

# Lower, DRBA to present free outdoor concert series

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township, in partnership with the Delaware River and Bay Authority, will present six outdoor concerts Wednesday nights this summer at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal.

Lower Township Council approved an expenditure of \$10,875 to co-sponsor the shows. The total cost is \$21,750, with the DRBA contributing the other half.

The free concerts begin at 5:30 p.m. with the bands playing two 60-minute sets. The lineup of bands this summer includes tributes to the music of Motown, Billy Joel, Journey, Irish music, the Rolling Stones and country.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Sensational Soul Cruisers will return July 13 to the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal in North Cape May as part of the free concert series.

This year's concert series opens with the Sensational Soul Cruisers on July 13, bringing the best of Motown

and the disco era. On July 20, Separate Ways brings their tribute to Journey, then the band

music." Jamison brings a rocking Irish sound Aug. 10.

A salute to the music of the "Piano Man," Billy Joel, takes the stage Aug. 17 with Danny V's 52nd Street, a six-piece band.

Fans of the Rolling Stones will want to see the Glimmer Twins on Aug. 27.

The summer concert series concludes Sept. 3 with the country band Phil Billy.

Township Manager Jim Ridgway said he was excited about presenting Jamison, an Irish classic rock band from Philadelphia featuring an electric-fiddle player. He said the band includes two songs from The Who.

"We're trying to make the schedule diverse," he said. "We added country last year because I think there are a lot of folks that like country

music." Ridgway said Phil Billy is a country rock band, not a tribute act, playing modern country music.

"I think the schedule is the best one we've had yet," he said.

Danny V's Billy Joel tribute drew a large crowd at the ferry terminal last year, Ridgway said. He noted Joel was selling out one show per month every month in Madison Square Gardens and playing a sold-out concert this summer

at Citizen's Bank Park in Philadelphia.

When the concerts began four years ago, crowds averaged about 500 per show. Ridgway said he expected about 2,000 people in the audience each night for this summer's concerts.

He said the shows offer an alternative to expensive nights out for families. The weather has been good for each concert since its inception, Ridgway said. A breeze often develops from the bay before sunset, he noted.

## Bonding for public safety building approved

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for 50 years at a cost of \$1 per year, said Conrad. The lease will have an automatic renewal for an additional 25 years, he said.

"For the 15 years, we're making the payment for our part of the bond where the construction is," Conrad said. "After that, it's \$1 per year."

He said the county could now move forward with seeking bids for reconstruction.

"It's fair to everyone," Conrad said. "They're getting what they need, we're getting what we need, it's going to save the (township) taxpayers a lot of money, it's going to save the county taxpayers money."

The renovations will involve modernization of the Public Safety Building with a future merging of county dispatch with county

Emergency Management dispatch.

Reconstruction of the building at the Cape May Airport will begin after Labor Day. The building will be vacated other than the Lower Township Police Department, which will move to the south end of the building while the north and a portion of the south are being renovated.

A new dispatch center will be in the south section of the building. Police will be working for nine to 12 months until the project is complete in about 20,000 square feet of the building as opposed to the current 46,000 square feet.

Total cost of renovating the building was estimated at \$4 million.

In other business, council approved a lease of township-owned land at the intersection of Seaview and Rochester avenues

in Diamond Beach to Achristavest Pier 6600, the developers of the Grand at Diamond Beach and Hotel Icona. The vacant land will be used for guest parking for Hotel Icona.

Achristavest Pier 6600 was the sole bidder for leasing the property at a public auction last December. The lease will run through 2021 at a cost of \$10,000 per year. The lot measures about 100 by 150 feet with a 150-foot buffer for a nearby playground.

Council authorized the purchase of a home at 4 Clearwater Drive in North Cape May for \$202,570. The house will be demolished and the property used to house a generator for the future Roseanne Avenue pump station. The property is located next to Cox Hall Creek.

Township Manager Jim Ridgway said purchase

of the property would allow the township to place the pump station in the middle of the yard. He said without the purchase, the pump station and generator would have been "wedged between two houses and would have affected the quality of life there."

"It will look like a park at the end of the street when we get it done and landscaped," he said, adding that the pump station would be underground but the generator stands 14 feet high.

Council also approved a \$4.5 million bond ordinance for drainage and storm water management improvements and associated roadwork to Roseanne Avenue and Bayshore Estates. The project will include new storm water drainage pipes, a pump station and repaving of Roseanne Avenue.

## Population continues to fall

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jobs to bring them in for the most part," Perniciaro said.

In addition, the county's older population is dying off more rapidly than they can be replaced, he said.

"Until that equation changes, you're going to have a declining population," Perniciaro said.

With other rural counties losing population, the state is starting to concentrate in cities and suburbs again, he said.

In the 1970s, there was movement to move to more rural settings but the population now is returning to cities. He said the overall population of New Jersey is not growing fast.

Even if young people do not move to the county, an increase in retirees moving here full time would help the population loss, Perniciaro said.

"We just haven't seen that pattern come back," he said.

Perniciaro said the percentage of homes that are second homes in the county continues to increase. He noted only about 10 percent of Stone Harbor's population resides there on a full-time basis.

When a town loses critical mass, stores may not remain open in winter or close all together, causing residents to drive farther to purchase necessities, he said.

A trend in the county is for older retirees with declining health to move out of the county to live near their children. Perniciaro said a study he conducted

in Stone Harbor last decade indicated retirees did not plan to stay in Cape May County when they reached their late 70s.

"That's interesting that people do understand when they buy in when they're 62 or so, they know it's not permanent," he said.

Perniciaro said the flight of older residents presents a challenge for non-profit organizations and churches here because their donations do not stay in the county, particularly in wills.

"They end up leaving or they never stop giving to the place they came from. There's no sense of permanence," he said.

The county has a lifestyle of three to four months of busyness and the rest of the year much quieter, something residents must accept, Perniciaro said.

When the last recession was ending, it was hoped the large population of retiring baby boomers would help populate the county.

"The Jersey shore's history is people coming to retire because they came here as a kid, they came here to the beach, and once you break that link, there's not a lot of new generations behind it," he said.

Perniciaro said he thought baby boomers

would retire to the shore after the recession ended but it has not happened. Expensive home prices aimed at second-home buyers may also keep retirees away, he theorized.

According to 2014 census data, Cape May County had the state's oldest population with a median age of 48.6.

Census data for Cape May County from 2014

indicated people under 5 years old represented 4.9 percent of the population, people under 18 years represented 17.8 percent of the population, people 65 years and older represented 23.9 percent of the population, up from 21 percent in 2010.

Cape May County had a population of 102,326 in 2000.

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