

Winter 2025 Preston Pipeline²

VOL14 ISSUE 2



From the Desk of the First Selectwoman

by First Selectwoman Sandra Allyn Gauthier

Happy New Year and welcome to Winter 2025!!!

We continue to work diligently on many initiatives that will prepare and poise Preston for the growth of the Riverwalk and beyond!

A trifold brochure to highlight Preston's 5-Year Joint Strategic Plan has been created. This brochure is one of the marketing deliverables as a result of all the efforts to include the community survey, in-person external community engagement and internal staff focus groups, and telephone interviews with businesses, residents, and other key stakeholders. This Community Wide Strategic Plan in partnership with the Town and School is a one-of-a-kind initiative in New England, possibly even greater geographically according to our Strategic Plan consultants. This partnership is unique and one we are proud of! We are pleased to share this brochure in this Pipeline issue (it follows this article), and we will continue to distribute it in key locations, on our websites and in other ways as appropriate.

The next phase of our Human Resources Performance Evaluation is being implemented. Evaluation forms, interim performance check-in questionnaires and project planner and tracker documents have been created and rolled out for use with staff members. Metrics used in other towns, such as the City of Norwich, which align and make sense for Preston are being incorporated into the performance evaluation process and for budget narrative and measurements in ClearGov as suggested by a resident. A "library" is being developed which will be used as a central resource for personal and career development ideas, needs, and goals. Department Managers and staff have been and will continue to be able to provide feedback on all these resources and tools over the next six months. The HR forms and metrics use the key priorities and goals of the Community Wide Strategic Plan to ensure our focuses have outcomes that the community has determined are important and essential to Preston's future.

The Economic Development Association's Best Practices has tools available to assist the Town in economic development and land use. It has a certification process like Sustainable CT but for now, we will work on the four key components: Communications and Marketing, Coordination and Collaboration, Organizational Capacity and Strategy and Policies and Procedures. We will review what we are already doing and implement ideas that fit for Preston. Each component has multiple action items under it. This endeavor will have key staff such as the Planner, Building Official and Zoning Enforcement Officer (and others as appropriate) working closely to ensure we are using best practices, seeking continuous improvement, and engaging with the community and stakeholders.

We continue to look at all available funding sources for our projects and Capital Plan. This has been and continues to be a team effort. We have submitted grant applications to the Community Investment Fund 2030, LOTCIP (both of which had new rounds open) and the Eastern Regional Tourism District. We are evaluating projects for the most recent round of STEAP which just opened with applications due February 20, 2025.

- We submitted two applications to the Community Investment Fund 2030. The first is for our Poquetanuck Village Master Traffic Calming Plan and Heritage Trail Project Phase III and improvements for Route 12 and Route 2A for engineering and design for an amount not to exceed 4M. The second is for a Master Plan for our Municipal Facilities and Building Needs and Assessment Advisory Group project for 250K. The CIF Board meets March 11, 2025, to review and approve applications. We received many letters of support from our legislators so many thanks to Senator Somers, Senator Osten, Representative Brian Lanoue, U.S. Senator Blumenthal, and U.S. Congressman Courtney! We will continue to update you on our progress. We had letters of support from businesses and other important stakeholders so thanks to them as well!

Continued on page 3

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Continued from cover page: From the Desk of the First Selectwoman

- For the latest round of LOTCIP, we submitted a pre-application to SCCOG for the construction of the Poquetanuck Village Master Traffic Calming Plan and Heritage Trail project from the DEEP property on Route 2A to the intersection of Route 12 and 2A. As previously discussed, we have the construction dollars for the other phases of this comprehensive project.
- We applied to the Eastern Region Tourism District to create and support six marketing initiatives with a goal of engaging residents, invigorating civic pride, and promoting businesses and agricultural tourism by supporting economic development while protecting rural integrity. Both are core pillars of the strategic plan. Key deliverables will be announced once we know if we have been approved for the grant which is anticipated to be on or before mid-March.

It is budget time again; as part of the process (as we have done in past years), we provided budget parameters to our Department Managers and Chairs. The upcoming conveyance of the Preston Riverwalk will impact staff and capacity. This is also another goal in the Strategic Plan which is to maintain and improve municipal services.

A summary of the budget parameters follows:

- Salary and wages will be handled centrally.
- Items should be kept flat whenever possible with up to a 2% increase with business justification. Amounts can be reallocated within department budget lines based on programming, historical data, or other pertinent needs.
- Any amount over 2% with business justification will need to be presented in person at a BOS Budget Workshop
- Recurring vendors should be contacted for any price increases or changes, and new quotes should be obtained for comparison purposes.
- Larger expenditures that are not capital should be included.
- Grant matches should be included.

A Budget Calendar to encompass the entire town process is being developed and will be shared on the Town Website and Town's Facebook page. As in years prior, the community notification system will be used for the Public Hearing, Annual Town Meeting, and Referendum.

Capital planning requests have been presented to the BOF, and the BOF's intent is to begin reviewing those over the next few months. Items are being prioritized and weighted by the BOS and BOE based on established criteria which are underway. The Capital Plan should be continually monitored as other funding sources are determined and approved too. The Boards should also be considering which items should be financed by the operating budget, bonding, "pay as you go" and other debt strategy options. Our Municipal Financial

Advisor will be engaged to forecast and recommend various scenarios.

