



HPC approves 12-foot height of historic home

Page A2



House of the week

Page B1



167th YEAR NO. 9 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021 \$1.00

Legal cannabis could boost business, tourism

Webinar outlines methods to capture growing audience of marijuana-motivated travelers

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

With recreational marijuana now legal in New Jersey, entrepreneurs may find lucrative business opportunities related to cannabis tourism and hospitality ranging from retail dispensaries and agritourism to events for cannabis edibles and delivery services.

The Lloyd Levinson Institute of Gaming and Hospitality (LIGHT) School of Business at Stockton University and the Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce

presented a webinar Feb. 24 called "Destination Cannabis: Insight for New Jersey Hospitality and Tourism." The virtual event focused on recreational marijuana and its impact on resort destinations, opportunities for hospitality and tourism business, cannabis and agritourism, and food and beverage tourism.

Consumption lounges

Rob Mejia, an adjunct professor in cannabis studies at Stockton University and president of Our Community Harvest: A Cannabis Educa-

tion Company, said people will not be able to partake of cannabis on federal lands, a public sidewalk or in federal housing but recreational marijuana use is permissible inside a private residence.

"Down the road, it looks like there will be consumption licenses," he said. "Essentially what it is will be a separate building or a building attached to a dispensary where people can buy product or actually bring product, go into the consumption lounge and partake."

He said that offers an opportunity for the hospitality industry such as

turning the consumption lounge into a mini restaurant with live music or comedy shows.

David Yusefzadeh, a Massachusetts-based chef and food designer and CEO/founder of Cloud Creamery, a cannabis ice cream company, said a private cannabis consumption club opened in his home state where participants cannot purchase product but can bring in as much as an ounce of cannabis. Regulations in Massachusetts allow only packaged food in consumption lounges that do not contain cannabis, "stoner food" like Twinkies and Snickers, he said.

Brian Applegarth, chairman of the California Cannabis Tourism Association, said his state has about 20 to 30 consumption lounges.

"As we innovate cannabis in the lens of adult use or recreational, we should always kind of toggle back and acknowledge that cannabis is really a tool for wellness and these kind of lounges can also have the personality of bringing people together that are maybe struggling with PTSD or using cannabis in a medically applicable way or well-

See Legal, Page A8



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Bearing the warmer weather well

While meteorologists refer to this time of year as false spring, two stuffed bears that regularly occupy the lawn of a home on Sunset Boulevard in Lower Township found it just right.

Residency not required for firefighters

Lower Township companies looking to bolster numbers

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council approved an ordinance eliminating the requirement for volunteer firefighters to live in the township.

The ordinance states the Villas Volunteer Fire Company, Town Bank Volunteer Fire Company and Erma Volunteer Fire Company have been staffed by township residents and to bolster their ranks, the residency requirement has been dropped, allowing residents of immediately adjacent municipalities to join the fire companies.

Lower Township will hire a firm to find unlicensed short-term rentals, those operating without a mercantile license. At a Feb. 17 Township Council meeting,

Township Manager Mike Laffey said he has been holding virtual meetings with short term rental compliance companies.

"When we decide the company that fits our needs, then we'll award that contract to them to help identify some of the short-term rentals that we don't know of and hopefully get those entities in compliance before the season starts this year," he said.

Laffey said he was working with the township's purchasing department, the township solicitor, and other key staff to finalize a request for proposals for emergency medical services within the township.

Council approved a resolution last month authoring competitive contracting for emergency medical services which could open the door

to an agreement with Wildwood Crest Rescue Squad to provide EMS services to Diamond Beach.

At a January council meeting, Councilman Tom Conrad, who serves as captain with the Lower Township Rescue Squad, responded to claims of slow response time to emergency calls to Diamond Beach.

Resident James Sanford, who has attended a number of council meetings in the past six months, stated an 80-year-old Diamond Beach resident died Aug. 7 while waiting for Lower Township Rescue Squad to respond to an emergency call.

At issue is the necessity of crossing a bridge from the mainland to reach Diamond Beach. Sanford said some Diamond Beach residents have reported response times of

20 to 24 minutes from Lower Township Rescue Squad.

At a Jan. 20 Lower Township Council meeting, Conrad said there was no mandate for an eight-minute response time. He said a study from the 1970s indicated response time should be under eight minutes at least 90 percent of the time.

Laffey said he met with two county departments to discuss problems in several areas of the township with groundwater flooding. He said he hoped county Mosquito Control would be able to assist the township by cleaning ditches and pipes near Tabernacle Road, which has an ongoing flooding issue.

Discussion was held with the township's Parks and

See Residency, Page A8

COVID changes way organization assists homeless

Family Promise loses churches but gains 4 homes for shelters

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

NORTH CAPE MAY — The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many aspects of life, including how a local organization assists homeless families.

Family Promise of Cape May County was designed to help families with children who are experiencing homelessness. The organization provided temporary housing with sleeping accommodations in local churches, but that changed when the pandemic struck a year ago.

According to Family Promise Director Laurie Johnson, the organization's goal is for families to get to the point at which they can sustain themselves. The organization assists families with first month's rent, security deposits, electricity and gas bills or replacing tires on their car.

Family Promise is continuing to work with churches but now churches are

providing the use of four houses for sleeping accommodations, Johnson said.

"It all worked out; four churches have risen to the challenge," she said.

While other organizations may focus on homeless individuals, Family Promise focuses only on those with children.

In addition to a place to sleep, Family Promise offers a day center at 505 Townbank Road in North Cape May, where they have access to three meals a day, intensive case management, laundry facilities, phones and internet.

At the center, volunteers assist children with virtual learning and homework, Johnson said.

The day center provides clients with a permanent address. Children are transported from the day center to the school they would normally attend.

"The day center is like home base," Johnson said.

See Family, Page A3



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Laurie Johnson, director of Family Promise of Cape May County, said the coronavirus pandemic has changed the way the organization assists homeless families.

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