

Hall

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clarification regarding the Solarium demolition and rescheduled for June 3. Nine companies submitted bids last week with all nine exceeding the \$10.5 million approved by voters.

The lowest bid came in at \$11.7 million, submitted by Domus Construction out of Philadelphia. Domus bid the full \$10.5 million for the construction of the building, but added another \$700,000 for

the modification to the promenade, and a little over \$505,000 for the geothermal heating and cooling system.

All the bids were available for consideration at Tuesday's special council meeting, but as the mayor indicated, no action would be taken on them prior to July 1.

The other eight bids offered on June first included:

- A& E Construction: \$11.9 million (\$10.7 million for building, \$760,000 for promenade and \$521,000 for geot-

hermal system).

- Ernest Bocks and Sons: \$12.1 million (\$10.9 million for building, \$635,000 for promenade and \$525,000 for geothermal system).
- Fred M. Schiavone: \$12.2 million (\$11.4 million for building, \$300,000 for the promenade and \$521,000 for geothermal system).
- Torcon Construction: \$12.4 million (\$11 million for building, \$950,000 for promenade and \$500,000 for geothermal system).

- Art Anderson and Associates: \$12.4 million (\$11.1 million for building, \$700,000 for the promenade and \$521,000 for geothermal system).
- Benjamin R. Harvey Co: \$12.6 million (\$11.7 for building, \$300,000 for promenade and \$600,000 for geothermal system).
- Gingerelli Brothers Construction: \$13.1 million (\$11.5 million for building, \$1 million for the promenade and \$521,000 for geothermal

system).

- Network Construction: \$14 million (\$12.8 million for building, \$687,000 for the promenade and \$521,000 for the geothermal system).

City council has already been concerned with the additional costs associated with the reconstruction of the new Convention Hall, and on June 1, they authorized an additional \$47,530 for architectural firm Kimmel Bogrette to come up with plans for a less expensive

building.

Wichterman, Fiocca and Bill Murray, who were elected May 11 and will take their oaths of office July 1, each said they favored a scaled down Convention Hall. Wichterman said while he was campaigning he heard most people saying the project was too big; however, the bond ordinance was passed based on current a building with a larger footprint.

Study

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Garden State Parkway," Van Drew said.

According to Van Drew, there is no way to widen Route 47, so they must come up with other ways to relieve congestion while being sensitive to environmental issues. Van Drew said the traffic congestion itself is an environmental issue.

"Traffic just stacks up and doesn't move for a day at a time during the summer. We've had horrific accidents. We talk about welcoming people to the shore after they've literally sat in traffic for six hours," he said. "We need to see if there is any way to move forward with some sort of Route 55 extension."

Van Drew said the discussion on extending Route 55 has gone on for as long as he's been in public service and it always comes down to environmental issues. He said it's time to bring the DEP and the road engineers together to find some way of making it happen.

County and state officials were looking at bringing the Beesley's Point Bridge back into operation, but the cost has been a major stumbling block to the operation. Van Drew said the state got back the \$900,000 it loaned the former owners of the bridge, then took possession of it and turned it over to Cape May County. The county has not yet come to an agreement over what to do about the bridge.

"If they are not going to restore it, someone has to facilitate a twin span on the parkway over Great Egg Harbor. Van Drew said not only is this a major access and egress for tourists coming to county shore points, but more importantly is a primary evacuation route in the event of a life-threatening storm.

"If there is a Category 3 hurricane, which potentially there could be, the entire county could be covered in water. In advance of that, everyone will be moving out north and west. All traffic

lanes will be reversed – the only folks coming in will be National Guard and Emergency Management people. If the county is going to turn the Beesley's Point

Bridge into fishing piers, fine, but we need to have a twin span over Great Egg Harbor on the parkway," Van Drew said.

According to Van Drew, the

existing span is not in good condition and must be constantly monitored. He said it is similar to a span that collapsed in Minnesota in May 2009.

"Something has to be done. We just can't leave people here to die," he said.

Van Drew shops for feedback from constituents

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON – State Sen. Jeff Van Drew recently conducted a series of supermarket stops around the district, trying to touch base with constituents and see what was on their minds.

"It went well," Van Drew said. "Part of that is just for me to keep in touch with people."

Van Drew said he feels it is very important to stay connected with the people who live in the district. He said it also gives people an opportunity to spout off to their state senator.

"There was a broad range of issues. Sometimes people said things were just fine. But they were also bringing up local issues, like the pothole in their street," he said.

Van Drew said people commented on

the light piers at Cape May's gateway, saying anything from they were awful to they're not that bad. People also raised budget issues.

"The most prevalent thought of all was try to be fair. The strongest theme I received was to stop spending, diverting and borrowing the way it has been done in the past. I have been a proponent of that for a long time. But be fair. Everyone has to tighten their belts from top to bottom. They said if the police, fire and teachers have to take a hit, then the administrators, senators and even governor should as well," he said,

Van Drew said people told him reductions should be spread out evenly over departments, not cherry-picked.

Van Drew said there were some areas where he didn't want to see cuts, such as libraries and transportation for the


disabled.

"I believe everyone should work. The disabled are working, producing, and getting a paycheck. But if they can't get to work, that is not right," he said.


Van Drew said libraries are not a luxury and should not be asked to take a 75 percent reduction. He said libraries provide the unemployed with access to computers, they are a way for kids to get information they need for schools, and provide information in various forms to senior citizens.

"All that cutting is not good," he said. "I believe you cannot grant people success. That is something they have to do on their own. But we have to provide the opportunity."

Van Drew said by and large people in the district are supportive of the state trying to balance the books and becoming fiscally responsible



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AcroBlast, fireworks coming to township

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Acroblast, an aerobatic flying competition, will once again be held at the Cape May County Airport.

The event is open to the public, but the organizers again stressed it is not an air show. As of Monday, 23 pilots had registered for the compe-

tion, and as many as 30 are expected to participate.

All the flying, which includes compulsory stunts, will be done over a heavily wooded section within the airport. None of the stunts or maneuvers would be done over residential areas. Judges will be placed around the "box" the pilots will fly in to monitor their maneuvers.

This year, the event will run

from Thursday, June 24, through Sunday, June 27. On June 24, registration and practice begins at 9 a.m. and concludes at 5 p.m.

On June 25 registration and practice begins at 8 a.m. and will conclude by 6 p.m.

The actual competition will begin Saturday, June 26, with a pilot briefing at 7 a.m. The first competition begins at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude

around 6 p.m. Competition resumes on June 27 at 8 a.m. and will conclude by 2 p.m.

Fireworks

Area businesses donated \$22,100 toward a fireworks display, which will be held July 5 in Lower Township. Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare said without the donations there would have been no fireworks this year.

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