Lastly, I implore you to get involved in our community in whatever capacity you can. It is an exciting time to make an impact and a difference in our community! Our government structure depends on the active participation of our community members. We need volunteers on our various Boards and Commissions. Please see <https://www.preston-ct.org/413/Volunteer-Opportunities> for openings. You can contact the Chair or appropriate staff member if you are interested in serving or for additional information too.

We continually update our Town Website and Town Facebook Page. I hope you find these resources helpful. Also, our TOWN OF PRESTON ALERT PROGRAM is a community notification system that delivers information directly from Town Officials to you - please register or update your profile on our website today!

As always, feel free to share your ideas, suggestions, and concerns by joining us at our BOS meetings, or calling me at 860-887-5581 ext. 105.

**I look forward to hearing from you!
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OUR CORE VALUES

Town/School leaders have collectively and clearly expressed the following Preston Town, School, and Economic aspects of value concerning its culture, climate, and optimism for the future.

Integrity

We promote a community-wide commitment to follow through with our joint plan, by matching our words and passions with thoughts and actions, with no desire other than for the greater good of the community.

Protection and Safety

We believe our people come first! Appreciation of Preston's rural and small town character as well as environmental conditions, inclusiveness, and personal health is a must. We strive to keep Preston safe for its residents, to coordinate initiatives regarding public health, and to improve its town and school buildings, property, and geographic infrastructure.

Innovation and Resiliency

We will strive to effectively and affordably seek and act on new ideas to achieve our joint strategic planning goals. It is a process of continual renewal involving the entire government organization as well as the whole participatory community. We are committed to strategic foresight, innovation, and smart investing in our people and our community.

Partnership and Leadership

We will foster and create leaders who inspire and facilitate team members to assume tasks and projects where they have developed knowledge and skill. Our partnerships will extend to the community where accountability flows in all directions.

Responsiveness and Growth

We believe that prosperous economic vibrancy and the desire to improve our economic outlook without impacting our rural character is fundamental. We welcome economic growth in specific locations. We exemplify responsiveness in our willingness to help constituents through prompt service in a dependable and accurate manner.

Passion and Excellence

We are committed to selecting and retaining high-performing employees and encouraging community members to pursue our goals with passion, enthusiasm, and excellence.

Open Communication and Transparency

We desire to better inform all members of the community with more and improved channels of communication regarding town and school events, public meetings, and recreational activities. We will achieve this by enhancing available communication tools. This includes digital messaging, improved internet and broadband access, and strategic placement of signage.



Preston's
5-Year

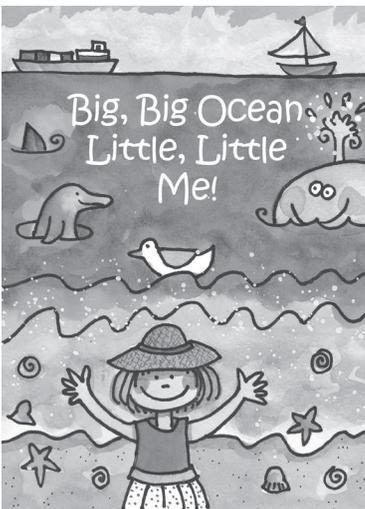


JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

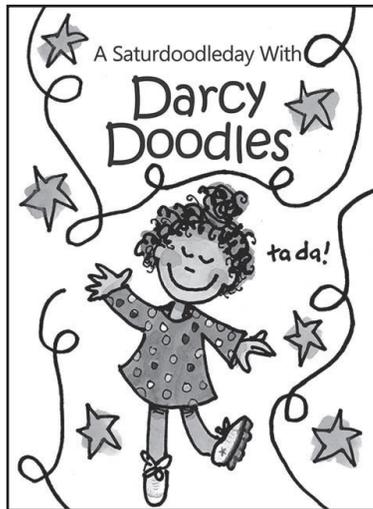
The Preston Town and Schools Strategic Plan will become a road map that is informed and shared by Town and School leadership and constituents to powerfully and accurately describe the fundamental goals and aspirations of the Preston Community for the future. It will essentially answer the question, "What do we want to be?"

2025-2030

My latest books are now up on Amazon...!



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written and illustrated by Tracy Rosiene



A fadoodle of a book for yoooodles!
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Email: tracylyndesigns@comcast.net

OUR VISION

Preston will be a vibrant community embracing opportunities that enhance wellness, respect all its members, and create a future of prosperity for all. We will create an exceptional quality of life that engages all citizens, provides economic stability and growth, offer leisure amenities, promotes business and employment opportunities, and support unsurpassed schools in the state of Connecticut.



OUR MISSION

Preston citizens, stakeholders, and civic and school leaders have collaboratively identified the following goals to improve Preston Town and School operations, its overall economic outlook, and the character of our community. We identify the following as goals to be addressed in the immediate period of 3-5 years; and with extension, to 10 years.

1

Create and implement an economic development plan that creates new enthusiasm and revenue while preserving the town's rural character.

Maintain and improve the quality of schools and municipal services.

2

3

Study and implement a plan for the best use of all school/town buildings.

Invest in technology for residents (broadband) and schools/government (cybersecurity/technology needs).

4

5

Validate and invigorate civic pride through communication and community initiatives.

