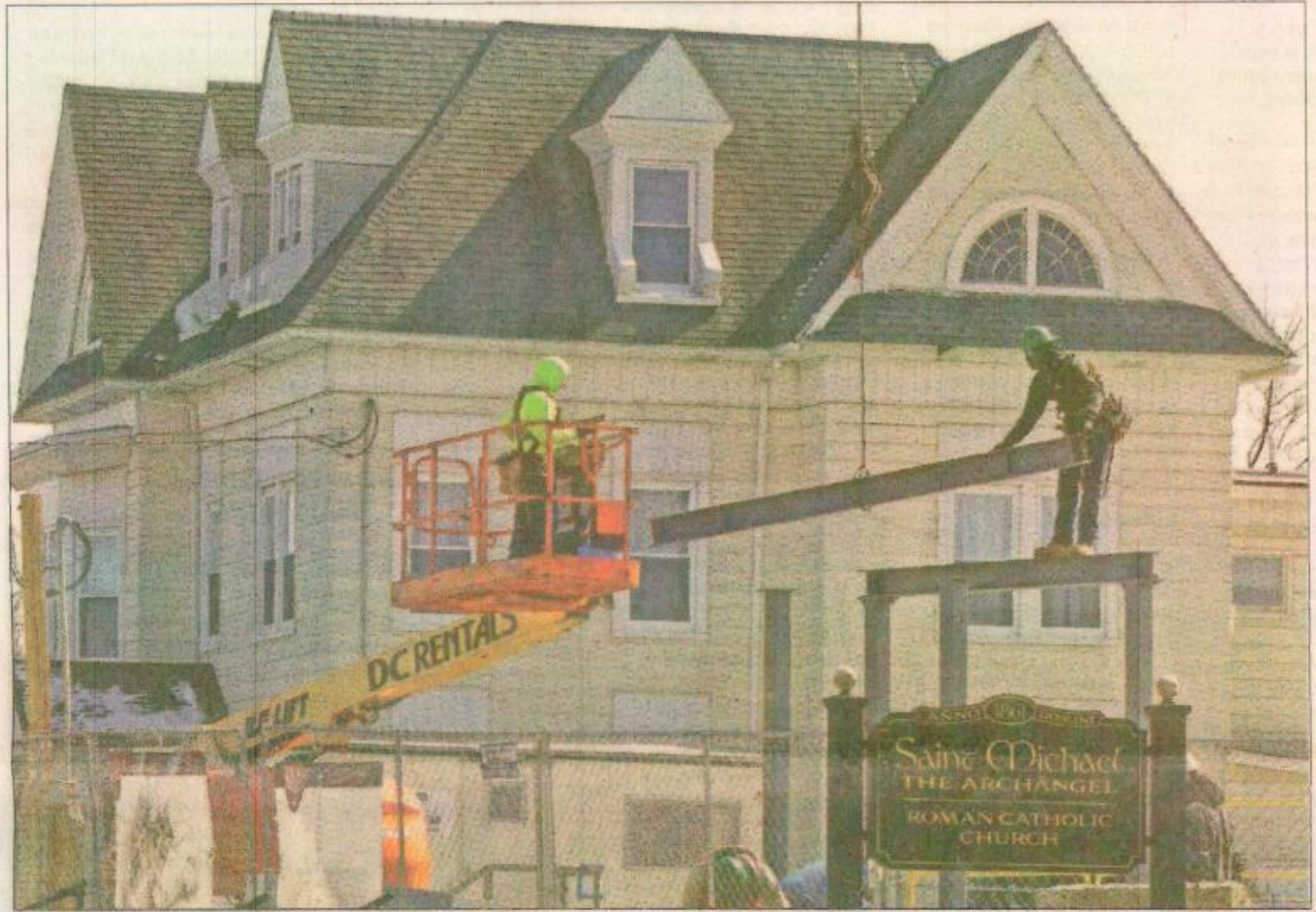


DOING GOD'S WORK



Steelworkers begin work raising the steel framework for the new St. Michael the Archangel Church on Liberty Street in Pawcatuck, on Monday. Petra Construction Corp., out of New Haven, is the general contractor for the project. | Photos by Harold Hanka, The Westerly Sun

St. Michael's reconstruction under way

Steel framework starts going up; trusses coming next week



By Brooke Constance White
Sun staff writer

STONINGTON — Although it's been quiet at St. Michael's Church for a few weeks, things are picking up again as the steel framing for the steeple is being laid in preparation for the

exposed timber trusses to be raised next week. Father Dennis Perkins said work on the church reconstruction slowed while project manager Petra Construction was waiting for Vermont Timber Works to complete the trusses, which will support the roof.

