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municipalities

Official Publication of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities

April 2018

Show Off Your City!

Municipalities share their scenery

2017 Environmental Law Roundup

Bloomfield's OPRA Portal



Focus: **Tourism**



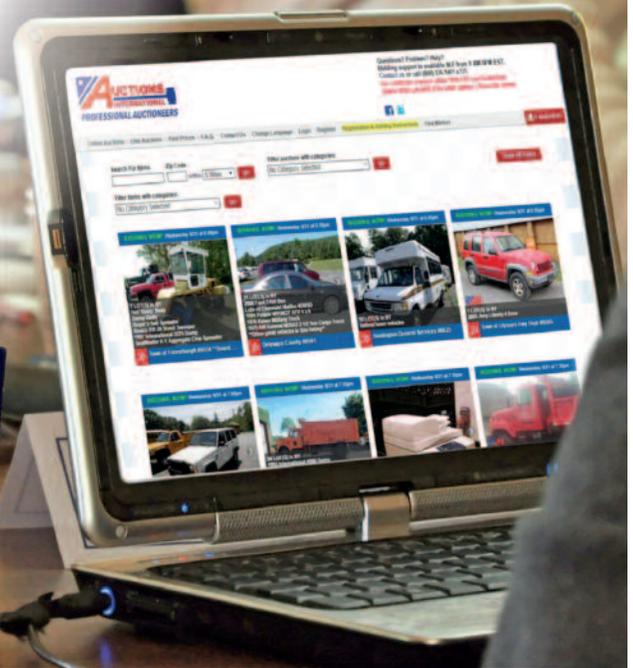
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New Jersey Municipalities Magazine

Volume 95 | Issue 4

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NJ city becomes newest excursion destination for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines passengers disembarking from Cape Liberty Cruise Port

Jennifer M. Costa, Director, Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization (EDMO)

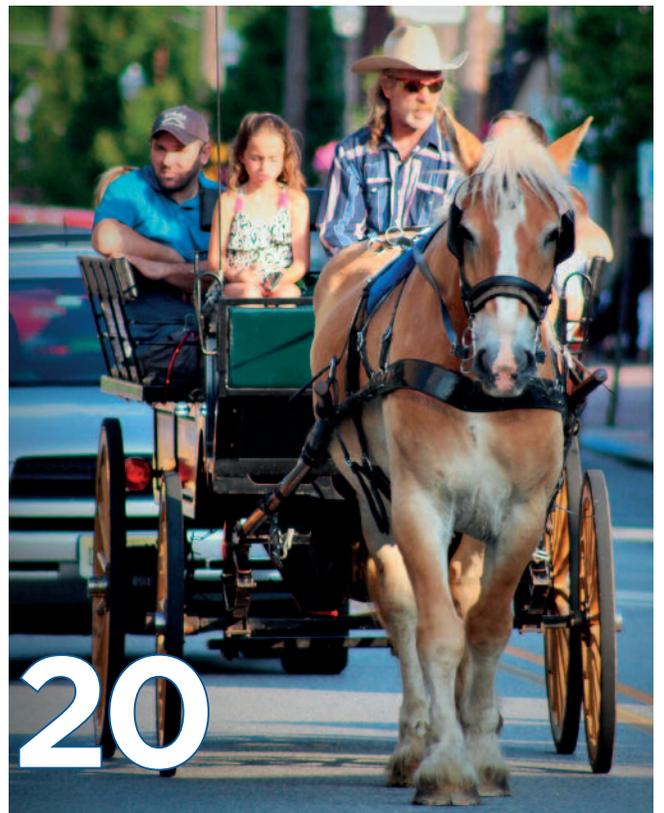
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South Jersey's Main Streets are attracting visitors seeking charm and interesting attractions
Megan York Parker, Public Relations Officer, Visit South Jersey

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Towns share their local highlights in the first League photo contest



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ABOUT THE COVER

The winner of the first NJLM Show Off Your City contest, Verona, painted a pretty and patriotic picture of life in the northwestern corner of the Garden State. See all of the participants in the feature on page 24.



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Attractions in Full Bloom Throughout the Garden State

“We all appreciate the famous ocean sports, shoreline activities, and beautiful beaches. In addition there are many less famous, but equally special, tourist attractions right here close to home.”

After winter’s cold, dark, and stormy weather, springtime in New Jersey brings welcome relief and the opportunity to again enjoy what brings millions to the Garden State each year. We all appreciate the famous ocean sports, shoreline activities, and beautiful beaches. In addition there are many less famous, but equally special, tourist attractions right here close to home.

In this issue, read about how Elizabeth is a cruise destination and how south Jersey’s main streets are an attraction for visitors from near and far. Surprising to some, but well worth a look so you can both learn how they leverage unique opportunities, and

maybe plan an excursion yourself as the season brightens.

Also in this issue, see the results of the first League photo contest and add these local highlights to your spring fling destinations. More of the photo entries will be shared via the League’s social media in the coming months.

Another surprise to some is that New Jersey was recognized in 2017 as a National Trails Day Champion. Even in our highly populated state, we take steps to preserve our natural beauty as a tourist attraction.

So while you are waiting for the ocean and wind to warm up at the shore, there are plenty of gems in New Jersey for you to visit, tour, and learn about. 🚶

Michael Darcy

@ For tips on hosting a trails event visit: trails50.org/event-hosting-guides. The NJDEP will even help you promote your trails event if you contact them before April 15 at Trails@dep.nj.gov.



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Touring Elizabeth

NJ city becomes newest excursion destination for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines passengers disembarking from Cape Liberty Cruise Port

By Jennifer M. Costa, Director, Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization (EDMO)

October 2017 marked a milestone in New Jersey State tourism history. Expanding for the first time ever in its history of tourism for the state, a major cruise line now has excursion opportunities for passengers to discover one of New Jersey's oldest and most historic cities, Elizabeth.





“The Elizabeth DMO has aggressively pursued sales and product development initiatives since it was formed in 2015. The addition of the first-ever cruise excursion in New Jersey’s Gateway Region is one of the organization’s most exciting successes to date,” said New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism’s Acting Executive Director Jake Buganski.

Specifically, with the new partnership of EMI Global, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line (RCCL) passengers now have the option before returning home, to continue their vacation experiences and embark on an exciting journey to explore New Jersey’s newest destination, Elizabeth. *Groups Today Magazine* voted Elizabeth as one of top 10 emerging destinations.

“Elizabeth is noted for its authentic cultural cuisine and rich ethnic diversity.”

Home of history

Established in 1664, Elizabeth is known for its historical precedence as a starting point for New Jersey and home of America’s founding fathers, like Alexander Hamilton, Elias Boudinot,

Marquis de Lafayette, and many others. Additionally, Elizabeth is noted for its authentic cultural cuisine and rich ethnic diversity—representing more than 50 countries and 37 language groups—as well as being the 5th Best City for Shopping in America, according to SmartAsset.com due, in part, to the location of New Jersey’s largest outlet and value retail center, The Mills at Jersey Gardens, within the city’s borders.

“We are excited to partner with Cape Liberty Cruise Port and Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization to bring Royal Caribbean Cruise Line guests to our center,” said Crystal Fresco, Director of Marketing and Business Development, The Mills at Jersey Gardens. “Union County and the City of Elizabeth has so much to offer, so we are certain the passengers who experience one of the exciting Elizabeth excursions will enjoy the vast shopping and dining offerings available at The Mills at Jersey Gardens.”

Photo ops and shops

With its convenient location, Elizabeth sits at the gateway to the state of New Jersey. Just minutes from Cape Liberty Cruise Port, Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR), and many major roadways, Elizabeth was a good fit for Royal



Touring Elizabeth

Caribbean's new expansion of excursions into the NY- Metro area.

Currently, Elizabeth is providing two excursion options for Royal Caribbean cruise-goers.

- **SNAP.PLAY.SHOP**, allows guests to begin their excursion at Veteran's Memorial Park where they have plenty of photo opportunities at one of America's busiest seaports as the ship make their way down the Arthur Kill Waterway. Children can take a few minutes to play in one of America's 26 playgrounds dedicated to the first responders and the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy.

Guests then proceed with their excursion experience to indulge at one



Above & below: Elizabeth has modern and historic attractions to engage cruise passengers.

“With its convenient location, Elizabeth sits at the gateway to the state of New Jersey.”

of New Jersey's most visited tourist attractions, The Mills at Jersey Gardens, an indoor premiere high-end outlet shopping center, where they will have a few hours to shop and explore the 200 store outlet center.

- **CALLING ALL HISTORY BUFFS**, allows excursion-goers to travel back in time and walk through history. The excursion begins at Liberty Hall Museum, where guests are greeted by tour guides who are dressed in period clothing and lead them through the same historic hallways that Alexander Hamilton once walked.

After their hour-long tour ends, excursion-goers will enjoy a lunch experience at any one of preferred cultural dining venues. After lunch, the excursion continues at one of two historical museums

(Boxwood Hall or the Snyder Academy of Elizabethtown) highlighting NJ State historical significance as well as Revolutionary War history.

Both excursions are filled with an engaging and educational bus ride, vocally illustrated by talented and charismatic tour guides from the Royal Caribbean Cruise Port tour operators out of Bayonne, New Jersey's Cape Liberty Cruise Port. The final stop for both excursions are to Newark Liberty

International Airport for passenger drop offs to their respective terminals.

Elizabeth offers a vast area of experiences for enthusiasts who have limited time and want to explore just outside New York City. Conveniently located just minutes from Newark Liberty International Airport and Cape Liberty Cruise Port, Elizabeth is the ideal location to extend a vacation before or after a cruise with close proximity to Bayonne. 📍





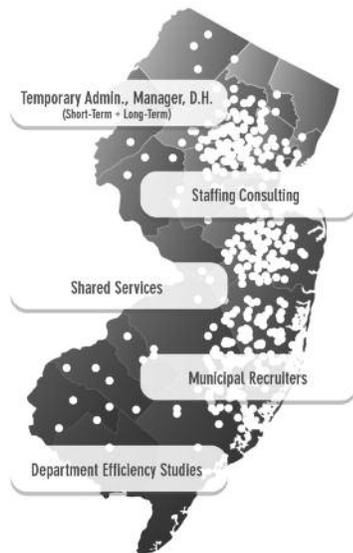
@ For more information visit:
GoElizabethNJ.com/
RCCLExcursions or call the Elizabeth
 Destination Marketing Organization
 office directly at 908-355-9797.

Mayor's Welcome

"The Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization (EDMO) tells the fascinating story of the City of Elizabeth's role in our country's founding and its vital contributions to America's economic vitality," said J. Christian Bollwage, Elizabeth Mayor and NJLM Past President. "From Elizabeth's agrarian beginnings—built on two rivers and a protected bay, to its dramatic leadership in the industrial and service revolutions, our story involves a NY Metro airport, colorful historic figures, famous firsts, an enormous seaport, a highly successful mall and residents who hail from all over the world. And the best part of our story: We're just getting started! Come see for yourself."

