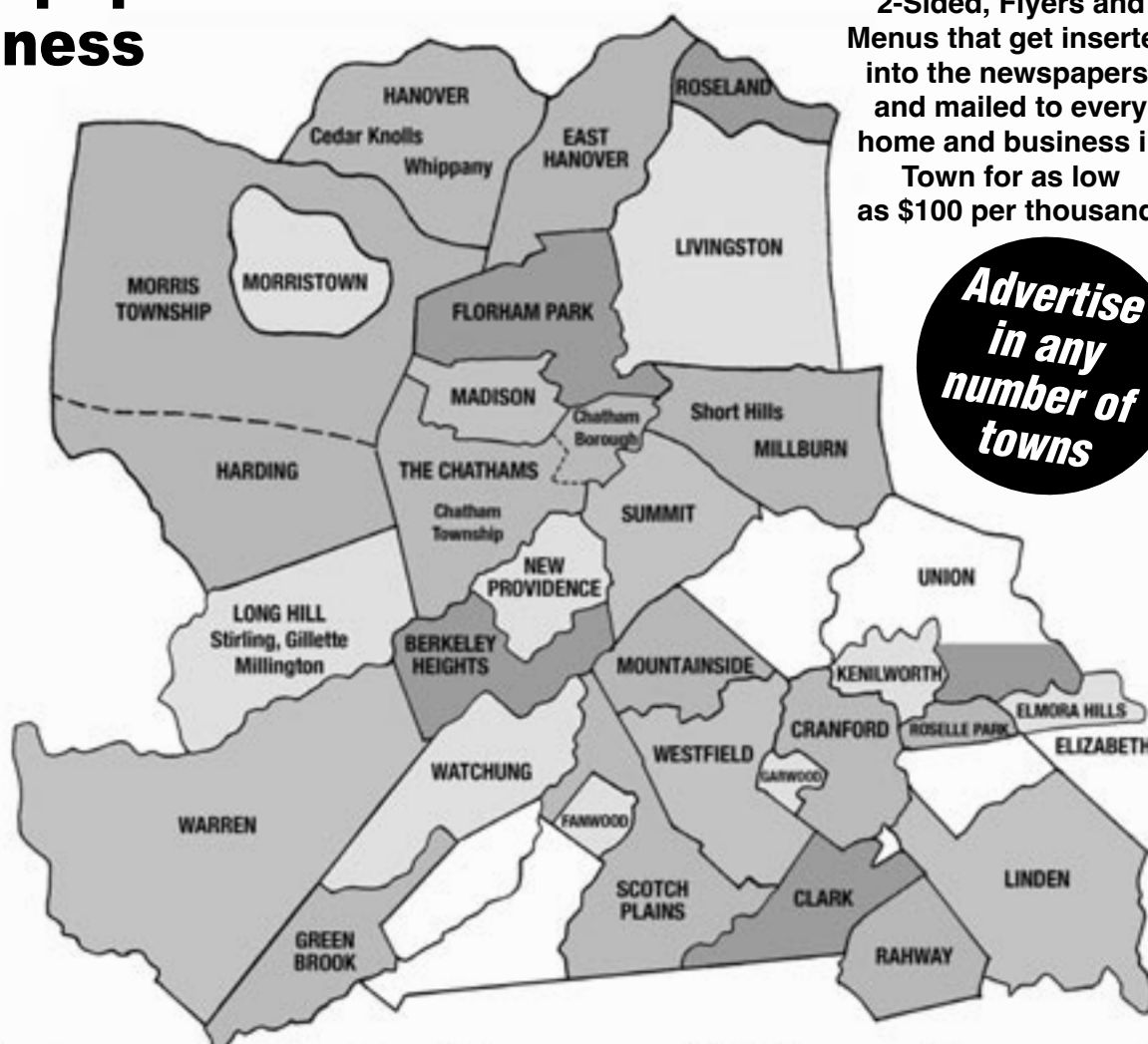
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9 HALF PAGE	6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
12 Units	6.5"x14"	400	960	1400	1800	2100	2400	2700	3000	3300	3600	3900
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PROBATIONARY PATROLMAN MICHAEL RAMOS TAKES OATH OF OFFICE



(above, l-r) Lt. Perrelli, Chief Miscia, Mayor Conley, Probationary Patrolman Ramos, Capt. Longo, and Lt. Plumstead.

Courtesy Photo

The Borough of Madison

On January 13, 2026, Mayor Conley administered the Oath of Office to the Madison Police Department's newest hire, Probationary Patrolman Michael Ramos (Badge #173), in Council Chambers.

Probationary Patrolman Ramos is currently enrolled in the 106th Basic Recruit Class at the Morris County Public Safety Academy, which began this week and is scheduled to graduate on June 1, 2026. He previously served the department as a per-diem dispatcher.

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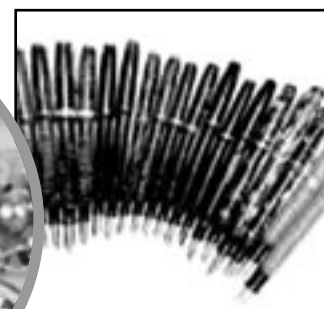
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