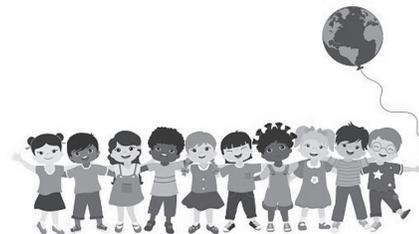
OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Preston Selectmen and the Preston Board of Education have created a joint strategic plan that will provide guidance and strategies that the entire municipal government structure will use to frame future decision-making, budget priorities, infrastructure projects, and community development at all levels.



To view the full Joint Strategic Plan, please visit www.prestonschools.org or www.preston-ct.org

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and

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<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1677077762/prestonschoolsorg/v0sxfhrxesulc3zibwur/ResidencyCheckList.pdf>

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Preston School District

Roy Seitsinger; Superintendent

Dear Preston Learning Community,

Happy New Year! We hope this version of the Pipeline finds you and your family well, safe, and enjoying your first few months of winter. The weather certainly has been intense at times, so please remember to have a foul weather plan and a plan to respond to unanticipated school closures due to odd weather or health and attendance disruptions.

We have worked through some challenging times these last few years, facing difficulties and achieving success. We know better days are coming with commitment, hard work, dedication to health and wellness, academic rigor, calmness, and care for each other. We can call 2025 the third year of steady recovery from the pandemic! With optimism and planning, we have moved forward with steady strides, improving operations, physical plant, instructional programming, and student performance. We look to the future with hope and optimism.

Preston Veterans Memorial School's PreKindergarten program was just awarded National Accreditation by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)! This is the first time that Preston has ever been acknowledged at the national level! Thank you to the entire team for working hard for almost two years to accomplish this goal!

The Preston Plains Middle School Boys' Basketball Team won the 2025 SEMSAC Large Division Championship! The girl's team was runner-up in their division—an outstanding season for all. Congratulations!

Plan and Act: In 2025, we are enacting the first steps articulated in our joint town and district strategic plan and district. *We are pleased and proud to do this work in coordination with the Town of Preston.* We have examined every aspect of our learning community and have established positive plans that include the following:

- A focus on building **Strong Hearts, Bodies, and Minds** of our children.
- Taking the next steps in implementing a powerful public-facing financial software package called ClearGov.
- Responding to and supporting the town-wide facilities committee.
- The continuation of our inter-operable coordinated technology, maintenance plans, and town programming through Parks and Recreation.
- Continue our efforts to sustain equal and equitable access to our community resources.
- Maintaining a supportive action to help everyone with mental health and wellness.

As part of this effort, we will continue to gather data, hold focus groups, and survey the community for guidance, perspective, and a positive growth vision. We look forward to the publication of our full

joint strategic plan document, which has already been published as a tri-fold summary and is available throughout our community.

The tri-fold brochure highlights Preston's 5-Year Joint Strategic Plan has been created. This Community Wide Strategic Plan is a one-of-a-kind initiative in New England, possibly even greater geographically, according to our Strategic Plan consultants. **This partnership is unique and one we are proud of!** We are pleased to share this brochure in this Pipeline issue (it follows this article), and we will continue to distribute it in key locations, on our websites, and in other ways as appropriate.

At the district level, we are issuing a parent survey about our report cards and student performance communication strategies. We will also hold other focus groups and collect data on different topics to help add district-level detail to our overall plan.

Personnel: Our experience and data foreshadow continued struggles such as a lack of teachers and other certified individuals coming out of higher education, burnout of staff at many levels, staff leaving the profession, and structural challenges on which our routine operations are based. Even so, over recent months, we have been able to achieve relative stability in certified staffing, support staffing, and transportation.

We are so grateful for everyone in our learning community's flexibility, dedication, commitment, kinship, and care. In many unprecedented and creative ways, our community continues to respond. Our building PTOs, the town Youth Service Bureau, and several consultants focused on various areas are moving the town forward with an emphasis on childhood experiences. It is a reflection of its people that Preston has prioritized relationships and has come out stronger financially, programmatically, and as a community.

We look forward to re-establishing other traditions and community activities, such as senior lunches at the elementary school, guest readers, community service, and more that will be reaffirming and welcoming.

Note: We continue to need substitutes for paraeducators, teachers, bus drivers, and custodian positions. If you or someone you know is interested in one of these areas, please do not hesitate to contact the central office at 860-889-6098.

Budget and Financing: We begin the next budget season by bringing an entire town and district audit to completion before completing each new town and district FY 26 budget proposal. **This historic accomplishment gives all of our boards a firm predictive foundation to create a strong fiscal plan for voter consideration.** The partnership between the leadership of the town and district and the coordination of a set of financial tasks led by our shared Director of Finance have put the town and district in a strong planning position.

Thank you to the voters for supporting both the town and the district budget for FY 25. As always, the upcoming FY26 budget will be critical for our entire learning community because going forward, we not only need to sustain our staff and programs, but we also need to expand in areas such as *science curriculum*, curriculum and instruction management, and expanding our creative environments using VR (Virtual Reality) goggles, and fully implementing our reading and math programs to help our students continue to grow academically and personally as the pandemic fades, but the impact lingers.

As part of our process in 2025-2026, we will begin to integrate our joint strategic planning goals and our curriculum and instruction priorities, called the **Pillars of Preston**, into our financial efforts with our larger district and community goals. We will continue to cite the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) goals as funding fades because they remain priorities. The five specific goals are (1) Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, and Student Enrichment. (2) Family and Community Connections. (3) Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of the Students and the Staff. (4) Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and the Digital Divide, and (5) Building Safety and Healthy Schools.

