

# Cape May Star and Wave

160TH YEAR NO. 26 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2014

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## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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## WEATHER CHANNEL VISITS WILDWOOD

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## Cape May, Lower Twp. eye regional school ruling

State commissioner of education declines to intervene in Bergen County dispute

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

A decision by the state's acting Commissioner of Education not to intervene to change the funding formula for River Dell Regional School District is receiving different interpretations from Cape May and Lower Township.

Cape May is attempting to withdraw or dissolve the Lower Cape May Regional School District in order to bring about a change to the regional

school's funding formula. The school district consists of students from Cape May, West Cape May and Lower Township.

After a recommendation from an administrative law judge to move the tax burden from Oradell to River Edge in the River Dell Regional School District, state acting Commissioner of Education David Hespe stated the case did not require state intervention because it was not a constitutional question.

The River Dell Regional School

District uses the same state-mandated funding formula as the Lower Cape May district based on equalized property values.

Oradell taxpayers spend \$20,000 per student to send them to the River Dell Regional School District, while neighboring River Edge taxpayers spend \$14,000 per student. Like Cape May, Oradell has higher property values than River Edge and a smaller student population.

Attorney Vito Gagliardi, who is

representing Cape May in the local

school funding-formula fight, also represents Oradell. He was critical of Hespe's decision.

Attorney Frank Campbell, who is representing Lower Township and represented River Edge, said he supports Hespe's decision.

At a June 17 City Council meeting, Cape May Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman said in a synopsis of Hespe's decision that under more compelling circumstances than were present in the River Dell case, extraordinary relief may be desirable.

What is extraordinary relief?

Wichterman said it is the opinion of Gagliardi and himself that Cape May qualifies for extraordinary relief because while the difference between the cost per student between Oradell and River Edge is only \$5,000 to \$6,000, the difference between Cape May and Lower Township is close to \$90,000 per student.

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## Marlboro saves big dissolving its MUA

Township's mayor calls it no-brainer

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

It was a municipal utilities authority that had ballooning salaries and benefits, duplicated existing departments at the township and too large of a supervisory staff. As a result, the township dissolved it.

While that may sound like a proposal Lower Township has for the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority, the MUA that was shut down was in Marlboro Township.

The Marlboro Township Municipal Utilities Authority (MT-MUA) was shut down in 2009 after a review of its operations by the township. According to Marlboro Township Mayor Jonathan Hornik, the annual savings has exceeded \$700,000.

"Every year it's been \$700,000 less in the budget," he said during a recent interview. "The deal was really a no-brainer."

He said that while there was

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## City variances required for development

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Planning Board in a 5-4 vote put the brakes on a proposed subdivision of a 2-acre lot on Pittsburgh Avenue that would have allowed the construction of 14 houses.

The board's vote was to determine whether the project needed variances for lot width, lot area and lot frontage. The vote split 5-4 at the conclusion of a three-hour meeting June 10.

See Development, page A3

## Cape May H2O ranked A-1



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE  
Cape May Mayor Edward Mahaney, left, Water/Sewer Department Superintendent Carl Behrens, Water Treatment Plant Operator Joe Mendo and City Manager Bruce MacLeod toast with glasses of water derived from the city's desalination plant, which recently won first place in the South Jersey Water Professionals annual contest.

## City wins first place in an annual water-quality contest

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's drinking water, a product of its desalination plant, won first place in the South Jersey Water Professionals annual contest.

Water Treatment Plant Operator Joe Mendo and Water/Sewer Department Superintendent Carl Behrens were awarded a plaque and a trophy June 19 at a dinner at the Lobster House. The competition, sponsored by Gloucester City, was held on Earth Day, April 12.

Cape May beat 14 other entrants for the top honor. Six judges sampled each water entry in two rounds of blindfolded testing, according to Mayor Edward Mahaney.

"It's a nice tribute to the city of Cape May and even better, it shows the quality of work that our men in the water and sewer department

do," he said.

"The award from our peers in the water production and research industry is very stimulating to us to continue our efforts to provide top-quality water for our residents and visitors," he continued.

Mahaney said the city would install a new well next year in order to ensure a potable water supply for the next 25 years.

Mendo said he attributed the quality of Cape May's water to the process undertaken during desalination.

"Everything's got to be spot-on," he said. "It all comes together as a package and produces our good quality water."

He said Cape May's water was judged on appearance, odor, flavor, "mouth feel," aftertaste and overall impression.

Mendo has been on the job for 25 years; Behrens for 16 years.

Cape May's water won a national award in 2004, placing fifth in the nation as determined by the National Rural Water Association, Behrens said. He said the department did not enter competitions for a number of years because they were "just too busy."

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the award recognizes the foresight that started in the mid-1990s when the governing body was confronted with the issue of dealing with saltwater intrusion in wells and built a desalination plant.

"Receiving this award recognizing the quality of the water that's actually produced and delivered to our customers within the city of Cape May, Borough of West Cape May, Cape May Point, the Coast Guard base and a segment of Lower Township, is a very high recognition for our water/sewer utility and the quality of water we produce through

the desalination plant," he said. Behrens said the reverse osmosis of the desalination plant strips most everything out of the water through a process known as rejection.

"We remove 99 percent of anything dissolved in the water," he said.

Through a process called permeate stabilization, the water plant adds calcium bicarbonate and hydrated lime slurry.

Cape May's water plant is automated, allowing the operators to constantly monitor water quality, Behrens said. They are also very mindful of the water the plant discharges into Cape Island Creek, he said.

Brehens said the plant tests for its effect on brine shrimp, which must be able to live in the water discharged from the plant for 10 days without affecting their feeding, growth and reproduction.

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