



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Above left, Gov. Chris Christie shakes hands with Marilyn Jalinski of Whiting, who despite using a walker, fought the crowds to greet the governor. Above center, Christie becomes emphatic as he talks about recovering from Superstorm Sandy. To his left his interim Sen. Jeff Chiesa. Above right, new teams and spectators fill the width of the mall as they listen to the governor talk about issues affecting New Jersey and Cape May.

Visit

Continued from page A1

Christie said when he visited shore towns of New Jersey in November of last year and in the following months, one couldn't help but wonder if businesses and beaches would be ready for this summer or if the tourists would be able to come back to visit. "This summer was a real question mark. We didn't know for the first time in our history if New Jersey was going to have a summer," Christie said to the large surrounding crowd. "But, down here in Cape May, you all have been extraordinary in the way that this resort has come back. I've spoken to business folks down here and while this will not go down as the greatest summer in the history of Cape May, it is a heck of a lot better than we thought it was going to be, and it's because of all of you." Christie said there is still work to do in rebuilding New Jersey following Sandy.

According to the governor, there were 365,000 homes substantially damaged or destroyed during the storm. He said no one believed those homes would be rebuilt in eight months before summer arrived, even if every builder in America were to lend a helping hand. His administration predicted rebuilding efforts to be a two-year process. "What we needed to do, in addition to getting people back in their homes, was getting businesses up and running again," he said. Christie called upon the Economic Development Authority (EDA) to administer nearly half of \$1 billion in aid to New Jersey in order to get businesses back on track. "One of the frustrations is that businesses have been so tough and so resilient, that they haven't asked for help," Christie said. He said many business owners initially reached out to the federal SBA (Small Business Administration),

which Christie referred to as an organization that is "awful to work with" and "inattentive to people's needs." He said at that point, business owners simply gave up on asking for help and tried to make it on their own. He said by calling the state EDA at 1-855-SandyBZ, business owners can receive the assistance they need through the Stronger New Jersey Business Grant Program and the Stronger New Jersey Business Loan Program, without dealing with the federal level SBA. "They (EDA) will send someone here to Cape May to help you fill out the forms. They'll work you through it. They will even host seminars," Christie said. According to Christie, any business that suffered \$8,000 or more in Sandy related damages can apply for and is eligible to receive a \$50,000 grant to help bridge some of the expenses they've had in connection with the storm. He stressed that this was a grant

and not a loan. The Stronger New Jersey Business Loan Program allows businesses that suffered the same \$8,000 or more in damages to apply for up to \$5 million in loans, which the applicant would not have to pay principal or interest on for the first two years. "So, while we're recovering here, it allows you to not have to make any payments on the loan and then ultimately, the interest rates on the loan are tied to treasury bill rates - still very cheap, low cost money," he said. "I fought hard to get this half a billion dollars in funding from Washington, D.C., and I want our businesses here in Jersey to benefit from it." "You don't need to suffer in silence," he added. The audience erupted in applause when the governor announced the "Stronger than the Storm" ad campaign would be over Sept. 1. He said a survey found that 80 percent of New Jersey residents heard or saw the advertisement on television "at

least once...at least." He said the ads were also placed in Canada and other states in the northeast region, which encompass the majority of New Jersey's tourists. Christie, who is up for reelection in November and predicted by many political analysts to win in a landslide, also touched on topics like education. "We do have enormous inequality in our educational system. Here in New Jersey, we have the largest achievement gap of any state in the country between what the highest achieving students achieve and the lowest achieving students," he said. "That means some extraordinarily great schools in this state, but also means we have some extraordinarily awful schools." Christie said two years ago in Asbury Park, where it cost \$30,000 per pupil, less than 50 percent of the high school graduates could read at an eighth grade level. He said as governor, he would try to con-

tinue focusing on educational equality and make sure every child in the state has a school system designed to benefit them and not the adults that serve in the school system. "It is a key issue in this campaign, and it's a key issue we have to deal with as New Jerseyans. We pay more than any state in America for public education here - \$17,700 on average per pupil, per year. Yet, we're not getting, all across the state, what these children need to get to reach their fullest potential," he said. "Throwing more money at it is not going to fix it, everybody. We have to change the way these children learn. We have to have longer school days and longer school years. These kids are coming in behind - how can we expect them to catch up?" He said the world is too complicated and too competitive for kids not to get the education they deserve.

Chiesa: focus is on getting aid to NJ

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Former state Attorney General, Jeff Chiesa, who was appointed

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in October by Gov. Chris Christie to be interim state senator, following the death of Sen. Frank Lautenberg, spoke to the Star and Wave following the press conference with Christie, Wednesday. Chiesa said he was delighted to see so many people on the mall to greet the governor and hear him speak, hoping to have

their photo taken with him or get an autograph following the press conference. The senator said he believes Christie and other New Jersey Republicans, such as himself, are continuing to focus on getting the aid to the families that deserve it. Chiesa also commented

on unemployment, which is currently at 8.6 percent in New Jersey. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, New Jersey lost 11,800 jobs in July alone. "In New Jersey we've had tens of thousands of jobs created while Governor Christie has been in office, so I think he's done a tremendous job," Chiesa said. "He talked to business leaders and the climate in New Jersey is getting better. It's a better regulatory climate, it's a better climate where you can deal with departments and state government that you have to deal with to do the things you want to do with your business. All those things are improving, but we have to keep working at it." Chiesa said the key is to encourage people to start businesses as well as encourage businesses to keep hiring people to boost employment.

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Continued from page A1

munity through dialogue and transparency in all regulatory, financial and fiscal policies with a view towards having a small business development model that works for all concerned: entrepreneurs, community residents, visitors and borough government. Wilburn, with his background in public safety, may be remembered as a little league coach, and is currently managing renovations of Cold Spring Presbyterian Church. Wilburn wants commissioners to spend more time in the community, connecting with elderly and underserved residents, and looking for opportunities for the borough to better respond to their valuable ideas and needs. Francis, known, in part for, his seven-year walk from California to West Cape May, has a Ph.D. in land resources and environmental studies. Widely known for being one of the first environmentalist promoting personal relationships as the first step in being an environmental practitioner, he was a project manager and environmental analyst for the U.S. Coast Guard's 1990 Oil Pollution Act staff. He echoed the concerns and goals of his running mates. Francis has a keen interest in water conservation and security. This past June, as a keynote speaker at the Cape May Forum, "Water Matters," he noted that West Cape May has had serious problems with regard to water usage and conservation and that there are huge financial and conservation benefits available to the community that are yet to be addressed. As Commissioners for All the People, they would make the change seamless, thereby enabling a smooth implementation of policies geared toward the betterment of West Cape May for all.

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