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Mayor Fred Tagliarini
 Township of Aberdeen
 ★★★★★
 JPM provided an outstanding Temporary DPW Director, and completed an outstanding Efficiency Study of our DPW.



Mayor Beth Holtzman
 City of Ventnor
 ★★★★★
 Best decision we made; Maria Mento and Joe Verruni are very knowledgeable and always accessible.



Mayor Colleen Mahr
 Borough of Fanwood
 ★★★★★
 Starting 16 years ago, JPM helped our Borough create many new and innovative shared services with our neighbor Town and School District.



Thomas Cardis
 Administrator, Gloucester Twp.
 ★★★★★
 All of my experiences with JPM have been great experiences. Always positive and productive. JPM's VP Tom Shannon is an outstanding Temporary Director of DPW.



James Naples
 Administrator, Bridgewater Twp.
 ★★★★★
 JPM was invaluable in helping the administration select a new police chief. I highly recommend their comprehensive evaluation process.



Mayor Richard Onderko
 Borough of Manville
 ★★★★★
 Best Municipal Government Advisors I've met in 10 years in elected office. Helped us recruit a fantastic Administrator. Thanks Dan and JPM.



Mayor Paul Fericola
 Village of Loch Arbour
 ★★★★★
 Dan and his Team filled in and helped our Beach Town recover quickly from Super Storm Sandy; helped us substantially reduce property taxes.



Mayor Samuel Raia
 Former Mayor, Saddle River Twp.
 ★★★★★
 Both Temporary Administrator Leslie Shenkler and Temporary CFO Michael Mariniello were highly professional and knowledgeable; the transition was seamless.

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NOW & THEN



Amy Spiezio
Managing Editor

Welcome to the Garden State: Enjoying Your Stay

Visiting the Garden State can be likened to discovering hidden treasures—and realizing the treasure to be discovered in your own back yard. Historically, New Jersey has been a refuge for those escaping the heat of the city to the six major regions designated by Visit NJ: Skylands, Gateway, Shore, Delaware River, Greater Atlantic City, and Southern Shore. And today that effort continues as the state’s attractions are primed, promoted—and protected.

This month’s focus on tourism takes us from the north of the state to the south. From the scenic main streets of South Jersey to the pastoral beauty of the Northwest of the state, communities are working to put their best foot forward for full-time residents as well as visitors.

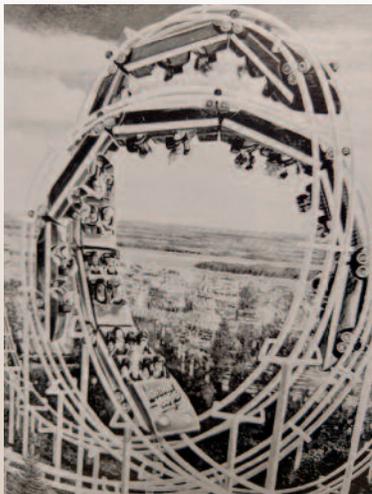
Vernon’s patriotic display was named the winner of the first

Show Off Your City Contest. Check out the cover, as well as the feature story on page 24 to get a glimpse of the highlights of communities who proudly share their image with their neighbors, including Vernon, Mt. Olive, Highland Park, Asbury Park, Brick, and Chatham. Images from these towns will be featured on social media, in the pages of this magazine, and in other League materials throughout the year. We appreciate their contributions and share their pride in a beautiful state.

The pride taken in the state can also be seen in the care taken to protect its environment. The League’s Environmental Counsel, John Scagnelli, Esq., provides a rundown of the environmental legislation from 2017 and looks forward to the efforts at keeping life here as beautiful as possible.

Are you proud of your community? Show off your town by sending in photos and stories about the latest and greatest events and moments to aspiezio@njlsom.org, we’d love to share the story! 📸

Time Capsule: Travel Times

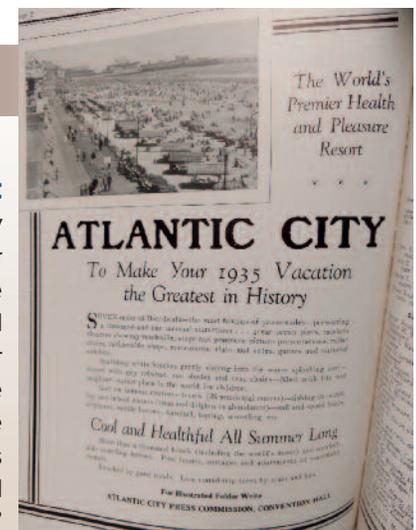


Ride On

The June 1978 issue of *NJ Municipalities* shared insights on what “New Jersey Is Doing to Insure Carnival-Amusement Ride Safety” covering the Carnival Amusement Rides Safety Act, and noted that during the 1977 season, there were 922 rides operating in New Jersey with Great Adventure Park in Jackson and the attractions on the boardwalk along the shore as prominent permanent locations.

Picture Perfect

In 1935, Atlantic City “The World’s Premier Health and Pleasure Resort” tempted those from other parts of the state with the promise of a getaway that is “Cool and Healthful All Summer Long.”



Driving Issues

In June 1957, the magazine ran a piece about “Progress in the Crusade for Shore Preservation and Development,” and a problem that may sound familiar: “It was hoped, by some officials, that the Garden State Parkway would relieve the crowding of beaches from Sea Bright to Point Pleasant by encouraging people from metropolitan New York and North Jersey to travel farther south. This did not occur last season, it may occur during the next few years, but by that time there will be more people.”

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Mayors Commit to Environmental Goals



Over 175 mayors, officials and leaders from municipalities large and small attended the sold-out New Jersey Mayor's Climate Summit in New Brunswick presented by Sustainable Jersey. At the event, 12 mayors formally pledged to work with Sustainable Jersey to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their towns and to strive toward achieving the organization's Gold Star Standard in Energy: Bruce Packer, Mayor, Glen Rock; Chuck Cahn, Mayor, Cherry Hill Township; Victor DeLuca, Mayor, Maplewood; Kevin Ryan, Mayor, Verona; Ravinder Bhalla, Mayor, Hoboken; Steven Fulop, Mayor, Jersey City; Michael Gonnelli, Mayor, Secaucus; David DelVecchio, Mayor, Lambertville; Christopher Bobbitt, Mayor, Lawrence Township; Liz Lempert, Mayor, Princeton; John C. McCormac, Mayor, Woodbridge Township; and Bruce A. Harris, Mayor, Chatham Borough.

The Summit included three panels of experts, resource organizations, and local leaders discussing a pathway forward to enable New Jersey to succeed in meeting the challenges presented by climate change. Jeanne Herb of Rutgers Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy and the New Jersey Climate Adaptation Alliance was a panel speaker.

A recording of the event will be available at SustainableJersey.com and NJLCVEF.org.



First Lady Tammy Murphy joined New Jersey Mayors at the Sustainable Jersey event.

Garden Statements

Franklin Polices Buena Borough

In a money-saving move approved this summer, Franklin Township Police have assumed policing duties for Buena Borough.

Franklin Township Police assumed policing duties for Buena Borough at midnight on Dec. 29, the department announced. Buena is expected to pay Franklin at least \$750,000 yearly for policing services, previously \$1.8 million was the price tag for the 4,500 resident borough's police department. A Buena substation will remain open and staffed 24/7 by the Franklin Township Police Department. If an officer is not in the building, visitors can pick up the red phone and one will be dispatched.

Washington Winter HQ Drops Admission Fee

Morristown National Historical Park will no longer charge an entrance fee to visit the park's Washington's Headquarters Museum. According to TAP Into Morristown, the park determined that it is in the best interest of both Morristown National Historical Park and the public to eliminate the entrance charge at the museum (which also includes a guided tour of the Ford Mansion).

The Ford Mansion was General George Washington's temporary lodgings during the Hard Winter of 1779-1780.



Ford Mansion in Winter. Credit: Sarah Minegar

Plastic Bags Banned in Long Beach

In an attempt to protect the environment, as well as the health, welfare and safety of its residents, Long Beach passed an ordinance in November limiting the use of single-use plastic carryout bags in the township. Patrons of stores will need to bring their own reusable bags or purchase recycled paper bags. The ordinance includes statistics from the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), and according to 2016 statistics, approximately 1 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide annually, less than 5% of which are recycled. Over 380 billion plastic bags and wraps are used each year in the United States alone. The intent of the ordinance is to encourage the use of reusable bags and eliminate pollution.

Camden County Aspires to End Homelessness

In September, Camden County rolled out a new six-point plan to help end homelessness in the county. The plan includes implementing progressive programs such as a rapid reentry program for the previously incarcerated to transition to civil life, 24-hour access to social workers, housing first initiatives for those with medical needs and seasonal employment opportunities to those out of work. The program includes a

focus on improving communication between county departments to help fill gaps and lead to higher success rates, as well as save taxpayer money. The program also includes resources for those living paycheck to paycheck, in attempt to prevent them from becoming homeless, and provides mental health and substance abuse help to those in need of these services.

Robbinsville Leads the Way in Hydroponic Farming

The first municipality in the nation to utilize this growing technique of the future, the township's desire to grow healthy and nutritious food has led to the delivery of its new hydroponic farm. Crops will be grown inside a standard 40-foot shipping container called The Leafy Green Machine (LGM). The container is capable of growing an amount of crops comparable to that grown on 1.8 acres of conventional farmland, and use 90% less water and zero pesticides. Crops may also be grown year round.

The borough has partnered with local groups to distribute its harvest, including Meals on Wheels, stocking food pantries and supplementing the Senior Center's nutritional program. This is only the beginning of the borough's agricultural project, as the borough plans to create a community garden and hold agriculture workshops in the future. Inside the LGM, crops will include leafy greens and herbs, in particular focusing on butterhead lettuce, swiss chard, and kales. 🌱

SAVE THE DATE!

ESCNJ's Annual Vendor Expo May 23, 2018

The ESCNJ's 1,000+ Municipal, Housing Authority, County Government, Higher Education and School District Co-op Pricing members are invited to examine equipment, test products, compare prices, and earn free state approved Continuing Education Units at our Vendor Expo.

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To learn more and find out about free, lifetime membership, please contact our Co-op Team at: coop@ESCNJ.k12.nj.us, or call 732-777-9848, Ext. 3120

Seminars Focus on Ongoing Concerns & Hot Topics

Local officials gathered at League Professional Development Seminars to build their knowledge and catch up with the latest developments on subjects including budgeting and sexual harassment. More seminars on significant issues are slated for next month, see the calendar on this page and visit njslom.org for more information or to register. 📌



Budgeting For Elected Officials was presented by Jason Gabloff, CMFO, Millburn Township and John Rheinhardt, Administrator/CMFO, Wharton Borough.



