



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Real Estate Resource



MUSEUM DETAILS COUNTY ROLE IN WORLD WAR I

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Drone flight tests emergency cell phone service



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

A technician holds the drone during an engine test April 5. The flight was held to determine the size of the area for which Verizon Wireless could provide cellular service after a disaster.

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WOODBINE — Following a hurricane or severe nor'easter, a drone could replace damaged cell phone towers to carry calls and communication for emergency responders.

A test flight April 5 from the Woodbine Airport tested how large of an area Verizon Wireless could provide cell coverage for from a drone in the air to assist first responders and customers.

Verizon spokesman David Weissmann said the test would determine the optimum altitude and how

'In the case of a disaster, we could have two or three of them going 24/7 to provide coverage for first responders and customers.'

—David Weissmann, Verizon Wireless

large an area wireless service could be provided from a drone. He said the drone could fly continuously for 16 to 20 hours.

"In the case of a disaster, we could have two or three of them going 24/7 to provide coverage for first responders and customers," Weissmann said.

While previous drone flights have been conducted at the Cape May County Airport and Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, the action moved to the Woodbine Airport on April 5. A drone was launched from a grassy area between two runways for a three-hour circular flight. The drone itself resembled a large radio-controlled airplane flown by hobbyists with an orange pod carrying equipment mounted under

one wing. The county teamed with Verizon Wireless and American Aerospace Technologies Inc., owner of the drone. If tests prove successful, the exercise could help make Cape May County and a wider area in the region immediately eligible for an Emergency Certificate of Authorization (COA) to use drones for post-disaster relief. The exercise is being conducted under an 800-square-mile COA issued by the Federal Aviation Administration to the

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Renovation or replacement?

Cape May now facing question on 'temporary' 1970s firehouse

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Architect Robbie Conley presented City Council with four options for either major renovation of the city's firehouse or construction of a new building with price tags in the \$4 million range.

During a council meeting April 4, Fire Chief Alex Coulter said the firehouse was built in the mid-1970s as a temporary building

"The building was meant to be a 20-year temp building. We're working on 40-some at this point and it is showing by deterioration on the exterior and the interior," he said "We're outgrowing the building, the infrastructure is insufficient ..."

Coulter said the building is not meeting some safety codes.

Conley said his firm specializes in emergency ser-



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Cape May Fire Department's turnout gear is stored in the engine bay. The city is exploring different scenarios for renovating or replacing its aging, temporary firehouse, some that cost as much as \$4.8 million.

vice buildings. He said he has served as a fire chief and as a volunteer firefighter for 35 years. Conley said his firm evaluated the current firehouse, which he described as a temporary, metal pole

barn. The fire hall has little or no insulation, Conley said. "It does not meet the requirements of an emergency service building today," he said.

The majority of the build-

ing is used for fire operations with a minimal amount of administrative and housing space. He said fire apparatus in engine bays were close to

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City seeks DEP parameters of rules for beach

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Cape May is in the process of renewing its beach maintenance permit with state Department of Environmental Protection and wants to be able to address cliffs of sand building up on the beach after storms.

During a City Council meeting April 4, city engineer Tom Thornton said the city has a general permit for beach and dune maintenance that allows raking, restoration after a storm, cleaning and work on dunes. The fee for the permit from the DEP is \$1,000, he said.

"It's not meant to include specific items that go beyond what the list of items are in the regulations," Thornton said.

He said the regulations do not explicitly address the condition of the beach after a storm that can cre-

ate a sharp drop off of sand between the surf zone and the beach.

"In our application for this, we're going to request that be included," Thornton said. "We don't know whether they will explicitly state that."

The rules may allow after-storm adjustments to some degree, he said. Sand can be moved from the lower beach to the upper beach but not in the other direction. He said the typical means of knocking down a scarp of sand is to drag a pipe behind a tractor. Thornton said it is a matter of interpretation of beach maintenance regulations.

"We have to be cautious about how we proceed and not make a mountain out of a molehill either," he said.

Thornton said for other types of beach maintenance, an individual per-

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HPC requests stricter standards for satellite dishes, solar, turbines

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Historic Preservation Commission is asking City Council to approve tougher standards for installation of solar panels, satellite dishes, wind turbines and driven piles for foundations.

During a City Council meeting April 4, HPC Chairman Warren Coupland said everyone should remember Cape May is a National Historic Landmark city.

"We should embrace it and do all we can as a team effort. With your leadership, your support with the HPC and other commissions, I think we can maintain this status and it benefits everyone," he said.

Cape May was placed on the watch list of the National Park Service prior to 2006 until "impending actions or circumstances are mitigated or eliminated." Coupland said the city was at risk at

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Lauren Suit/Submitted

Hopping to the hunt

With a spring in their step and an egg in their sight, residents of Lower Township hopped down to Freeman Douglas Memorial Park on April 8 for the annual Easter egg hunt. The children were divided into age groups to hunt for eggs filled with goodies and golden coins that could be redeemed for special prizes.



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