Student Population: As predicted, our district's student population will slowly increase and diversify over time. This year and following, our growth will remain relatively flat. Our priority for recovery and advancement, as well as our general community expectations, leads us to advocate for sustained staffing, the maintenance of smaller class sizes, and continued funding of supplies and materials.

Growing Work Priorities: As noted above, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) affirmed our *national accreditation* for our pre-kindergarten program. Our team did an exceptional job preparing layers of documentation and preparing for a sight visit as part of the accreditation process.

The middle school has wholly redesigned its schedule to create instructional spaces called WIN (What I Need) and PIP (Personal Interest Plan) that allow for expanded learning experiences for middle school students. PPMS also created an advanced math track to enable students with strong math skills to advance at their own pace. Over the last year, the middle school has added three new sports teams, including volleyball, softball, and golf, to support student wellness and skill development.

Systematic Examination of Grade Reporting: The Board of Education Communication Committee has initiated an in-depth review of our report card process. The staff has been surveyed. A parent focus group was held on February 4, 2025, at 7 PM at Preston Plains Middle School. A follow-up survey to parents has been scheduled, and there are plans to gather student input as well. Adjustments or changes in the report card design will be recommended to the Board of Education by the end of this school year.

Grants and Workload: The responses to the pandemic and the swiftly shifting priorities of society have generated significant increases in work for our learning team. In addition, in recent years, we have been required by law to adjust our kindergarten age from a cut-off of January 1, and we moved back to a cut-off age of five by September 1 to attend. Under new state law, we created an approved Inclusion Equity Diversity (IED) Recruitment Plan. *We have completed or are working on*

multiple policy updates, began a school culture and climate initiative, reviewed or complied with many substantial new and existing mandates, and managed more than twice as many grants than existed just a few years ago.

Over the next few years, two opposing events will happen in relation to grants. On the one hand, federal funds generated in response to the pandemic will end, and we will need to assess what we should keep and sustain going forward. On the other hand, new competitive grants and opportunities for innovative programming beyond the several grants that our district has already been awarded in areas such as HVAC, school safety, and curriculum will continue to pop up randomly. We must be prepared for both scenarios.

The Source: Over the last decade or so, there has been a cultural shift away from respecting expertise, the scientific method, confirmatory investigation, or the rigor of logical thinking. There is also a shift toward immediate gratification, no confirmation of source, and unfettered speculation without facts. We encourage our entire community to ask questions, examine perspectives, and come to the Source - the leadership of the district or the town, the meetings we host, and the messages we publish, for insight, information, and details. Sharing information and patiently creating understanding helps us all effectively pursue a mutually beneficial vision of what our future community should become. **Please get in touch with the district if you are interested in any of the topics mentioned here (860-889-6098 or www.prestonschools.org).**

Fully Engaged! The District is doing everything possible to keep students, staff, and community members engaged and safe. Health and attendance difficulties have lessened the impact on our district operations, including transportation, building and grounds, food service, certified staff, support staff, administration, and the Board of Education; however, monitoring chronic absenteeism remains a requirement expected by the State Department of Education. We have experienced spikes in student and staff absenteeism, so we continue to be cautious.

With honor, humility, humanity, patience, perseverance, kindness, and the reminder that we all need each other to move forward into a positive, dynamic future, we are doing more than moving forward; *we are at the very beginnings of significant transformation, an inflection point in our district, in our community, and likely in our nation.* It is our duty to do whatever we can to keep the community stable and plan ahead as partners so that we can care for our children and each other through these still challenging times.

The Future and the Vision of Our Community: We work efficiently in the present but are not so distracted by the urgency of the short term that we miss the importance of the future. We need to be thinking 5 to 10 years ahead. *Key to this planning and future action is participation.* We value and care for every single student in our district. We have the best community, wonderful children, caring families, and all the potential needed to address an unsure future successfully.

With the most profound thanks and respect for your support and sacrifices over the years, we offer our warm regards in the new year!

Roy M. Seitsinger, Jr., Ph.D., Superintendent

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Avalonia: Screech Owl Boxes!

Bob Chapin; Avalonia Preston Town Committee Chair

Of the 19 species of owls that live in North America, the Northeastern states generally host 6 or 7 species each. The big ones (the Barred Owl and the Great Horned) are fairly common, but smaller species like the Screech Owl are also around, though less frequently seen, or heard.

Why are we concerned about owls? All owl populations have been declining due to a human-driven reduction in prey numbers and suitable habitat. But as part of her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Katelyn Jakubowski in Norwich recently built 20 nesting boxes suitable for Eastern Screech Owls and donated them to Avalonia. THANK YOU, Katelyn!! Preston received two of these boxes, and we recently installed them high in the trees along the edges of some of the fields at the Preston Nature Preserve. Screech owls readily take to man-made nest boxes, so we are hopeful that at least one of these boxes will eventually host a mating pair.



