



House of the week

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More businesses staying open through winter

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Jersey Central Power & Light and contractor Viasant have returned to resume remediation work at the site of the former coal-gasification plant in the vicinity of Lafayette and St. Johns streets in Cape May. Work this week will include construction of support features associated with excavation and commencing of temporary sheet piles to create a cofferdam.

JCP&L resumes remediation

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Jersey Central Power & Light Company and contractor Viasant have returned to the vicinity of Lafayette and St. Johns streets for additional environmental remediation work at the former coal-gasification plant site.

According to a news release, environmental, health and safety oversight of the day-to-day activities are being conducted by Arcadis U.S. Inc. on behalf of JCP&L.

Anticipated work to be performed the week of Feb. 4 includes continuing construction of support features associated with excavation and commencing installation of temporary sheet piles to create a cofferdam — a watertight enclosure constructed in waterlogged soil or under water and pumped dry so that

construction or repairs can proceed under normal conditions.

Perimeter air monitoring will continue. Arcadis will work with police to ensure the safety of pedestrians walking by the site. Field conditions, including weather, can often alter the project schedule and the schedule is subject to change.

During the week of Jan. 28, the work crew continued receiving equipment and materials for completing the remediation, continued construction of support features associated with excavation and created test pits along sheet pile alignment.

Earlier in January, traffic-control signage was installed for deliveries and privacy screening was placed around the perimeter fence line. Installation of soil erosion and sediment controls around the limit of the disturbance were completed.

In May 2017, an additional small area of contamination was found in the wetlands behind Lafayette Street Park.

The remaining work will not be as encompassing as previous work, Frank Lawson, JCP&L supervisor of site remediation programs, said in May. He said the work probably would not require the tent structure to be reinstalled. Some of the roads built into the wetlands will remain for the next portion of work, Lawson said.

“The biggest problem is the farther you get out, the more tidally-influenced it is. There is more water out there,” Lawson said. “To dig up a little bit of dirt takes a lot longer.”

From 1853 to 1937, a manufactured gas plant burned coal to provide Cape May with gas for heating, cooking and lighting. In the process, benzene, naphthalene and other chemicals were left underground.

Budget seeks .5-cent rise in city's tax rate

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The proposed 2018 municipal budget features a half-cent increase in the local purpose tax rate.

The rate would increase from 33.9 cents per \$100 of assessed property value to 34.4 cents. Council may make changes in the budget until its public hearing in April.

According to City Manager Neil Young, the city's budget totals \$29.3 million, comprised of \$18.4 million in the current fund, \$2.5 million in the beach utility, \$1.2 million in the tourism utility and \$7 million in the water/sewer utility. He said overall the budget grew 1.58 percent from \$28.6 million in 2017 to \$29.3 million for 2018.

The city saw increases in revenue with room tax collections up \$25,000. The construction office anticipated about \$471,000 in fees

but received almost \$800,000 in construction fees. Young said the budget anticipates \$165,000 from the newly created Bureau of Fire Safety.

The budget uses \$2.6 million of surplus or \$350,000 more surplus funds than last year. The city started the year with a \$4.5 million surplus account.

Ratables increased by \$30 million or just over 1 percent. Young said 54 percent of the budget comes from local purpose tax. The amount to be raised from taxes is \$9.8 million, up \$238,000 from last year.

Salary and wages total \$6.9 million or 38 percent of budget. Young said the city has 128 full time employees which increase to 328 employees during the tourist season. Group health insurance is increasing by \$74,000 due in part to the expense of

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Man gets 30 years for killing girl, 15

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — More than two years after a Lower Township teen was found dead, partially dismembered and hidden away in the crawl space of an abandoned home in Middle Township, her killer has finally been brought to justice.

Charles Mosley, who charged in the murder of

15-year-old Nicole Angstadt in Rio Grande, was sentenced Monday by Cape May County Superior Court Judge John Porto to 30 years in state prison. Mosley is subject to the No Early Release Act, which requires he serve 85 percent of the sentence before he can be

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Lower Twp. proposing no tax increase for '18

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Lower Township Council introduced its 2018 budget Monday, calling for no increase in the municipal tax rate.

Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the 2018 tax levy is \$20.8 million, an increase of \$66,000 over last year. The township's total municipal budget is \$28.1 million.

Ridgway said the township is below the legal spending cap by \$990,000. He said the township completed 2017 with a surplus of \$7.1 million, an all-time record. Of that, \$3 million is being applied to the 2018 budget, leaving a balance of \$4.1 million in the surplus account.

“Our projections anticipate fully restoring the balance

used in this budget,” Ridgway said.

He said the surplus account increase was due to a rise in ratables and construction activity. Total assessment of real property, upon which the tax rate is based in Lower Township, is \$3.6 billion, a \$9.1 million increase over 2017. Ridgway also attributed the stable tax rate to savings from shared service agreements, including the county cooperative.

“The use of caps in our union contracts has allowed us to stay financially strong,” he said.

Ridgway said the township has begun using county dispatch and projects strong savings in the future as other municipalities eliminate local emergency dispatch and sign

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School dives deep during undersea festival

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Plastic and cardboard sharks threatened from the tables and floors, marine debris hung from a line and student-researched information was available on oil spills, coral reefs and variety of other ocean environment topics.

Walking through Cape May City Elementary School's gymnasium/auditorium Feb. 1 was like taking a trip below the ocean's surface, all a part of the school's Ocean Exploration Festival.

The school's chorus sang the Beatles' song “Octopus's Garden,” and young folks could have their photo taken peering from a yellow submarine.

Superintendent Victoria Zelenak said each year the



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

First-grader Leonardo Arroyo gets his hand inked to make a whale print during Cape May City Elementary School's Ocean Exploration Festival.

school's teacher for the gifted and talented program, Sandy Sandmeyer-Bryan, chooses a theme

with the assistance of students.

“Every single child is involved from preschool to

sixth grade,” Zelenak said. “Classes have a class project and the older kids have individual projects.”

She said the annual event helps students make decisions about future careers.

“This age group is very conscious about the health of the planet, so this allows them to express that,” Zelenak said.

A display warned of the ever-increasing hazard of plastic in the ocean.

Community agencies, including the Nature Center of Cape May and the Surfrider Foundation, had tables set up at the event. At the Nature Center table, children made pictures of whales by inking their hands and pressing them on paper.

The U.S. Coast Guard was on-hand with a display as well as a number of parents from “Coastie” families.



WASHINGTON INN

Open Valentine's Day
Wednesday, Feb 14th

3-course for
\$49 and \$75 menu



OPEN FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
ON PRESIDENTS WEEKEND

Cape May Wine School

Sunday, February 18th at 1pm

The Great Wines of Sonoma County.
Tasting of 9 wines from Jackson Family Wines



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