

# Cape May Star and Wave

159TH YEAR NO. 19 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, May 8, 2013 50¢



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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# BPU: Municipalities can choose electricity provider

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – A representative from the Board of Public Utilities addressed Lower Township Council, Monday, saying municipalities can choose from whom they buy their electricity.

Gary Finger, the business ombudsman with the BPU, told council the energy market was deregulated in 1999,

there are now 109 electricity providers in New Jersey. However, only about 9 percent of the residents have opted to use a third party provider, which usually offers lower rates. By comparison, about 21 percent of commercial customers have switched to a third party.

Finger said municipalities can enter into a third party agreement for the community as a whole, and the first town

has already taken that step. He said the town of Plumstead recently put out their electrical service for bid and went with a third party provider. He said Lower Township could do the same by passing an ordinance creating an aggregate energy account.

"You would put together a package for all residents, and businesses would also be eligible," he said.

The township residents who

wish to keep Atlantic City Electric as their provider would have to opt out of the contract. Finger said any residents who used a third party provider could not be part of the municipal account until their individual contract expired. Commercial customers would not automatically be part of the municipal account and would have to opt into the program.

Township Manager Mike

Voll said he and his wife discussed third party providers and said they felt comfortable with Atlantic City Electric, which provides electricity for all of Cape May County. Finger said nothing would change except the rate the residents paid. He said there is very little electricity created in New Jersey, and the major utility companies buy most of the energy from states such as Pennsylvania and

West Virginia. He said the difference is that the large utility companies buy energy to supply their customers once a year and the rate is set for the year. Third party providers buy electricity at market rates, which normally results in a discount. Finger said the township residents could see a 10 percent reduction in their electricity bills.

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## Water will flow in Town Bank, revenues anticipated

By BETTY WUND  
For the Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Matt Ecker, executive director of the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority (LTMUA), told the board of directors at its May meeting that he looks forward to the revenues that will come in this summer as water flows to new township water hookups in Town Bank and parts of Villas.

"We are in healthy shape. The future looks great for the MUA," said Ecker.

"I came in when the water project just started," said board chairman Nels Johnson. "The mayor and the council were in a bitter battle to get it mandated. These gentlemen have done an amazing job to get this approved."

"The water allocation permit was approved April 1. We now have an adequate water supply for Town Bank and all of the Villas. As you may recall we did not know how much money we would have left from the Town Bank project to do additional streets in the Villas," Ecker said. "There is money left for some addi-

tional roads to connect to township water. The potential number is about 4,000."

"There are now 7,234 connections in the township. New connections could bring the rateables to just under 12,000," said board member Stephen Sheftz.

"It has been eagerly awaited for months if not years. Now it is possible to pay your fees, get your receipt and contact your plumber. Meters will begin to be set in two weeks," Ecker said. The township council accepted a reduced cost for individual homeowners to hookup to the township water system to approve the project. The \$1,600 cost is \$1,000 less than originally proposed.

An application for water connection allowing for five annual payments of \$320, or payment in full, is available at the MUA office at 2900 Bayshore Road in Villas. Answers to questions about connecting and information about alternative payment options including a New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA) loan are also on

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Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

## My country tis of thee

Above, students from Cape May Elementary School took part in a Loyalty Day observance, May 1, in Wilbraham Park in West Cape May. Students from West Cape May Elementary and Maud Abrams School also took part. In 1958, Congress declared May 1 as Loyalty Day, but it was never named a federal holiday. West Cape May is one of the few communities that regularly observes the day.



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

## Swan family graces Lake Lily

Above, Lake Lily in Cape May Point is now the home of a swan family after the pen (female) hatched five baby swans, which are called "cygnets." The cob (male) is shown here with his head in the water trying to dig up some food. He stayed near the nest while his mate-for-life was incubating her eggs, and he continues to stay close to home to protect their young. Swans are seen regularly in the ponds in at Cape May Point Lighthouse State Park.

## World Series of Birding lands in Cape May, 5/11

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – The World Series of Birding is coming to New Jersey. Not the Major League Baseball championship series, mind you, but the World Series of Birding – a 30-year-old tradition in the state founded by Cape May Bird Observatory Director Peter Dunne.

The 30th annual World Series of Birding on May 11 will be a complete 24-hour marathon, from midnight to midnight, taking place across the entire state and welcoming competitors from around the world.

"We've had teams from England, Germany, Spain, Turkey, Israel, you name it – it truly is the World

Series of Birding," said Bird Observatory Marketing Director Sheila Lego.

Lego said there are over 60 teams currently registered for the event, including 16 youth squads hoping to see and hear the nearly 200 species of birds throughout New Jersey. Dunne said the 24-hour marathon is commonly referred to by avid participants as the "big day." He said the tradition goes all the way to the 1920s and 30s when experts Charlie Urner and Ludlow Griscom pioneered events such as this that brought enthusiastic birders together.

Since the first World Series, thousands of birders have taken the challenge and fol-

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Cain Chamberlin/Cape May Star and Wave

## Water tower getting facelift

Above, workers place a curtain around the Cape May water tower at Madison and Columbia as they prepare to sandblast the exterior. See related story on page A3.



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