Owls are astonishing birds with a whole suite of special adaptations to help them make a living at night. They locate their prey by sight and sound. To make that work, their eyes are both in the front of the head (rather than on the side, like songbirds), which enables binocular vision with excellent depth perception. This depth perception is critical for avoiding branches when flying in the forest, and for judging the depth and position of prey. The eyes are much larger, in proportion to their body, than our eyes are. And their eyes are not round, like ours, but elongated front-to-back, like a long telephoto lens. These extended tubular eyes produce a larger image on the retina, enabling very precise and clear distance vision. The trade-off for having such exceptional vision? Their eyes do not move in their sockets, which is quite different from animals with spherical eyes (like most other animals). Instead, owls can really rotate their neck. They have 14 vertebrae in their neck (as opposed to our 7), which allows them to have much greater rotational flexibility. Indeed, owls can turn their heads 270 degrees in each direction (both left and right). This gives the impression that owls can turn their heads all the way around...which is very nearly true. So their head moves, but not their eyes. And the iris expands fully in low light (when most owls hunt), allowing them to gather 2.5 times more light than we perceive in the dark.

Another interesting adaptation for catching elusive and quiet prey: their ears are closer to the front of their head, and are asymmetrically placed, with one ear being higher than the other. In species which hunt at night (like the Screech Owl), this asymmetry is pronounced, and one ear canal is also larger than the other. Owls have to locate their prey in both the horizontal plane (side to side), AND in the vertical plane (up and down). Owls and humans both have roughly the same precision horizontally (about 1-2 degrees), but by rotating their head 90 degrees and moving their head up and down on that very flexible neck, they are vastly more precise than we are at locating a sound in the vertical plane. Scientists have tested this in Barn Owls inside a completely dark, light-free laboratory room, where the owls had to rely entirely on their hearing to hunt. The

owls were able to successfully capture prey 90% of the time.

Another adaptation owls have evolved is silent flight. The feathers and wing structure of most daytime-active birds make noise rubbing together, and produce wind noise as the bird flaps its wings. The primary flight feathers on owls have a soft down near their base, to minimize rubbing with adjacent feathers. The flight feathers also have short comb-like ridges at the front of the feather, and a soft, hair-like fringe along the trailing edge. The combined effect is to produce much less noise in flight. This not only allows the owls to hunt without making any noise to give themselves

away, but that silence also allows the owls to hear well and precisely while flying. Making noise while flying would effectively "blind" the bird, and it would lose track of its prey on the approach. A noisy owl would be a poor hunter, and therefore, a hungry owl.

Eastern Screech Owls are small owls, whose most common calls are not screeches at all, but soft murmurings to their mate. They have one of the most diverse diets of all owls. They will eat June bugs, other large insects, and mice or voles in the summer. In the winter, songbirds occasionally replace the insects. All owls lack teeth, of course, and have comparatively short and weak bills, so rather than tearing their prey into smaller bits, adults will swallow their prey whole. Anything digestible will be dissolved in the two-chambered stomach and gizzard, and the rest (bones, feathers, scales) will be regurgitated as an owl pellet.

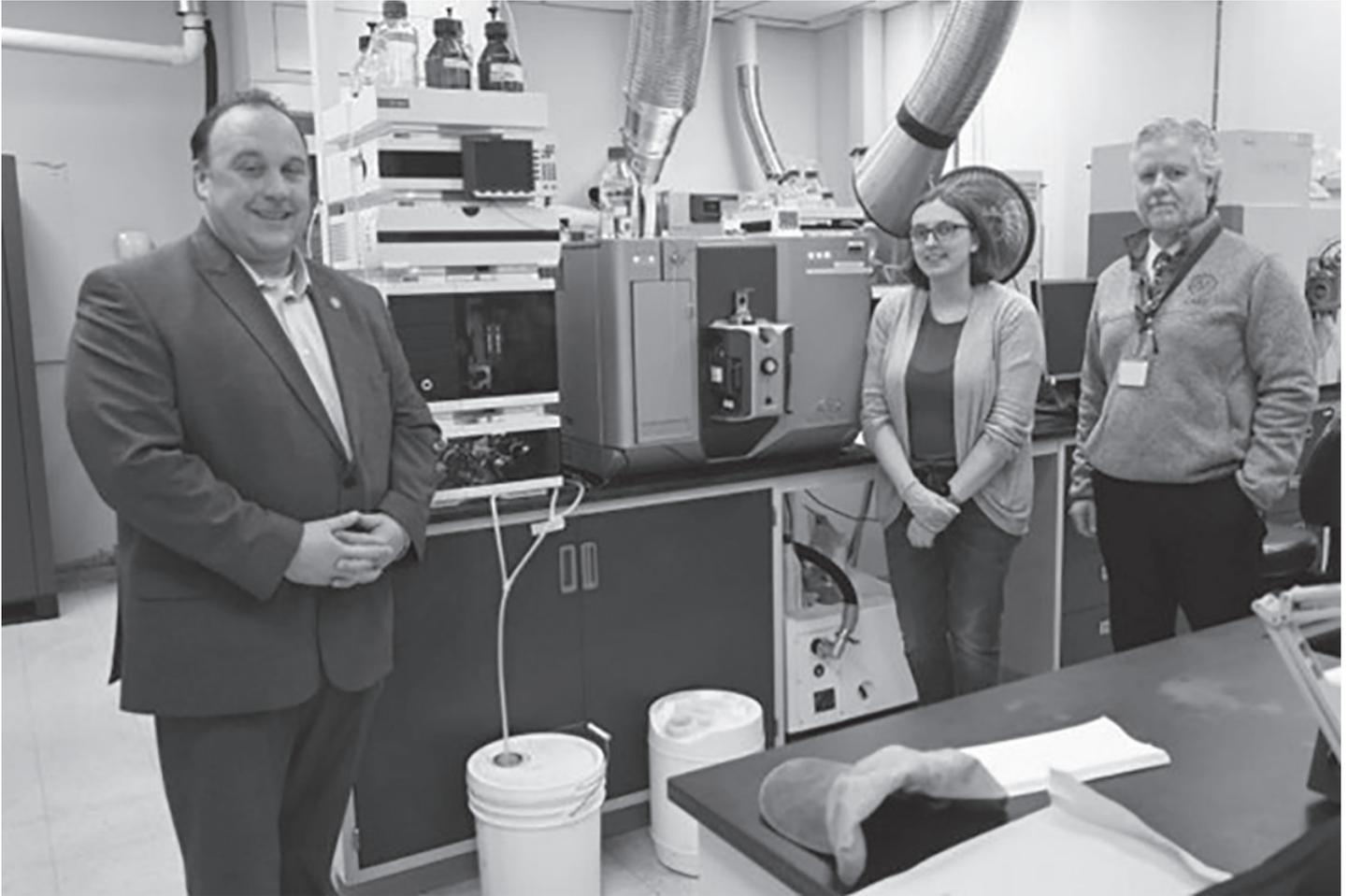
Screech Owls come in two colors: a brown form and a grey form. The grey form is the same grey of tree trunks, and when the owls perch near the base of a branch, near the trunk, and elevate their ear tufts, they blend in really well, effectively dissolving into the background of the forest. Screech Owls are also nocturnal hunters, so are rarely to be seen during the day. We will have to check for their presence in the Preston Nature Preserve (PNP) by looking for owl pellets under the nest boxes, and listening for their calls recorded on the BirdWeather passive listening device. If we are lucky and attract a nesting pair, the chances are good they (or an adult offspring) will return next year, as owls tend to re-use their successful old nests over and over.

