

# Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 9 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2015 75¢



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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## FIREFIGHTERS IN VILLAS DRILL IN ICE RESCUES

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## Homes near bulkheads can appeal V zone rating

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — A number of Lower Township residents who live near Delaware Bay received the news last August from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that their homes were in a V zone, meaning their flood insurance rates could skyrocket.

During a special meeting Feb. 23, Stewart Farrell, director of Richard

Stockton University's Coastal Research Center, updated residents on appealing their V zone status.

Following Hurricane Sandy, FEMA issued Advisory Base Flood Elevation Maps, followed 13 months later by the issuance of preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Farrell said much of the Delaware Bay front has been classified as a V zone, or wave velocity zone, where it had never been previously. He said FEMA classifies the shoreline based

on the potential for wave damage.

Farrell said if FEMA predicts a 100-year storm, or a storm with a 1 percent annual chance of reoccurrence, would generate a 3-foot-high wave on the water's surface at the flood elevation, the properties landward of that point are considered to be in a V zone.

"That means you must build above that 3-foot wave elevation by 1 foot. If the base flood elevation is 8 feet, the 3-foot wave takes you up to 11

feet plus the foot freeboard," he said.

In that case, the first horizontal structural member of the house has to be at an elevation of 12 feet, Farrell said. He pointed out a number of oddities associated with FEMA V zone regulations. If a homeowner raises the height of their house by 4 feet, the electricity meter must be raised, which requires a platform with stairs and a railing.

"But if your side yard is only 3 feet, you can't get a 4-by-4-foot square

platform on your property," Farrell said.

He said FEMA is about to hold a 90-day appeal process. The official appeal date has yet to be announced, Farrell said.

"You have 90 days from that appeal period start to file an appeal for various issues that you may find with your particular property," he said.

Farrell has been working with

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## Fire and ice on Delaware Bay



Edward O'Neill/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The sun sets over a frozen Delaware Bay filled with ice floes in Villas. Ice halted the Cape May-Lewes Ferry operations for three days, while single-digit temperatures kept fire and water department personnel busy answering calls reporting broken water pipes in homes last week.

## Inderwies wants Fire Dept. funds back in budget

(See related editorial on Page A6)

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Councilman Jerry Inderwies cast the lone dissenting vote during City Council's Feb. 17 introduction of the 2015 municipal budget, requesting that \$70,000 be restored to the Fire Department's budget for more paid fire personnel and that more surplus be used to reduce a proposed 1-cent property tax increase.

"I cannot support even the introduction of the budget without this public safety issue being addressed," Inderwies said.

He said City Manager Bruce MacLeod asked Cape May Fire Chief Alex Coulter to supply him with an in-depth report of department issues with a deadline of Feb. 9.

"It was my hope that report would be given to City Council members prior to this meeting. Unfortunately, it was not," Inderwies said.

He said he felt the report held very valuable information regarding statistics that could affect council's concept of what was going into the budget.

He said there was an incident Feb. 14 involving a call for a second ambulance "and no one showed up for that call." The city has a limited number of paid firefighters. He called for \$70,000 that was removed from the Fire Department's 2015 budget to be reinstated by using more surplus funds or eliminating one new city position outside the Fire Department.

Inderwies noted his parent lives in Cape May.

"That could have easily been one of them and an ambulance doesn't show up for manpower issues," he said.

A lot of manpower is needed to fight a structure fire, Inderwies said. He called the \$70,000 a starting point for the Fire Department's future. He acknowledged the \$70,000 is not a cut but a reduction due

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## Severe cold freezes ferry for three days

NORTH CAPE MAY — Significant ice accumulations in Delaware Bay halted the Cape May-Lewes Ferry for three days beginning Feb. 19.

One of the ferry's boats, the M/V New Jersey, was able to break through the ice at the North Cape May terminal and restore service Feb. 22.

"We were staying ahead of Mother Nature for a while early this week, working another ferry to clear out the Cape May Canal and partnering with the Pilots Association using a tug to break up the ice around the berthing facilities in Lewes," Director of Ferry Operations Heath Gehrke said Feb. 20. "Unfortunately, the conditions deteriorated to the point that we can't operate. The bitter cold temps and wind have conspired to cause ice conditions that we can't break through. We're hopeful that we can resume service this weekend and will be looking forward to the warmer temps that are forecasted."

Gehrke warned passengers who planned to use the ferry to call or check the Cape May-Lewes Ferry website, Facebook page or Twitter before arriving.

The official high temperature at the Cape May Airport Feb. 22 warmed to 39 degrees following a night of rain.



Cape May-Lewes Ferry photo

Significant ice accumulations in Delaware Bay halted the Cape May-Lewes Ferry for three days beginning Feb. 19. One of the ferry's boats, the M/V New Jersey, was able to break through the ice at the North Cape May terminal Feb. 22.

## Lower Twp. proposes budget with 2.5-cent increase in tax rate

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township's proposed 2015 budget includes a 2.5-cent property tax increase representing a 4.6 percent tax hike.

Township Manager James Ridgway presented his budget message during a Township Council meeting Feb. 18. He said the proposed tax levy is \$20,224,231 compared with \$19,268,529 last year, an increase of \$955,701.

The amount of surplus supporting this year's budget would decrease from 2014 by \$265,000, or 12.8 percent. Ridgway said that was due to

several adjustments made to the fund balance in 2014 that will not be made in 2015, so the maximum amount that can be responsibly anticipated is \$1.8 million.

There are revenues that will not be included in the 2015 budget, including half of the Lower Township Elementary School District's contribution for a School Resource Officer (SRO). The SRO is retiring and the school will not be funding the position. That means that the officer replacing the SRO will be an addition to the current patrol members.

There are four additional

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