County’s second homes skew census data
Seasonal-property owners should inform bureau to one living there

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave
Cape May County, where 60 percent of homes were vacant April 1, is a tough place to gather data in the 2020 U.S. Census.
As of last week, only 30 percent of Cape May County households had completed the census — well below the national completion rate of 45 percent.
A major cause of this could be people with multiple homes confused about which address they should use when responding to the census, according to U.S. Census Bureau Regional Director Jeff Behler.
He said if a person owns a seasonal or vacation home where they do not live and sleep most of the time, and they know that no one else usually lives there, they can respond online or by phone and answer “no” when asked if they or anyone else usually sleeps there.
Doing this will not only help the census be more accurate and count that everyone is counted only once and in the right place, but it also ensures that a census taker does not have to follow up in person, according to Behler.
He said the county’s response rate was about 40 percent and the self-response rate was 30 percent.
“A lot of people don’t think about filling out the census for their second home or every property that they own,” he said.
If you own a primary home elsewhere and a seasonal home in Cape May County, ideally you would fill out a census form for both homes.
For their primary home, the owner would provide all the name of those who reside in the home.
For their secondary home, the owner would state that person or persons not usually live there. Online, a screen will pop up allowing the homeowner to check off “second home” or “rental property.”
When no response is received for a second home, a census worker will knock on the door and sometimes connect with a knowledgeable source in the area who will verify the dwelling is a second home.
Why should the owner of a second home fill out a census form, in the first place? The number of vacant residences in New Jersey will be based on the 2020 Census results.
“If people don’t get counted, if they are not counting the 60 percent, that means there are going to be fewer federal resources,” Behler said.
The state will use census data to fund HealthSTAR — See HPC, Page A8
USCG rescues sea turtle
Party Officer 3rd Class Sloan Sanders and Party Officer 2nd Class Laneen work to free a sea turtle entangled in a fishing line while Fireman Jason Breckner assists Aug. 13 near Cape May.
The crew from Coast Guard Cutter Shearwater rescued the sea turtle and released it back into the wild.

HPC: City should hire inspector to force compliance

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave
Cape May — Some members may recuse themselves from the city’s Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) for renovations or major changes to historic home but during the renovation process ignores the HPC’s orders.
The HPC Chairman Warren Coupland, Cape May City Council meeting Aug. 12, Commissioner Bob Mullock reported a swimming pool project, Mullcock said. He said the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) visited the property and stated the swimming pool project, Mullcock said.
During a Cape May Point meeting Aug. 12, Environmental Commissioner John Coupland said. He said the state Department of Environmental Protection visited the property and stated the swimming pool project, Mullcock said.
He said there was no permission for the swimming pool project, Mullcock said.