"There hasn't been a lot going on at the job site but things are getting going again," he said.

See Church, A6



Steelworkers begin work raising the steel framework for the new St. Michael the Archangel Church on Liberty Street in Pawcatuck, on Monday.

Trump raises fears about access to federal data

Scientists, others worry about access to federal data? Laws have been introduced

dent Assistance Services, an agency that provides substance abuse prevention services to schools and communities throughout Rhode Island, is the Regional Director of Development for the South County coalition.

"I am tasked with developing the regional task force on the coalition that

Chariho Middle School prevention counselor Terri Censabella, a task force member, said it would be challenging to fully integrate groups which have been operating independently.

"It's going to take some time, because we've all been our own private entities for so long," she said.

years, the school committee has allocated \$28,195 in the proposed budget to partially fund the positions, which cost a total of \$59,000 per year.

The committee will make the final cuts to the \$57 million spending plan at its Thursday meeting, scheduled for 7 p.m.

Battle brews over free tuition plan

Fellow Democrat, House Speaker Mattiello critic of Raimondo's proposal

By Matt O'Brien
Associated Press

PROVIDENCE — Gov. Gina Raimondo's signature initiative this year — a proposal for two years of free tuition at the state's public colleges — is off to a rocky start.

House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello, a fellow Democrat, took to Twitter last month to call it "unsustainable and fiscally irresponsible." Other lawmakers have also voiced doubts.

Raimondo said in an interview Thursday it is all "part of the normal give and take" of the legislative process in

the Democratic-controlled General Assembly. In previous years, similar battles on competing priorities ended in compromise.

But even some supporters of Raimondo's free tuition concept said other legislators are having a hard time endorsing a program perceived as a giveaway.

"This is truly middle-class relief," said Rep. Gregg Amore, a Democrat and member of the House Finance Committee that will begin vetting the proposal Wednesday.

But "when it was rolled out as free, I think she lost a golden opportunity to sell this for what it really is," Amore said. "I think the proposal has merit and the messaging stepped all over the merit."

Raimondo's program would cover tuition for the full two years at the Community College of Rhode Island or the final two years of a four-year-degree at the University of Rhode Island or Rhode Island College.

Raimondo has held rallies at high schools around the state since January, building enthusiasm among college-bound seniors and their families. Several mayors and city councils have endorsed it, as has the Providence NAACP and the Democratic president of the state Senate.

"We've heard from hundreds and hundreds of families from across Rhode Island," said Raimondo, adding that she is also "hearing daily from business people telling me this could be a game-changer for Rhode Island's economy."

>> Church

From A1

"They didn't want to put the steel structure up too early because the trusses are needed to tie into it."

The trusses are scheduled to arrive Monday, and once they are put together Perkins plans to have members of the parish come to sign them on March 26 and April 2 from noon to 4 p.m. as a way of including the congregation in the project and thanking them for their continued support.

The Bishop will be at the site on April 2 at 8:30 a.m. to bless the trusses. The first one will be raised immediately following.

At the moment, Perkins said they are about half-

way to their goal of raising the nearly \$8 million for the reconstruction project. Although the estimates were higher than they had initially thought, Petra Construction has been working hard to save money in other ways, he said.

In late January, the parish announced that an anonymous donor offered to match donations up to \$250,000, which Perkins said they met at the end of February.

"We're excited to see the project progress and are especially excited to see the steeple and structure go up," he said. "We are excited to see progress being made above ground and to continue our capital campaign

to raise the remaining funds to see the project through."

The project has been a long time coming as the parishioners and church leadership voluntarily vacated the building five years ago after learning it was structurally unsafe.

Since then, the leadership looked at various options such as renovating portions of the building. After inspecting the church, architects and engineers indicated that dismantling and rebuilding was the best and most cost-effective route to take.

The landmark property, located at 60-62 Liberty St., was built in 1861 and an addition was built in 1867. The

roof, which was put together in a piecemeal manner, was problematic since the beginning, Perkins said. Columns were installed from the basement to the ceiling to stabilize the roof in 1872.

The first phase of the project the current rebuilding project, which began last summer, included dismantling the walls and roof. The new church will include a 745-square-foot addition to allow for an elevator and ADA-compliant restrooms.

The interior will not be complete until all funding has been pledged for phase two of the project.

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>> Council

From A1

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