Owls start to court in February, and by March are settled into the process of raising their family. If you go walking at the PNP, keep an eye out for these nest boxes, and wish the occupants luck.

Finally, let me remind you that the PNP is open to all walkers and nature enthusiasts until April 15, when we will close the Preserve to allow ground-nesting birds to use the fields to hatch and raise their young. As always, please keep your dog on a leash, and enjoy the winter fields. It's a different experience in the winter.

Questions or comments to me at bobchapin@access.net.

From Representative Brian Lanoue



In December, I had the unique opportunity to visit the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station located in New Haven. The reason for the visit? Some of you might remember two years ago I championed legislation that added PFAS chemical testing to the soil testing program at the facility.

PFAS is a group of synthetic forever chemicals that are resistant to heat, water, and oil. These toxic substances were added to fertilizers over the years and do not break down easily. This legislation was critical as it is important for farmers to know if there are any traces of it remaining in their soil.

With a soft launch of PFAS Testing starting this month and a hard launch beginning in February, this testing is of great importance to not only farmers, but to town owned properties and Connecticut homeowners as well. It is expected that the complete PFAS Testing Program will be in full swing by May.

As a follow up, I was invited by CAES Director, Dr. Jason White, to discuss PFAS Testing, and take a tour of this historic facility. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station is the oldest agricultural experiment station in the country and is located on

a 7-acre campus. There is a satellite facility that is in Windsor, Connecticut, with a 70- acre facility in Hamden, and a 24- acre facility located in Griswold. When the New Haven location was founded in 1785, they operated on a budget of just \$2,300 per year! The facility currently employs 110 people, while the satellite facility located in Windsor has 12 staff members.

During my discussions on the tour with Dr. White and his wonderful staff, I learned a variety of information concerning PFAS, and got to see firsthand the time and attention to detail that must be taken while testing the chemical. It is made up of thousands of contaminants, and it is one of the most difficult chemicals to test. Something as simple as putting your soil into a plastic bag could alter the test result. The facility is expected to test 1,500 samples on average per year.

As the program begins to roll out between now and May, my office will be relaying the latest information from Dr. White and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. With our area of Connecticut being particularly enriched with a great history of agriculture, this program will help us monitor our soil for generations to come.

Cub Pack and Troop 75 News



St. James Church Cub Pack 75 races their Box Cars recently at PCVFC.



Cub Pack 75 is instructed in First Aid by Cub leader Mike Swanson.



Cameron Maskaly recently became Scout Troop 75 84th Eagle Scout. Koto's to Cameron and T75.



Scouts from troop 75 receive donation from delta Water Fowl as part of Jacob Searcy's Eagle Project. Jacob built 16 "Mallard Wood Duck Hen Houses" at the Preston City firehouse.

Congratulations To All!

SJC Epiphany Tree Burning and Old Glory ceremony 2025



SJC Parish members sang songs of rejoice as members of Scout Troop 75 lead several Prays for Peace and Love to respect All those who gave their lives as a true Sacrifice, The Victim's of the Calf. Fires and Hopes for World Peace in the year 2025. This Annual St. James Traditional Annual Epiphany, "The coming of the Kings" was started by Father David L Cannon many years ago. The Many Trees and wreaths were donated by the Preston community and a majority from the staff at Flemings Feed and Hardware.



