

# Boosted by mail-in ballots, county voter turnout rises 25%

By ERIC AVEDESIAN  
Sentinel staff

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Voter turnout in the Nov. 6 general election was 57.85 percent in Cape May County, with mail-in ballots contributing to the swell in numbers, according to Cape May County Clerk Rita Marie Fulginiti.

"It seemed big. I remember in 2008 when (Barack) Obama ran that our voter turnout was almost 79 percent," Fulginiti said. "It was

much greater than the 2014 midterm election."

In 2014, turnout in Cape May County was 45.65 percent.

"The ballots cast in this election were 10,000 more than in 2014. The ballots cast in this election so far, and there's going to be a few more, 41,548. In 2014 the ballots cast were 31,03," Fulginiti said.

The Cape May County Clerk's Office issued 8,291 mail-in ballots this election, more than any other year,

according to Fulginiti. The next highest mail-in ballot total was 6,980 in the 2016 general election.

In August, Gov. Phil Murphy signed a change in the mail-in ballot law, giving voters an option to apply for a mail-in ballot for a single election or to receive a mail-in ballot for all future elections.

Previously voters had the option of requesting a ballot for a single election, all elections in a calendar year or all future elections.

The new law mandated that voters who received a mail-in ballot for the 2016 general election be sent one for the 2018 general election.

Fulginiti said this increased the number of mail-in ballots issued.

"What changed in this election was a change in the law which prior to this we had folks who were on the rolls and they could just elect a single election or be every election for the calendar year or every general year. Now it's changed so that there's

just two choices; only a single election or for all future elections," Fulginiti said. "Prior to this the folks that were on these lists seemed to be seniors in a pretty big number. This year I saw a lot of younger people voting by mail. Some of it is due to political action committees reaching out to them and sending them a pre-filled mail-in ballot application. All they needed to do was sign it and put it in a prepared postage-paid envelope and send it in and they got a ballot."

Voter turnout on election night in Atlantic County was 44 percent, or 82,713 out of 184,752 voters, according to the Atlantic County Clerk's Office website.

Some mail-in ballots in Atlantic County had the wrong ZIP code in the return address. Earlier reports stated the ballots had a ZIP code 08830 for Iselin in Middlesex County instead of 08330 for Mays Landing. Officials in October said all of the mail-in ballots would be delivered to the correct address.



Dale Gerhard/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

## Township salutes those who served

The color guard from U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Cape May leads the Lower Township Veterans Day Parade down Bayshore Road in Villas on Nov. 10. The parade featured local veterans, the Lower Cape May Regional High School marching band, below left, and local community groups. Below right, sisters Donna Webb, right, and Diane Shinn wave at the passing parade while holding pictures of Shinn's son, U.S. Navy veteran James Keith, who recently passed away.



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[www.capemaymac.org](http://www.capemaymac.org)

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## Leaf Collection Schedule

Loose leaves raked to the curb will be collected on the day/week of your scheduled street maintenance route.

**LEAVES CONTAINING DEBRIS, TRASH OR BRANCHES WILL NOT BE COLLECTED**

ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3
All streets running North, South, East & West	All streets running North, South, East & West	All streets running North, South, East & West
Beach Avenue to West Perry Street	Ocean Street to Madison Avenue	Madison Avenue to Wilmington Avenue
3rd to Ocean Street	Beach Avenue to Lafayette Street	Beach Avenue to Lafayette Street includes Clay Street & St. James Place
Oct. 29th to Nov. 2nd and Nov. 19th to 23rd	Nov. 5th to 9th and Nov. 26th to 30th	Nov. 12th to 16th and Dec. 3rd to 7th

Leaves, Branches, and Grass may be dropped off at the Recycle Yard  
830 Canning House Lane, Cape May  
For more information call The Public Works Dept. 609-884-9570