The League's Labor Counsel Joseph Hannon presented on **Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: What You Need to Know**.

APRIL

April 4

Municipal Options in Opioid Litigation

DoubleTree Hotel, Tinton Falls

April 16

OPRA In Depth: Privacy & Law Enforcement Issues

DoubleTree Hotel, Tinton Falls

JUNE

June 15

The One Day Mini Conference

Conference Center at Mercer, West Windsor

Visit njslom.org/seminars for changes and updates.

For more information on seminars, contact Danielle Holland-Htut at dholland@njslom.org or 609-695-3481, Ext. 118.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg's Papers on Display

The papers of Frank Lautenberg, New Jersey's longest-serving U.S. senator, are now on display at the Alexander Library at Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

His papers, now curated and maintained by the Rutgers University Libraries, encompass 2,250 boxes of hats, buttons, campaign stickers, vinyl records, paper documents, and other artifacts that, laid end to end, would stretch the length of seven football fields.

The exhibit will include a letter from the late Sen. Ted Kennedy, thanking Lautenberg for his condolence note after the death of John F. Kennedy Jr., and photos taken by a volunteer after the terrorist attacks in Sept. 11, 2001. "They're beautiful photos," said Sheridan Sayles, the archivist who's curating the exhibit. "Devastating to look at, but beautiful."

The collection will stay permanently among the Rutgers library system's Special Collections and University Archives, alongside the Gov. Brendan T. Byrne papers, the Harrison Williams papers and the papers of Millicent Fenwick, the popular Republican congresswoman Lautenberg defeated in his first run for the Senate. 📌



Data Center

NJ Tourism Fast Facts

The Garden State's tourism industry is made strong by the wide variety of options for visitors to this small-but-mighty location. According to the New Jersey Fun & Facts Guide from New Jersey Tourism:

- New Jersey has the most stringent testing along the coastline for water quality control of any other seaboard state in the U.S.
- The Burlington Pharmacy on High Street is New Jersey's oldest pharmacy (circa 1731) and is believed to have once been a key station on the Underground Railroad.
- Atlantic City has the longest boardwalk in the world.
- Cape May holds the distinction of being the oldest seashore resort in the United States.

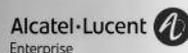


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Do Not Jeopardize the New Jersey Tourism Industry by Allowing Offshore Drilling

By Sean T. Kean, Assemblyman, District 30

The Jersey Shore is renowned, not for the reality television show, but for our beautiful beaches. However, a proposal by the federal government to allow oil and gas drilling off of the coast of New Jersey puts our beaches at risk.

New Jersey boasts 127 miles of coastline that draws visitors from around the world. In 2016, the Garden State had 98 million visitors. The Jersey Shore is a vital component to our annual \$38 billion tourism industry and \$6 billion seafood industry.

In 2016, the tourism sector generated \$38.2 billion of state GDP, representing 6.5% of the entire state economy. Further, the tourism industry directly supported 321,231 jobs and sustained over 500,000 indirect jobs in New Jersey. These encouraging numbers demonstrate a thriving tourism industry that has experienced seven straight years of spending and visitation growth.

However, this increase in tourism will come to a screeching halt if we experience an environmental disaster like the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill that occurred on the Gulf Coast. During this event, an oil rig exploded and sank, killing 11 workers. This was the largest marine oil spill in history and caused the release of an estimated 134 million gallons of oil into ocean waters, impacting 1,300 miles of shoreline in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida.

Across multiple states, beaches closed, and numerous fish, shellfish, marine mammals, marine birds, and other wildlife were harmed. It is estimated that this environmental catastrophe cost \$22 billion in lost tourism revenue in the Gulf States and more than \$1 billion to the commercial fishing industry. Overall, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill cost BP more than \$60 billion.

The Trump administration has proposed opening up nearly the entire Atlantic coast of the United States to oil and gas drilling. Now, our ocean and tourism industry is being threatened by the possibility of oil and gas drilling off New Jersey's beaches.

We need the federal government to know that New Jersey is vehemently opposed to this proposal. Offshore drilling is a serious threat to our economy, tourism, quality of life, and our most precious natural resources—the ocean and beach. That is why I have sponsored AR-109, opposing oil and gas drilling off the coast of New Jersey.

In addition, the New Jersey General Assembly recently passed A-839, prohibiting offshore oil and gas exploration, development, and production in state waters, and issuance of

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permits and approvals for activities associated with offshore oil and gas activities. The bill forbids the DEP from issuing permits associated with offshore drilling, no matter the location. The bill also requires the DEP to review any proposed offshore drilling lease or plan in the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions to determine if the proposal will affect state waters and to take immediate action if there is a serious threat to the Shore.

Drilling in the Atlantic Ocean south of New Jersey could still impact our beaches as the current travels north. A major spill along the East Coast could easily reach New Jersey.

I have been opposed to offshore drilling throughout my legislative career under both Democratic and Republican administrations. In March 2010, President Obama proposed opening up new areas for offshore drilling from Delaware to the northern portion of Florida in the Atlantic Ocean. However, the plan to expand offshore drilling was put on hold, and then the Deepwater Horizon spill occurred.

We would put the entire tourism business and commercial fishing industry at risk by allowing offshore drilling. Think of how many businesses and jobs would be negatively impacted by such a disaster—restaurants, bars, hotels, taxi, Uber and Lyft drivers, supermarkets, liquor stores, retail stores, and recreational services, among so many others.

The amount of potential Atlantic offshore oil and gas is not worth this tremendous risk. The national Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) conducted an assessment in 2011 that showed Atlantic offshore oil and gas represents less than 6% of the nation's undiscovered technically and economically recoverable offshore resources. The assessment indicated the greatest opportunity for potential resources was shown in the Gulf of Mexico and in the Arctic waters of Alaska.

A clean ocean and beach are integral to our economy and quality of life in New Jersey. Monmouth and Ocean counties, which I represent, as well as Atlantic and Cape May counties, rely on these tourism dollars and jobs they create. Offshore drilling is a serious threat to our economy, tourism, quality of life, and our most precious natural resources. We have a responsibility to maintain a clean environment, beaches and ocean for future generations. ♣

Sean Kean has served in the state Legislature since 2002. A resident of Wall, he represents parts of Monmouth and Ocean counties in the 30th Legislative District. He is a municipal attorney and prosecutor.

The views expressed and the data presented by contributors are theirs and are not necessarily shared by the League.

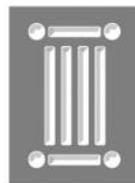
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Planning for New Jersey's Ocean Future

By Carmen Amato, Mayor, Berkeley Township

In January of this year, Berkeley Township and the Ocean County Mayors' Association both passed resolutions strongly opposing offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling activities, which could endanger the health and well-being of the Jersey Shore's communities, environment, and thriving economy.

Our reasons for passing these resolutions are many.

New Jersey residents know our oceans and coastlines are special; hundreds of species of fish and birds, plus whales, dolphins, seals, and some endangered species call them home. Offshore oil and gas development would threaten our wildlife and waters with habitat damage, day-to-day air and water pollution, harmful noise from seismic testing, and the potential for catastrophic oil spills similar to the BP Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.

The economic impact of offshore oil and gas activities should also not be underestimated.

“When we look at the future of New Jersey's ocean, it should not include oil rigs.”

New Jersey's 127 miles of scenic coastline, hundreds of miles of back-bays, estuaries, and other waterways support a crucial tourism industry that brings in more than \$32 million each year and provides more than 500,000 jobs. Our marine resources also support recreational and commercial fishing businesses and activities that contribute more than \$2 billion in added value to New Jersey's economy.

Oil and gas development directly impacts these industries and many more.

The bottom line: as the Mayor of Berkeley Township, I can tell you that when we look at the future of New Jersey's ocean, it should not include oil rigs.

Instead, we are working to advance better stewardship of our oceans through forward-thinking, solution-based strategies, such as supporting the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan. We feel regional planning for new and emerging uses in our shared waters, such as offshore wind development or sand mining, is vital to help ensure that all users' and stakeholders' voices can be part of the planning process.

That's why we are proud to have been the first New Jersey municipality to pass a resolution supporting the ocean planning effort.

Regional ocean planning is a process that looks at the entire picture of how we use, manage, and conserve the ocean and coasts in the Mid-Atlantic. It brings together representatives from Mid-Atlantic states, federally recognized tribes, the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council, and eight federal agencies with ocean interests, in order to improve information sharing, tackle common problems, and create a shared vision for a healthy ocean. Guided by this process, this regional body developed the Regional Ocean Action Plan in 2016 and is now overseeing its implementation.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan creates benefits with pooled data and information from local, state, and federal sources on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal. This shared resource allows us to view how we use our ocean resource holistically, by identifying overlaps and potential conflicts between sectors early in the process. It also encourages those who have a stake in the outcome to share ideas and expertise with each other to create better solutions to mutual problems.

The most effective way to collectively create the best plan for all of our communities, the blue economy, and a healthy ocean is to support the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan. Our waters are a common, interconnected resource we all must manage responsibly, and only with coordinated and consistent policies can we address the issues and threats that affect our entire region.

In addition to Berkeley Township, Asbury Park, Bradley Beach, Lavallette, and Long Beach have all passed resolutions to support the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan; we are calling on you to join us. The American Littoral Society provides resources to explain how regional ocean planning can directly benefit our businesses, economy, environment, and residents.

Since every community is different, the reasons you need regional ocean planning may vary. But no matter the reason, it's important for all of us to get onboard with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan. By working together, we can make New Jersey's coastlines healthier and more prosperous for all of our residents. 🌊

Carmen F. Amato, Jr., is Mayor of Berkeley Township.

New Jersey Building Officials Association, Inc.

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The New Jersey Building Officials Association was established in 1929. We are a not-for-profit organization recognized as a chapter of the International Code Council, and are devoted to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public, by promoting professionalism, education, and ethics.

NJBOA's Active Membership is comprised of licensed Code Officials and Inspectors of all disciplines, as well as Technical Assistants. We have Associate, Subscribing, and Honorary memberships available to others engaged in the building industry, including housing, planning, zoning, and manufacturers' representatives. As always, we welcome people from many career backgrounds to consider joining our organization, or come to any meeting as our guest.

As we approach our 90th Anniversary, **NJBOA** is proud to be the **only** statewide association, inclusive of Code Officials and members of diverse backgrounds, that is recognized by the Department of Community Affairs. **NJBOA** will continue to actively support and participate in the Building Safety Conference of New Jersey, as we have done for 35 years. **NJBOA** is an organization that remains strong in membership, and have welcomed an increase of new applicants this year. **NJBOA** is a tried and true brotherhood whose success is written in our legacy. The **NJBOA** Executive Board would like thank our members, Past Presidents, and communities, for their unwavering support, which has helped pave the way to its success thus far. **NJBOA** will continue to forge ahead with strong leadership and the proven confidence of its members, through this decade and beyond.

