



House of the week

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Planners OK housing above mall stores

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165th YEAR NO. 42 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2019 \$1.00

Sierra Club: Replenishment waste of money

Governments should plan retreat, as eventually the sea will win, Tittel says

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spends millions of dollars annually on replenishing sand on Cape May County beaches. It's a waste of money and a perpetual work project, said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey chapter of the Sierra Club.

"It does not really solve the problems facing the shore, which is sea level rise, climate change and more frequent impact of storms and storm surges," Tittel said. "It gives people false hope, to pump sand on a beach and it's there for a year or two, before a storm takes it away."

The Sierra Club is a national environmental organization supported by members. Its goal is to influence public policy in Washington, D.C., and state capitals through public education and grass-roots political action, according to its website.

Tittel said the money spent yearly on beach replenishment is not sustainable for the future.

"We need to think about a longer-term strategy versus just pumping sand," he said. "We're fighting a race against time and we're going to lose and sea is going to win. We need to think differently about protecting the coast. We need to buy out homes in the path of storm surges."

Tittel said communities must determine where to strategically retreat so beaches can sustain themselves. While the sand replenishment may last through one storm, it may not last through the next storm, he said.

Beach replenishment damages the ocean's ecosystem, Tittel said.

"Pumping the sand makes the beach big, flat and devoid of all life," Tittel said. "The important part is as the beach gets wider and bigger, the angle of sand into the water gets sharper and encourages bigger waves to [break] closer to shore. It increases riptides and storm surges and impacts recreational surfers and does a lot of damage."

"My concern's with what happens when [they] go off the coast, use a giant vacuum to suck up sand, it creates environmental damage by destroying fisheries, biota, all the kelp and seaweed," Tittel said. "It dumps it all on beach, which impacts the environment and fisheries."

Tittel said there is not enough sand to deal with all beach replenishment as the sand continues to get sucked back out to sea.

"Cape May Point is down 1,200 feet [of beach] in the last 30 to 40 years; they lost a lot of sand," Tittel said. "A lot of that sand is sucked down to Wildwood and has to do with the canal. A lot of people don't realize the Cape May Point

Lighthouse beach used to go out another quarter mile past that."

Alternative options to pumping sand include a strategic retreat, Tittel said.

"Rebuilding dunes helps but we need to think about where to strategically retreat," Tittel said. "We built in the wrong places and we are trying to defend them by putting up seawalls, jetties and pumping sand. We need to think [about] buying out properties to let nature take its course."

The long-term strategy to protect vital infrastructure is essential, but right now the only action is relying on pumping sand, Tittel

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Memorial Paddle Out honors Boyt

The 9th annual Memorial Paddle Out, in honor of Lt. Andy Boyt, was held Oct. 14. The event is a memorial service held on the anniversary of the passing of Boyt, known as an avid surfer as well as a firefighter. Participants paddle out on their surfboards, body boards and kayaks from Steger's Beach with loose flowers, form a circle, hold hands and pray and raise their hands skyward before tossing the flowers in the center of the ring.

Beach Theatre complex off-limits after discovery of unstable roof support

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Construction Official Lou Vito ordered the sidewalk in front of the former Beach Theatre complex cordoned off with yellow tape and barricades Oct. 13 after one or two support columns was found to be structurally unsound.

The columns support an overhang over the former entrance to the theater. Vito said he received a report from the fire department of

a person stating they leaned against one of the columns and it moved.

"I don't want people sitting under it," he said. Two take-out restaurants are located next to the overhang. Zito said he initially was not able to contact a management company for the complex.

"The next step is for them to get in touch with me and tell me how they are going to solve it," he said.

Frank Theaters, owners of

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

One or two support columns at the Beach Theatre complex was found to be unstable, forcing the city construction office to order the sidewalk cordoned off.

County schools suffering under funding change

Some districts forced to cut staff, programs

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

According to Save Our Schools (SOS) New Jersey, a grassroots volunteer organization of parents and public education supporters, New Jersey has underfunded public schools more than \$6 billion since 2010.

In 2018, a bill known as S-2 was signed into law. S-2 phases out adjustment aid, called the hold-harmless provision that enabled some districts to receive more money than others. S-2 also eliminated growth caps, allowing districts with increasing enrollments to get more state funding.

Funding was redistrib-

uted from the overfunded to the underfunded districts, with about 370 districts receiving additional aid. However, about 200 districts suffered losses in state aid that would affect how districts provide education. Some of these districts mounted legal challenges against the state.

The process will be a seven-year phase-in period, during which some districts will lose a portion of their state aid over time.

Local school administrators are left with unfunded budget items and facing a possible reduction in staff.

According to administrators

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Districts join forces to let Trenton know cuts harm students

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

Cape May County's school districts are united in a dialogue with political leaders for a possible solution to a change in funding that will cut \$27 million in aid over seven years.

Upper Township School District Superintendent Vincent Palmieri Jr. said the districts have reached out to state lawmakers for two years.

"We've sat down with our local legislators, they've been very supportive. They understand our plight," Palmieri said. "Geographically we're the farthest from

Trenton, we have the least amount of population and representation down here. It's an uphill battle."

Michele Barbieri, president of the Upper Township Board of Education, echoed the struggles the county faces working toward a political resolution to the sharp cuts in state aid and their deleterious effects.

"We're really hoping legislators begin to take notice and realize that this is serious and it should be serious business for them. We're in a small area here with not a lot of voice," said Barbieri, who also serves as vice

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