

Wrestlers advance to Region 8 Tournament

Page A8



House of the week

B1



169th YEAR NO. 8 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2023 \$1.00

Ferry, airport update coming

Capital program is DRBA's largest ever at \$604.5M.

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

NORTH CAPE MAY — Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) commissioners adopted the agency's 2023 capital improvement program (CIP) along with an authority-wide five-year strategic plan for the agency's airports and crossing facilities.

The 2023 CIP of \$208 million is comprised of \$174.7 million in authority resources and \$33.3 million in federal, state and local grant funds.

"Just like the rest of the country, the DRBA is challenged by its aging infrastructure — bridges built in 1951 and 1968, ferry vessels launched in the 1970s and airports dating from World War II," said Vincent Meconi, chief operations officer for the DRBA. "This CIP, the authority's largest ever, is a necessary investment to maintain that infrastructure for the traveling public. The authority will continue to invest in the Delaware Memorial Bridge, Cape May-



Provided

Drydocked at Caddell Shipyard in New York City, the M.V. Delaware is expected to be back in service with the Cape May-Lewes Ferry by the end of March.

Lewes Ferry and our five regional aviation facilities for the benefit of our customers."

The five-year strategic plan, which contains nearly 100 major capital projects at the Delaware Memorial Bridge (DMB), Cape May-Lewes Ferry (CMLF) and the agency's five regional airport facilities, serves as a planning

tool for directing resources to address the increasing demands associated with that infrastructure.

The plan is expected to cost about \$604.5 million in authority and grant funds. Authority funds consist entirely of tolls and other user fees; no tax dollars are used.

The CIP includes rehabilitation to the approach

roads to the North Cape May ferry terminal. Pavements at the toll approach are deteriorating and improvements are necessary to maintain expected levels of service.

The project proposes the design and construction for roadway reconfigurations at the terminal en-

See DRBA, Page A4

Lower, Middle police seek two for carjackings

Perpetrators fail first attempt, get away with SUV on second

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — The Lower Township and Middle Township police departments investigated two separate reports of an armed carjacking Feb. 16 in North Cape May and the Edgewood area of Middle Township.

The first incident was reported to the Lower Township Police Department at about 3:36 p.m. when officers were dispatched to the 900 block of Irving Avenue in response to a report of an attempted robbery/carjacking in which the accused subjects brandished a handgun.

The victim reported two men approached her, pointed the handgun and demanded she turnover the keys to her vehicle. The victim refused, at which time the men fled the area in a gray four-door sedan.

At about 4:34 p.m., Middle Township police were dispatched to the 2900 block of Route 9 for a report of a robbery/carjacking.

The victim reported he was sitting in his vehicle when he was approached by two men; one pointed a handgun at him and demanded his vehicle keys. After obtaining the keys, the men fled the scene in

the stolen vehicle, a gray 2018 Dodge Durango, and the gray sedan.

The investigation revealed both incidents were carried out by the same subjects.

They were described as Black males and reportedly driving a 2020 silver Toyota Camry bearing Pennsylvania plates LTE6344. The Camry had been reported stolen, taken at gunpoint, to the Philadelphia Police Department on Feb. 15. Further investigation failed to recover either vehicle.

These incidents are currently under investigation by the Middle Township and Lower Township Police Departments, as well as the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office.

It is requested that residents who reside in these areas who have outside video surveillance check their footage for the vehicles.

Those who have any information regarding this case, or video footage, are asked to contact the Lower Township Police Township Detectives Division at (609) 886-1619, ext. 256; the Middle Township Major Crimes Unit at (609) 465-8704, or the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office at (609) 465-1135.

Township Committee won't intervene in rental dispute

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Last month, residents of Shawcrest Mobile Home Park approached Lower Township Council stating they were unhappy with significant increases in their monthly lot rental fees and requesting the township enact a rent control ordinance.

The township is maintaining a hands-off policy, not wishing to become in-

involved in a landlord/tenant dispute, Township Manager Mike Laffey stated said Feb. 6 during a Township Council meeting.