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Focus: Tourism



Downtown Upswing

South Jersey's Main Streets are attracting visitors seeking charm and interesting attractions

By Megan York Parker, Public Relations Officer, Visit South Jersey

In a state as packed with people as it is with things to see, the counties that stretch from the Philadelphia suburbs of South Jersey to the shores of the Delaware Bay radiate natural beauty, small-town charm, and one-of-a-kind experiences. Today, the culture that anchors some of the oldest settled communities in America supports contemporary, five-star dining, unique shopping districts, and a bountiful wine region fast earning a reputation for remarkable quality and taste.

South Jersey's charming Main Streets—the downtowns that decorate our region and offer premium culinary experiences—draw in visitors with wine pairings from local vineyards, history, art and theater experiences, as well as retail selections, all in one central location.

Downtown South Jersey

South Jersey's deep history within the colonial United States and our proximity to cities such as Philadelphia, New York City, Wilmington, and Trenton... means that our region offers a range of experiences for every age and every taste.

Cobblestone streets and historic landmarks in the Delaware Valley accompany modernized storefronts housing a unique inventory of items; next door,



you'll find farm to fork dining in charming cafes with seasonally refreshed menus, offering al fresco dining along tree-lined streets out front. These hometown communities easily fill out a calendar of events that rival our neighbors on the other side of the Delaware River.

Here, Visit South Jersey shares just a few of our treasured downtowns and how they attract visitors.

Burlington County

Bordentown: Downtown

Bordentown offers a unique slice of historic South Jersey, featuring art galleries, bookshops, antique stores, and a vintage record shop.

Don't miss the Cranberry Festival each fall—or the popular Common Sense Brewing.

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Downtown Upswing



Medford: Medford Village includes antique and jewelry stores amid historic streetscapes and many culinary hotspots as well

as several craft breweries. Freedom Park is the stuff of which dog dreams are made. Every December, the Dickens Festival turns downtown into a Victorian holiday paradise.

Columbus: At the Columbus Farmers Market, shopping “the oldest and largest flea market in the Delaware Valley” means having your pick of thousands of items, including antiques, gardening gear, fresh produce, and Amish baked goods.



Moorestown: Moorestown offers a unique selection of restaurants and retail in its historic Main Street, plus Perkins Center for the Arts,

surrounded by some of the most charming historic homes in the region.

Browns Mills: The mega-celebration of all things blueberry is held here: the Whitesbog Blueberry Festival (June), considered to be one of the finest “old-fashioned” festivals in the tristate area.

Batsto Village: An historic, walkable iron-working village clustered around a preserved mansion home serves as a landmark to NJ history, a serene space to both learn and observe wildlife as well as a backdrop to a variety of festivals year round, like the favorite Country Living Festival each October.

Camden County



Collingswood: Collingswood accents its popular, dining-focused “Restaurant Row,” starring several James Beard-nominated chefs, with

vintage retail, sustainable parenting goods, and art-and-gift galleries. Collingswood’s

May Fair has kicked off summer in South Jersey for nearly 40 years.



Haddonfield: Kings Highway, with its shops and restaurants anchored by historic Indian King Tavern, is

your starting point to this charming town. First Fridays in Haddonfield (April through November) feature performances and art; Fall and Summer bring craft festivals that shut down Kings Highway with crafters and visitors from near and far. Every New Year’s Eve, Haddonfield offers a family-friendly First Night celebration, complete with fireworks.

Camden: Just over the bridge from Philadelphia, you’ll find the historic city of Camden, home to Rutgers University, the expansive Adventure Aquarium and charming Camden Children’s Garden, which features seasonal programming for children. Beer enthusiasts mark their calendars for the Garden State Craft Brewers Guild Beer Festival (June), when they’ll sample the fare of more than 21 New Jersey-based breweries on the decks of the famous Battleship New Jersey on the Camden Waterfront, which hosts outdoor entertainment during Independence Day celebrations and all summer long.

Gloucester County



Glassboro: The ever-evolving home of Rowan University will soon offer tourist access to the Rowan University’s Jean & Ric Edelman Fossil

Park at Rowan University—an excavation spot that may provide much sought after evidence to support the theory of the mass extinction of dinosaurs.



Pitman: Clustered around the historic Broadway Theater, you’ll find shops, restaurants and art—as well as exciting new microbreweries.



Mullica Hill: The antiques capital of South Jersey boasts both a lovely stretch of Main Street surrounded by acres

of rural farmland, dotted with farm stands and agriculture experiences.

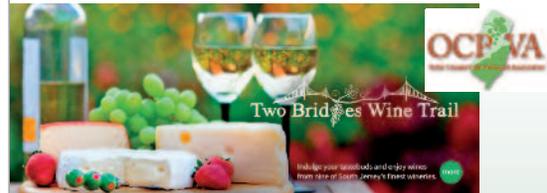
Salem County

Salem City: This historic town, the oldest permanent English-speaking settlement on the Delaware River, has a lot to do—with river views. The Victorian holiday home tour has a cult following.

Pilesgrove: The country’s oldest weekly rodeo calls Pilesgrove home: The Cowtown Rodeo! Also, the “Often Imitated, Never Equaled” Cowtown Farmers Market has stood for 91 years in Salem County.

Atlantic County

Hammonton: The Red White and Blueberry Festival held every June draws crowds to taste the local favorite crop, but the downtown draws visitors year round for its Eagle Theater, wineries, and charming restaurant and retail offering. 🍷



Cheers! South Jersey’s Wine Region

In New Jersey, winemaking is a family tradition that has grown by leaps and bounds in less than a decade, and is poised to achieve even greater heights in the next. Having evolved from a handful of operations into an officially designated American Viticultural Area (AVA) called the Outer Coastal Plain with more than 30 wineries and vineyards, the wine industry in South Jersey accounts for a significant portion of the millions that industry generates statewide each year. For visitors who want help planning their routes through the region, the Two Bridges Wine Trail, Wine & Ale Trail of South Jersey, and Cape May Wine Trail offer guidance that includes maps to local landmarks, downtown shopping, dining, and more.

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Focus: Tourism

Show Off Your City

Towns share their local highlights in first League photo contest



Throughout the Garden State, local governments work every day to make life better for their neighbors, their families, and the world around them. In a sentiment that so many public officials can embrace, Yoko Ono says “Keep going until your efforts start to make things better in your hometown.”

And, every now and then, it's important to take a moment to acknowledge how things are better—the success stories and the beautiful moments.

The Show Off Your City contest winner for 2018 is **Vernon Township**, a municipality of 25,000 people right near the border of New York State in Sussex County. Led by Mayor Harry Shortway, the township's website, vernontwp.com, notes:

“More than 40% of Vernon’s 70 square miles is preserved open space and the township is crisscrossed by both federal and state parks as well as a 20-mile stretch of the Appalachian Trail. Communities within the township include Glenwood, Highland Lakes, McAfee, Vernon Valley, Barry Lakes, and Lake Wallkill.”

Vernon’s All-American town center is featured on our cover this month and will receive a free League publication of their choice.

The other entrants to the contest also put some amazing best feet forward, and their images are featured on the following pages.

Our congratulations to Asbury Park, Brick, Mt. Olive, Chatham, and Highland Park for sharing their communities’ highlights.

Look for more images from these great New Jersey towns on the League’s Facebook page, website, and future issues of *NJ Municipalities*. We hope you’ll participate in future contests and Show Off Your City! 🏃



Previous page:
Contest Winner
Vernon’s town center.

Above: Highland Park’s view of the Raritan River on a breezy day;

Below: Mt. Olive residents on the run for fun.



Show Off Your City



Top left: Chatham Heirloom Tomato Tasting.

Top right: Asbury Park's misty morning at the Arcade from the jetty. Courtesy of Asbury Park Boardwalk (apboardwalk.com)

Below: Brick Township Mayor John Ducey enjoying some Jersey Shore pizza.

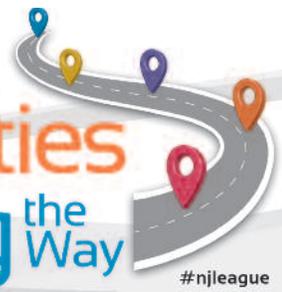
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Connecting Towns

Sustainable Ferry Service through private and public partnership sets sail in the Downtown Driven Program

By Nancy Taggart Davis, Mayor, Borough of Beach Haven;
Lori A. Pepenella, CEO, Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce



There is a lot happening in the downtowns of the Long Beach Island Region of Ocean County. The term Long Beach Island Region (aka Southern Ocean County) was coined over a decade ago to attract visitors and investors to the area. Long Beach Island is known for its 18 miles of beautiful beaches, resort towns, and landmarks. The other side of the bay includes the legendary Pine Barrens, historical downtowns, and booming residential population.



Conference Connections

Jersey League of Municipalities Conference Tourism session; and, through a collaborative effort, the partnership will be supporting the Borough of Tuckerton's application for the Sustainable Jersey Grant program for funding. The Ferry Project will promote for both downtowns. Receiving information bike rental kiosks, dining, and recreational

The Southern Ocean County Chamber initiated a Regional Business Development Panel and Vision 2020 in honor of its 100th Anniversary in 2014, which created the Downtown Driven Program.

Setting sail

The first two municipalities to join the pilot program in 2017 were the Boroughs of Beach Haven and Tuckerton. After passing resolutions to support dialogue that will lead to economic development and innovation, it was clear that a ferry service between both locations was a high priority. This led to a combined "Downtown Driven Committee," which includes Tuckerton EDC and Council members, Beach Haven Council members, Ocean County Planning Department Representatives, Southern Ocean County Chamber representatives, and Tuckerton Seaport personnel.

Within a year, the group of collaborators developed and funded a 2017 Ferry Project that ran 32 successful trips across the bay leaving from Tuckerton Seaport to Beach Haven docks.

In addition to saving gas and reducing the carbon footprint of crowded summer weekends, the passengers completed experience surveys, and took part in a Bay, Wildlife, and Historical Eco Tour while making the crossing. The reservation-only service met capacity during its limited run in 2017, which is leading to plans of expansion for peak 2018 season totaling 128 trips.

Exploring initiatives

The Downtown Driven Water Ferry Committee also participated in several initiatives, including surveying and collaborating with Stockton University's Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism. This past fall the ferry project was part of the New

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Southern Ocean Chamber's Chowderfest on Long Beach Island.

options during the trip, passengers will arrive downtown well-versed on what is available upon landing helping local commerce.

Partnership between the Borough of Beach Haven and Southern Ocean County

Chamber goes back 104 years, when the chamber was founded and began to promote the area to Philadelphia as a viable business investment as well as a summer destination.

In the more recent past, the borough and

the business organization have worked side by side to provide a safe and visitor friendly location for Southern Ocean Chamber's Chowderfest Weekend.

