

Cape May Star and Wave

163rd YEAR NO. 37 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2017 75¢



House of the week

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Aerodrome billed as multipurpose creative space

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Weather darkens look back at summer business

'The weather has been really a problem. We might have seen fewer cars and fewer visitors because of that.'

—Diane Wieland, director, Cape May County Department of Tourism

By KRISTEN KELLEHER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COUNTY — Excess rainfall may have dampened the 2017 summer season some.

According to the New Jersey Weather and Climate Network, the state's average rainfall in July was 6.33 inches, 1.76 inches above the average from 1981 to 2010.

The average statewide rainfall in August was 5.06 inches, about .96 inches above the 1981 to 2010 average.

Southern New Jersey, in particular, had a wet summer.

July rainfall in Ocean City was between 8.74 inches and 10.94 inches, depending on the location. Sea Isle City's average for July was 9.42 inches and in Egg Harbor City, the average was 9.15 inches.

"The weather has been really a problem," said Diane Wieland, director of the county Department of Tourism.

Rainy nights and rainy weekends could have affected day-trippers from the Pennsylvania, New York and north-

ern New Jersey areas.

"We might have seen fewer cars and fewer visitors because of that," Wieland said.

Cape May County presents statistics about the previous summer season each spring.

However, Wieland said some businesses reported having their best year and others said it was on par with last year. Some industry sectors did better than others. Wieland said casual dining establishments did very well, whereas upscale dining did not do as well.

Summer 2017, however, was not a total wash.

From January to June 2017, there were more overnight stays generated than in the same period in 2016, according to Wieland.

The year 2016 was also a record for the county.

Occupancy tax collection numbers are up nearly \$300,000 through June over the same period in 2016. They increased about \$97,000 for June, year over year.

Canadian tourism, which has been affected by a poor

exchange rate in recent years, increased slightly this summer, she said.

In Cape May County, Canadian tourism was up about 1.5 percent this summer.

According to a news release from the county Department of Tourism, nationally, Canadian tourism declined 12 percent in 2015 and 6 percent in 2016.

Nationally in 2017, there was a 1 percent increase in Canadian visitors, or a po-

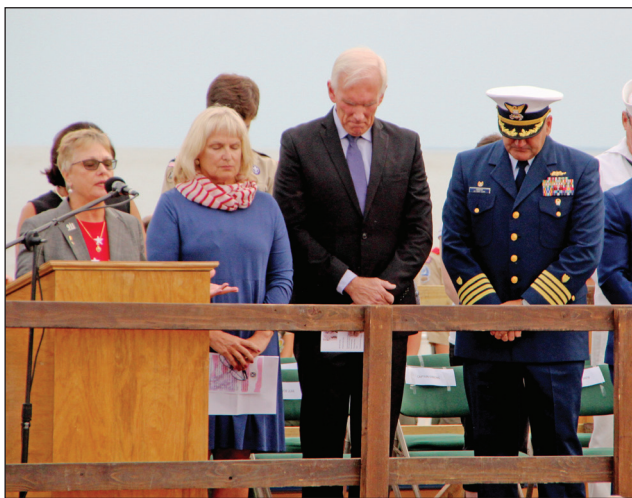
See Weather, Page A2

Local ceremonies mark 9/11 anniversary



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

At top, Janice Pansini Gomez, the widow of firefighter Paul Pansini who lost his life at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, speaks to the crowd during Lower Township's 9/11 ceremony Monday. Above, members of the Blue Knights, Red Knights and Rolling Thunder motorcycle clubs during the national anthem.



John Cooke/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

At top, Pastor Block delivers the invocation as Kiwanis President Kim Ford, Mayor Chuck Lear, U.S. Coast Guard Commander Owen Gibbons and others observe a moment of silence during Cape May's 9/11 ceremony Monday. Above, the Coast Guard Color Guard.

Hurricanes hot topic at severe weather forum

Three such storms at once in Atlantic basin very rare

By KRISTEN KELLEHER
Sentinel staff

during Thursday's conference.

OCEAN CITY — At the start of the 2017 Cape-Atlantic Severe Weather Conference on Thursday, Sept. 7, Frank Donato said it was no mystery why they schedule these events in September, during the heart of hurricane season.

This year's conference, held at the Ocean City Music Pier, was sandwiched between two hurricanes that hit the southern United States. Hurricane Harvey made landfall Friday, Aug. 25, in Texas and Hurricane Irma made landfall last weekend in Florida.

Unsurprisingly, several members of the audience asked a panel of experts questions about hurricanes

The panelists included NBC 10 meteorologist Glenn "Hurricane" Schwartz; Joe Miketta, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Mount Holly; Jim Eberwine, a retired National Weather Service meteorologist; Tom Lamaine, a former meteorologist/newscaster for KYW-TV and CBS3; John Miller, a U.S. Senate fellow working on the NFIP reauthorization; and David Yoel, CEO of American Aerospace Technologies.

Before the panel discussion, Yoel gave a presentation on how drones can be used for emergency management.

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School pool in Cape May to reopen after four years

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A grand opening is set for 4 p.m. Oct. 12 for Cape May City Elementary School's new indoor swimming pool.

According to Superintendent Victoria Zelenak, the project was completed on time. It included demolishing the school's original 50-year-old pool, which was closed in August 2013 due to leaks.

Along with a new pool, skylights, lighting and piping, the project included renovation of the boys and girls locker rooms, pool office and natatorium, pool deck and pool equipment. New locker room facilities are handicapped accessible and feature new lockers and showers.

While students have not yet hopped into the heated pool, they have been

School pool, Page A8



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

A grand opening is scheduled for Oct. 12 at the \$1.6 million swimming pool at Cape May City Elementary School. Students will start using it in late September.

Desalination plant really worth its salt

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

Plant Operator/Supervisor Carl Behrens said the plant uses state-of-the-art reverse-osmosis technology. He said that years ago, the water plant had cisterns that extended only about 40 feet below the ground into the Holly Beach aquifer.

CAPE MAY — The city gets much of its drinking water from a desalination plant housed in a circa 1926 building in the Public Works yard. While the building may look like a museum on the outside, what's taking place inside is anything but old-fashioned.

Rick Mroz, president of the board of commissioners of the state Board of Public Utilities, and staff toured the city's desalination plant Sept. 5 with Mayor Chuck Lear, City Manager Neil Young and Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks.

Chief Water Treatment

"The water would just perk up, it was artesian," Behrens said, noting at that time water mains were made of wood.

In that era, the city used 4 million gallons of water per day, he said. With the advent of steel pipe, the city's water consumption is now 2 million gallons per day except on the hottest days, when 2.9 million gallons

Desalination, Page A4

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