Preston City Congregational Church



*Where
Friends
Become
Family*

Pastor Thomas C. Burke, Jr.

Worship at 9:30 A.M..
Sunday School 9:15 A.M.

EASTER SERVICES!

**Sunrise Service
6:30 a.m.
Amos Lake
Hollowell Road**

**Easter at PCCC
9:30 a.m.**

Please Join Us!

Check us out on FACEBOOK!

For more information, check out our website:
prestoncitycongregational.org

**321 Route 164 • Preston, CT
860.887.4647 or 860.886.7200**

News From The Preston City Congregational Church Two Can Food Pantry



**The pantry is now open on the
3rd Wednesday of each month
from 10 'til noon.**

We welcome all sorts of canned goods. Always needed: tuna, soups, cereals, cranberry sauce, stuffing, gravy, canned veggies... we thank you for your generosity!

You are very generous people, and we are grateful, and so are they!
(The Toucan Food Pantry Crew)



Preston Historical Society

EST. 1964

Address-123 Parks. Rd., Preston, CT 06365 Email- prestoncthistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Website- www.preston-ct.org Facebook- facebook.com/prestonhistoricalsocietyct/



We Need YOU!

AMERICA 250 CONNECTICUT

In 2026, the United States will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the country. It is an opportunity for reflection on the ideals of the founders of the nation, but also a time to consider the path forward in expanding our realization of those ideals today.

In the spirit of participatory democracy, the Preston Historical Society is working with the schools and local government to create programs and events to help celebrate this historic year.

If you have ideas, or would like to join a committee to organize projects, please call Linda at 860-887-5828, or email prestoncthistoricalsociety@gmail.com

The Preston Historical Society is involved in a project putting our held archives of documents and photographs online. It is a very interesting project. I feel like I learn new things about the history of our town every time I enter information.

The work requires a computer (a scanner is optional), and an extra few hours a week of your time. You can work from home, too! We've got some great volunteers already, join us!

If you'd like to see what we've been doing, go to <https://ctcollections.org/>.

Please call Linda at 860-887-5828 or email LindaCh5@comcast.net. We'd love your help!!!!



PRESTON CEMETERIES

We are so lucky to have so many (34) old colonial cemeteries in Preston. Unfortunately, many of them are unkept and overgrown. The PHS has been working to keep these cemeteries clean. **If you'd like to help, please contact Gary Piszczek at hellgate_farm@msn.com**

Preston Historical Society Membership Application – 2025

Please Circle: \$10 – Senior(55+)/Student \$20 – Single membership \$25 – Family membership
\$125 - Lifetime membership _____ Donation

Please make checks payable to PHS. Remit to Mark Christensen, Treasurer
15 Amos Rd, Preston, CT 06365

Name: _____ Address _____

Town: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I'm interested in: Publicity____ Programs____ Documents Transcription____ Building & Property Preservation____

Preserving the Past for Future Generations



Preston Public Library

389 Route 2 (Across from Town Hall) Preston, CT 06365 • Phone 860.886.1010

Find us online! www.prestonlibrary.org • Email us: library@prestonlibrary.org

Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays Fridays 10:00 am- 4:00 pm • Thursdays 10:00 am – 7:00 pm

Saturdays 10:00 am – 2:00 pm • Closed Sundays, Mondays

Website: <https://prestonpubliclibrary.org> Facebook: Preston Public Library-CT Instagram: prestonlibraryct

Upcoming Programs and Events

Thursday February 27th at 5:30 pm

Mighty Aphrodite:

Celebrating Chocolate, Friendship and Love

A playful program celebrating love, friendship and fun romantic duos throughout history and of course, the love of chocolate! Join Kim Larkin of Klassic Kreation as she presents a program of fun cultural history of foods that inspire love. Aphrodite's mocktail spritzer will be served along with chocolate and chocolate-dipped treats.

Fun poetry, a large, colorful display and interactive trivia make this a class to love!

Register online at <https://prestonpubliclibrary.org>

Wednesday, March 19th 10:30 am:

Jazz Concert with the

Preston Plains Middle School Jazz Band

Swing into Spring with the Preston Plains Middle School Jazz Band as they perform favorite songs! This concert is free and open to all ages! No registration required.

Family Fun

Saturday, March 15th All Day!

Shamrock Celebration!

Stop by the library on Saturday, March 15th to celebrate shamrocks and all things green! Craft stations will be available to create St. Patrick's Day crafts to make or give to someone special!

At 12:00 pm, enjoy a performance by the dance troop Crow and Cauldron! Take a challenge at our green scavenger hunt for a sweet treat, and enjoy our green giveaway!

For all ages, no registration is required.

While supplies last. No registration required.

Children's Corner

Tuesday, March 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th

11:00 am-11:30 am

Spring Story Time for Toddlers

Come bloom at our story time for 2 to 3 year-olds and their caregivers! Stories, finger plays, songs, and crafts! Register online at <https://prestonpubliclibrary.org>

Wednesday, March 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th

11:00 am-11:30 am

Spring Story Time for 3 to 5 Year-Olds

Spring forward with our story time for preschoolers! Picture books, stories, songs, finger plays, and crafts! Register online at <https://prestonpubliclibrary.org>

Thursday, March 22nd 11:00 am-1:00 pm

Budding Builders Clinic

Challenge your engineering skills each month in this stop-in activity! Each month different building materials will be available for participants to create interesting designs from their imagination.