Beginning in 1988, the event was one of the first food festivals of its kind to come to the Jersey Shore. The Chamber and the Borough worked to bring it to Taylor Avenue in the heart of the Beach Haven. By attracting visitors with unlimited chowder sampling in a competition between local restaurants, the event grew from one to two days. By adding musical acts, children activities and a day dedicated to merchants offering end of season bargains, the event helps post-Labor Day numbers swell to surpass sales that local establishments earn during peak summer season. Over the course of 30 years, the Borough has handled security and other issues professionally and responsibly.

The private/public partnership is built on a mutual goal for positively promoting the community and helping businesses succeed. 📍

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About Beach Haven

Conference Connections

The Borough of Beach Haven is a coastal resort community located on Long Beach Island, a barrier island which offers an array of residential housing options, countless retail and dining establishments within a well-defined business district and numerous parks and public access points to the ocean and bay.

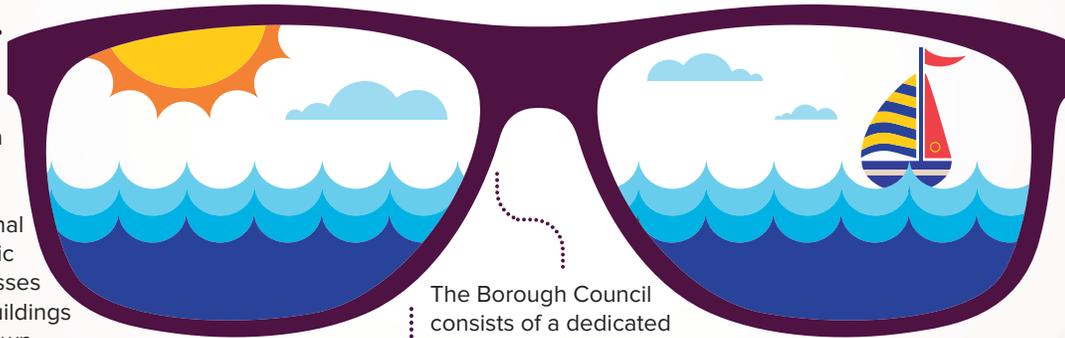
Known as “the Queen City,” Beach Haven is a late 19th century beach-front resort established in 1873. The town still retains its Victorian and Edwardian character.

The Beach Haven Historic District, listed in the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places, encompasses the most intact buildings in the center of town.

The Borough’s Master Plan states “The residents of Beach Haven strive to provide a unique and vibrant coastal community and vacation destination that focuses on exceptional quality of life, a well-planned thriving town center, valued natural resources and recreational offerings that support all of its citizens and visitors.”

The Borough Council consists of a dedicated group of residents that include: Mayor Nancy Taggart Davis, Council President S. James White, and Councilmen Donald Kakstis, Thomas Lynch, and Charles Maschal.

With many projects on the horizon, the Borough and the Regional Chamber are both committed to remain Downtown Driven, and are excited to see the results.



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Major New Jersey 2017 Environmental Legislation/Developments

By John M. Scagnelli, Esq., NJLM Environmental Counsel; Partner,
Chair of the Environmental & Land Use Law Group, Scarinci Hollenbeck, LLC

In 2017, we saw a number of significant New Jersey legislative and related developments in the environmental area during the last year of the Christie Administration. The New Jersey State Legislature blocked the Christie Administration and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) from loosening septic system density requirements in the Highlands and placed a question on the November 2017 ballot calling for an amendment to the State Constitution dedicating the use of State environmental natural resource damage settlement funds only for environmental restoration purposes, which was approved by State voters.

Governor Christie vetoed the Legislature's passage of a bill to require owners or operators of trains carrying petroleum products to have emergency discharge, response, and cleanup plans. Significantly, Governor Christie signed into law the Water Quality Accountability Act, which requires infrastructure maintenance for public water supply systems, signed a Bill approving the expanded use of recycled asphalt pavement materials, and vetoed the Legislature's attempt to require New Jersey's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). At the end of the 2017 Legislative session, a Bill requiring State oversight of the budgets of regional sewerage authorities was passed and signed into law by the Governor.

While all this was happening, incoming Governor Murphy released the Report of his Environment and Energy Transition Advisory Committee, which provides a roadmap of the environmental initiatives we can expect to see from his new Administration.

All of this signals increasing attention to environmental issues at the State level, and we can anticipate that this momentum will accelerate with the new Administration.

1 State Constitutional Amendment Dedicating Natural Resource Damages Settlement Funds for Environmental Restoration

In December 2016, the State Assembly passed ACR-127 (McKeon/Benson/Eustace) which called for New Jersey voters to approve a constitutional amendment ballot question calling for the dedication of funds recovered from State environmental lawsuits to environmental projects. That resolution was introduced after the Christie Administration had collected more than \$350 million from companies responsible for polluting the Passaic River in the Passaic River litigation and spent less than 20% of those funds on restoration products, and settled the Exxon Mobil environmental litigation for \$225 million—far

less than what environmental advocates claimed the case was worth.

In 2017, the ballot question was revised to require only the dedication of State natural resource damages settlement funds for environmental repair and restoration purposes. New Jersey voters approved the amendment of the State Constitution for this purpose by a vote of 69% to 31%.

2 Blocking NJDEP's Highlands Septic System Density Standards

On Jan. 8, the New Jersey State Legislature passed Senate and Assembly Concurrent Resolutions (SCR-163) (Smith/Bateman) and ACR-255 (McKeon/Eustace) reflecting the Legislature's finding that NJDEP's proposed rule to revise the septic system density standards in the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act Rules published for public comment on May 2, 2016, was not consistent with Legislative intent. NJDEP's proposed rules would have increased development in the Highlands Preservation Area and involved the levels of nitrate which could be absorbed into the soils in the Highlands Preservation Area.

NJDEP's proposed Highland's septic system density standard rule was blocked.

3 Water Quality Accountability Act

Possibly the most important environmental development in 2017 was the enactment of the Water Quality Accountability Act, P.L. 2017, c.133. The Act was signed into law by Governor Christie on July 21, 2017. The Act applies to public water systems with more than 500 service connections. Among other things, the Act requires periodic inspections of public water system infrastructure including valve inspections, the development of cybersecurity programs for cyber risks to public water supply systems, the requirement to develop mitigation plans to address water quality violations, and asset management plans for the maintenance, repair and renewal of water supply infrastructure.

The Water Quality Accountability Act will have far reaching consequences for public water systems in this state. (See the February issue of *NJ Municipalities'* Water Infrastructure focus features for more details.) The Act's passage is also part of what we see as increasing attention being paid by the State to water quality and water supply.

4 Oil Trains

In 2017, the Legislature continued to pay attention to the transport of crude oil by trains transiting northern New Jersey counties. This led to the passage of S-806 (Feinberg/Gordon), which required owners and operators of oil trains to have emergency response and cleanup plans. The Bill passed the Legislature, but was conditionally vetoed by Governor Christie on July 13, 2017. During the last part of the 2017 Legislative session, A-4031 (Huttle/Eustace) was passed by the Assembly.

This Bill called for the creation of a New Jersey Crude Oil by Rail Safety Task Force to study the risks and impacts of the transport of crude oil by rail, and to make recommendations for emergency response measures. It can be

anticipated that this or a similar Bill will be passed in some form during the 2018 Legislative session and possibly signed into law by the new Governor.

5 State Oversight of Budgets of Regional Sewerage Authorities

As one of his last acts as Governor, Governor Christie signed into law as P.L.2017, c.290 a Bill, S-848 (Stack/Oroho), providing for State oversight of the annual budgets of regional sewerage authorities created under the Sewerage Authorities Law, N.J.S.A. 40:14A-1 et. seq.

The new law imposes limits upon the growth of fee-funded appropriations in the annual budgets of those authorities and on increases in the amounts permitted to be billed to customers, and requires the approval of the annual budgets of the authorities by the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

It also limits the percentage of growth of fee-funded appropriations in a regional sewerage authority's annual budget to not more than 2% per year and requires that the amount billed to customers of the authority or the amount billed to a local unit for its proportional share of the authority's expenses cannot exceed



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Environmental Legislation

the amount billed in the authority's previous budget year to each customer or local unit by more than 2% for comparable usage of the sewerage system. This provides a control on sewerage authority charges. The sewerage authorities had previously operated on a quasi-independent basis without State oversight.

6 Recycled Asphalt Pavement Legislation

Also among the last acts of Governor Christie was his signing into law a bill which allowed for the expanded use of recycled asphalt pavement millings, P.L. 2017, c.325. The Bill, S-3521 (Gordon/Oroho), permits the expanded use of asphalt millings to be used:

(i) Unbound as a surface material for parking lots, farm roads, pathways, for quarry reclamation, or underneath guardrails; or,

(ii) Mixed with other materials as a base or sub-base material. The user must demonstrate to NJDEP that the environment in which the material is used has a PH level greater than 4 or a PH level less than or equal to 4 if the user demonstrates that releasable levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and metals are at or below NJDEP and U.S. EPA drinking water quality standards. Many municipalities use asphalt millings and the new law permits them to expand that use.

7 New Jersey Participation in Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

In the 2017 Legislative session, the Legislature passed A-4701 (Eustace/Zwicker), which called for New Jersey's full participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) related to global warming. Governor Christie vetoed that Bill on July 13, 2017. The Bill has been reintroduced as A-1813 in the 2018 Legislative session and will likely be signed into law by the new Governor.

8 New Jersey Sets Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) Requiring Statewide Testing of Drinking Water for PFOA and PFNA Chemicals

Evidencing the increasing state concern over drinking water quality and supply,

NJDEP in 2017 proposed amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act and Private Well Testing Act Rules to set maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA) in drinking water. NJDEP would use the New Jersey Drinking Water Quality Institute's recommended drinking water standard of 14 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and proposed standard of 13 ppt for PFNA.

These PFOA and PFNA compounds are used in many consumer products and industrial applications, including non-stick cookware, food packaging, and stain retardants in mattresses and clothes. The compounds are also used in firefighting foams used by many municipalities. Municipalities should take steps to eliminate their use of firefighting foams which contain these PFOA and PFNA compounds.

9 Legislative Changes to Funding Provisions Under the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund

Among the bills signed during the last days of the Christie Administration was a Bill, A-1954 (Coughlin/Benson), which makes significant changes to the funding of financial assistance and grants from the Hazardous Discharge and Site Remediation Fund, a fund relied upon by many municipalities for remediation funding for brownfields and redevelopment projects. A-1954 was signed into law as P.L. 2017 c.353. While the changes are somewhat complex and beyond the scope of this article, a brief overview of them is as follows.

The new law contains limits on grants to municipalities, counties, and redevelopment entities for brownfields redevelopment projects; reduces the cumulative total amount of matching grants which can be awarded to municipalities, counties, and redevelopment entities for recreation and conservation projects; and removes language in current law which allows grants to municipalities, counties, and redevelopment entities for recreation and conservation projects, or for affordable housing, even if the public entity does not own the property. The new changes deserve careful study.