He said township officials had received emails and phone calls from residents of the park that also mentioned code violations such as trash and recycling collection issues.

Laffey said he responded to the phone calls and emails and had code enforcement visit the site to

help the park meet township codes.

"I know some of the community members over there had reached out to the health department in regard to the water quality there," Laffey said. "At this point, I'm not sure how they made out with the health department."

At a Jan. 18 council meeting, John Niewinski said he represented the tenants of Shawcrest Mobile Home Park.

Niewinski said Middle Township adopted an ordinance to control the increase in rent a landlord can impose. He said residents of the park received rental agreements for 2023 with an average lot rent increase of 14.1 percent. The lowest rent increase was 8.3 percent and the highest was 18.6 percent, he said.

"We believe these deep increases have not been justified and are deemed

unconscionable," Niewinski said. "In the fall of 2020, Legacy Communities purchased Shawcrest Mobile Home Park and since then we have experienced a 27 percent increase with a 7.1 percent increase in 2022 and an average of 14.1 percent in 2023."

The mobile home park is responsible for the water infrastructure and any repairs to water service to the homes, Laffey said. Wildwood provides water

to the entrance of the mobile home park, he said.

Laffey said residents are welcome to bring any code violation issues to the attention of the township.

Mayor Frank Sippel said the township sent a letter to Legacy Communities and the park manager identifying the problems. Laffey said the park management was invited to attend a future Township Council meeting to address the concerns of the residents.

La Mer resort gets OK for pool, covered patio

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Cape May Planning Board granted final site plan approval to La Mer Beachfront Resort to replace its swimming pool and build a covered outdoor patio for dining.

At a Feb. 14 meeting, attorney Ron Gelzunas, representing Adis Inc., said the application was carefully crafted not to require any variances. He said a new survey was made of the

property to ensure the existing conditions on the site were accurately reflected on the plans.

Gelzunas said no additional rooms were being added to the hotel or additional seats to the restaurant.

Architect Richard Garber said the project would bring the building into compliance by moving from a previously approved lot coverage of 75.9 percent down

See La Mer, Page A5

Slow approval process continues for CRC

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON — The state Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC) approved 49 conditional licenses and 11 upgrades to annual licenses Feb. 8. None of the licenses was for cannabis businesses located in Cape May County.

At its Feb. 6 meeting, Lower Township Council approved a resolution of support for an application to the CRC for a cannabis retail license for Sea and Leaf LLC to operate at 3860 Bayshore Road in the North Cape May Shopping Center, which contains a post office and a dollar store. Lower Township is permitting no

more than two cannabis retail licenses and no more than two delivery licenses.

CRC Executive Director Jeff Brown said the CRC has received 1,575 applications for recreational cannabis licenses, most of which are for conditional licenses that allow a business to set up but not operate.

Of the 1,575 applications, only 54 have moved to a completeness review, he said, adding that 154 requests to convert from a conditional license to an annual license are under review.

Of the applications received by the CRC, 893 are for cannabis retail sales, 400 for class one cultivation, 240 for class two manufacturing and

11 to operate a testing lab.

CRC Commissioner Maria Del Cid-Kosso, chairwoman of the Permitting and Licensing Committee, said a statewide cap of 37 cultivation licenses, including alternative treatment centers was in effect for two years but ended Feb. 22.

Six cultivators are licensed to produce only medical cannabis but none to produce cannabis for recreational use. There are 11 permitted to serve the medical and recreational sectors for a total canopy of 486,000 square feet, Del Cid-Kosso said.

"In past public meetings, we have issued adult use cultivation licenses

See Slow, Page A3



INTIMATE. ELEGANT.

Take a seat, order your drink and stay a while.
The Lounge menu is back at the Ebbitt Room.

View the menu at EBBITTROOM.COM

Located at the Virginia Hotel | 25 Jackson Street, Cape May | (609) 884-5700

THE
EBBITT
ROOM
AT THE VIRGINIA