

Girls lacrosse wraps up its super season

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House of the week

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168th YEAR NO. 21 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022 \$1.00

With recovery over, it's time to move ahead

County tourism director Wieland shares encouraging news as summer season arrives

'It's not about recovery right now, it's more about expanding and recouping what we lost.'



—Diane Wieland, Cape May County tourism director

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Last year, Cape May County's tourism industry recovered 96 percent of the business lost in 2020, the worst year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cape May County Tourism Director Diane Wieland presented a host of encouraging facts and figures May 25 during the county's annual tourism conference. She said direct tourism spending

in the county totaled \$6.6 billion in 2021, or about \$288 million below 2019 spending.

Almost 20 percent of tourism dollars spent in the state are spent in Cape May County, Wieland said.

She said the recovery is based on returning to tourism spending levels from 2019, which totaled \$6.9 billion in this county, a record year. Wieland said the goal was not only to recover to 2019 levels but go beyond it. The county broke the \$2 billion

annual mark in tourist spending in 1994 and the last year reached \$6.6 billion.

"We had lost in 2020, \$1.5 billion," she said.

Cape May County ranks second in the state behind Atlantic County in tourist spending. Wieland said many visitors to Cape May County spend a day or a night in Atlantic City, which she termed a "perfect partnership."

The county outpaced 21 others in food and beverage, retail and

recreation spending by visitors, she said.

And that's without chain hotels, stores and restaurants.

"Obviously, it doesn't matter to the visitor," Wieland said. "When you take a look at it, our visitors aren't coming here so they can go to Applebee's."

She said the county exceeded the 2019 figures for lodging and food and beverage last year.

In 2019, 10.2 million persons

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

U.S. Coast Guard salutes nation's fallen heroes

The Coast Guard Training Center Cape May Honor Guard takes part in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 82's annual Memorial Day flower boat launching ceremony May 30 at Ocean Street in Cape May. In the background, lifeguards row to a Coast Guard vessel to retrieve a tow line.

West Cape May residents: Curb use of pesticide

Concern for the natural habitat drives push against weed killers

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Some residents are concerned development has been rampant and wetlands are being destroyed by using Round-Up and other pesticides on lawns.

During a Borough Commission meeting May 25, Third Avenue resident Judy Smith said the borough is losing its wetlands, tree frogs, bees, fireflies and other valuable environmental contributors even though a lawsuit against the herbicide Round-Up has been settled for millions of dollars. She said other chemicals are being used.

"Every time I see a perfectly manicured, very green lawn, I shudder to think of the chemicals used to get it that way," Smith said.

She said she and her husband built a home in West Cape May 40 years ago and loved the nature they found in their own backyard. She said in recent years with five homes built nearby, she has seen the decline of the natural

habitat.

"Before the destruction of natural growth nearby, I could count 15 to 18 cardinals in my backyard at any time," Smith said. "Today, I count one pair."

She said a neighbor cleared out half of Gold-beaten Alley. Smith said while the borough no longer uses Round-Up, it has no jurisdiction over private property.

Written comments from West Cape May Environmental Commission Chairwoman Hilary Pritchard were read into the record by Smith, who was requesting help in curbing the use of toxic synthetic pesticides and weed killers.

"We would like your support to help us educate the public regarding the detrimental effects that these chemicals are having in our environment and most importantly in our wetland areas," Pritchard stated. "Increase in building has also impacted runoff into environmentally sensitive areas."

The Environmental

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City resumes offering free jitney service

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved a contract to provide free summer jitney service from the Atlantic City Jitney Association at a cost of \$349 per vehicle per day.

Sea Isle City Transit submitted a bid of \$400 per vehicle per day.

Jitney service began to help ease Cape May's parking problems with service to the elementary school parking lot on Lafayette Street, which serves as a free park and

ride lot. Jitneys also make frequent trips along Beach Avenue. The city contracted with the Atlantic City Jitney Association in 2019 and with Sea Isle City Transit in 2021. The jitney did not operate in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said the Atlantic City Jitney Association's bid mentioned flexibility to add extra vehicles as needed.

Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan noted the bid was lower than a previous contract with the Atlantic City Jitney Association of \$400 per

vehicle per day.

Gillin-Schwartz said price was a factor but prior positive experiences with a contractor also mattered. The contract expires no later than Dec. 31 with an October cutoff date and an option for the city to continue for weekend service.

Mayor Zack Mullock said he was pleased the cost was decreasing in light of increasing gasoline prices.

Sheehan said the city's Parking Advisory Committee was instru-

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COVID infection rate spiking across county

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — The number of COVID-19 cases among Cape May County residents has been on the rise, with 639 active cases reported at the end of last week. The county is categorized as an area of high transmission.

Cases by municipality: Avalon — 3, Cape May — 11, Cape May Point — 2, Dennis Township — 41, Lower Township — 150, Middle Township — 145, North Wildwood — 11, Ocean

City — 59, Sea Isle City — 10, Stone Harbor — 8, Upper Township — 118, West Cape May — 2, West Wildwood — 1, Wildwood — 43, Wildwood Crest — 22 and Woodbine — 13.

Of the state's 21 counties, Cape May County ranked third in new weekly cases with 431 per 100,000 persons. The county was tied with Atlantic County for the most new hospital admissions at 18 per 100,000. Cape May County was in second place behind Cum-

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Patty Behrens
Special to the
STAR AND WAVE

Motorist kills beachgoer in North Cape

Witnesses reported an out-of-control vehicle hit a person sitting on the beach at Lincoln Avenue in North Cape May at about 8 p.m. Sunday. The vehicle ended up in Delaware Bay about 200 feet offshore. Victims of the accident were airlifted to the hospital. No official statement was released.



NAILED IT. Rusty Nail

The Rusty Nail is back! Our famed surfer bar and restaurant is back open for the 2022 season. Stop by for breakfast, lunch and dinner—as well as delicious cocktails and the coldest draft beer in Cape May (as verified by Exit Zero Magazine).

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