



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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# Addiction problem 'touches everyone'

## Cape Assist offers prevention services, education, recovery assistance

By ERIC AVEDESIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

WILDWOOD — For those around us whose daily lives have been affected by addictive substances, Cape Assist offers counseling services, making the burden of opioid addiction less painful.

Cape Assist is a nonprofit substance abuse prevention and treatment agency based in Wildwood.

According to Cape Assist's website, the agency began in 1981 with

the Cape May County Council on Alcoholism.

After receiving a seed grant of \$25,000 from the state Department of Health, the agency began an outreach to schools with public awareness campaigns.

In 1987, the agency addressed drug addiction and became the Cape May County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. Both alcohol counselors and drug counselors realized addiction was the real problem instead of individual substances. The agency began to



address prevention and hired additional staff through the years.

The agency changed its name again to Cape Assist in 1993, and had an annual budget of \$300,000

to address all forms of substance abuse. Cape Assist established a headquarters in Wildwood in 2004, where it serves Cape May County residents.

Cape Assist's Senior Coalition Coordinator Kim Mounce said opiate abuse and its connection to heroin is one of the agency's major topics in recent years.

With its staff of 12, Cape Assist provides treatment with outpatient and intensive outpatient treatment, individual counseling and group counseling.

Mounce said the agency also advocated for medicine drop boxes in police stations where the public can safely discard any unused prescription medicines. Cape Assist staff also presents informational sessions about drug abuse to senior citizen centers, schools and parent groups.

Cape Assist also conducted a symposium with Atlantic Prevention Resources and Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey

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## Beaches next site of fund fighting

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — With a new presidential administration not sold on climate change and promising sweeping reforms, will the federal beach replenishment program vanish like area beaches in a nor'easter?

While President Donald Trump has not issued a statement on beach replenishment, some change is inevitable, according to experts in the field.

Geology professor Robert Young, director of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Western Carolina University, said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is trying to develop 50-year projects from Delaware to Sandy Hook.

"I think the idea that the corps is going to be able to not just find the sand but meet a very ambitious timetable where they have to come back to all of these communities every two years, three years, four years, and that there will be enough dredging to do all of that and



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Heavy machinery is used to move sand during a beach-replenishment project in Cape May Point. Experts believe the change of administration may affect federal funding for beach projects, with more battling over fewer dollars going forward.

money to continue to do all of that, I think it's problematic," Young said.

He said some portions of the nation such as southern Florida and North Carolina are running out of sand to use for beach replenishment.

"There are certainly parts of the country where it's going to become very difficult to get sand in the near term, not just in the long term," Young said.

He said New Jersey and Long Island, N.Y., are in

better shape for sand supply than other areas.

While Cape May's economy is dependent on its wide sandy beaches, it is not the mission of the Army Corps to build beaches just for recreation, Young said.

"They're supposed to build beaches for storm-damage reduction," he said.

Young said beach replenishment is worth the expense at some locations, while the

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'What I see as the biggest problem is that we don't really have a national plan or vision for where or how federal dollars should be spent, no big-picture vision. They fund project by project.'

—Robert Young, director, Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines

## Lower budget seeks 1.8-cent tax-rate boost

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township's proposed 2017 budget, introduced by council Monday, contains a 1.8-cent property tax rate increase.

The budget totals \$27,403,577, up \$13,545 from 2016. Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the tax levy is increasing from \$20 million to \$20.7 million, an increase of \$710,292, or 3.54 percent. He said the township is below the legal spending cap by \$827,000.

Ridgway said the tax increase is due in part to decreased mercantile license fees collected of almost \$70,000. The change was from a state legal ruling concerning rental units. He said the second factor for the proposed tax increase was \$750,000 in payments to the county for dispatch services and lease payments. The township turned over 911 dispatch to the county last year and is participating in a rehabilitation of the public safety building at the Cape May County Airport.

"These changes will most certainly bring about considerable savings moving

forward, but because this is the first year, those savings aren't anticipated in this year's budget," Ridgway said. "We anticipate significant savings in next year's budget for utilities and maintenance."

He said no increase is anticipated for 2018.

The local purpose tax rate in the proposed budget is 57.3 cents per \$100 of assessed value, up from 55.6 cents last year. The local purpose tax would be \$573 for every \$100,000 of assessed property value. The owner of a \$200,000 home would pay \$34 more in local purpose tax than in 2016 for the municipal budget.

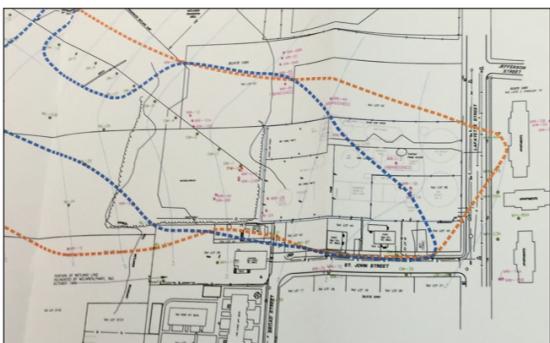
The township finished the year with a record surplus of \$6.5 million with \$2.5 million being applied to the 2017 budget leaving a balance of \$4 million in the account. Ridgway said projections fully anticipate restoring the surplus being used in the budget.

"We feel confident using this amount of surplus because operations have left it at a historically high level," he said.

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## JCP&L monitoring benzene-contaminated groundwater

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave



The orange dotted line shows the boundary of benzene-contaminated groundwater extending off the former manufactured gas plant site and onto the apartment complex site.

CAPE MAY — Jersey Central Power & Light and its contractor Viasant are monitoring benzene-contaminated groundwater under the front yard of Osborne Court Apartments, but say there is no safety concern.

The utility is undertaking a sizable environmental remediation on the site of a former manufactured gas plant (MGP) off Lafayette Street between St. John Street and athletic fields.

JCP&L placed copies of its remedial work plan, about

equal in size to three telephone books, in the Cape May branch of the county library. A map in the plan indicates groundwater containing benzene crossing Lafayette Street underground in the front yard of Osborne Court Apartments which are operated by the Cape May Housing Authority. Benzene is classified as a carcinogen by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

JCP&L excavated one to six feet of soil in 2002 from the front yard of Osborne Court, replacing it with clean soil.

In an email last week,

JCP&L Project Manager Anna Sullivan stated, "JCP&L's primary focus is always to protect public health first, and then to address environmental impacts. The good news is shallow groundwater is not a source of drinking water in Cape May, and as such there is no concern regarding potential impacts to public health. In terms of addressing purely environmental impacts, what is important to note is the direction of groundwater flow — it flows across the site in a northwesterly direction. As a result, the groundwater plume is

being addressed through the actions we are taking currently."

"The primary containment wall we installed last spring cuts off sources of future impacts to groundwater flowing over the former MGP site," she stated. "And the secondary containment wall and pump and treatment system we're installing as part of our current effort will capture and treat groundwater flow from the periphery around our site, including some of the groundwater plume. But obviously that takes time,

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# WASHINGTON INN

## Open Valentine's Day

With a 4 course  
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