



Change orders needed for Convention Hall doors

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Changes to door designs accounted for much of the \$66,096 in change orders city council approved, April 17, for the new Convention Hall project.

The first change order approved at the regular meeting for \$58,251 marked the seventh change order for Ogren Construction, the primary contractor for the Convention Hall project.

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the change order was mainly for alterations of door-frames in the facility. He said the doorways are to the back theater space and the catering kitchen. The back theater doors will now open inward towards the stage area instead of outward and the single swinging door to the kitchen was made into double swinging doors.

MacLeod said a door was also added between the community room and the back-stage area. The change order also included installing conduit and box frames for audio

visual equipment as well as raising main hall linear diffusers for the air conditioning system.

The second change order for \$7,845 was from Arose, Inc., for additional installations related to the voice data-telecommunications system.

Council also approved a \$29,615 landscaping con-

tracting to wind down, especially on the interior. According to MacLeod, around two-thirds of the bamboo flooring has been installed and the restrooms have been completed, with the exception of some finish work, like the partitions.

He said the tile work in the catering kitchen and the lobby area is almost finished, and the carpet installation for sections of the lobby will begin this week. Carpeting in the administrative offices is finished. He said there is ongoing spackling and painting work taking place in the vestibule, which should be done by the end of the week.

On the exterior, railing installation on the boardwalk surrounding three sides of the building began on the east side of the structure. He said the railing on the rear and west side of Convention Hall has already begun. As of April 17, tile on the face of the building's foundation was around 25 percent complete.

Please see Hall, page A2



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Above, Convention Hall as it appeared Saturday, April 21.

tract with Greenscape Landscaping of Moorestown. MacLeod said there were five bids for the project, but Greenscape Landscaping, the lowest bidder, was the only local contractor.

MacLeod said he visited the Convention Hall site on Friday afternoon to check up on the progress. He said construction work is start-



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Above, a German Shepherd named Cyrus used by the K-9 Unit of the Cape May County Sheriff's Office. Below, volunteer workers from Home Depot construct an agility course for sheriff's officers dogs.



Dogs get workout area thanks to Home Depot and volunteers

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COUNTY - A team of volunteers from Home Depot donated their time to construct a training agility course for dogs at the Cape May County Sheriff's K-9 Unit facility.

The county K-9 Unit was selected for a "Home Depot Build" as part of Home Depot's community give back program, as the Cape May Court House branch supplied all the materials and volunteers needed to build the training course. With the help of Home Depot, the Cape May County Dog Obedience Club and officers in the Sheriff's Office, the agility course was constructed in one day last Thursday. Home Depot volunteers came from stores in Court House, Absecon, Vineland and Washington Township.

Together, the staff built six search boxes, six hurdles, a six-foot A-frame, a six-foot catwalk, low crawl and broad jump obstacles for the course. Sgt. Beth Perednas

of the K-9 unit said an agility course was the only thing missing from their facility and now they have one. She said prior to the construction sheriff's officers were forced to take their dogs to different locations for this type of training.

"An agility course is extremely important - it builds trust between the animal and you," she said. "Being alongside them as they climb up ladders and ramps shows them they can trust you no matter what situation you put them in."

Perednas said about a year ago, she and one of her officers visited several businesses throughout the area for materials to build the course. When they approached Cecelia Olden, an employee at the Home Depot, the sheriff's officers told her the department needed materials at a low cost because of a limited budget, and planned to build the course themselves. Olden immediately brought up the idea of a "Home Depot Build" to store manager, Matt Peterson, and

contacted the Home Depot corporate headquarters. The project was approved in December 2011.

"When we spoke to Cecelia about it, she was imperative in getting it to the corporate office and getting it funded," Perednas said. "We are so thankful for what she, the Home Depot and the volunteers have done."

County Sheriff Gary Schaffer said the K-9 unit consists of eight dogs and five officers who train together on a consistent basis. The unit used to conduct single-purpose training with the animals, assigning each dog a specific task of either narcotics, explosives or search and rescue. However, that was when the unit had 13 dogs in the squad. Since the department has only eight dogs, the dogs are cross-trained in various scent detections. Schaffer said cross training has allowed them to have fewer dogs, lowering the cost of food, medical treatment and training, but the strength of

Please see Dogs, page A10

Buy bread alone - roadside stand sells bread baked in clay oven

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP - When she returned from studying abroad, Elizabeth Degener knew she wanted to work at farming or baking.

Degener, 25, finished a business degree at American College in Dublin, Ireland, in 2009; but instead of coming home she returned to an eco-community farm in Germany where she spent time between her junior and senior year.

An eco-community is essentially an organic farm community where people go to work in exchange for a place to stay and meals. The workforce is generally transient, and according to Degener, some people go to work there for its therapeutic value. She said a lot of people come in contact with this type of farm through WWOOF.org, which



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Above, a sign drawing attention to the stand where Elizabeth Degener sells her various kinds of bread baked in a clay oven.

is World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms.

"They call us wwoofers," she said. "This is really becoming popular with young

people."

She said the eco-communities are generally between 15

Please see Bread, page A2

CM deputy mayor goes to Trenton

Wichterman talks regional school tax with deputy chief of staff

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman said he had a very positive meeting in Trenton with Deputy Chief of Staff Deborah Gramiccioni to discuss problems and unfairness with the regional school funding formulas.

Wichterman said Cape May City is currently paying \$72,000 per student sent to the Lower Cape May Regional School District, while Lower Township, which has the majority of the students in the district, spends only \$7,700 per pupil. Wichterman said Cape May taxpayers could be paying as much as \$80,000 next year.

He said the unfair taxing situation has only escalated since the funding formula changed in 1974. Wichterman said when he asked Gramiccioni if he was wasting his time being there, she replied, "If I thought you were wasting your time, you wouldn't be sitting here."

He said Gramiccioni believed it might be time for New Jersey to consider altering the funding formula for regional school districts. Wichterman said when the funding formula for Lower Cape May Regional changed in 1974, there was no input from the municipalities as to whether they agreed with it.

"There are only two municipalities that are in regional

school systems that do not adhere to strictly funding the school through the values of property," he said. "The rest of them, like us, we are all saddled with this one formula."

City Solicitor Tony Monzo found three other school districts dealing with similar problems. Wichterman contacted the other districts and said two of the three immediately gave him the information he was looking for.

"Seaside Park is paying \$112,000 per child to put their kids in their regional school," he said. "We thought we had it bad."

Wichterman said he and

Please see Tax, page A2

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