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TIDES
April 2011
Eastern Standard Time

	High		Low	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
20	10:26	10:50	4:12	4:15
21	11:19	11:42	5:06	5:07
22		12:15	6:01	6:03
23	12:37	1:15	6:58	7:02
24	1:36	2:19	7:58	8:06
25	2:38	3:24	8:57	9:11
26	3:39	4:23	9:53	10:12
27	4:36	5:15	10:43	11:08
Moon Phases				
New Moon, April 4				
First Quarter, April 12				
Full Moon, April 19				
Last Quarter, April 26				
Apogee, April 6				
Perigee, April 19				

Christie doesn't answer occupancy tax query

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Cape May hotel and motel owners had hoped for more from the visit by Gov. Chris Christie, April 12, hoping the governor would take questions about the seashore lodging bill being discussed in the State Assembly.

According to Larry Muentz of Alexander's Inn, the governor only accepted seven questions from the 650 to 700 people who attended his town hall meeting at the Naval Air Station Wildwood.

"It was very well received,

"Most of our tax goes to the black hole in Trenton."

– Larry Muentz, Hotel/Motel Association

all in all, but we didn't get any of our questions taken," Muentz said.

Muentz said last week a representative of the lodging group attended a town hall meeting in Hammonton and was at a previous town hall meeting in Hammonton and

was able to ask questions to the governor. Last week, the group attempted to reach the governor with their questions. They had stickers made in the shape of stop signs reading, "Stop the room tax."

"We had about 100 of our people there interspersed

throughout the crowd," Muentz said, "But he didn't specifically address the room tax."

In Hammonton, the group was able to ask Christie about Assembly Bill A-2657, which the group said levels the occupancy tax in towns on the coast. Presently, hotels, motels and B&Bs in shore towns like Cape May must add a 7 percent occupancy tax on top of the 7 percent sales tax. Under A-2657, a seashore lodging district would be created and all rentals would be charged to all weekly rentals, including whole houses, condos and

apartments.

Muentz said the legislation would raise \$200 million in revenue.

"The governor said he's not concerned about raising \$200 million," Muentz said. "He said he would like it to be revenue neutral."

According to Muentz, Christie said he would give the bill serious consideration, but if the state is going to raise another \$200 million, he would want to look for \$200 to cut from the budget. Christie said it would be up to the proponents to get the bill through

Please see **Query**, page A2

New bids due for Convention Hall

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – After city council rejected all six bids submitted by general contractors to construct the new Convention Hall, they are now going back to the beginning and redoing the entire bid process again.

According to City Manager Bruce MacLeod, as soon as the initial bids were rejected, March 15, the city immediately went back into the request for proposal (RFP) process. The city re-advertised for the receipt of bids by the end of March.

He said there were already at least seven general contractors who took out bid application documents for the latest round of bidding. MacLeod said two of those contractors are new and the other five are contractors who applied in the last bid process.

"There is still a strong interest in the project," MacLeod said.

The lowest bidder during the March 15 special meeting, the Benjamin R. Harvey Company, Inc., informed the city they had made a mathematical error when they submitted a bid of \$6,984,000 to build the new Convention Hall. It was determined that the other five bids exceeded the \$10.5 million amount bonded for the project.

"It was unfortunate they had a mathematical mistake because they were the lowest bidder," MacLeod said.

City council unanimously approved the resolution to reject all six bids at that point. MacLeod said he hopes there are no mishaps like this on April 26 when the council will review new bids for construction. The meeting will begin at 11 a.m.

Mayor Edward Mahaney said at the March 15 meeting, the delay that has occurred in the bidding process shouldn't disrupt the scheduled completion date for the new Convention Hall, which is Memorial Day 2012.

Elmira Street and other road projects

MacLeod said the Elmira Street re-paving and widening project is complete as far as city obligations go.

He said the final phase of the project is to install a street light at the intersection of Elmira and Lafayette, which is the responsibility of the county.

