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Tourism's Recovery

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Preserving New Jersey's Past

How Heritage Tourism Sites Are Surviving the Pandemic

Dorothy Guzzo, Executive Director, New Jersey Historic Trust

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Are We There Yet? Are We There Yet?

The June issue marks the start of a summer break for *NJ Municipalities* magazine and all of our thoughts are turning to vacations. Of course, all of us parents have heard on long drives to summer destinations the words from the backseat, “Are we there yet?” and “How much longer?” Between the ebbing of pandemic fears and lifting of capacity limits, we are looking forward to venturing out to all of our favorite Garden State spots from the shore to the mountains. In doing so, we all may now be asking if we are indeed there yet or, maybe more appropriately, “when will we arrive?”

So, it’s only appropriate for the issue’s focus to be on the tourism industry...how they’ve managed through the crisis months, and how they’re moving forward.

Heritage tourism sites around the state faced a severe economic impact with closures, decreased volunteers, and school trips mothballed. Dorothy Guzzo, Executive Director of New Jersey Historic Trust, shares a rundown (page 6) of some of the innovative ways properties around the state preserved the past by utilizing the latest technology.

Vacation time is a critical time for many of New Jersey’s municipalities’ incomes for local governments and local businesses alike, and we salute their resilience. Places like Long Beach Island (page 24) and Monmouth County (page 28) revamped and stepped up their campaigns to create virtual visitor centers and welcome all by land and sea as restrictions are lifted.

This issue also shares a special message from Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver (page 16) about the State of New Jersey’s newest

official holiday: Juneteenth. Celebrated on June 19th, Juneteenth marks a day of liberation of the African American people from slavery in our country. Lt. Gov. Oliver encourages municipalities to embrace the day with, “activities in your communities such as exhibits, speaker series and educational events, arts and literature readings, as well as various family activities. Some traditions have included reading the Emancipation Proclamation, singing, brass bands, and athletic events.” We look forward to celebrating that day this month and for years to come.

But it won’t be all be fun and vacation planning here at the League this summer. We’re ramping up for the 106th Annual League Conference; and while it’s early to pack our bags for Atlantic City, we are well into our planning. Please check out our Conference Preview on page 45 for a rundown of a revamped session schedule, enhanced safety considerations, and the first look at an ever-growing list of exhibitors.

We are always proud of the League Conference, but this year we are genuinely delighted at the thought of seeing you all again, safely, in person. While the summer will be fun, the thought of gathering together again certainly makes us look forward to the fall.

We look forward to providing you with more Conference information at our new and improved Conference website, www.njlm.org/conference and in our October and November issues.

We wish you a safe, enjoyable, and prosperous summer! We also look forward to seeing old and new friends again in November and when we can say, “Oh yeah, we’re here!” 🍷

Michael Cerra

“We are always proud of the League Conference, but this year we are genuinely delighted at the thought of seeing you all again, safely, in person.”

P.S. Please join us this month at the Online Mini Conference. Visit www.njlm.org/miniconference for more information.

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Preserving New Jersey's Past

How heritage tourism sites are surviving the pandemic

DOROTHY GUZZO, *Executive Director, New Jersey Historic Trust*

New Jersey has a rich and diverse history that includes Native American archaeological sites, agricultural and industrial buildings, three centuries of residential buildings, schools and halls, parks and theaters, and much more. Key to sustaining this landscape is heritage tourism which is, according to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present, including cultural, historic, and natural resources. Most, if not all, of these sites had to shutter their doors at the onset of the pandemic.

Entry fees, ticket sales for historic tours, gift shops sales, and private events, which sustain these historical destinations, came to a halt, resulting in a severe economic impact on the heritage tourism economy. Also, volunteer staffing, which is often made up of older, retired people, took a hard hit during the pandemic since this segment of the population is the most vulnerable to COVID-19. Additionally, schools were either fully virtual or hybrid, which prevented in-person school trips, eliminating a major segment of visitors.

