

Murphy urges greater vigilance in COVID battle

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

COVID-19 cases are rising across New Jersey, with numbers not seen for months. State officials say community spread through small parties and gatherings is to blame.

In response, they are asking for the state's residents to be more vigilant even though they are fatigued by the precautions they have been asked to endorse since March. What residents do now, they say, will decide the dangers they will face come the holiday season.

At Gov. Phil Murphy's COVID-19 press conference Monday afternoon, he said there were 1,192 new daily cases in New Jersey, bringing the statewide total to 221,205 since March 4.

"While numbers are a far cry from where we were at our springtime peaks, they are also significantly higher than where we were

for most of the summer until just a few weeks ago," Murphy said. He added most are not coming from schools or businesses, but from private gatherings at homes.

State Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli said the trend showing an increase began about a month ago. Until September, the state was experiencing positive test results in the high 300s each day. Then, she said, they climbed to 500 to 600 cases daily and now are averaging 1,000 a day.

Persichilli said this is similar to what most of the nation is experiencing with rising coronavirus cases.

She echoed Murphy that more of the cases are due to community spread, not to any single event or relaxation on limits the state put on large gatherings and indoor dining.

Persichilli said excluding schools and congregate living, the largest percentage of outbreaks shows that

personal gatherings and parties have contributed the most, followed by day care settings and farms.

"I know we're all tired of COVID-19 and precautions needed and restrictions we have endured," she said. It is understandable residents want life to go back to normal, "but as we approach the holiday season, now is the time to double down on social distancing, wearing face coverings and good hand hygiene. As the weather gets cooler and more people move inside, the risk of transmission increases."

She added, "The trajectory of the next few months will be determined by all of us in the coming weeks. Our behavior will be critical in shaping how our holidays will be celebrated. Now is not the time to let your guard down. The virus has not stopped circulating, so we must continue this fight."

She and the governor urged residents to put the

COVID-alert app on their smartphones. It is available online at covid19.nj.gov/ app and also at Google and Apple app sites.

Murphy said there have been more than 205,000 downloads so far, but he urged more people to download the app to make it easier to notify people who may have been exposed and to address hotspots in the state.

He and Persichilli said as colder weather makes people want to move inside, they should stay outside as much as possible.

Murphy said because there has been no evidence that the higher numbers are the result of looser restrictions on businesses, there were no plans to revise those restrictions but he would not rule them out if conditions change in the future.

"I'd be lying if I didn't say ... these numbers are sobering," Murphy said. "We're war gaming a whole lot of

potential steps we can take, indoor or outdoor."

He added he didn't want to increase the burden on businesses.

"We don't have any evidence indoor dining is contributing to this," he said, suggesting he is more interested in taking "scalpel steps" to tailor limits to specific areas rather than have broad mandates.

There is one broad mandate, however, what he referred to as "an individual call to arms" for people to wear face coverings, to social distance and to practice good hand hygiene, a plea that Persichilli seconded.

Voting begins in a big way

The governor noted that 1.75 million ballots had been returned so far to county clerks for the Nov. 3 election, which is already 45 percent of the total number of ballots cast in the 2016

presidential election.

"Folks, if you haven't returned your completed ballot, I urge you to put it in the mail today," he said, or to use a secure drop box, hand deliver it to the county board of elections or give it to a poll worker on Election Day.

"No matter how you do it, your ballot is safe and secure," he said.

Outdoor alcohol

Murphy said the state is extending permits for outdoor consumption of alcohol until March 2021 for a nominal \$10 fee.

"For many of our residents, the ability to serve liquor to their customers beyond their normal premises has been meaningful, in some cases lifesaving, helping them survive in these uncertain times," Murphy said, noting "given the uncertainty, extending these permits is the right thing to do."

Lower getting free oceanside berm in Diamond Beach

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township will receive its portion

of an oceanside berm in Diamond Beach at no cost to the municipality.

The project area includes North Wildwood, Wildwood,

Wildwood Crest and Lower Township, all of which are vulnerable to storm damage all year from a combination of hurricanes and nor'easter, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The project area will be restricted to the beach front and tapered at the southern and northern ends at Herford Inlet and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife/Coast Guard properties.

The nonfederal sponsor is the state Department of

Environmental Protection (DEP). The total project length is about 25,000 linear feet, with a berm of varying widths at elevation 6.5 feet and a dune with crest elevation at 16 feet along the entire length of the project. The project would be accomplished by back passing sand from those areas along the project in Wildwood and Wildwood Crest that have an excess accumulation of sand. The DEP, in coordination with the municipalities,

is acquiring the necessary real estate easements to construct the project.

At an Oct. 19 Lower Township Council meeting, Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the project cost is \$21.6 million, with 65 percent funded by the federal government and 35 percent funded by nonfederal sources.