10 The Murphy Administration Environment and Energy Transition Committee Report

On January 1, Governor Murphy's Environment and Energy Transition Advisory Committee released its Report which provides an overview of the Governor's environmental priorities for his Administration. The report deserves careful review. Among other things, the Committee recommended that New Jersey rejoin the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and commit to the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and become the 16th state to join the U.S. Climate Alliance.

The Committee recommended that the new Administration launch a Coastal Resiliency Initiative identifying best practices and updating key environmental laws, such as CAFRA, to address threats posed by climate change.

The Committee recommended that the State address the disproportionate impacts of pollution and contamination from an environmental justice perspective and set up an Interagency Environmental Justice Task Force.

The Committee recommended that the Governor launch a comprehensive initiative to upgrade the State's aging water infrastructure, including drinking, wastewater, and stormwater.

Finally, the Committee recommended that the Governor reverse environmental rollbacks in NJDEP rules, remediate toxic waste sites, and renew the State's commitment to open space, fish and wildlife protection, and parks and aggressively pursue natural resource damages cases and insure that settlement funds remediate local impacts.

As seen from the above, 2017 was a year of accelerating momentum on the environmental front and we can anticipate that this momentum will continue in the coming year. Clearly, renewed attention will be paid to environmental issues by the Murphy Administration and the State Legislature. 📌



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⁽¹⁾ Source: Thomson Reuters Corporation

MeToo, Now What?

Ridding sexual harassment from New Jersey workplaces

By Keiona Miller, Councilwoman,
North Plainfield



#METOO

I sat across the table from a stranger at a coffee shop listening intently as he described how a female associate had wrongfully accused him of sexual harassment. Emotional and visibly angry, he fidgeted in his chair before he finished his story by announcing boldly, “so we [a group of men] got rid of her.”

He repeated his dramatic tale a few times as if to convince me of his innocence. I waited patiently for him to speak his piece and then asked, “Do you understand why your female colleague interpreted being looked over for a professional opportunity after turning down your request for a date?” I could see in his eyes that his anger was turning towards me, so I followed up swiftly with another question: “Did you or did you not ask her out for a date?” My new friend suddenly stood up from the table, grabbed his stuff, saying “OK, so you don’t believe me,” and leaving the store.

I leaned back into the chair and began to recount the many times in my professional career when I was in that woman’s position, when I experienced MeToo moments. Just to recall a few that are appropriate for this publication: After sitting through a staff meeting that I added valuable input, which was readily accepted and immediately implemented, I was called into the office by a male supervisor who explained to me, “You weren’t brought here to make decisions, you were supposed to sit there and be cute.” I remember another time when an older female co-worker walked up to me and pinched me on my cheek, not the cheek on my face, and told me how attractive she thought I was.

Some of you may be gasping, but the reality is as many as one in three of the women who read this article will have had a

number of similar experiences.

One of the biggest obstacles to cracking down on sexual harassment is our collective silence on the issue. Statistics show that 71% of women who are harassed do not report it. This is a very unfortunate reality. It perpetuates suffering for victims while simultaneously enables perpetrators.

Even if your municipality has the most well-written sexual harassment policy, here are questions to consider:

- Has the policy been read and understood by employees?
- Has it been adhered to?
- Are there measurements in place to test attitudes towards sexual harassment in your workplace culture?
- Are there visible reminders in place to keep employees conscious of your organization’s commitment to enforcing the policy?
- Is the policy being enforced?

As elected officials, we all know that the establishment of any policy is only as good as its enforcement.



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Me Too

The impact of sexual harassment on individuals can range anywhere from minor feelings of irritation or moments of social awkwardness to severe physical and psychological damage such as PTS (post-traumatic stress), clinical depression, high blood pressure, anxiety and sexual dysfunction. Consequently, survivors of sexual harassment may experience a breakdown of personal relationships, lowered self-esteem and decreased productivity at work which can lead to loss of employment and under-employment for many years to come.

To employers, the effects of sexual harassment are varied and can be financially catastrophic. Left unchecked, continued sexual misconduct by employees may contribute to higher absenteeism, higher employee turnover, lower employee morale, and overall decreased productivity which undoubtedly, negatively impacts the organization's bottom line. Additionally, the costs of sexual harassment lawsuits can result in losses in the millions.

A New View

Sexual harassment in the workplace is nothing new. But, America's view of its acceptability is changing. Incidents that might have remained hidden under the rug, laughed off, pushed aside,



First Lady, Tammy Murphy (l) with Councilwoman Keiona Miller of North Plainfield.

or paid-off in secret settlements five or ten years ago are now showing up as hashtags on social media. The internet has delivered a fresh, uncomplicated and very effective weapon to combat this age-old crisis, and more individuals are joining the cause every day.

The "MeToo" movement founded in 2006 by Tarana Burke, a Civil Rights Activist from Bronx, New York has taken on wings with social media and has been fortified by the recent take-down of once powerful perpetrators like Roy Moore, Louis CK, Harvey Weinstein, and the list continues... Women today are emboldened like never before to stand up and to speak out for themselves.

Finally, the silence has been broken. Now what?

Ready for a new era?

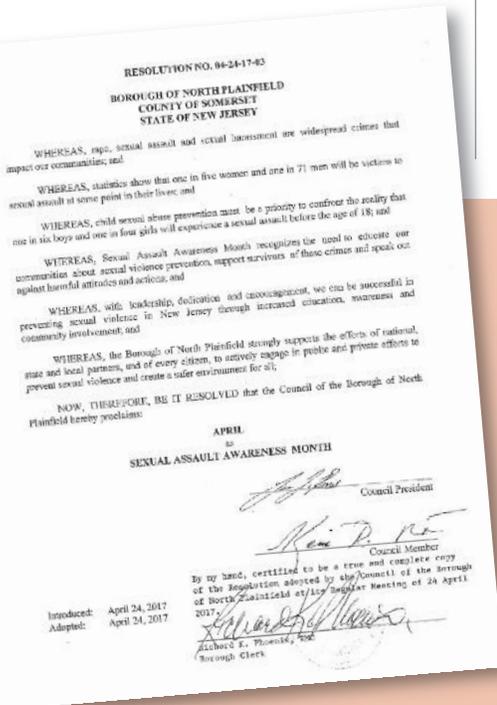
If your organization's existing policy

has not been visited during the past 10 years, then most likely it needs to be revised to include definitions of sexual harassment with descriptions of improper conduct.

Plan to provide sexual harassment training, but a word of caution: we owe it to ourselves to ensure that sexual harassment training does not become a mere perfunctory activity on our organization's to-do-list. Training should be implemented as a significant necessity.

Do not assume that all employees will interpret the policy and training in the same manner. Researchers at the University of Missouri have found that "employee perceptions of how exactly 'sexual harassment' is defined by a company's policy can, in effect, eliminate or reshape the meaning of these policies and contradict the norms and values of the companies that try to enforce them." They suggest that training should acknowledge the gender dynamics of harassment. Other considerations:

- Establish and implement measurements to test attitudes towards sexual harassment in your workplace culture. This could be a brief employee survey.
- Provide clear, visible, and consistent reminders that harassment will not be tolerated.
- When there is a report of sexual harassment, believe the victim first.
- If possible, establish a third-party source for receiving complaints. 📧



IN YOUR TOWN Join the movement.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness month. Use this opportunity to educate staff to coordinate local events and lead awareness campaigns. Joining the movement may help break the silence in municipal offices and those of the surrounding community.

In April 2017, I introduced a resolution declaring recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in North Plainfield.

It was a small action but it's a step in the right direction. It sounds the alarm that we as municipal officers recognize that there is a crisis, and that we are committed to providing the resources in coordinate the assistance that is necessary to facilitate change in this area.

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Open Public Records Portal

Bloomfield creates transparency technology

By Michael Venezia, Mayor, Bloomfield; NJLM Executive Board Member



OPRA (the Open Public Records Act) is the state statute that gives the public access to government maintained documents while maintaining privacy for citizens. The Municipal Clerk's Office is in charge of processing requests for government records under the OPRA statute.

The Bloomfield Municipal Clerk's Office receives hundreds of OPRA requests each year and has, therefore, decided to establish a system that will allow for faster and easier accessibility to public information.

Prior to the summer of 2016, the Clerk's Office maintained government documents such as signed Ordinances, Resolutions, Appointments, Contract Awards, and RFPs in the office's

main computer system. Because of the way the Township's network was arranged for security purposes, it was necessary that only the Clerk's Office had access to these frequently requested documents.

The open public records portal project was initiated because citizens, as well as Township employees from various departments, were requesting the same documents consistently and

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Bloomfield Public Records

repetitively, and this became a time-consuming process.

Getting started

Once the decision was made to create the portal, the process needed to be determined:

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Bloomfield's website is home to the OPRA portal.

- 1** The first step was to create a one-stop shop for the most frequently sought out documents.
- 2** The Township's IT Director was able to create a permanent portal on the Township's website which would allow the Clerk's Office to upload all of already scanned documents to the portal and organize them in a way that was searchable and easy to navigate.
- 3** A proper naming convention was created, and previously scanned documents were renamed to conform to the created convention.
- 4** Once the portal and naming convention were created, the previously scanned files were sorted by category and date, renamed, and uploaded.

The Bloomfield Open Public Records Portal, publicrecord.bloomfieldtwpnj.com, is up and running since August 2016 and continues to be updated monthly. As council meetings continue, the site will continue to remain updated with the latest adopted documents.

Having the signed Ordinances and Resolutions at the public records portal has reduced the number of OPRA requests submitted for these types of documents by at least 15%. Also, the Clerk's Office no longer has to send individual departments copies of signed legislation—each department, user, employee, or citizen can go to the portal

and have direct access. Implementing the public records portal has made the Township more transparent and accessible to everyone.

The documents available on the site are all Ordinances, Resolutions, Appointments, and Contract Awards that have been adopted beginning with 2010 to the present.

While OPRA requests must be fulfilled, requestors can be directed to the website so in the future they can get immediate access to view desired records in PDF form, meaning they will be able to save and print. Our department heads, staff, residents, the community, and even the media and our professional consultants are pleased with the accessibility and convenience of our "Bloomfield Open Public Records" portal. I and other elected officials and professionals in town hear many compliments about the portal when they are out and about in the community.

The website will continue to be updated on a regular basis and will, therefore, continue to serve as a way to keep the citizens of Bloomfield involved and up-to-date with Township business.

The Township of Bloomfield considers transparency of the utmost importance and with this innovation, the public has a very easily accessible window—24/7—to look inside the workings of the Township of Bloomfield. 📄

Editor's Note: This program received Honorable Mention in the 2017 Annual Innovation in Governance Awards program from the NJ Department of Community Affairs and the League.



