

Cape May Star and Wave



160TH YEAR NO. 6 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, February 5, 2014 50¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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Former city manager Fred Coldren passes away at 70

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Those who knew or served with Fred Coldren during his decades of public service say he always did what he felt was best for the community and its people. As a devoted public servant, Coldren was affiliated with numerous organizations; such as the Boy Scouts of America, the Historic Cold Spring Village Foundation and the United Way of Cape May County as well as multiple municipalities and state and federal departments.

Coldren, 70, passed away at his Franklin Street home in Cape May on Wednesday, Jan. 26. Coldren's colleagues and friends spoke to the Star and Wave, saying his death was a heartrending loss.

Originally from Emporia, Kan., Coldren moved to Cape May County and started out as a reporter for the Wildwood Leader, Seven Mile Beach Reporter and the Atlantic City Press. He was then the editor for the Cape May County Herald from 1969 to 1970.

Following his stint in journalism, he made his way

into politics and served as the special assistant, press and legislative aide to U.S. Congressman Charles Sandman Jr. as well as the executive director of the New Jersey Republican State Committee from 1973 to 1974 and a delegate at the National GOP Convention in 1976.

Coldren served as Cape May City Manager for 15 years, the longest tenure of any manager in city history. During that time, he was considered to be pivotal in beach replenishment efforts and having Cape May designated as a National Historic

Landmark.

Current City Manager Bruce MacLeod said when Cape May originally began beach replenishment, it required the procurement of rights to beachfront property and leases.

"Fred was extremely instrumental in initiating beach replenishment," MacLeod said. "Back then, they had to demonstrate to the DEP and Army Corps of Engineers that the city had procured rights to beach parcels and secure leases with beachfront property owners. Fred pretty much single-handedly negoti-

ated the procurement of those beach parcels and 99-year lease agreements."

MacLeod said he first met Coldren when he started his job at the county treasurer's office in 1975. He said Coldren was the county insurance and grant coordinator at the time. When MacLeod was hired by the city four years later to work in the tax and finance department, Coldren was serving on city council (1976-80). The following year, Coldren would become city manager.

"Fred was very smart; a person of integrity and honor.

He was a forward thinking person. He actually introduced the city offices to computers and wrote the software used for printing the water and sewer bills at the time," MacLeod said. "He was a hard worker. He spent a lot of hours here at City Hall..."

Cape May Mayor Ed Mahaney said Coldren was not only a catalyst for beach replenishment projects, but also water and sewer infrastructure improvements throughout the city, writing grant applications for capital

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County budget introduced with less than .5-cent boost

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE – Cape May County freeholders introduced a \$138.9 million county budget for 2014 on Jan. 28, which calls for a tax rate increase of less than a half-cent.

Although it will vary depending on the ratio of assessed value to true value in each of the county's 16 municipalities, an average taxpayer will pay \$209 for \$100,00 of property assessment.

After increasing 18 percent in 2012, revenues from transfer fees at the county clerk's office decreased slightly this year by 3 percent, bringing in approximately \$4.6 million. Interest on investments decreased 34 percent to slightly over \$64,000 and for the fifth year, the county's ratable base declined.

"Despite these financial setbacks, I believe we are introducing a solid budget that will continue to protect the services that residents need and expect from county government, while staying affordable to the taxpayers of Cape May County," Freeholder Director Gerald Thornton said.

The 2014 budget is \$138.9 million compared to the adopted 2013 budget of \$138.5 million. The county

tax levy rose from \$96.4 million to \$98.3 million. Balancing the budget uses \$9 million of the county's \$17 million surplus.

Total operating expenses are \$70 million, reflecting a decrease of approximately 1 percent. Total salaries and wages increased to \$45.3 million.

The budget keeps the tax rate increase to less than half a cent and the tax levy is at a 1.9 percent increase.

"In 2014, we are focusing on investing in important areas such as infrastructure, economic development and governmental operations," Thornton said. "This year, we will re-open our newly renovated senior center in Upper Township in February, break ground for a new County Correctional Center, build new exhibits at the county zoo, complete the much-needed third floor of the county courthouse and end the year with the opening of a state-of-the-art library in Wildwood Crest."

Public comment and adoption of the budget is scheduled for 7 p.m. March 11 in the Freeholder's Meeting Room at the County Administration Building. The proposed budget is available at the Office of the Clerk of the Board in the Administration Building and on the county website at www.capemaycounty.gov.net.



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Sailing on thin ice

Above, the ferry Cape Henlopen appears to be stuck in the ice, last Wednesday, near the entrance of the canal leading to the Cape May-Lewes Ferry Terminal in North Cape May. The cape area was experiencing frigid temperatures, but the water was not frozen, just filled with floating chunks of ice. See more winter pictures on page A8

Advisory Committee on Tourism forgotten

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Cape May's Advisory Committee on Tourism, which was set up mainly to promote tourism and help the Tourism Utility transition to a self-sustaining utility, seems to have fallen by the wayside – no meeting schedule, expired terms for all members, and without fulfilling any of the duties outlined in the ordinance that created it.

A little over two years ago, Cape May City Council passed ordinances creating a Tourism Utility, eliminating the Tourism Commission and reinstating an Advisory Committee of Tourism. By

ordinance, the committee is supposed to meet not less than six times per year. The city scheduled six meetings in 2013: Jan. 24, Feb. 21, March 21, April 18, Oct. 17 and Nov. 21, but according to committee members, the group met no more than three or four times.

The ordinance also requires the appointment of one councilmember as a liaison to the Advisory Committee on Tourism, who would be a non-voting member of the committee. Indications are no councilmember was ever appointed as a liaison to the committee.

As the first term for Advisory Committee on Tourism members expired in

January, it appears the committee membership was not confirmed and approved by city council at the annual reorganization meeting, no liaison was appointed, and no meeting schedule was adopted.

"The purposes of the Advisory Committee on Tourism," as stated in Ordinance 244-2011, "are to advise the City Council and the Director of Marketing, Communications and Event Sales in coordinating public/private programs related to tourism within the City and exploring means and methods for accomplishing the objectives of the Department of Tourism, Civic Affairs and Recreation, but with a pri-

mary focus on tourism."

Without a meeting schedule, the committee is essentially defunct and not fulfilling its intended purpose, which was to promote tourism and by extension, help make the Tourism Utility a "self-sustaining/solvent fund," and shift the financial burden of the Convention Hall from the city's general fund to the utility.

In 2011, Councilman Bill Murray and Councilwoman Deanna Fiocca, voted against the ordinance eliminating the Tourism Commission and creating the Advisory Committee on Tourism. At the time, Murray said he

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Airport an area in need of rehab

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Starting a new business is quite a gamble in the present economy, but Lower Township is trying to create incentive for entrepreneurs by pursuing a program that would provide tax breaks to new ventures located at the

Cape May Airport.

Lower Township Council took the first step in its attempt at obtaining these tax incentives by passing a resolution on Jan. 22 that declared the 986-acre airport complex as an area in need of rehabilitation. According to Deputy Mayor Norris Clark,

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