



Elevated levels of contaminants found at park site

Page A2



House of the week

B1



166th YEAR NO. 33 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020 \$1.00

Sierra Club: Expanding desal plant bad idea

Environmental organization claims it would only worsen saltwater intrusion

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The New Jersey Sierra Club released a statement July 31 claiming expansion of the city's desalination plant would worsen saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources.

The release stated the city wants to increase the plant's capacity by at least 50 percent to 3 million gallons of water a day, and eventually expand it even more.

"There is a serious problem again in Cape May with saltwater intrusion in their drinking wells. Instead

of trying to deal with the problem, they're going in the wrong direction. They want to build a bigger plant that will only make things worse. They want to take more brackish water for drinking, but by doing that the groundwater will become even saltier. The bigger the plant is and the more they pump, it will become more and more expensive and do more environmental damage. What's worse is that they are doing it even though the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) never updated or fully completed the study on the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer," said Jeff Tittel,

director of the New Jersey Sierra Club. "These days, the salt water intrusion line is moving up the Cape May peninsula faster than traffic on the parkway on a Sunday evening. Sea level rise and climate impacts are only making things worse. Instead of dealing with the saltwater intrusion, Cape May is going down a path that not only isn't sustainable but will make things worse."

Overdeveloping areas with limited water supply is one of the causes of saltwater intrusion, stated the release. The Sierra Club stated new developments continue to be built without consideration of the

impacts to groundwater and increasing population in these areas exponentially increasing the load on the aquifer because one person uses about 75 gallons of water per day.

"Expanding the desalination plant will only help promote more overdevelopment in Cape May like the one proposed by East Cape May Associates. The city continues to promote overdevelopment without doing basic scientific analysis of wetlands or if there is enough water to service the development. New developments increase the population of the area and mean more people are hooked into the system. Add-

ing an additional 1 million gallons of water will be enough for 15,000 people, and even more if they get what they want. Overdevelopment also means more impervious cover like roads and buildings, resulting in storm water or sewage runoff into the ocean instead of recharging the aquifer," Tittel said. "Cape May is just feeding into the downward spiral of more development leading to more pumping, which means less recharge and more saltwater intrusion."

The Sierra Club helped fund a

See Sierra Club, Page A2



David Nahan/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Charles Pomlear of Stagecoach Road in Upper Township surveys the damage caused by the tornado Aug. 4, which flipped over his pool house and gazebo, as well as knocking down multiple trees.

Tornado tears up Upper Twp.

Most of county fares well amid Tropical Storm Isaias

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Cape May Star and Wave

UPPER TOWNSHIP — Tropical Storm Isaias threw a twist into the mix of heavy rain and strong winds when a tornado formed and touched down Aug. 4 in Marmora, causing widespread damage.

Martin Pagliughi, Cape May County Emergency Management coordinator, said the county suffered a lot of downed trees — mostly on private property — and power outages but fared better than some regions.

"Overall we made out very well," Pagliughi said. "We were on the eastern side of the storm and had more wind than heavy rain like in the northeast quadrant. What we are hearing is the damage in other counties was a lot more extensive."

He said Monday that the county had just sent out a preliminary assessment form to municipalities to "get a windshield



Benita Battaglia/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Storm clouds form as a line of strong thunderstorms moves into Cape May on Aug. 4, two days after Tropical Storm Isaias downed trees and caused power outages across Cape May County.

estimate of damage county-wide" to submit to the state, which would determine whether to declare a disaster through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Pagliughi said the southbound lanes of the Garden State Parkway were closed around milemarker 22 where the tornado hit in Upper Township.

Upper Township Emer-

gency Management Coordinator Scott Morgan said the tornado left a path of destruction nearly 2 miles long.

See Tornado, Page A5

COVID-19 cases decrease by half throughout cape

Fall from 80 plus to 42 in a week

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

The number of active COVID-19 cases in Cape May County fell by half from last week to this week.

According to the Cape May County Department of Health, on Monday, Aug. 10, there were 42 active cases among residents in the county and an additional two in long-term care. Through most of last week, there had been 80 or more active cases of the coronavirus countywide.

As of Monday, there were no communities in the county with cases in the double digits. Upper Township and Middle Township each had nine cases, the highest in the county.

Ocean City, Lower Township and Woodbine had four cases each; Cape May and Sea Isle had three cases apiece; Wildwood had two and Wildwood Crest, West Wildwood, North Wildwood and Dennis Township had a single case each. There

were no active cases in Avalon, Cape May Point, Stone Harbor and West Cape May.

There are 30 active COVID-19 cases in the county among nonresidents, including nine in Sea Isle and six in Avalon and Ocean City.

There were two active cases in long-term care, one in Lower and the other in Middle.

Cape May County had 1,012 confirmed COVID-19 cases as of Monday and 82 fatalities since the pandemic began.

Over the course of the pandemic, the hardest-hit communities have been Lower with 265 cases, Middle with 207 and Upper with 112. Lower has had the most fatalities, with three among residents and 33 in long-term care facilities. Middle and Dennis have each had 10 deaths related to COVID-19, seven of them in long-term care, followed by Woodbine with seven

See COVID-19, Page A5

West Cape school hoping for mostly in-person class

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The borough's elementary school has two possible plans for returning students to the building. Superintendent Robert Garguilo presented the school's possible reopening plans during a Board of Education meeting July 30. One of the plans will be in place this week, he said.

Plan one would have 100 percent capacity of the school with children attending in-person four days per week. The school day would total 6.5 hours. The building would be closed on Wednesdays for thorough cleaning with students using remote learning at home.

Students would be split

between learning in their classroom and the gymnasium, with two groups, A and B. On Monday and Tuesday, Group A would be in the classroom and Group B would be in the gym with live streaming back to the classroom, he said.

On Thursday and Friday, Group B would be in the classroom with Group A in the gym.

Plan two would have students in school Monday through Friday with a 4.5-hour instructional day from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aftercare would be available.

"If we can get all the students in the room, social distance up to 12, which could be a possibility if some students decide to

See West Cape, Page A3

SHORE MEDICAL CENTER is proud to join the PENN CANCER NETWORK

ShoreMedicalCenter.org