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**Beach Drive sidewalk project under way**  
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## City moves ahead with public safety complex

### Council introduces funding for survey of current facility, site

'There has been an absence of responsibility of a lot of councils in the past. It seems public safety facilities have been something that really doesn't seem to be a must for the city of Cape May.'

-Barney Dougherty

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In an auditorium packed with police officers and firefighters, City Council unanimously introduced a bond ordinance providing preliminary expenses for the construction a new public safety building. During a meeting Feb. 21, council introduced an ordinance appropriating \$300,000 by authorizing the issuance of \$285,000 in bonds

with a \$15,000 cash down payment. A public hearing for the ordinance is scheduled for 6 p.m. March 20 at City Hall. "This is the first step toward a new building complex, a fire station and police station," Public Safety Building Advisory Committee Chairman Jerry Gaffney said. Committee member Dr. Rose Trafficante said initially, the committee did not comprehend the inadequacies of the current structures. She said the facilities

are out of compliance with state regulations. Trafficante said she was appalled to see tarps used in the police records room due to a leaking roof. "The conditions make the safety of our first responders an issue," she said. First responders' jobs are difficult and are becoming more complex, Trafficante said. "When you look at the facilities under which they work, they rank

last," she said. Committee member Barney Dougherty said he was astounded by the condition of the area of City Hall housing the police department. "There has been an absence of responsibility of a lot of councils in the past," he said. "It seems public safety facilities have been something that really doesn't seem to be a must for the city of Cape May."

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## Outrage over gun violence

### Protesters rally outside LoBiondo's office

By KRISTEN KELLEHER  
Sentinel staff

MAYS LANDING — Crystal Harris took her 11-year-old daughter out of school early and drove to Mays Landing on a rainy day Friday to partake in a rally advocating for legislative action against gun violence. When asked why she was there, she said it was for her daughter. "It terrifies me that every single day they could go to school and not come back," the Millville resident said. "I'm done with this. I don't think arming teachers is the answer."

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Cape May elementary considering full-time, armed guard.  
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with LoBiondo's staff about gun violence. LoBiondo was not in his office at the time. Jason Galanes, LoBiondo's chief of staff, provided a copy of a letter dated Feb. 23 and signed by LoBiondo and several other legislators. It was addressed to House Speaker Paul Ryan. The letter requested "immediate consideration of H.R. 4477, the 'Fix NICS Act of 2017,' when Congress returns for legislative business next week. According to the letter, the bill would provide incentives to states, federal departments and agencies to submit information and records to NICS, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, accurately and promptly. In a Twitter post Feb. 23, LoBiondo said he has never accepted donations from the NRA (National Rifle Association) as a member of Congress. "Unsolicited checks were

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Kristen Kelleher/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE  
Egg Harbor Township High School student Emily McGrath, 17, confronted state Sen. Jeff Van Drew about his gun control record, most notably his relationship with the NRA.

## Gun range owner says N.J. laws already strict

By KRISTEN KELLEHER  
Cape May Star and Wave

SEAVILLE — Keith Woodrow, owner of Full Metal Jacket Gun Range in Upper Township, said he does not think stricter gun control laws are necessary in New Jersey. "They need to enforce the dozens and dozens of laws they already have on the books," he said. Gov. Phil Murphy, who campaigned on promises of reducing gun violence and creating additional firearms legislation, has announced a multistate partnership and

an initiative for the state's law enforcement agencies to help prevent gun violence within the last few weeks. This comes in the wake of the Feb. 14 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., that resulted in the deaths of 17 people. According to information from the Governor's Office, Murphy announced Feb. 22 the States for Gun Safety coalition, a partnership with Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey to combat gun violence

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## Teen takes Van Drew to task over NRA cash

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

NORTHFIELD — State Sen. Jeff Van Drew has had a mixed record on gun control, one that hasn't gone unnoticed. Emily McGrath, a 17-year old student at Egg Harbor Township High School, confronted Van Drew after a Democratic candidates forum Feb. 21 on his gun control record, most notably his relationship with the National Rifle Association (NRA). The story made national news as a video clip from

The Philadelphia Inquirer went viral online, showing McGrath say, "Senator, you lied." Van Drew, D-Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic, addressed McGrath's class the previous day and reportedly boasted that he had never received a donation from the NRA. According to campaign records, the NRA donated \$1,000 to Van Drew in 2008. While Van Drew's office acknowledged the senator refused taking donations

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## Coalition hoping to stop the cycle of abuse, neglect

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Many of the county's children are affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), a problem that is generational and an epidemic in Cape May County, according to Lower Cape May Regional High School Superintendent Christopher Kobik. "It is the reason why society has the social ills it does," he said. For the seventh year in a row, the county is ranked the highest of the state's 21 counties in unemployment, out-of-home child placements and rate of reported and substantiated investigations of child abuse and/or neglect, and the lowest in overall child wellness, according to a 2017 NJ Kids Count report. In addition, the county

ranked 15th for overall health outcomes, Type 2 diabetes and obesity, infant and child mortality. It also ranked above the state rate on adult premature mortality and had the second-highest suicide rate and fourth-highest rate of drug abuse deaths. Kobik said he was asked to join the Cape Regional Wellness Alliance, funded by a four-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Alliance. He said the group includes Cape May County Chamber of Commerce President Vicki Clark, Middle Township Police Chief Christopher Leusner, Vicki Lachman of the Cape Regional Medical Center Board of Directors, Greg Speed of Cape Counseling and Michael McKnight, county educational program specialist.

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## Many factions but one voice: No oil drilling off coast

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — Under gray winter skies, officials gathered by the Ocean City Music Pier on Feb. 26 for a news conference opposing offshore drilling along the Atlantic coast. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has proposed the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program for 2019-2024, which opens the Atlantic coast, from Maine to Florida, for oil and gas exploration and drilling. Politicians, environmentalists and business owners

concerned over a proposal by the Trump administration to allow 47 leases in 26 offshore study areas in the Atlantic Ocean joined together to oppose the plan. After announcing the proposed plan, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke ruled out oil and gas drilling off the Florida coast, citing tourism as an economic driver. The Obama administration removed the Atlantic coast from the 2017-2022 plan, but President Donald Trump reversed that, pos-

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