

Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 6 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2015 75¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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Summit highlights draw of ecological, agricultural tourism

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city hosted a summit Jan. 28 focused on ecological and agricultural tourism sponsored by Assemblyman Sam Fioocchi that brought together stakeholders in tourism and government from Cape May and Cumberland counties.

He said the conference was a listening tool to hear the thoughts of those in tourism in order to create legislation and “promote and develop modern tourist destinations.” Fioocchi,

an Upper Township resident, said his goal was job creation, economic workforce development and to improve the quality of life in the district.

Mayor Edward Mahaney said all those dependent on tourism need to work together. He stressed being good stewards of the environment and keeping towns affordable for residents and visitors.

Cape May County Tourism Director Diane Wieland said nature-based tourism, which is mostly birding, is a \$544 million industry in the county. She said 30 percent of land in the

county is used for nature-based activities, with 54,000 acres used for ecotourism.

“Cape May County generates the highest amount of recreational expenditures in the state,” Wieland said. “Nearly 43 percent of our visitors come for eco-tourism.”

She said 48,000 second homes are located in the county, or 47 percent of residences.

“These are the folks coming in the offseason,” she said.

Wieland said visitors like to take home wine, honey and produce grown

here, as shown by an increase in farm markets.

Baby boomer tourists have \$157 billion to spend this year, according to Forbes Magazine, she said.

“Eco-agri-tourism are forms of niche tourism and are currently considered the growth industry in the United States,” Wieland said.

She said those who come for eco-agri-tourism are also interested in arts, history and culture.

Those looking for a “green experience” are willing to spend more money than the average visitor, ac-

ording to TripAdvisor, Wieland said.

Peter Dunne, representing New Jersey Audubon, said New Jersey is one of the greatest eco-tourism destinations in the world, equal in stature to Costa Rica, Ecuador and Sao Palo, Brazil.

Bill Walker, state Department of Agriculture marketing specialist, said a 2006 state survey showed the direct benefit of agri-tourism in New Jersey totaled \$57 million, with the indirect effect totaling \$33

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Testing eye in the sky

NJIT's drone pilot program at USCG base

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — It may be groundbreaking today but could be commonplace in the future: drone flights during times of coastal storms and other emergencies.

The New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) began drone flights Jan. 28 from a seldom-used airstrip at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May. The first flight traveled one nautical mile out over the Atlantic Ocean in a circular flight path. The media was present for an afternoon flight Jan. 29 under cloudy skies.

The drone — or Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), as NJIT prefers to refer to it — took off toward the ocean on a launcher using a pole and compressed air. The launcher allows the drone to use a smaller engine, which is not capable of providing enough power for takeoff.

The drone spent an hour flying at an altitude between 2,500 and 3,000 feet, making loops to map the area between the base and the Cape May Jetty. While that region has been photographed from the air numerous times, the purpose of the mission was to accomplish that task with a drone and ground-based pilot.

According to David Yoel, CEO of American Aerospace, a UAS could be flown out into the Atlantic Ocean ahead of a storm to improve the forecasting of the landfall of a hurricane, which could improve response time.

“In addition, we can do mapping of damage to help first responders to determine how best to respond,” he said.

Yoel said the photos of damage could be placed on the Internet for the use of emergency responders. American Aerospace will post video from the drone flights on You-



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Flight technician/payload specialist Marty McGregor, left, watches as pilot Michael Cancienne removes the payload from a drone after it landed at an airstrip at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May following a New Jersey Institute of Technology test flight over the Atlantic Ocean.

‘We see a lot of applications just in Cape May County, like damage assessment, beach erosion, monitoring different movements of sand.’
—David Yoel, CEO, American Aerospace



The drone, or Unmanned Aircraft System, is prepared for takeoff. A launch is used so that the aircraft can take flight using less fuel than would be necessary if it were self-propelled.

Operations Center RV was parked next to the airstrip. Inside, local officials including Cape May Mayor Edward Mahaney, county Freeholder Director Gerald Thornton and county Emergency Management Coordinator Marty Paggiughi watched video streaming from the drone.

“The entire emergency management and homeland security in the entire county is watching this technology. Some of the applications will

boggle the mind,” Yoel said. “We’re very interested. We see a lot of applications in just Cape May County, like damage assessment, beach erosion, monitoring different movements of sand.”

Parked nearby was a truck with a tracking antenna from where the drone’s pilot, Michael Cancienne, was flying the aircraft. The controls of the drone resembled those

Lower considers pet protections in foul weather

By JACK FICHTER
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VILLAS — Resident Helen Thompson is suggesting Lower Township Council adopt an ordinance that requires dogs be in a climate-controlled structure during extremely cold or hot weather.

She told council during a Feb. 2 meeting that Wildwood and Upper Township have passed ordinances addressing those issues.

Wildwood’s ordinance stipulates “in extreme weather below 32 degrees and above 95 degrees, in major storms where evacuation is recommended, all outdoor dogs and indoor/outdoor cats, with the exception of feral cats, must be brought indoors whether tethered or kenneled, unless the kennel is heated or air conditioned, according to the safety code. Indoors would include any area of the residence which is temperature controlled.” A garage or basement is not considered adequate shelter unless it is heated or air conditioned, according to the Wildwood ordinance.

He said protection from weather for pets was vague in the township’s current ordinance.

“I have no problem adding that into the ordinance,” Mayor Michael Beck said. “Our ordinance has in it that they must be taken care of in extreme weather. This would make it more specific in the sense that it designates a specific temperature.”

The township’s animal ordinance has had a number of items added and taken out over the years, he said.

Township Solicitor David Stefankiewicz said the ordinance needed to be updated to be cohesive. He said he would have some recommendations for the ordinance at a future meeting.

Thompson requested that a “watered-down” version of the ordinance not be produced.

Quoting information from the Animal Legal Defense Fund’s 2014 Animal Protection Laws and Rankings Report, Thompson said New Jersey ranked 37th in the nation in protecting animals. She said in 2007, the state was in the middle tier of rankings but in 2008 moved to the bottom tier and stayed in the bottom tier until this year.

Township Manager Jim Ridgway said he was supply-

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Van Drew to host bayshore hearing

TRENTON — State Senate Community and Urban Affairs Chairman Jeff Van Drew announced that he will hold a hearing to take testimony from residents and business officials of the Cumberland and Cape May county Delaware bayshore area about urgent economic and environmental issues they are facing — including post-Hurricane Sandy matters — to develop an action plan for addressing them within 90 days.

“I have strong concerns about the state of the bayshore towns, which are continu-

ing to suffer more than two years after Superstorm Sandy. Shore communities across the state received billions of dollars in aid while western Cape May and Cumberland counties were left to fend for themselves. This has resulted in incredible hardship that only adds to the economic and environmental issues long faced by the bayshore region,” said Van Drew, D-Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic.

“We have to do more to help the local governments, resi-

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Valentine's Weekend
Open Friday, *Saturday & Sunday

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Italian Wine Class
@ Cape May Wine School

Lecture and Wine tasting of 6 Wines and Cheese
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