In Your Town

Other communities can replicate this public records site by following the simple process indicated in this feature. IT departments can contact our IT Director for assistance or questions and begin scanning recent documents today. When time permits, a community can scan older documents and work backwards.

That's what we did—we started with 2016 and now have documents available on the site beginning with 2010. We will continue adding older documents to the portal as time and work assignments allow.

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FINANCE

Tax Sale: Live Sales vs. Electronic Sales in New Jersey

By Carl M. Dileo, Tax Collector, and Stacy Proebstle, Public Information Officer, Township of Toms River

New Jersey law requires all 565 municipalities to hold at least one tax sale per year, if the municipality has delinquent property taxes and/or municipal charges.

When holding a tax sale, title to the delinquent property itself is not sold. Delinquent charges are paid with interest and cost by the lien holder and a tax sale certificate is issued. At the auction, bidders bid down the interest rate that will be paid by the owner upon redemption of the tax sale certificate amount. If the interest is bid down to 0%, then a premium is bid starting at \$100 to whenever the bidding stops to obtain the tax sale certificate.

The premium is kept on deposit with the municipality. If the tax sale certificate is not redeemed within a five-year period (not including time in bankruptcy) or the property is foreclosed upon, then the premium is turned over to the town. Once a tax sale certificate is issued, the lien holder can pay any outstanding municipal charges when they come due on the property to the town and add those charges to the lien at an interest rate that is set by the municipality.

A town can choose to have a standard tax sale or an accelerated tax sale.

Standard sale is unpaid charges from the prior tax year.

Accelerated tax sale, which requires a resolution, is for current year charges.

Until 2012, New Jersey always conducted in person, or live tax sales. Toms River Township was one of six towns approved to participate in a pilot program to conduct an electronic tax sale in 2013. Five years later and the Township is benefitting from electronic tax sales.

Since the Toms River Tax Collector's office completed its first online property tax sale in 2013, the Township has had a record number of premiums bid on properties, collecting

\$4.138 million premiums on 1,078 properties.

There are, however, some differences between a live (held in the municipal building) and an electronic tax sale, which I will explain.

Live tax sale

No resolution is required to hold a live standard tax sale. Having a live tax sale requires lien holders to be at the municipality. The tax collector will auction the outstanding charges due on each property one by one having lien holders call out the interest rate or premium amount they will pay to acquire the tax sale certificate.

“ Since the Toms River Tax Collector's office completed its first online property tax sale in 2013, the Township has had a record number of premiums bid on properties, collecting \$4.138 million premiums on 1,078 properties.”

After the auction is completed, lien holders must review their winning properties with the collector's office before finalizing the sale. If a lien holder chooses not to pay after the tax sale is completed, the only recourse for the collector is to reactuate the charges due. If no lien holders are there to bid on the property, the lien is struck off to the municipality.

Electronic tax sale

An electronic tax sale is innovative and provides a greater pool of potential lien buyers, thus creating the environment for

a more complete tax sale process. One of the major differences in live versus electronic tax sales is that the tax collector is required to have a resolution to have an electronic tax sale, even if it is a standard tax sale. State statute now requires the municipality to go out to bid to award the contract if the amount that is going to be paid to the host vendor is over the bid threshold.

There are several benefits to having an electronic tax sale. Having the entire process done online makes participation easier in many ways. First, lien holders are not required to be in New Jersey to bid as the site is open to all bidders that register. Second, lien holders can bid at home from their computers, allowing them to bid on multiple auctions if more than one municipality is having an online tax sale that day.

It also notably extends competition, as it allows more lien holders to register allowing more properties to see premiums versus an interest rate of return which ultimately aids the property owner. Lastly, online tax sales permit lien holders to start placing bids once the website opens roughly four weeks from the day the auction closes. This allows for multiple properties to continue to be bid on until the auction time expires.

To complete the process, the website host notifies the lien holder of how many properties they successfully bid on and the amount that needs to be paid to the municipality. This can be done by the lien holder either electronically or in person at the municipality by cash or check. Bidding online requires the lien holder to place a deposit (normally 10%) of what they can bid up to not including premium amounts.

The lien holder may lose the deposit if the collector determines the lien holder did not bid in good faith and/or does not have the funds to cover what is due or they do not want the properties they successfully bid on.

Lastly, after the tax sale closes bidding, the collector can notify the website vendor to contact all the bidders to

inform them if properties are available (in the event of bidder who doesn't have funds to purchase the lien) so that other lien holders have a fair chance to rebid on those properties.

With an electronic tax sale the entire auction process is online—from

registration through research and bidding. The electronic platform makes participation easier and greater while notably extending reach to a nationwide audience. Moving the tax sale online allowed us to do that with great success. 

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GOLD DOME



The Three Stages of the Marijuana Debate

By Ben Dworkin, Ph.D., Director, Rowan University Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship

Governor Phil Murphy's support for legalizing recreational marijuana use has brought the issue front-and-center in Trenton. Today, the nitty-gritty negotiating is happening in the back rooms of the State House.

It is perhaps best to view the marijuana debate in three stages.

Medical marijuana which was allowed by New Jersey law in 2009, is the first concern. Former Governor Chris Christie's concerns with the potential for widespread recreational use disguised as "medicinal" led to very restrictive distribution regulations. Public support, however, to broaden access to medical marijuana is overwhelming and the Murphy administration will certainly use its regulatory authority to allow that.

Decriminalization of recreational use is the second concern. This does not make marijuana legal in New Jersey, but rather eliminates the criminal enforcement of use and possession, up to a certain threshold. Distributors and dealers can still be criminally charged. Decriminalization is an effort to turn the "crime" of marijuana into something akin to a parking ticket.

An increasing number of legislators are willing to support decriminalization because of the social justice issues that are associated with current enforcement. Studies have shown a stark racial disparity in those arrested for marijuana. A criminal record can have dramatic negative effects on one's life chances—in employment, access to public housing and other government resources, bank credit, schooling, etc.

According to the ACLU, in 2013, African-Americans in New Jersey were three times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites, despite similar usage rates. For the Murphy administration, the costs—both monetary and societal—of the current enforcement policy are unreasonable, unjust, and ineffective.

A growing number of Trenton legislators are ready to support decriminalization.

Legalization Those who favor moving to the third stage in the debate, legalization—suggest there are four major reasons why decriminalization isn't enough.

1. Decriminalization doesn't eliminate the black market. You would still buy your pot from a dealer who hides in the shadows. This puts purchasers in dangerous situations and encourages more elaborate criminal enterprises.
2. Only with legalization will the dealers be regulated so that they can't push harder drugs on customers, abuse those customers seeking to buy on credit, sell to children, etc. It is by bringing the marketplace out in the open, legalization proponents argue, that it can be controlled in ways that are impossible today, and would remain impossible under decriminalization.
3. A third reason some argue for legalization is that it is the only way to take advantage of the potential for New Jersey to be the center of marijuana research and development, and the resulting jobs that can emerge. With legalization, medicinal marijuana testing can expand along with the much-needed ancillary products, such as improved on-the-spot tests that can be utilized by law enforcement, employers, etc. Regulating and taxing a new industry also holds the potential for raising potentially \$300 million in tax revenue for the state.
4. Finally, proponents of legalization argue that decriminalization will extend, not end, the current social injustices. The fear is that municipalities will continue to enforce marijuana laws in a racially disparate manner, and will impose significant fines on those arrested thereby creating what one leading advocate called, "a perverse revenue stream."

Failure to pay a municipal fine, especially an exorbitant one, of course could also lead to jail time, and all the subsequent negative effects. Given the state's past history of racial differences in marijuana possession arrests, many on the social justice side of this issue believe that full legalization—not decriminalization—is the only way to proper solution.

Among other reasons, opponents of legalization argue that the data is unclear as to whether marijuana is a "gateway drug." Indeed, the THC levels of today's marijuana are significantly

higher than in the past, resulting in much more varied effects on users.

Further, some challenge the idea of generating tax revenue from what they consider a dangerous and immoral enterprise. In effect, the taxation of legalized marijuana is also a “perverse revenue stream.”

There is a strong possibility that the two sides can find an accommodation. Following Vermont, New Jersey would be the second state to legalize marijuana by statute. The others did so by public referendum, and then left the details to be worked out by bureaucrats. Thus, New Jersey has the unique position of being able to host a vibrant discussion on a wide variety of details prior to passage. These discussions are going on today.

Points of contention of particular interest to municipalities will include the regulation of storefront distribution and the possibility of using empty office park space for the hydroponic growing of the plants, along with related research and development.

Towns will also be concerned with security and law enforcement issues. Marijuana dispensaries will be cash businesses and may be targeted by criminals. DUI stops will become more challenging because, unlike alcohol, there is no legal threshold for how much marijuana in a driver’s body should constitute “impaired driving.” Police will need a multi-point check, including an oral test and recognition of impaired movement, before making a charge.

In addition, municipalities will need to be able to expand their understanding and recognition of impaired action among employees who might have inhaled marijuana, similar to what is done today when someone comes to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The potential to move towards decriminalization or legalization is going to be a major focus for the state legislature in 2018, with a likely resolution not coming until May or June. Assembly Majority Leader Lou Greenwald (D-6) and fellow Assembly members Dan Benson (D-14), Reed Gusciora (D-15) and Raj Mukherji (D-33) are among the most active on these issues. They are

joined by a number of Senators including Joe Cryan (D-20), Vin Gopal (D-11), Ron Rice (D-28), Nicholas Scutari (D-22), Robert Singer (R-30), and Troy Singleton (D-7).

What is perhaps most exciting is that we have seen the experiences of several other states, can learn from their mistakes, and the resulting legislative debate

here in New Jersey is sure to benefit both the desire for an effective policy and a transparent process. 🇯🇵

Editor’s Note: The New Jersey League of Municipalities Marijuana Legalization Task Force continues researching and analyzing municipal issues and impacts surrounding the possible legalization of marijuana. At this time there is no municipal consensus position regarding legalization.

The Power of Collaboration



TEAMWORK MAKES THE DIFFERENCE WHEN DISASTER STRIKES...

May 15, 2017: A Learjet headed to Teterboro crashed in the Carlstadt Public Works parking lot exploding in a fireball of fuel and airplane fragments that destroyed the property. Fortunately, the staff had just left for the day.

The MEL/JIF team responded immediately.

The South Bergen JIF worked with Joe Crifasi, Carlstadt Public Works Director to document the damage and develop a plan to restore the property.

The JIF also forwarded the funds needed for emergency repairs, and took action to secure full restitution from the airplane’s insurer, which was successful.

The MEL Environmental JIF (E-JIF) consultant inspected the area to confirm the fuel spill had been remediated and a plan was in place to remove remaining traces.

“The response of the MEL/JIF team was immediate. They worked with me daily until the claim was successfully resolved,” Crifasi commented. “Carlstadt Risk Manager Frank Covelli and South Bergen JIF Executive Director Steve Sacco really produced outstanding results for Carlstadt.”

