



Lacrosse teams fall in CAL semifinal

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House of the week

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168th YEAR NO. 19 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022 \$1.00

Shorecast: Don't expect repeat of 2021 tourism

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — The summer tourist season is forecast to be strong but maybe not as strong as 2021, which was fueled by pent-up demand for travel and financial stimulus following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stockton University's Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism presented its 14th annual Jersey Shorecast on May 11.

Oliver Cooke, associate economic

professor at Stockton University and editor of the South Jersey Economic Review, said 2021 was a solid year of rebound for local tourism and hospitality but employment levels in the industry have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Cooke called summer 2021 "very robust" based on at hotel/motel room tax data.

"It's probably going to make 2022 pretty tough in terms of year-on-year comparisons given what happened last year," Cooke said.

For summer 2022, he predicts a very strong season but one that may

not be as robust as last year.

"I wouldn't be surprised if we were close to where we were last summer but it's going to be very hard to look back and say 2022 was just unbelievable because 2021 was so high on a year-to-year basis," Cooke said.

Cape May County Tourism Director Diane Wieland said the county has recovered 96 percent compared to 2019. Lodging in 2021 surpassed 2019, which was a record year, she said. The county had 10.3 million visitors last year.

The 2022 season is looking great,

she said.

Normally, 100,000 Canadians visit the county in July and August, but the border was closed for the past two summers. Wieland said Canadians formerly gravitated toward campgrounds but the trend now is for hotel stays.

"What we're hearing from them is the gas prices aren't going to impact them, they've been paying a lot for gas anyway," she said.

On a question of how gasoline prices, inflation and a potential recession would affect the upcoming summer season, Cooke said he

believes inflation would play a huge role for all of 2022 but that high gasoline prices often work to southern New Jersey's benefit because vacationers plan shorter trips.

Wieland said advertising for Cape May County tourism is repeating a tag line used in commercials in 2009, Cape May County is just "a tank of gas away."

"There's 30 million people within a 300-mile radius, so we wanted to resonate with them that it's a tank of gas away," she said.

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City's new rules intend to rein in outdoor dining

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Council approved an ordinance modifying regulations for outdoor seating for restaurants first approved in 2017.

On May 3, city solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said applicants must provide cut sheets of materials to be used for outdoor dining, furniture must not be chained to poles or other structures in view of the streetscape, heating apparatus would be subject to the approval of the Bureau of Fire Prevention and positioned to preserve 5 feet of pedestrian egress.

In addition, no outdoor cooking facilities are permitted, no additional signage including street or chalk signs allowed, the last seating for any outdoor dining area will

be no later than 9:30 p.m., no public address systems are permitted, no change in drainage or grading is permitted and umbrellas must follow safety standards.

The ordinance clarifies that it provides allocation outdoors of existing seating and not creation of new or additional seating.

"Sale or service of alcoholic beverages in these locations may be permitted subject to compliance with all applicable ABC regulations and statutes including an extension of premises application," Gillin-Schwartz said.

The ordinance clarifies and confirms it is intended to provide a streamlined process to permit outdoor seating not impacting parking, circulation or other issues implicat-

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Jersey Central Power & Light began work May 9 in the front yard of Cape May Housing Authority's Osborne Court property along Lafayette Street. A contractor is removing about 2 feet of surface soil in a limited area so that a geotextile fabric can be installed to mark where the deeper soil contamination is located.

Motorist kills pedestrian, crashes car in Cape May

CAPE MAY — A 63-year-old woman was struck and killed by a reported erratic driver Sunday on Lafayette Street.

At about 4:14 p.m. May 15, Cape May County dispatch received a report of an erratic driver traveling over the Route 109 bridge toward Cape May.

Police officers responded to the area and located a vehicle matching the description traveling southbound on Lafayette Street. The vehicle

struck a pedestrian and continued forward, striking a telephone pole and another vehicle before becoming disabled. The woman was pronounced dead at the scene. The investigation is ongoing.

The area of Lafayette Street between Jackson and Ocean streets, as well as Bank Street between Broad Street and Lyle Lane and parts of Decatur Street was closed while crews repaired downed wires from the accident.

JCP&L installs geotextile fabric

Product to delineate contaminated area at Housing Authority property

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Jersey Central Power and Light (JCP&L) began work in the front yard of Cape May Housing Authority's Osborne Court property along Lafayette Street on May 9 to mark an area of underground contamination as part of a process to change a deed notice.

A contractor was to remove about 2 feet of surface soil in a limited area so that a geotextile fabric could be laid down for the sole purpose of demarcat-

ing where deeper soil contamination exists and will remain in place, according to Chris Hoenig, senior communications representative for First Energy Corp.

"These impacts are approximately 12 feet and 32 feet below ground surface and are related to the former manufactured gas plant site that has been remediated by JCP&L," he stated. "The surface soils are not being removed due to impacts but will be replaced with clean fill to expand an existing soil cover at the Housing Authority property."

Hoenig stated the work was being performed in accordance with the guidance of the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and with Housing Authority permission, to support the establishment of a deed notice for the area.

A deed notice is an institutional control and accepted remedy that specifies the location and concentration of any remaining contamination and how it must be controlled, maintained or monitored.

See JCP&L, Page A11

Planners unfavorable toward affordable housing off-site

Cape May Cove developer proposes two units in 1950s-era house instead of at harbor subdivision

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — An application to move an affordable housing obligation from a development on Cape May Harbor to a two-unit house on Lafayette Street was withdrawn following unfavorable comments from the city's Planning Board.

During a Planning Board meeting May 10, developer Thomas DiDonato, of Cape May Cove LLC, sought to amend final site subdivision approval granted in 2020 and request

relief from a condition in which two affordable units would be located on site of the development at Cape May Harbor. Instead, he proposed providing the units in a 1950s-era house on Lafayette Street.

Moving an affordable housing obligation off site is permitted by a city ordinance.

DiDonato said initially he planned to place two affordable housing units on site at the proposed 13-unit subdivision. He confirmed he purchased a building on Lafayette Street that he was rehabilitating for

the two units.

Attorney Linda A. Galella, representing the applicant, said Cape May went through third round affordable housing compliance and reached a settlement agreement with Fair Share Housing Center in 2018.

She said the settlement agreement included the 13-unit development and it was contemplated that the units could be located off site or on site. After the settlement agreement was reached, the city adopted a housing element and Fair Share

Plan as part of its master plan that also contemplated the affordable housing units could be off site, Galella said.

Attorney Chris Baylinson, representing Cape May Cove LLC, said DiDonato's obligation was for 2.6 affordable housing units, so he paid \$15,000 into Cape May's Affordable Housing Trust Fund last year for the .6 share.

When affordable housing sites are chosen, they are examined for items such as proximity to stores and public transportation, Galella

said. She said the Lafayette Street property met that criterion.

Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan said the affordable units DiDonato was to construct on Cape May Harbor were to have four to five bedrooms, comparable to the other full-price units in the development.

"The ones on Lafayette Street are only going to be two bedrooms," she said.

"To me, it's not like for like when you're going from five bedrooms

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NAILED IT. Rusty Nail

The Rusty Nail is back! Our famed surfer bar and restaurant is back open for the 2022 season. Stop by for breakfast, lunch and dinner—as well as delicious cocktails and the coldest draft beer in Cape May (as verified by Exit Zero Magazine).

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