

Lower expenses offset losses in Cape May

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House of the week

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Legal pot would provide retail, tax opportunities

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON — A ballot question asking voters whether they would like to legalize the possession and use of marijuana for people age 21 and older and legalize the cultivation, processing and sale of retail marijuana was expected to have been approved by New Jersey voters Nov. 3.

A state commission created to oversee the medical cannabis program would also oversee

the new, personal use cannabis market. Marijuana would be subject to state sales tax and, if authorized by the Legislature, a municipality could pass an ordinance to charge a local tax on cannabis products.

Should state residents be searching for marijuana retail stores in the near future or delivery services to their homes?

Erik Altieri, executive director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), said he ex-

pected the state Legislature to pass some form of legislation to end the arrest of adults for marijuana possession. He said setting up the regulatory process and issuing licenses on the commercial and retail side would take some time.

“What we want and what the majority of New Jersey voters want by approving this initiative is that no adult continues to face arrest for simple possession,” Altieri said.

In other states, timelines for

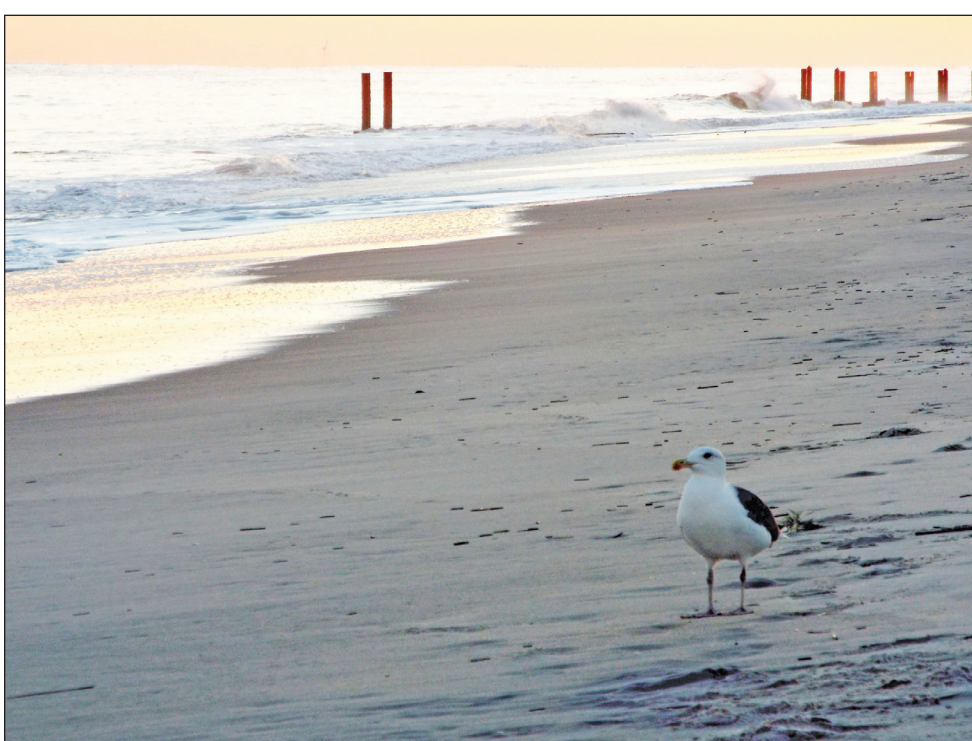
implementation of a commercial cannabis market have been as short as six to eight months and as long as two years, he said. Altieri said there are 11 states with legal marijuana, so New Jersey does not need to “reinvent the wheel” with some infrastructure already in place with the medical marijuana program.

On Oct. 28, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Nick Scutari (D-Union) said existing medical marijuana dispensaries could begin selling to the public

within a month of the election. Altieri said while local towns could pass ordinances against marijuana sales within their borders, they could be overridden by the state.

“Some states require counties to opt in, some require them to opt out, some don’t allow them to opt out at all. Some if they opt out, they lose the tax revenue they would have got from the shared pool,” he said.

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John Alvarez/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

A bird's-eye view of sunset

A gull spends some time on the beach, where it has little company this time of the year, as the sun sets on another great day in Cape May.

Horseshoe crab blood may be key to vaccine

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

A vaccine for COVID-19 may rely on the blood of a 450-million-year-old living fossil that is ubiquitous on Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean beaches — the horseshoe crab.

Delaware Bay and the shores of southern New Jersey are home to one of the largest populations of these invertebrate creatures on Earth.

