



Lower Township honors officer for life-saving heroics

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House of the Week

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170th YEAR NO. 33 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2024 \$1.00

County geography ideal for mosquito habitat

Higher temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, sea level rise likely to worsen problem

By **JULIA DiGERONIMO**
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — When summer comes around, mosquito bites become a daily occurrence and their escalating numbers a problem.

With temperatures increasing and precipitation patterns changing, the issues appear likely to worsen.

Every county in New Jersey has a department whose sole responsibility is to monitor and maintain mosquito populations and viruses.

The Cape May County Department of Mosquito Control stays on top of the changing

number of species and what viruses they carry.

“Think of us as surveillance operation,” said Mathew Diem, the department’s assistant superintendent. “We’re constantly looking for mosquitoes in their larval habitat before they emerge and start flying around biting people.”

The department follows Integrative Pest Management (IPM) regimens to stay on top of what viruses are transmitted.

Geography affects the number of mosquito species found in an area. While some counties are inland, Cape May is a peninsula bordered by water on three sides.

“They’re definitely one of the worst,” Diem said, referring to the county’s mosquito problem. “Any of the counties that have an area of salt marsh and either the ocean or the bay have problems. In our case, we have both.”

The county’s landscape lends itself to a large mosquito population.

“Our topographical and geographical location is unique because we’re a peninsula,” Assistant Administrator Ron Simone said. “This differentiates us from the rest of the state, which makes our mosquito habitat unique and more widespread than other counties across the

state.”

One of the department’s top concerns is what viruses the mosquitoes are spreading.

“A spectrum of mosquitoes can carry multiple viruses while some mosquitoes are not known to carry or transmit any,” Diem said. “We have 47 mosquito species in this county and, of those, there’s a small handful that are going to transmit a virus.”

Over the past decade, viruses have fluctuated as different species became more prevalent. Precipitation is one environmental factor that affects the number of species.

Climate change not only re-

fers to shifts in temperature but precipitation as well. As temperatures vary, seasons will experience unprecedented amounts of rain.

More frequent rain will play a role in mosquito populations.

“More water, whether it be sea level rise or water coming from coastal storms, will increase mosquito production,” Simone said.

Bodies of water provide large habitats for mosquito reproduction.

“I would say that what we’re noticing is more like a shift in species,” Diem said. “So as the

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Daily beach tag sales up, weekly, three-day down

Cape May officials wondering if tourists staying shorter time

By **JACK FICHTER**
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Early data for the summer show sales of daily beach tags have increased while weekly and three-day purchases are down.

At an Aug. 8 meeting of the Municipal Taxation and Revenue Advisory Committee (MTRAC), member Martin Van Walsum said he looked at beach tag sales from different sources. He collected data from Jersey Cape Diagnostics, which has made the city’s tags for decades, the tax collector’s office and beachfront sales.

He said he compared this year’s tag sales through June to last year’s figures and found a significant increase in daily sales with a corresponding decrease in weekly and three-day sales.

“I’m a little hesitant to reach conclusions on the basis of one month’s information, especially since the Fourth of July was not included yet,” he said.

Van Walsum said the city realizes more profit from daily tag sales on a per-tag basis.

“I think that there is some conclusions that we can also reach about the strain that puts on the city when you see a significant increase in the number of people that are coming in just for the

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Lightning arresters coming to City Hall

By **JACK FICHTER**
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City administration continues to assess damage from a July 12 lightning strike to City Hall and a radio tower that sheared off a VHF antenna and sent a surge through the building that damaged computers, network cards, servers and telephone system.

Police Chief Dekon Fashaw told City Council on Aug. 6 that better grounding will be installed on City Hall. He said the recovery and the insurance documentation was made easier by the assistance of the city manager’s office.

City Hall was also struck by lightning in July 2021, destroying the police department’s radio dispatching equipment. Following the incident, the city signed a contract with the county to provide 911 dispatching services and the city installed un-interruptible power supplies on most of its computers.

“Lightning doesn’t strike twice in the same spot? That’s incorrect, because it does,” Fashaw said.

City Manager Paul Dietrich said the city’s

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Jack Fichter
CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

National Night Out

Above, Sgt. Dustin Phillips of the Cape May County Sheriff’s Department K-9 Unit, pets Juno during National Night Out on Aug. 6 in Cape May. Top left, Deputy Mayor Lorraine Baldwin and Christine DiDinato hand out frisbees and beach safety rules. Top right, Tara Friscano, of Rochester, N.Y., tries some firefighting with the help of the city’s fire department. Above left, Kailin Back of the Nature Center of Cape May holds a horseshoe crab. Bottom left, Heather Turner speaks with U.S. Senate candidate Curtis Bashaw.

HIGH TIDE HAPPY HOUR

EVERY Monday-Friday from 3pm-5pm.

Score Big on weekdays at the Rusty Nail with \$4 Pacifico Draft, \$8 Shack Margarita, \$8 Fishers Island Lemonade, \$8 Dip Trio and \$10 Buffalo Chicken Dip!

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