

# Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 33 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2015 75¢



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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## BABY PARADE FILLS CAPE MAY WITH CUTE

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# Tourism measures show season topping strong 2014

By KRISTEN KELLEHER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COUNTY — The roadways are more crowded, room occupancy is strong and some municipalities are reporting stronger beach tag sales and restaurant spending.

The 2015 summer season is on track to surpass a strong 2014 season, according to the Cape May County midsummer tourism report and local tourism representatives.

The report, released Aug. 6 by the

Cape May County Department of Tourism, said 2014 was a record-breaking year for the county. Tourism expenditures increased 5.2 percent and generated \$5.79 billion in revenue.

"Last year, all five sectors measured showed an increase in visitor spending according to the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism research, conducted by Tourism Economics," the report stated.

"For the second consecutive year, Cape May County's lodging; food and beverage; retail; and rental income expenditures surpassed the \$1

billion level. Cape May County also took the lead in the state in generating revenue in both recreation spending at \$668.6 million and rental income at \$1.9 billion."

Although there are still a few weeks left in the summer season, nearly all of the report's findings indicate 2015 will surpass 2014.

Traffic counts on the Garden State Parkway into Cape May County increased in the 5 percent range on holiday weekends and the Atlantic City Expressway also reported an increase

of 5 percent in traffic exiting at milepost 7S, according to the report.

According to the report, occupancy tax increased more than 9 percent in the first half of 2015.

"July appears to show an increase in occupancy. However, those figures are not available," the report stated. "Most businesses are reporting an increase in revenue, with record-breaking crowds for Memorial Day and July 4th weekends."

This may be due, in part, to this summer's many sunny days. This season,

according to some local officials, has been in no short supply of weather ideal for sitting on a beach.

"For the most part it's been great summer weather," said Vicki Clark, president of the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce. "The high temperatures we have encouraged people to come down."

Clark said a variety of county businesses have told her that business is up this year over the 2014 season, with

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Kim Royster/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

## Cape May holds coronation for Queen Maysea

Cape May's Queen Maysea 2015 and her court were honored Aug. 5 at Cape May Convention Hall when a new queen was crowned during the 83rd annual Queen Maysea Coronation. Above, Queen Maysea Mahogany Kelly, left, with Paisley Elias, Allison Reidenback and Keily Fulford.



## Legal bills still within budget in Cape May

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's legal bills over the past 18 months total \$499,089.

Members of the public have been asking for an accounting of legal bills. At an Aug. 4 City Council meeting, City Manager Bruce MacLeod said he used a listing of payments to legal firms from Jan. 1, 2014, through July 31, 2015. He said legal costs may be spread over several budget items and budget years.

As an example, he said bills from City Solicitor Tony Monzo were spread across current fund budgets from 2013 to 2015, as well as to the water/sewer utility, tourism utility, beach utility budget and general capital.

MacLeod said the city's 2015 current fund is budgeted for legal costs of \$575,000. He said the city's current legal budget has a balance of \$463,116 remaining.

MacLeod provided a breakdown of legal bills. For 2014, the city paid Monzo \$109,013 and so far this year, \$75,165. The city prosecutor was paid \$6,280 in 2014 and \$6,020 in 2015.

Robert Fineberg, attorney for the city's Historic Preservation Commission, was paid \$5,545 in 2014 and \$2,475 in 2015. The city's bond counsel, McManimon, Scotland and Baumann, was paid \$31,083 in 2014 and \$3,367 in 2015.

Planning and zoning boards attorney George Neidig was

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## Cape May approves water-loss settlement

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved a \$350,000 settlement agreement with the Borough of West Cape May for 121 million gallons of water Cape May sold to the borough from its desalination plant from 2003 to 2009 but did not deliver due to faulty master meters.

West Cape May estimated it paid for almost \$700,000 in water it did not receive.

Cape May replaced a meter in Wilbraham Park believed to be responsible for more than 17 million gallons per year of missing municipal water from the borough. The new meter is designed to record very low water flow, something an old meter did not properly record.

West Cape May hired Eden Water Resources to search for the cause of the missing water. Cape May will pay West Cape May \$35,000 per year in the form of a credit for 10

years, according to Cape May Solicitor Tony Monzo.

He said the agreement also extends West Cape May's contract to purchase water from Cape May for 10 years. Safeguards have been placed in the agreement in the form of quarterly reviews of the amounts billed versus the amount of water consumed by the borough, Monzo said.

"We're not looking at a run up of unaccounted water loss over a number of years," he said. "The new meters will be tested annually with West Cape May having the opportunity to be a part of that process so that the calibration will not be contested. If it is there will be an opportunity to challenge it at the time it's being tested."

The new 10-year agreement is subject to cost-of-living increases as well as increases in cost from operation of Cape May's desalination plant for items such as additional wells or skids, Monzo said.

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## Right of way needed for W. Cape May roundabout

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — A roundabout proposed for what locals refer to as the "CVS intersection," where West Perry Street meets Park Boulevard and Myrtle Avenue in six legs, is still at least a year away from the first shovel hitting the ground.

If local property owners are not willing to sell "slivers" of land to the county for the project, according to county Engineer Dale Foster, the project could be derailed. He said the roundabout project

is in the appraisal stage to determine the value of ground the county needs to obtain to build it. Along with small portions of land needed for the roundabout, some land is also needed for improvements to Broadway, Foster said.

He said he could not predict when construction would begin because if the county is not able to obtain all the rights of way it needs, the "project is not a go."

A letter to property owners used the term "eminent domain," but the county is not seeking to take any property without compensation, he said. Following

land purchase, utility poles would need to be relocated, said Foster.

The county is seeking additional funding for the project, he said.

A roundabout is much smaller than a circle and would feature a landscaped area in the center, so pedestrians do not have to cross all traffic lanes at once. At a public forum in 2013, Foster said only one to two cars would be in the roundabout at a time.

At that time it was predicted construction on the roundabout would begin in

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