



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Real Estate Resource



PLAY BALL! LITTLE LEAGUE SEASON OPENS

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City hit with tax hike for LCMR

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — The Lower Cape May Regional Board of Education approved its 2017-18 budget during a meeting April 27 that will bring a tax decrease to property owners in Lower Township and West Cape May but an increase to Cape May homeowners.

Business Administrator Mark Mallet said total revenues increased \$1.3 million mainly due to debt service, which reflects taxpayer support for a recent bond sale and an increase in surplus reserve.

In January 2016, voters approved a \$6.3 million bond referendum that includes site improvements, new roofs, enhanced security and electrical upgrades at both the middle and high schools.

At the high school, locker room renovations and a new, free-standing fieldhouse will be constructed. High school site improvements include milling and resurfacing of the entrance road and parking lot, entrance landscaping and drainage

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Township's elementary tax rate up

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

COLD SPRING — The Lower Township Elementary School District Board of Education approved its 2017-18 budget April 25 that calls for .75-cent tax rate increase for property owners. The local purpose tax rate will increase from 45.7 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 46.5 cents.

The owner of a \$200,000 home will see an annual tax increase of \$17.80. The district's budget totals \$27.8 million, with \$16 million funded by taxpayers. Overall, the budget is up \$530,840, or about 2 percent.

Business Administrator John Hansen said the budget provided for all the needs of the students and protects the future of the school district. He said the state was considering redistributing state Adjustment Aid to schools because some districts "were not keeping

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cape May Point Department of Public Works employee Jim Prestidge plants a tree in the dune at Whilldin Avenue with the help of a backhoe. An unknown assailant poisoned and cut several trees, likely to improve his or her view of the ocean. Below, Cape May police officers will monitor the dunes for vandalism.

Cape May Point replaces vandalized trees on dune

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Volunteers, state park and public works employees planted new trees on Arbor Day on a dune at Whilldin Avenue where trees had been illegally cut down, poisoned and trimmed.

Cape May police officers Ptlm. Doug Henderson and Ptlm. Scott Krissinger were on hand to witness the tree plantings. Henderson said police were watching the dunes and that anyone caught damaging trees would be prosecuted.

Cape May Point State Park naturalist Matt Pellegrine, of the state Division of Parks and Forestry,

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Lower gets temporary reprieve on flood maps

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced last week that it would continue to use the current Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS) for Lower Township, saving many residents from being included in a greatly expanded flood zone that FEMA initially proposed in 2014.

"We have temporarily won our fight with FEMA concerning flood maps," Councilman Tom Conrad said during a Township Council meeting May 1. "While the rest of the county is being put into the new flood maps that should be published in October, all of Lower Township, especially those residents in Villas and those who reside north of Cox Hall Creek, will still be in the same flood zones as the prior maps."

"No new V zones or VE zones, no properties that have never flooded now being in a major flood zone, no new flood area construction codes and no drastic increase in flood insurance," he continued.

Conrad said the hiring of a law firm to challenge the designations may have helped the township obtain a temporary reprieve from FEMA.

"We will continue to negotiate with FEMA on behalf of our residents to hopefully come to a final resolution to end this matter in a way that is beneficial to our residents and protects Lower Township for actual flooding," he said.

FEMA will return to re-evaluate the township, Conrad said. He thanked Lower Township Planning Director Bill Galestock for representing the township since it learned homes north of Cox Hall Creek were being placed in a different flood map

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'We will continue to negotiate on behalf of our residents to hopefully come to a final resolution to end this matter in a way that is beneficial to our residents.'

—Councilman Tom Conrad

MAC exhibit evokes a flood of memories

By JOHN COOKE
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Joan Green has seen a lot of Cape May history, through fair weather and foul. Green, a lifelong resident of Cape May, graduated high school here in 1947.

"I remember having to show identification to get back on the island after some of these storms," she said, referring to the historical storms such as the 1962 nor'easter and hurricanes Hazel, Gloria, Irene and Sandy, documented in the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts and Human-

ities' (MAC) newest exhibit, Cape May's Stormy Past.

At the southernmost tip of New Jersey, Cape May is especially vulnerable to the elements. Hurricanes, nor'easters and blizzards have all left the city with a flood of memories and haunting images of utter devastation.

Ben Miller, author of the book "The First Resort," curated the latest exhibit in the Carroll Gallery at the Emlen Physick Estate's Carriage House. The exhibit, which opened April 28, runs through Oct. 6.

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John Cooke/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Longtime Cape May resident Joan Green looks at photos in the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities' exhibit 'Cape May's Stormy Past,' which is on display through Oct. 6 in the Carroll Gallery at the Emlen Physick Estate.

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