

Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 1 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2014 75¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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Parkway improvements, bridge upgrades coming in 2015

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

In the coming year, construction on the Garden State Parkway in Cape May County will center on building overpasses over signaled intersections in Middle Township in the northbound direction with entrance and exit ramps.

In addition, the Exit 0 interchange in Lower Township will be modified into a safer configuration and the bridge over Great Egg Harbor Bay connecting Atlantic and Cape May counties will be replaced.

According to Tom Feeney, spokesman for the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, a construction contract is expected to be bid in 2015 for interchanges 9, 10 and 11 in Middle Township.

The parkway connects to local roads at those signaled, at-grade interchanges. Under the project, bridges are being built to carry the parkway over the local roads, eliminating the at-grade crossings and the need for the traffic signals. Ramps are being built to provide access to and from the parkway in both directions at all three interchanges. The planned changes would improve the safe operation of the interchanges and reduce congestion. Feeney said northbound construction and

the new interchanges would be completed by the end of 2015. The project is on schedule, he said. The southbound overpasses were completed slightly ahead of schedule. He said the possibility of weather-related delays are built into the schedule. Construction on the southbound parkway project in Middle Township began in 2013 and was 67 percent complete as of Nov. 28. The at-grade crossings were eliminated for southbound traffic in October. The contractor was Richard E. Pierson Construction Co. Inc. at a contracted cost of \$74 million.

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David Nahan/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Construction of the new Garden State Parkway bridge over Great Egg Harbor Bay and demolition of the Beesley's Point Bridge, left, will be largely completed by the end of the year.

Cost of higher education changing community college demographics

More students seeing Atlantic Cape as quality option

By KRISTEN KELLEHER and JACK FICHTER
Sentinel staff

Atlantic Cape Community College's typical student today is younger and more likely to be a recent high school graduate than 10 years ago, and many experts attribute that to the rising cost of obtaining a bachelor's degree.

In the past, community college was seen as a good option for students who could not get in to a four-year college.

"That's changing," said Dr. Richard Perniciaro, Atlantic Cape Community College vice president of Planning, Research, Facilities & Executive Support. "Now we get more students that are from high schools that we didn't get a lot of students from before. It might be becoming a choice because it's cheaper, but the mix of students is changing and the reasons to come here are changing."

Atlantic Cape has campuses in Atlantic City, Cape May Court House and Mays Landing.

The Mays Landing campus educates more than 1,000 full-time students annually, from high school students taking college-level classes to adult students bolstering their skills and making career changes.

Atlantic Cape offers 35 associate degree programs, with 17 program options.

A new hospitality and gaming studies wing opened in October at the Atlantic City campus, and a new building for science, technology, engineering and math is being built at the Mays Landing campus.

Of the three major schools in the region — Lower Cape May Regional, Mainland Regional and Ocean City — a larger percentage of students are attending Atlantic Cape from LCMR.

LCMR Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jo-



Kristen Kelleher/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Students sit in the student lounge of Atlantic Cape Community College's Main Campus in Mays Landing. The rising cost of earning a bachelor's degree and more offerings at community colleges are making them more attractive to a wider range of students.

seph Castellucci said the high school works closely with Atlantic Cape in terms of registering students who are interested in the college. He said the demographic of the district's students who enroll at Atlantic Cape has changed radically in the past few years.

"The restaurant management school is a school that draws a lot of our kids, being that they have an outstanding program," he said.

Castellucci said the program has very good job-placement service.

"In our community, we have so many opportunities for kids that want to participate in culinary arts, particularly

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Brittany Errickson, left, Christina Basquez, right, pet a therapy dog at the Mays Landing campus during finals week of the fall semester.

LCMR preparing students for life in the real world

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Preparing students for jobs that exist in a changing economy in an area of mainly tourist-related occupations is a goal of Lower Cape May Regional School District.

Education plays a key role in Lower Township's economy and future, according to a report presented to Township Council by School District Superintendent Christopher Kobik, a member of the township's Economic Development Committee.

He said the successful workforce of the future is one in which a diverse group of people with different values, different understandings, different educations and backgrounds sit down and make up their minds to work together. Kobik said that was what excited him about being a member of the Economic Advisory Committee.

"It kind of confirmed some of the beliefs we have at Lower Cape May Regional, that really the reason you're here, students, is because you're going somewhere," he said.

That is both good news and bad news, said Kobik, because the school district produces a number of very creative, inspired, intelligent students who are "exported," who leave the community and do not return.

"If we can create opportunities here for them, we'll be able to keep them in our community," he said.

In 2013, about 79 percent of students in the regional high school went to college, Kobik said. He said many Lower Cape May Regional graduates make the decision to stay in the community but because of our geographic isolation and work opportunities, they are limited in their choices.

The regional school district



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Lower Cape May Regional High School District Superintendent Christopher Kobik addresses Township Council.

has adopted "Career Ready Practices." Kobik said every employer needs students to be responsible, to be able to work with others positively and productively, to communicate clearly and effectively, to be able to demonstrate creativity and innovation, model integrity, ethical leadership and have effective management skills.

He said every employee in every store, in every business, in every tourism-related job and in the fishing industry need those common principles that the school district has adopted.

Kobik said at the beginning of the school year, he asked the staff, "What are we doing to invoke the notion of the reason you're here is because you are going somewhere and how are we helping students be ready for careers?"

Attending college is one thing but being successful in a career is another, he said.

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