



Tourism season sends mixed signals

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House of the Week

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170th YEAR NO. 43 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2024 \$1.00

Cape May drops state health plan, to save \$800,000

Employee costs to fall \$1,600 next year with private insurer

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — By switching from the state health benefits program to AmeriHealth, the city will save \$800,000 next year and save employees an average of \$1,600.

At a Sept. 15 meeting, City Council approved a contract with AmeriHealth to insure city employees and retirees.

Mayor Zack Mullock thanked Councilwoman Maureen McDade, City Manager Paul Dietrich, Deputy City Manager Justin Riggs and Chief Financial Officer Kevin Hanie for their work on the health insurance issue.

The mayor said the city's health insurance costs through the state benefits program increased about 24% in 2021 and 12% in 2023. Mullock said a number of municipalities are leaving the state benefit program because they can obtain better rates from private insurers.

"Most important was our employees, making sure that our retirees and our current employees were taken care of, obviously looking at it as a financial issue because it is one as those prices have just astronomically increased, looking out for the taxpayers as well," Mullock said.

McDade said the city was facing a 16% cost increase from the state health benefits program for 2025. She said the process to find alternative coverage began last May with two separate brokers.

"This was not to detract from the coverage that they had, and, in some ways, we've been able to enhance it," McDade said, noting the new coverage was comparable with the state plan with the same physicians and providers.

The AmeriHealth plans include dental and vision insurance, something city

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Cape May Point to increase pre-season beach tag costs

By RACHEL SHUBIN
For the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Pre-season discounted seasonal beach tag fees will increase in 2025. This increase comes from offsetting increases in the beach program budget due to the increase in minimum wage.

The per person cost prior to May 31 will increase from \$36 to \$40. After May 31, the cost increases from \$45 to \$50.

"We're not doing it across the board because we don't think it's necessary and [beach director] Chris [Garison] thinks we will do fine with the income from the daily and weekly [tags]," Mayor Bob Moffatt said during a Borough Commission meeting Oct. 9.

Borough Administrator Ed Grant said there was a deficit between operating

expenses and the amount of revenue they brought in, and the changes made would be sufficient to cover that deficiency.

"It just seems to me you're hitting the residents and not the daily people coming to Cape May Point," resident Sandy Allison said.

Commissioner Catherine Busch asked when the fees were last changed for the daily and weekly beach tags.

"I thought some time in the last four years, all of them had been increased," Busch said.

Grant and Moffatt said that was correct. Busch inquired about the tag fee for rental properties, which Grant said was not being changed at this time.

The ordinance for increasing the seasonal beach tag fees passed 2-1, with Busch

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Spooky sounds in Cape May

Frank Scott/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

The marching bands from Richard M. Teitelman School and Lower Cape May Regional High School perform during the Halloween parade Oct. 20 in Cape May. Below left, Kenny Gauthier of North Cape May. Below right, a pair of pirates aboard a Cape May Beach Patrol lifeboat. Bottom, a string band entertains the crowd.



Cape May proposes limiting amount of recycling pickup

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council introduced an ordinance to establish limits on recycling collection and require private collection for amounts exceeding those limits.

At a Nov. 1 meeting, City Manager Paul Dietrich said city staff has been discussing changes to recycling regulations for over a year. He said Eric Prusinski, superintendent

of Public Works, and his staff have been monitoring establishments in town to gauge how much recycling was being generated.

"This is not to curtail a typical residential property," Dietrich said. "If you're a single-family property owner, whether this is your primary residence or your second home, this is not to regulate recycling out of those zones. It's looking at the larger commercial properties, whether it's a multifamily property,

some of the condo converted properties that have four or five or 100 residential units."

The ordinance would limit recycling collection to two 96-gallon cans for a total of 192 gallons, he said.

Some businesses place bundled cardboard curbside. Prusinski said when cardboard is not tied or bundled, it blows all over the street.

He said 96 gallons of cardboard equates to a pile 48 inches by 36 inches by 28 inches

high. Councilwoman Maureen McDade said she accompanied Public Works on a two-hour ride around the city on a windy day and saw many cardboard boxes in the street blocking traffic. She said cardboard in the street is out of place in Cape May.

"This screams to me safety and worker's comp. because that means somebody is getting out of the truck and needs to load all of this in, that means

bending over to do so because there is no other means to do so," McDade said.

Mayor Zack Mullock said a commercial recycling hauler would not pick up a pile of cardboard at the curb.

Prusinski said sidewalks are blocked by recycling items. He said a commercial hauler would require all items to be in a dumpster.

Dietrich said high-volume

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