



## City Council OKs budget with no increase in taxes

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## House of the Week

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170th YEAR NO. 20 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024 \$1.00

## Tourism panel optimistic area will see growth

### But wage inflation, loss of beach concerts, labor shortages to harm A.C.

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

ATLANTIC CITY — Panelists at the 16th annual Jersey Shorecast on May 8 were cautiously optimistic about a good summer tourism season for 2024.

The event, sponsored by the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism (LIGHT) at the Stockton University School of Business, included five industry experts discussing local economic trends.

While past editions of Shorecast have included more projections for Cape May County, this year's presentation concentrated on the woes of Atlantic City, which has lost all its beach concerts and faces competition from new casinos opening in New York.

LIGHT Faculty Director Jane Bokunewicz presented statistics that highlighted some of the successes of 2023, especially at Atlantic City casinos.

Total gross gaming revenue of \$1.4 billion was up 11% from 2022, primarily due to growth in internet gaming and sports betting. In-person gross gaming revenue of \$811 million was up 1% and nongaming net revenue was 45% of the total net revenue compared to 39% in previous years.

Casino employment

was up in general, but labor shortages were still a factor. Several panelists reported that inclement weather hurt business in summer of 2023, Bokunewicz said.

She said overnight stays in Cape May County were up 8% but the stays were shorter than the previous summer.

"Summer of 2023 was slightly better than the previous summer but it never returned to the pre-pandemic levels of 2019," Bokunewicz said.

Daniel Gallagher, director of sales for the Atlantic City Sports Commission, said the industry is one of the largest growing markets, except maybe behind cannabis.

"We came off a banner year. We did about 75,000 room nights in sports alone, which was 250,000 people in the destination and \$100 million in economic impact," he said. "Sports is on the rise right now and we're seeing that, and there's no question that's here to stay. But the question is how we diversify our portfolio to get these sports athletes, these spectators, this affluent demographic."

Oliver Cooke, associate professor of economics at Stockton University, said his general take on last summer was that it was "pretty decent" in Cape

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## Heist nets \$300,000 at city jewelry store

### Police say 'smash and grab' burglary isolated incident

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Queen May Jewelry on the Washington Street Mall was burglarized just before 3 a.m. May 5, when the perpetrators stole merchandise valued in excess of \$300,000, according to its owners.

Security camera video was posted to social media later in the day showing glass in the front door of the store being smashed, allowing entry of two persons while a third remained outside to receive the items. Stolen items included designer handbags and jewelry.

A rare Louis Vuitton trunk bearing the name of Jenny Hecht was stolen as well as handbags from Vuitton, Gucci and Chanel. Each handbag carries a serial number that has been entered in a database of stolen merchandise.

Cape May Police Chief Dekon Fashaw described the burglary as "smash and grab."

"We are working that case very vigorously, we are making headway," he said.

Fashaw said he believed it was an isolated event. Those with any information or video are asked to contact Cape May police at (609) 884-9500.



Jake Regnier/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

## Trump rally in Wildwood

Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican Party nominee for president of the United States, held a rally Saturday, May 11, on the beach in Wildwood during a break from his trial in New York over money allegedly paid to an adult film star to buy her silence about an affair. In front of thousands of supporters, the former president took the stage at about 6:30 p.m. and spoke for about 75 minutes.



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