

Cape May Star and Wave

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HOUSE OF THE WEEK
Real Estate Resource



OWNER HOPES YOU GIVE PEACE PIES A CHANCE

Page A2



Census: County has oldest population in state Social service agencies working to address needs of aging residents

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

RIO GRANDE — The latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau confirms again that Cape May County houses the oldest population in the state.

The U.S. median age ticked up from 37.6 on July 1, 2013, to 37.7 on July 1, 2014, according to the Census Bureau. The estimates examine population changes among groups by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin nationally, as well as in all states and

counties, between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2014.

The counties in New Jersey with the highest median age July 1, 2014, were Cape May at 48.6, Hunterdon at 45.5 and Sussex at 43.9.

The youngest counties, those with the lowest median age, were Hudson at 34.8, Passaic at 36.7 and Cumberland and Essex, both at 37.

As the nation aged, so did every county in New Jersey, according to the Census Bureau.

Having the oldest population in the state produces a number of needs to

be addressed by local social service agencies.

Donna Groome, executive director of the county Department of Aging and Disability Services, said their mission was to enable senior citizens to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and educate seniors on their long term needs.

While there is no definitive theory why the county has the state's largest senior population, Groome said the presumption is because of the scenic beauty of the area.

"I ask people a lot, 'How did you

get here,'" she said. "Most often the answer is 'I vacationed here, I love it here, I wanted to live here in my retirement.'"

Groome said seniors will move to the county with a spouse, away from their children and family.

"When their spouse dies, they are very far away from their family," she said. "We do our best to offer as many programs as possible."

While the department does not offer cash assistance for seniors on limited incomes, Groome said they look at all the benefit programs available

such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) for food stamps, home energy assistance or PAAD (Pharmaceutical to the Aged and Disabled).

"We try to look at their income, look at what they're spending, look at the benefit programs out there, see if there is any way that might qualify for SNAP to free up some dollars they may be spending on food to spend elsewhere," she said.

Of 390 needs assessment surveys

See **Oldest population**, Page A3



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Gray skies are gonna clear up ...

Ugly, gray skies and multiple days of deluging rain blanketed Cape May over the past week, but brighter days eventually became the norm. Yacht Avenue looked a little gloomy Friday, June 26, but the forecast for the Fourth of July weekend is 85 degrees with sunny skies.

Talks begin on dividing public safety building

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Attorneys for the county and Lower Township met two weeks ago to discuss creating a shared-services agreement covering how the Public Safety Building at the Cape May Airport would be divided between Lower Township police and headquarters for the county Office of Management and a future 911 dispatch center.

County Emergency Management Director Martin Pagliughi said it needs to be determined whether Lower Township would sell the building back to the county for \$1, the same arrangement in which Lower Township purchased the building from the county. He said another possibility was splitting up the building, with Lower Township purchasing a portion of the building following renova-

tion under a condominium agreement.

Pagliughi said the details were being worked out through the county's bond counsel. Another question is how the renovation work would be divided.

He said he was visualizing the county would take the lead on the project and pass a bond issue for the improvements to the entire building, then Lower Township would just pay for whatever percentage of the building it occupies.

"I think probably what they are going to recommend is that the county take over the whole building and then we just more or less lease them the space for 20 years or 30 years, and the capital improvement part of it, they would just pay back the county for the percentage of the building that's occupied by them," Pa-

See **Talks begin**, Page A4

Seagear opens second store, this one catering to beach crowd

By JACK FICHTER
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SHELLENGER'S LANDING — Seagear has been a mainstay of the commercial fishing industry for decades here on the second-biggest port on the East Coast.

It has sold wire rope, nets, slings and anything and everything a commercial fisherman needs to get back out on the water, and now is branching out with a second location with items for surfers, boaters, recreational fishermen, beachgoers or folks who want to dress like Jimmy Buffett.

Seagear has always had the challenge of being off the beaten track. Seagear President Chuck Barto said

he tells people to turn right on the street next to Lucky Bones and keep going right for the main store that specializes in commercial fishing gear at 1144 Route 109.

The business started in 1986 with one small building, a former icehouse that was joined with a welding shop and former auto repair garage.

Back then, only one marine supply was in town, Cape Port Marine, which was started by Barto's father-in-law.

For the commercial fishing business, Barto said he buys directly from rope and netting mills all over the world. He said the commercial fishing business in America has shrunk in the past 20 years.

"There were twice the boats 20 years ago," Barto said.

As the commercial fishing industry becomes more corporate, Barto is setting his sails for a broader market. While the old salts flock to Seagear, he wants to bring in tourists, recreational boaters, surfers and folks who spend time outdoors for fun or work.

Besides the heavy-duty commercial gear downstairs, the second floor of the main store is loaded with men's, women's and kids' clothing, including foul-weather gear, UV protective Tech shirts, T-shirts, Carhartt shoes and jeans, and Timberland and Wolverine boots.

See **Seagear**, Page A4



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Seagear President Chuck Barto holds up one of the new tourist geared T-shirts for sale at the business' new location.



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