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166th YEAR NO. 26 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2020 \$1.00



Benita Battaglia/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Dining al fresco in Cape May

Visitors enjoyed nice weather June 20 while dining outside Aleathea's Restaurant at the Inn of Cape May. Gov. Phil Murphy allowed outdoor dining at restaurants beginning June 15, and it was the first weekend this season for restaurants to begin serving customers at their facilities.

COVID-19 numbers rising in southern N.J.

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

Although the number of new COVID-19 cases was low in Cape May County, and Atlantic County reported only a single death over four days, state and county officials were grappling with statistics showing southern New Jersey has a much higher positivity testing rate than central and northern New Jersey.

The Cape May County Department of Health on Monday added a new statistic showing the number of out-of-county residents who have tested positive in the county. Local officials also said young people — from 17 to 32 years old — with coronavirus symptoms are showing up at medical facilities.

Gov. Phil Murphy and state Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli said at their Monday press

conference that as overall COVID-19 statistics have been improving across the state, there is nearly double the rate of residents testing positive for the coronavirus in the southern part of the state. They were questioning whether that could be attributed to increased activity at the Jersey shore or from other factors. They did not have an answer at their press conference Monday afternoon.

The overall daily positivity rate on Monday was 2.42 percent, Murphy said. Persichilli broke down the numbers by region, showing the rate of 1.55 percent in the northern part of New Jersey and 1.94 percent in central New Jersey. The southern part of the state is showing a rate of 5.37 percent.

"It may have to do with the shore," Murphy said, See COVID-19, Page A3

School will test scenarios for in-person instruction

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Cape May City Elementary School will have a short summer session during which models for social distancing will be tested for the upcoming school year.

Superintendent Robert Garguilo said during a virtual meeting June 18 that he had looked at reopening plans from all over the state and found most are following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. He said

Gov. Phil Murphy was expected to issue a plan for schools this week.

"It was hinted we should look at the college guidelines which have been released," Garguilo said.

The college guidelines mostly mirror CDC guidelines, he said. Garguilo said Cape May elementary is assembling reopening planning committees. He said Principal Zack Palombo has reached out to parents and teachers for committee members.

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City planning a star-spangled salute



Provided

A patriotic flyover of World War II airplanes is scheduled for 7:45 p.m. Saturday, July 4. The aircraft will be trailing smoke and the flyover will be visible from anywhere in Cape May.

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — While the fireworks may be missing here due to social distancing this July Fourth, a number of other patriotic events have been scheduled for the holiday weekend.

Cape May's "Olde Fashioned Fourth of July" celebration encourages homes and business to decorate in red, white and blue. Categories in the competition include best porch, best home, best business, best nighttime display and judge's choice.

"We want the whole town

to look patriotic, get back to our roots as it was done in the day," said Laurie Taylor, Cape May's marketing director.

The city will hold a "Star Spangled Sand Sculpture" contest from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. July 4 on the beach at Convention Hall. If rain makes an appearance, the contest will be moved to Sunday, July 5, Taylor said. Judging will take place in three categories: family groups (all ages), individual adult (ages 13 and older) and individual child (ages 12 and younger). The com-

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Governor: A.C. casinos allowed to reopen July 2

Restaurants may resume service indoors same day

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

The regional economy will get a boost when casinos in Atlantic City reopen July 2 and restaurants will get a little more breathing room the same day when they can open their indoor service, albeit at 25 percent capacity.

During his daily press conference Monday, Gov. Phil Murphy said indoor dining would be allowed as of July 2 and that casinos would also be open in time for the big July 4 weekend.

The governor has been slowly opening various parts of the economy that have been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. On Monday, personal care businesses such as barbershops and hair salons were allowed to reopen and a week earlier nonessential retailers were allowed to allow customers back.

All of the businesses are still under capacity restrictions to limit the spread of the coronavirus and have to undertake more rigid hygiene measures.

The governor also raised the limit on outdoor gatherings from 100 people to

250, with no limits on outdoor religious or political events, but he asked that if people are part of large gatherings that they still wear face masks, practice social distancing, wash their hands and get tested. Indoor gatherings can now be at a maximum of 100 people or 25 percent capacity of the facility, whichever is lower.

Murphy acknowledged the "enormous frustration" individuals and businesses have been feeling because of the steps his administration has taken since mid-March and also said he couldn't help but notice the viral videos showing events where "people have let their hair down a little too much" by congregating without face masks or social distancing.

There have been 12,895 deaths from the coronavirus in New Jersey during the COVID-19 pandemic and positive cases have reached 169,415 in the state.

However, he pointed out as the health metrics have improved, he has been easing the restrictions. He quoted Rutgers University football coach Greg Schiano in say-

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City Council proposes parking meter fee hike

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council introduced an ordinance during a virtual meeting June 16 to raise meter rates from \$1 per hour to \$1.50 per hour in all areas of the city that were not raised last year to \$2 per hour.

Council also considered raising meter rates only in the municipal Jackson Street parking lot.

City Manager Jerry Inderwies said the 50-cent increase in a normal tourist

season could generate an additional \$200,000 to \$250,000 in revenue. He said the city was aware revenue would be short this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has also generated some additional costs for the city.

The new meter rates would not take effect until Aug. 4. Mayor Chuck Lear said an increase in the meter fee for the Jackson Street parking lot from \$2 to \$3 per hour would not have generated as much revenue. Inderwies

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