For all ages. No registration required.

Lego Club: Thursday March 27th

5:30 pm-6:30 pm

Enjoy some after-school fun at our active Lego Club!

Due to popular demand now a 2 hour session!

We have lots of Legos, snacks, and Lego books to inspire your creations!

For ages 5 to 12 years old. No registration required.

Volunteers Needed

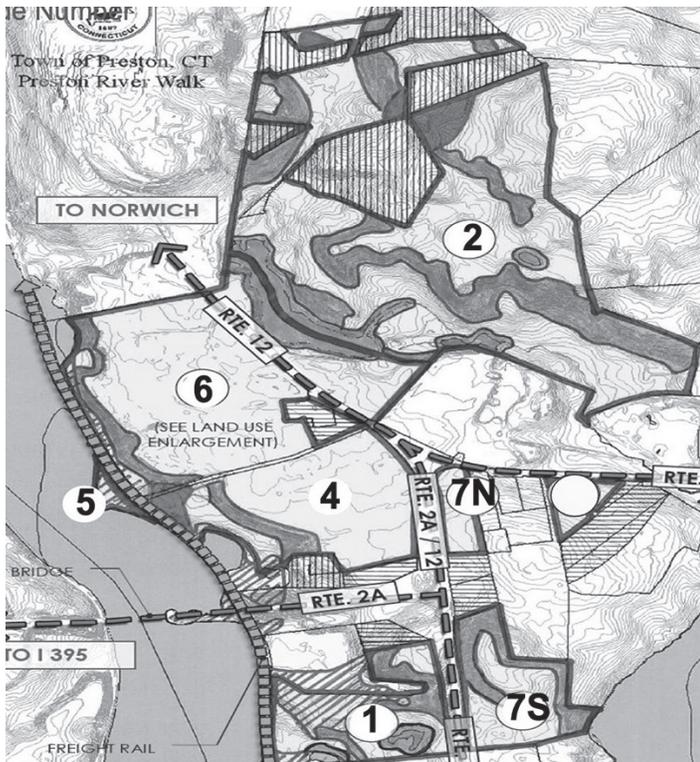
The Library is always looking for volunteers to help out with small projects at the Library! Examples of projects included cutting out crafts, shelf-reading, and other projects depending on skill. Great for school community service hours if you're a teen! For more information call us at (860) 886-1010.



Preston Redevelopment Agency (PRA)

Sean Nugent & Merrill Gerber

Clean-up work was completed!



The clean-up work was completed by the end of August 2024! While this was a fantastic outcome, conveyance to the Mohegan's has not occurred as significant administrative paperwork related to our Environmental submissions and our closing documents with the Tribe still needs to be completed.

As it relates to environmental submissions, we have been working with our environmental firm (Tighe & Bond) to complete all documentation required by CT-DEEP (Department of Energy & Environmental Development) related to the Final Verification Reports on each parcel in order to achieve a "No Audit" response. To date, we have received a "No Audit" finding from CT-DEEP on Parcels 1, 5, 7S, and 7N.

We submitted the Final Verification Report for Parcel 2 in late December 2024 and anticipate a "No Audit" response sometime in March. Parcels 4 & 6 cannot be submitted until we complete the detailed (online and over 1500 pages each) Environmental Land Use Restriction (ELUR) submissions. These documents require our surveyors (Meehan & Goodin), our legal firm (Ship-

man & Goodman), and our environmental firm (Tighe & Bond) to coordinate efforts to pull these documents together. These must be submitted and approved by CT-DEEP before we can submit the Final Verification Reports. The ELUR for Parcel 6 will be submitted in January and we hope to submit the ELUR for Parcel 4 in March. For those not familiar with our agreement with the Tribe, a "No Audit" finding on each parcel is required prior to conveyance.

In addition, we are working with our legal firm (Shipman & Goodwin) to develop and complete all documentation required for closure and conveyance. We are working regularly with the Tribe and their legal team to ensure this material is ready for execution once we complete the CT-DEEP "No Audit" process.

As a result, completion of this administrative work should position us to convey the property with the Tribe by the fall of 2025.

Per the Property Disposition and Development Agreement (PDDA), once conveyed the Tribe has three years to begin development and an additional two years to complete their development. The current development plans are based upon the current Conceptual Master Plan which was approved by both Planning & Zoning and the PRA in 2017. Recall that the property becomes taxable at conveyance.

Lastly, we remind everyone that while our clean-up work has ended, only those groups associated with the project are allowed access to the site. We continue to work with our State Troopers about trespassers who feel the site is their personal off-road biking trail or that the Administration Building is their personal area to hang out and/or deface. Please know that anyone caught trespassing will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

In the meantime, should you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, please attend one of our meetings on the second or fourth Wednesday of each month or contact me (Sean Nugent) at 860-625-3160 or Merrill Gerber at 860-887-7169.

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Preston Market

at Lu-Mac's Plaza • 352 Route 2
Preston • 860-892-1407

**Stop by and say hello as we are
changing things up a bit!
We are excited to be part of the
Preston community and will have
a grand opening in the near future...!**

Groceries, Snacks, Candy, Ice Cream, Milk,
Bread, Cleaning Supplies,
Coffee, Sodas, Juices, Energy, Water, Teas
Lottery and so much more!