MacLeod said once the street light is installed, Elmira will commence to be a two-way street, but until then it will remain one-way. He said there is no precise timetable of when the street light will be put in.

There is also a continuing project on Yacht Avenue. According to MacLeod, the sewer main work has been completed and Giberson Plumbing and Excavating is wrapping up replacing the water main. From there, they

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Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Golden sunrise

Although phragmites (the common reed) are considered an invasive species, they are set off beautifully by the rising sun, as seen in this photo, taken Tuesday morning in West Cape May.

WCM budget passed 2-1

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY – The 2011 budget for the borough has been adopted, with Commissioner Ramsey Geyer being the only board member to vote no.

Mayor Pamela Kaithern and Deputy Mayor Peter Burke both voted in favor of adopting the budget, but Geyer did not agree with how

the budget had been discussed and developed.

"I had a problem with the entire process," he said. "We didn't really discuss any specific details about the budget and we didn't look at the entire thing together."

Geyer, as commissioner of public safety, said he also did not agree with the ongoing argument between the board and the volunteer fire company. The VFC has repeatedly

asked for more funding to be sure they can buy more equipment and meet state mandates and requirements. Fire Chief Chuck McPherson and other West Cape May volunteers were in the audience at the Wednesday, April 13 meeting and continued their fight for more funding.

To demonstrate the cost and importance of his firemen's

Please see **Budget**, page A4

Cape May says goodbye to former mayor, visionary

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – One of Cape May's most respected and controversial political figures passed away, April 12, when former Mayor Frank Gauvry, 84, died at the Christiana Hospital in Newark, Del.

Gauvry was instrumental in Cape May's urban renewal project in the late 60s and early 70s and the construction of the Washington Street Mall, two projects that created a big stir in the community, only later to be held up as symbols of Gauvry's vision and leadership.

"Frank had the vision to see what good it would do. It materialized in a beautiful way," former mayor Mickey Blomkvist said, referring to the mall project. "A New York times article referred to it as one of the best small malls in the country. But Frank took a lot of heat on



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Above left, former mayor Frank A. Gauvry speaking at the rededication of the Washington Street Mall in 2008. Above right is a plaque from the original dedication, June 24, 1971, when Gauvry was mayor.

that. It wasn't easy."

Blomkvist said when the mall was first under construction, Sam Kahn, owner of what is now the Ugly Mug,

came to the governing body and said, "You boys have ruined my business."

When the mall was being created it involved tearing up

three blocks of Washington Street, and there was dirt and mud everywhere.

"There were wooden water pipes below Washington

Street," Gauvry's youngest daughter Isabelle said. "I still remember the streets were mud for months. They had to close businesses for months. People were up in arms."

However, the mall became an instant success, Isabelle Gauvry said.

"After it was finished, Sam came back and said, 'Boys? I was wrong,'" Blomkvist said.

Blomkvist said the urban renewal project was also very important to the city.

"Urban renewal was something he took great pride in and he worked very hard at it," Blomkvist said. "A lot of those properties there were in disrepair - some homes had dirt floors."

Blomkvist said he was referring to an area on St. John Street. As part of this project, service roads were put in at Lyle and Carpenter's Lane. Empty lots where former businesses stood became what is now Victorian

Towers.

"A lot of citizens were concerned about these things, but those were the kinds of things that meant a lot to Frank," Blomkvist said.

Blomkvist said he and Gauvry were political opponents when he first ran, but they grew very close.

"Frank cared very much about the city, and it showed," Blomkvist said.

Gauvry lived in Hockessin, Del., since 1988. He was born in Philadelphia, Aug. 30, 1926. He first came to Cape May right after World War II, when he served in the U.S. Coast Guard. He served on a troopship, the U.S.S. Wakefield, and made 44 trips across the North Atlantic and crossed the Pacific twice. During the D-Day Invasion, he was temporarily assigned to an L.S.T., and was among

Please see **Gauvry**, page A2

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