**City hit with tax hike for LCMR**

**By JACk FICHTER**

**Cape May Star and Wave**

ERMMA — The Lower Township Elementary, Middle, and Regional Middle School (LCMR) board of Education approved its 2017-18 budget during a meeting April 25 that will bring a tax decrease to property owners in Lower Township and West Cape May but an increase to Cape May homeowners.

Business Administrator Mark Middlet said total revenues increased 11.7 million dollars, or six percent, year-over-year due to an increase in state aid, a two percent increase in state support for public education, and a one percent increase in state support for district-related costs.

Mr. Middlet said the state aid grants for the Lower Township School District, which reflects tax support for a second school aid and an increase in surplus reserves.

In January, voters approved a $6.3 million bond referendum that included site improvements, expanded facilities, enhanced technology, and additional upgrading of facilities.

At the high school, locker room renovations and new, free-standing fieldhouses will be constructed. High school site improvements include grading and rearranging of the entrance road to the school and a new landscaping and drainage project.

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**Township’s elementary tax rate up**

**By JACk FICHTER**

**Cape May Star and Wave**

COLD SPRING — The Lower Township Elementary School District Board of Education approved the 2017-18 budget April 25 that calls for 17.5 percent tax rate increase for property owners. The local property tax rate will increase from 45.5 cents per $100 of assessed value to 52.3 cents per $100.

The owner of a $200,000 home will pay an additional $320 in taxes in 2017-18. The district budget total is $27.8 million, with $18.1 million funded by taxpayers. Overall, the budget is up $330,496, or about 12 percent.

Business Administrator John Hansen said the budget is up because the district protects the future of the school district. He said the state was considering redistricting state Aid to schools because some districts “were not keeping up.”

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**MAC exhibit evokes a flood of memories**

**By JOHN COOKE**

**Special to the Star and Wave**

CAPE MAY — Joan Green has seen a lot of Cape May weather through her 50 years as the township’s municipal historian. She said she is especially vulnerable to the elements: Hurricanes, nor’easters and blizzards. Green, a lifelong resident of Cape May, graduated high school here in 1947.

“I remember having to show identifications to get into some of those storms,” she said, referring to the historic storms such as the 1862 nor’easter and hurri cane Hazel, Gloria, Irene and Sandy, documented by the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities (MAC) newest exhibit, Cape May’s Stormy Past. The weather phenomena that have dramatically affected the Shore area are especially noticeable during the Bermuda High, a high-pressure system that can bring a flood of memories and haunting images of better days.

Ben Miller, author of the book “Cape May’s Stormy Past,” curated the latest exhibit in the Carroll Gallery at the Emlen Physick Estate’s Carriage House. The exhibit, which opened April 26, runs through Oct. 8.

See Exhibit, Page A4

**Lower gets temporary reprieve on flood maps**

**By JACk FICHTER**

**Cape May Star and Wave**

VILLAS — The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced last week that it would continue to use the current Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Lower Township, saving many residents from being included in a greatly expanded flood zone that FEMA initially proposed in 2014.

“We have temporarily won our fight with FEMA concerning flood maps,” Councilman Conrad said during a Township Council meeting May 1. “While the rest of the county is being put into the new flood maps that should be published in October, all of Lower Township, especially those residents in Villas and those who live around Cape Creek, will still be in the FIRMs as the prior maps.”

“Until the new FIRMs are published in October, we have this temporary reprieve on this important matter in a way that is beneficial to our residents and property owners.”

— Councilman Tom Conrad

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Longtime Cape May resident Joan Green looks at photos in the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities’ exhibit Cape May’s Stormy Past, which is on display through Oct. 8 in the Carroll Gallery at the Emlen Physick Estate.

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