



House of the week

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Park panel wants pro landscaper

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Daniel Leppold/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Surfers seize stormy seas

Larger waves generated by Hurricane Chris, well offshore from the Jersey coast, attracted surfers last week to Cape May's Cove Beach. A cold front sweeping in today is expected to bring pleasant temperatures with it through the end of the week.

Local schools brace for cuts in state funds

Lower Cape May Regional to lose \$6 million by 2025

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — A bill approved by the state Senate and Assembly, and now awaiting the governor's signature, would phase out state adjustment aid to many schools in the county, creating large deficits in operating funds.

Both the Lower Cape May Regional High School and Lower Elementary School districts stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in state aid annually beginning this year.

The bills would modify school-funding law to eliminate adjustment aid for a number of districts and would send more money to districts where state aid has not kept up with increasing enrollment.

The bill's main sponsor, Senate President Steve Sweeney, D-Salem, Gloucester, Cumberland, has sought to cut adjustment aid to schools in districts he believes are overfunded. Adjustment aid would be taken from school districts tagged as overfunded and given to other school districts that are determined to be underfunded. The changes would be phased

in over seven years with a 5 percent cut this year and 100 percent cut by the 2024-25 school year.

According to the New Jersey School Boards Association, about two-thirds of the state's school districts are considered "underfunded" due to the enrollment growth caps and because state aid allocations have not reflected student population growth since the current funding law was enacted in 2008. In addition, 184 districts receive adjustment aid, a statutory provision designed to prevent aid reductions when the school funding system was implemented but which the Legislature originally intended for phase-out.

Lower Cape May Regional Superintendent Christopher Kobik said the district would lose about \$6 million over the next seven years.

"I anticipate before that happens, there will be some active involvement to try to change some of that plan," he said. "I don't think this 'fix' to the funding formula is legitimate because the funding formula itself has many, many flaws."

He said every community

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County files suit against opioid makers

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Cape May County filed a lawsuit July 5 in Superior Court against the leading pharmaceutical manufacturers related to the ongoing opioid epidemic.

Denis Brown, administrative aide to the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders, released a statement about the lawsuit July 9.

Part of the county's contention is that an advertising campaign that began in the late 1990s and still continues to convince doctors, patients

and others that the benefits outweigh the risks in using opioid medication is misleading.

According to the lawsuit, the manufacturers misrepresented the dangers of long-term opioid use to physicians, pharmacies and patients, minimized the risks and encouraged opioid use.

Companies mentioned in the lawsuit include Purdue Pharma, Teva Pharmaceuticals USA Inc., Cephalon Inc., Johnson & Johnson, Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc., Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc., Endo Health Solutions Inc., Endo Pharmaceuticals Inc., McKesson

Corp., Cardinal Health Inc. and AmerisourceBergen Drug Corp.

According to the lawsuit, the county spends millions of dollars each year for health care on behalf of indigent and eligible residents for prescription opioid painkillers manufactured by the defendants.

Opioids include brand-name drugs such as OxyContin and Percocet and generic drugs such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, and are derived from or possess properties similar to opium and heroin, and are "highly addictive and dangerous and therefore are regulated

by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)," according to the lawsuit.

The complaint alleges that the defendants "have manufactured, promoted and marketed opioids for the management of pain by misleading consumers and medical providers through misinterpretations or omissions regarding the appropriate uses, risks and safety of opioids."

According to the lawsuit, the defendants knew that after prolonged use, the effectiveness of opioids wanes,

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Pregnant LT woman killed in car accident

BELLMAWR — Ashley Zarzycki, 24, of Villas, and her unborn child were killed July 11 when the car in which she was a passenger struck a tractor-trailer and became wedged under the trailer.

The accident took place at about 1 p.m. on Route 42 in

Bellmawr, Camden County.

The car's driver, Matthew Britton, 26, also of Villas, was transported to Cooper University Hospital for treatment of injuries that were not life-threatening.

The accident is under investigation.

Video interpreters breaking barriers to proper health care



Aravna L. - 31655

Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Aravna L. is an interpreter with InDemand Video Remote Interpreting who speaks Haitian/Creole.

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Language barriers can prevent emergency responders from providing proper care at the scene of an accident or other calamity.

Three weeks ago, a traffic accident in Cape May involved a vehicle with three deaf occupants. An officer on scene radioed the police station asking if anyone was available who knew American Sign Language, but no one was available with that skill.

The subjects were trans-

ported to Cape Regional Medical Center, where, the officer was informed, "someone" was waiting in the emergency room who knew sign language.

That "someone" was the InDemand Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). The roll-around computer screen connects patients with a live interpreter for not only sign language, but a host of languages from Chinese to Russian.

"Within the realm of Chinese, there are a lot of dialects and you can choose from those," Cape Regional Medical Center's materials management buyer Stephen

Leypoldt said. "It's a pretty expansive language offering."

He said a patient can request a male or female interpreter.

Raymond Wisniewski, Cape Regional's director of patient experience, said the VRI is used mostly for Spanish followed by Mandarin.

In a demonstration, a push of the button on the system's screen for Haitian/Creole brought Aravna L. on the screen from Chicago. She said she works eight hours a day receiving calls from hospitals and clinics. Aravna has no apparent Haitian accent.

"I am from Haiti but I came here when I was very young," she said.

Aravna is certified in medical terminology, as are all the InDemand interpreters. She said helping patients makes her job satisfying.

"Personally for me, I have my own parents who do not speak English very well, so whenever I'm helping the patients, I feel like that's my parents. If they went to the hospital, I would want them to have that help available to them," she said.

Each workday is differ-

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