Modern medicine has relied on the milky-blue blood of horseshoe crabs for decades. Their blood is the only known natural source of limulus amoebocyte lysate (LAL), which detects bacterial endotoxins in drugs, medical products and vaccines.

But while the race to develop a COVID-19 vaccine has increased the awareness of the horseshoe crabs and their vital role in testing vaccines, it has not necessarily increased their use and certainly has not further threatened their vitality.

Charles River Laboratories (CRL) in Wilmington, Md., is an industry leader in both manufacturing life-saving LAL and the protec-



File photo/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Horseshoe crabs, which are found in abundance on Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean beaches in southern New Jersey, are important in biomedical testing.

tion of horseshoe crabs as both a resource to the biomedical community and the survival of the birds, turtles and marine creatures that depend on them.

“A large part of my role includes endotoxin testing, a critical process in identifying bacterial contamination to ultimately ensure the safety of drugs, vaccines and medical de-

vices,” said John Dubczak, director of Reagent Development and Pilot Plant Operations for CRL, which operates 90 sites in 20 countries. “The horseshoe crab blood is extremely sensitive to endotoxin pyrogens, which indicate the presence of gram-negative bacteria.”

Horseshoe crabs, A8

Second District winner could hold it for years

Region a swing district; party switch raised national interest in outcome

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Cape May Star and Wave

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — The Second Congressional District race between now-Republican incumbent Jeff Van Drew and challenger Amy Kennedy has been one of the most interesting and high-profile in the country.

“New Jersey has 1 million more Democrats than Republicans among registered voters, so in many of the congressional districts and races up and down the state, Democrats do have some advantage,” said John Froomjian, executive director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University. “Although I will also say that we have probably one of the most competitive congressional races in the country here in south Jersey in the Second District.”

That’s in large part due to Van Drew’s very public party switch in December 2019, when he pledged his “undying support” for President Donald Trump on national television from the Oval Office.

The freshman congressman said the final straw was when the Democratic leadership told him he would lose their support if he did not vote to impeach the president.

But the marriage went bad before the honeymoon, when Van Drew cast his first

vote against Nancy Pelosi for Speaker of the House.

According to Politco.com, Van Drew had been planning to seek re-election as a Democrat but saw his support plunge into in the 20s when he announced he would vote against impeachment.

According to Ballotpedia.org, the district was one of 109 in the country that intersected with “Pivot Counties,” or counties carried by Republican Donald Trump in 2016 after Democrat Barack Obama claimed them in 2008 and 2012.

Despite Republican Frank LoBiondo holding the district from 1995 to 2018, and Democrat William Hughes holding it prior to that from 1970 to 1994, Froomjian

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The Second Congressional District is ‘one of the rare districts across the country that voters seem to really look at the candidates and make up their minds.’ And those voters do not favor extremism on either side.

—John Froomjian, executive director, William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University

Would ‘blue wave’ hit Jersey shores?

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Cape May Star and Wave

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — Many pundits around the U.S. were predicting a blue wave to sweep the nation based on early voting and polling.

John Froomjian, executive director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, said choices will “depend on the region, on the state” but that “in blue-state New Jersey, we have seen quite a bit of enthusiasm and new voter registration on both sides, but more on the Democratic side.”

He said there have been new registrations for Republicans as well but that “Democrats do seem to really be enthusiastic.”

As of Oct. 31, more than 90 million people had already cast their ballot, more than 65 percent of the number in the 2016 election.

“It speaks to how important this election is to many, many people,” Froomjian said. “I think the election is a referendum on President Trump and I think that factor is going to influence races up and down the ballot.”

He said one sign of a blue wave is “the majority of early vote-by-mail ballots coming in seem to be from the Democrats.”

That does not mean the Republicans are

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Divided we stand: Will nation reunite after the election?

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Cape May Star and Wave

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — The wait is finally (almost?) over and the division and vitriol can stop. But will it? That, of course, depends on who wins between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden.

John Froomjian, executive director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, said he has never seen division like there is right now in the country.

“I’d say the political climate is stressing out people of all ... stripes,” Froomjian said. “It’s probably the most intense election I’ve seen in decades of covering and commenting on politics. The most often-repeated phrase at this time is, ‘I can’t wait for it to be over.’”

Whether it is over quickly or not depends on how close it is, as Trump has threatened litigation if he does not win. If that is the case, the end could be a long time coming and threaten to widen the divide.

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