Lower Township was originally slated to contribute \$104,000 to the project, Ridgway said, adding that a new state agreement was made as a result of Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

"Our cost went to zero," he said.

In other business, council approved a \$74,000 professional services contract for engineering, architectural services and construction phase services for a new Public Works administration building. The current 960-square foot building at 771 Seashore Road will be de-

molished and replaced with a 1,550-square-foot structure.

An existing block wall and concrete footing will be used as a foundation for a portion of the building. The estimated construction cost is \$500,000 with 10 percent contingency.

Council approved a \$9,500 professional services contract with the engineering firm of Mott MacDonald for environmental consulting and site remediation services for the Public Works building. The work will include site inspection and an explosives survey.

An explosimeter is a gas detector used to measure the amount of combustible gases present in a sample. According to a letter from Mott MacDonald, odors have been detected in the employee break room while no leaks of natural gas or gasoline have been detected.

Mott MacDonald will also conduct indoor air sampling.

'Poe by Candlelight' outside

WEST CAPE MAY — The award-winning Equity professional East Lynne Theater Company will present one of its most popular events, "Poe by Candlelight," outside just in time for Halloween.

The event is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24, at West Cape May's Back Yard, 732 Broadway behind the fire hall. It is the site of the farmers market is the recent Lima Bean Festival. There is plenty of parking.

As usual, ELTC actors will read their favorite stories by the master of the macabre, Edgar Allan Poe. The performers — Suzanne Dawson, James Rana, Lee

O'Connor and Gayle Stahlhuth — will be on a small stage, using microphones. So far this year's stories include "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Black Cat" and "The Cask of Amontillado."

ELTC requests that guests wear masks and sit in the pre-arranged socially distanced seats. The one-hour presentation will have no intermission; restrooms will not be available. Tickets must be purchased in advance at tinyurl.com/poetix-2020 or by calling (609) 884-5898. No tickets will be sold the night of performance. Cost is \$12 for adults and free for those 12 and younger. The 2021 West Cape May Christmas Parade will receive \$2 from every ticket sold.

Sewell

Continued from Page A2

vation of Sewell Tract in its natural state and free from destructive development."

Testa said the DEP has continued to push an agenda to have Sewell Tract developed against the desire of its owners, the city of Cape May and every environmental and citizen group that has addressed the matter.

"That is why we've asked Gov. Murphy and McCabe to step in and have NJDEP put the litigation on hold while outside financing can be explored to settle this case," Testa said. "Although we continue to believe the plaintiffs can win the case on the merits at trial, settlement on a reasonable basis would avoid wasting more time, money, judicial resources for trial and expensive appeals. A few months' postponement in a case that originally began decades ago should be no big deal."

The Sewell Tract is the single largest undeveloped environmental resource in the city. Concerned Citizens claims development, among other things, would result in irreversible losses to potable ground water resources, unmitigated destruction of associated wildlife habitat and dangerous increases in flood damage due to loss of flood buffer capacity. The city, which officially supports the positions taken by Concerned Citizens in the suit, may also be on the hook for millions of dollars of infrastructure development costs based on promises made to the owners in the 1960s.

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Cape May Star & Wave
165 YEARS OLD • 1854-2019
CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE (ISSN 519-020)
Volume 166 Number 43
Published weekly by Sample Media, Inc.,
963 Lenape Drive, Lower Township, NJ 08204
Published Weekly (52 times a year)
SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: By mail for \$42 a year; \$75 for two years; \$22 for six months. Periodical Postage at Cape May Court House, N.J. and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to the Cape May Star and Wave, P.O. Box 2427, Cape May, N.J. 08204.

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TIDES : Oct. 21-28, 2020

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
21	12:20		5:42	6:42
22	12:55	1:23	6:43	7:46
23	2:05	2:29	7:49	8:52
24	3:17	3:36	8:58	9:54
25	4:23	4:37	10:04	10:50
26	5:19	5:30	11:02	11:37
27	6:06	6:16	11:54	
28	6:47	6:58	12:19	12:39

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Live One Day At A Time



To shepherd can be defined as to watch over carefully, to guide, to protect, and to feed, either spiritually or physically. We all probably have at least one earthly shepherd. It may be a parent, a pastor, an educator, or a good friend. Although these people are here to help and give us strength in times of need, they may sometimes fall short of our expectations. However, our Heavenly Father is a perfect Shepherd. We, with our limited knowledge may not understand His ways, or why certain things may happen. Like little children, who don't know why they must be subject to the doctor's vaccination, we sometimes can't see God's plan for us. The Bible tells us all things happen for the good of those who love the Lord, and putting our trust in Him will not eliminate our adversities, but it will help us to better accept them.

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