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Redevelopment Responsibilities & Local Public Contracts Law

By Frank Marshall, Esq., NJLM Staff Attorney



Our council has authorized and directed our planning board to conduct a redevelopment study of a specific area within our municipality. Many of the properties within this area are commercial rental properties. Will our planning board need to provide the tenants of these properties with individual notice of any hearings regarding the determination of the need for redevelopment?



No. Under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (“LRHL”), individual notice of any hearing only needs to be provided to the property owner, recorded on your municipal assessment records. (See *N.J.S.A. 40A:12-6*) The law makes no special provision requiring municipalities to provide direct notice of hearings to tenants or lessees, and case law has consistently held that the general notice, required to be published in the newspaper, is sufficient for these parties. This is not only true for commercial tenants but also for residential tenants and any other member of the general public as well.

Perhaps the most instructive case on this issue is, *Iron Mountain Information Management, Inc. v. City of Newark*, a decision by the Appellate Division which was later affirmed by the State Supreme Court. As the Court succinctly ruled, “Notably, when the Legislature adopted the LRHL, it chose not to impose upon a governing body any obligation to provide commercial tenants with individual notice of a proposed blight designation. In fact, the LRHL treats commercial tenants no differently from any other member of the general public whose only notice of the proposed blight designation is publication of a hearing



notice in a newspaper of general circulation once a week in each of the two weeks preceding the Planning Board meeting.”

Our town currently has an in-house IT department but our council feels we could save money by contracting with an outside vendor for such services. Are there any special considerations under the Local Public Contract Law we should be aware of under these circumstances?

Yes. Assuming that you will be using competitive contracting as provided for in the Local Public Contracts Law (“LPCL”) to solicit vendor proposal for IT services, there are special considerations when a municipality is looking to replace services provided by its own employees.

The LPCL requires that whenever a municipality seeks to replace an employee using the competitive contracting process, that municipality must notify the affected employees or their representatives, prior to the issuance of a Request for Proposal. (See, *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.5(c)*.) Once the employees are given notice, they then have the option to submit recommendations and proposals affecting wages, hours, and terms or conditions of employment in an effort to meet the goals of competitive contracting.

A municipality must provide information regarding budgets and the costs of performing services by its own employees in order to assist the employees in demonstrating that keeping the services in-house can meet the same contract requirements as potential outside contractors.

If employees succeed in demonstrating that their recommendations will succeed, this can be grounds for your municipality to reject all vendor proposals. ❧

Read More About It!

Competitive Contracting, when used appropriately, provides Local Contracting Units with the flexibility to award contracts for certain specialized goods and services based on other factors besides price.

To learn more and access sample evaluation forms, resolution, and procedural insights check out the League of Municipalities’ publication, “Local Contracts Law Series #2: Primer on Competitive Contracting.”

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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A-1254/S-2128 **Prohibits State pension and annuity fund investments in fossil fuel companies.**

Status: Introduced and referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee. The Senate companion is proposed for introduction.

A-1245/S-2128 would prohibit the State's pension and annuity funds from investing in, and requires divestment from, the 200 largest publicly traded fossil fuel companies that hold the largest carbon content fossil fuel reserves. The State Investment Council and Director of the Division of Investment, in accordance with sound investment criteria and consistent with their fiduciary obligations, must take appropriate action to divest any stock, debt, or other security, whether owned directly or held through separate accounts or any commingled funds. Divestment must be completed by January 1, 2022, with the exception of companies engaged in mining, extraction, or production of coal, which must be divested within 24 months of enactment.

The bill permits the State Investment Council to stop divesting or begin reinvesting upon clear and convincing evidence showing that, as direct result of such divestment, the total and aggregate value of all assets in the pension and annuity funds become equal to or less than 99.5% or 100% less 50 basis points of the "hypothetical value of all assets in the pension fund. However, they must provide an annual written report to the Governor, Legislature, and Attorney General explaining the reasons and justifications.

Within 120 days of the effective date, the State Investment Council and Director must identify the fossil fuel companies which to divest from and provide such listing to the Governor, Legislature and Attorney General. This list must be annually updated and include all investments sold, redeemed, divested, or withdrawn in compliance of this law and all prohibited investments from which divestment has not happened. The report must also provide a description of the progress that the division has made since the last reporting.

The Carbon Underground 200™ compiles and maintains the Fossil Free Indexes which identifies the top 100 coal and the

top 100 oil and gas publicly traded reserve holders globally, ranked by the potential carbon emissions content of their reported reserves. One of the companies on the list is Exxon Mobile, one of the top holdings for Domestic Equity, according to the Division of Investment in its Investment Reporting Package period ending December 31, 2107.

We are concerned that this legislation will undermine the Division of Investments and create an environment wherein politics influences investments. This is counterproductive and places restrictions on prudent profitable investments. In fact, in its 2017 Annual Report, the New Jersey State Investment Council noted that, "divestitures pose three primary fiscal challenges to the Pension Fund: they require identification and sale of holdings on a timetable that may not consider market conditions; they impact risk and return for the Pension Fund; and they reduce the investment universe available to the Pension Fund. Collectively, the divestiture laws reduced the investment universe as of June 30, 2017, by approximately 1.5% in international markets and 1.9% in international emerging markets, relative to their respective benchmarks."

We have also requested a fiscal note for A-1245/S-2128 to determine the impact the bill would have on the pension funds. -LB

S-846/A-3549 **Weakened UEZ Bill Wins Senate Approval**

Status: Under consideration by the Assembly Commerce and Economic Development Committee

The Senate has approved a Committee Substitute for S-846, a weakened version of the bill that was originally intended to reauthorize and extend the life of Urban Enterprise Zones (UEZs) in qualifying municipalities.

The prior version of the bill, which was approved by the Senate Economic Growth Committee in January, would have extended the duration of each previously designated UEZ for 10 years beyond their current expiration date. It would also have reauthorized the UEZs in five municipalities, where the program sunset on January 1, 2017.

The substitute bill, which is now headed over to the General Assembly, reauthorizes the program in those five towns—Bridgeton, Camden, Newark, Plainfield, and Trenton—until September 30, 2019. The bill also directs the Urban Enterprise Zone Authority to conduct a study of the program. That study, including findings and recommendations, will need to be delivered to the Governor and the Legislature, before March of next year.

In order to qualify to host a UEZ, municipalities need to meet certain criteria. Those include chronically higher than average unemployment rates. Qualifying municipalities also have lower than average per capita and household incomes, and the vast majority of these towns are home to high percentages of tax exempt properties.

The UEZ Program offers incentives to participating businesses, designed to encourage business growth, provide jobs, and stimulate local economies.

Approximately 6,800 certified UEZ businesses participate and benefit from the advantages of the UEZ program statewide. To qualify for these advantages, a business must agree that 25% of its workforce will include either residents of the host municipality, or State residents who have been unemployed for at least a year.

This program is not a panacea. But it does prevent the loss of business to other states, provide jobs where they are needed most, and preserve ratables that help to fund basic services in qualifying municipalities.

Though we preferred the prior version of the bill, we support the Committee Substitute for S-846, which will likely join companion legislation, A-3549, for consideration by the Assembly Commerce and Economic Development Committee. Please ask your representatives in the General Assembly to support this effort. –JM



A-1644

Allows municipalities to establish affordable housing preference

Status: Introduced and referred to Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee

This bill would allow a municipality to enter into an agreement with the developer of a residential property to provide a preference for residents for up to 50% of the affordable housing units in a particular project.

Municipalities play an important role in helping to provide access to affordable housing. Often lifelong residents of a community are forced to uproot and move away from the area they have always lived in because the cost of

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Legislative Update

housing has become too much for them. This is especially true for elderly residents, whose incomes remain stagnant while the cost of housing continues to increase.

This bill provides a mechanism which empowers municipalities to act in a way to help residents remain in the town they have lived for so long by providing them with a better opportunity to obtain affordable housing within their hometown.

The League approves of this bill because it provides a solution to an important local issue. –FM

S-1150 **Requires** **hotel/multiple** **dwelling inspections** **every two years**

Status: Referred to Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee

This bill would increase the frequency of inspections under the “Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law” from once every five

years to once every two years.

While well intended, the increased frequency of inspections of hotel and multiple dwellings will create an increased burden on local officials while doing little to ensure compliance with current health and safety regulations. Rather than inspecting more frequently, resources would be better used on enforcement of already in place regulations.

Because of the increased burden this bill would place on municipal officials, with little to gain in return the League must respectfully oppose. –FM

A-2371 **Using 9-1-1** **Trust Funds for** **9-1-1 Purposes**

Status: Referred to the Assembly Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee

A-2371 requires that at least 10% of the “9-1-1 System and Emergency Response Trust Fund Account” funds are to be annually

appropriated for the purpose of paying for the costs of any annual upgrade and maintenance of 9-1-1 public safety answering point technology, including the upgrading and maintenance of automatic location identification technology.

In response to the rapid pace of change in communications technology and to the public’s embrace of the new technology, in 2000 the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) identified a need for Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1), which would allow the public to transmit text, images, video and data to a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and which could accommodate additional types of emergency communications and data transfer.

Text message technology may be the only safe way for some victims to communicate their danger to emergency dispatch. For a child hiding under a bed or in a closet, for a victim of human trafficking, or for a hearing-disabled individual witnessing a crime, fire or accident, text messaging can be a life-saver.

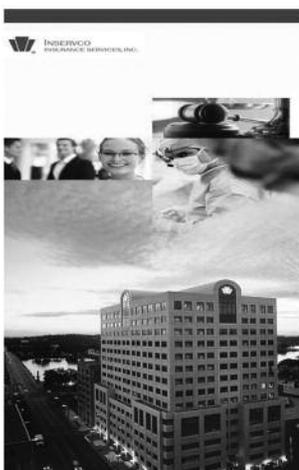
In order to finance the installation of new NG9-1-1 infrastructure over time and the training of PSAP operators, while properly maintaining current services in the interim, the Governor and the Legislature, in 2004 agreed to create the “911 System and Emergency Response Trust Fund” (the Trust Fund), to be funded by a monthly 90-cent fee on every land line and cell phone service. During the next few years, the Trust Fund provided over \$118 million, with over \$42 million of that dedicated to NG9-1-1 upgrades, and with more millions of dollars distributed, as grants, to municipal and county PSAPs that handle the vast majority of 911 calls.

But, beginning in 2009 and continuing since, State budget makers have diverted monies from the Trust Fund to finance other priorities, shortchanging callers who rely on, and local units that operate, the system.

We support A-2371. –JM 

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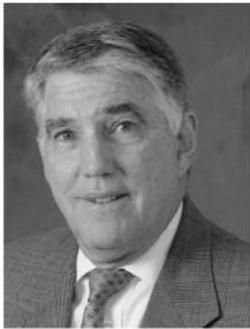
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