

Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 8 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2015 75¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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ALTIERI HONORED FOR WRESTLING VOLUNTEERISM

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Experts optimistic about county tourism in 2015

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

NORTH CAPE MAY — The future is bright for the 2015 tourist season, according to county Tourism Director Diane Wieland.

She presented the facts and figures to the Lower Township Chamber of Commerce during a January meeting at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal.

Reviewing tourism here in 2014, Wieland said Cape May County tourism is expected to have a positive

growth rate of 4 percent in 2015. She said 2014 was the first time in history the tourism industry recovered ahead of the economy. Wieland said either the traveling public is tired of not taking vacations or has enough confidence in the economy to spend money on travel.

Steady growth in the occupancy rate realized an increase of 3.6 percent in lodging nationally and 9.2 percent in Cape May County during the first three quarters of 2014.

Occupancy tax collection rates in the county increased by \$646,447 in

the first three quarters of 2014 over 2013, which Wieland classified as a good year. The tourism sales tax in 2013 was \$511 million, with \$8.1 million in occupancy tax collected in Cape May County, Wieland said.

Cape May County ranks second in the state in total tourism expenditures, lodging expenditures and food and beverage expenditures. Our county ranks first in total retail and recreation expenditures, she said, and sixth in transportation expenditures.

"Cape May County retail last year

broke the \$1 billion mark," she said.

Wieland said looking at the year ahead, lower gasoline prices will help drive vacations but have not reduced airfares. Response to a fall/winter county tourism marketing campaign continues to remain strong, with 12 percent more visits to the "Fall for the Jersey Cape" website and 18 percent more "likes" from a Facebook campaign.

She said a strong fourth quarter in 2014 was an indicator of an increase in tourism in 2015. Wieland said hotels are predicting occupancy growth

of 1.1 percent.

Wieland presented trends to watch for 2015:

— Millennials, those born from 1992 to 2000, would rather spend on experiences than things, and are willing to pay more for those experiences.

— Mobile device-friendly marketing should be a top priority as desktop travel booking declined in 2014.

— Cultural immersion: travelers are looking for experiences that bring the destination to life, they want to

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Long-term flooding fix a necessity, study finds

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a report recently detailing the results of a two-year study to address coastal storm and flood risk to vulnerable populations, property, ecosystems and infrastructure in the North Atlantic region of the United States.

The report, known as the North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS), brought together experts from federal, state and local government agencies, as well as nongovernmental organizations and academia, to assess the flood risks facing coastal communities and collaboratively develop a coastal storm risk management framework to address increasing risks, which are driven in part by increased frequency and intensity of storm events and rising sea levels due to a changing climate.

The NACCS stresses the importance of land use planning, wise use of floodplains and strategic retreat as cost-effective risk management tactics.

Ken Gooderham, a managing director of American Shore & Beach Preservation Association, said the Army Corps has worked up a formula for communities to look at their coastal flood risk and make some informed decisions. He said the NACCS and other recent reports have stressed the need for more resilient coastlines and communities and looking for the best solution for a town's coastal issues "rather than a one-size-fits-all" approach.

Gooderham said the planning process needs a long-term goal rather than just putting enough sand on the beach for the summer. He said coastal towns need plans for the next 20 to 40 years addressing the potential of sea level rise.

In the past year, North Carolina's Coastal Resources Commission said it did not buy into a "one-size-fits-all sea level-rise approach" and commissioned a study that projected by community the range of risk and the reason for the threat, Gooderham said.

"In some places it's not a question of necessarily the water rising as much as the land may be sinking," he said.

The Army Corps is pushing for

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Snow blankets Cape May County

John Alvarez/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The snowstorm that began Feb. 16 and extended into the morning of Feb. 17 followed the forecasted totals of 4 to 6 inches, according to WIBG Radio Chief Meteorologist 'Nor'easter Nick' Pittman. 'It was weaker storm. We didn't have to worry about the winds coming off the ocean, it was only a 999 millibar low,' he said. Nor'easter Nick said the atmosphere was very dry. Cape May received 7 inches of snow, with Seaville receiving 4 inches. Atlantic City International Airport received 3.9 inches. The forecast called for higher amounts of snow in Cape May and Lower Township than Upper Township or Ocean City, which got 5.7 inches. The snow was light and fluffy, which did not weigh down power lines. He said the snow was useless for building snowmen. Following a one-day warm up to near 30 degrees, another Arctic blast arrives Wednesday night, putting Thursday and Friday high temperatures only into the teens. Nor'easter Nick said his winter forecast called for the second half of winter to be a lot worse than the first half. He said normal high temperatures this time of the year should be in the lower 40s. 'High temperatures in the teens is pretty much unheard of,' he said. See more photos on B8.

West Cape May considers food truck regulations

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Should food vending trucks be allowed to operate near festivals and events without paying a fee? The topic of regulating food-vending trucks came under discussion at a Feb. 11 Borough Commission work session.

Mayor Pamela Kaithern said she asked the Borough Clerk's Office to find ordinances regulating food-

vending trucks from other municipalities in the county. She said the issue may be food-vending trucks interfering with vendors that pay to participate in events in the borough.

Kaithern said it should also be determined in what district food vending trucks could operate.

"Are they in conflict with restaurants," asked the mayor. "Is it something we want to promote, in which case, we have to think about the regulations, or is it something we

can pass on at this point and have them periodically come in like they do now with some of the festivals?"

Kaithern said food-vending trucks have been located at the West Cape May Farmers Market and some festivals in Wilbraham Park, but have not just pulled into the borough and began serving food on their own.

Deputy Mayor Peter Burke expressed concerns about food-vending trucks pulling up to the perimeter of events and serving food without pay-

ing to be a part of a festival. Kaithern said the borough had no regulations governing food-vending trucks.

Borough Solicitor Frank Corrado said vendors could be licensed and regulated but he was not convinced the borough could forbid vendors on the grounds they would compete with some other commercial enterprises. He said the borough could limit areas where food trucks could vend as does

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