Throughout the pandemic and the challenges it presents, historic sites have had to get more creative to maintain operations and ensure these historic destinations remain a vital part of our communities and economy. Many of these

sites throughout the state were able to adopt new methods to deliver rich content and implement alternative programming. While not a substitute for in-person visits, these options helped to maintain a captive audience during COVID-19.

Shown above: **The Emlen Physick Estate** was built in 1879 by Emlen Physick, the grandson of Dr. Philip Syng Physick who is regarded as the father of American surgery. The house was designed by renowned Victorian architect Frank Furness and considered rather avant-garde for the time period. New Jersey Historic Trust grants helped fund the preparation of construction drawings and specifications for the installation of a geothermal heating and cooling system, landscape restoration, and the preparation of a detailed study and schematic plans for a new HVAC system.



UpFront: Preserving NJ's Past



The Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms is a 30-acre National Historic Landmark and the 1911 estate of Gustave Stickley, a leader of the American Arts and Crafts Movement and pioneer of "mission" or "Craftsman" furniture. New Jersey Historic Trust grants helped fund the preparation of a Historic Structure Report, a capital restoration of the main Log House and the White Cottage, a comprehensive Site Master Plan, and interpretive wayfinding signage.

Museum of Early Trades and Crafts (METC)

In the Borough of Madison, the Museum of Early Trades and Crafts (METC), owned by the Borough, adapted many of its existing programs to a digital platform in late April 2020 in lieu of their in-person educational events.

The museum touts a collection of hand

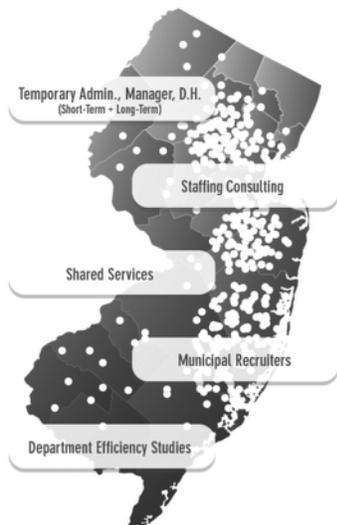
tools and artifacts of the pre-industrial age that has been supplemented over the years by gifts from the public, and now consists of over 8,800 artifacts related to 21 different trades. METC's Education Department offers virtual field trips and digital content for schools, providing either live or pre-recorded programs through a number of local area libraries, offered engagement to residents of

several senior living facilities, and offered programming for local access television stations about the preservation and interpretation of the tools used before the rise of industrialization in the United States.

The Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms

The Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms is an early 20th century estate owned by the Township of Parsippany-Troy Hill, which preserves, interprets, and makes relevant the legacy and ideals of Gustav Stickley and the American Arts and Crafts movement.

To keep visitors engaged, the museum hosted a series of virtual events, including a lecture series offered to the public relying on their in-house curator to research, prepare and present the lectures. The series generated weekly audiences of up to 100 participants, attracting new members, and, depending on the subject, attendees from across the country and Canada.



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The Dey Mansion

Currently under the direction of the Passaic County Board of County Commissioners, the Dey Mansion served as General George Washington's Headquarters during the summer and fall of 1780.

The staff at Dey Mansion are dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of the Dey Family. Their work promotes the exploration of life in Colonial America and the events and people of the American Revolution. Due to COVID-19, many of their events were moved online including an online lecture series and one-hour virtual meditation sessions known as "Meditation at the Mansion."

Millville Army Airfield Museum

The Millville Army Airfield Museum, which is co-owned by the City of Millville and the Delaware River and Bay Authority, displays an extensive collection of artifacts and airfield data found in underground bunkers and from the surrounding community and the community of veterans who served at the Millville Army Air Field. Museum staff created virtual movie nights and a veteran speaker series to engage visitors.

Montclair History Center

Made up of four historic homes in Montclair, the Montclair History Center serves the public as a historic house museum, museum shop and space for demonstrations, lectures and classes interpreting Montclair's past. The Center was very successful in implementing virtual programming during the pandemic, also known as their "Digital Silver Lining."

Despite COVID, many of the Center's programs were able to be moved online using the Zoom and YouTube platforms for visitors to enjoy the sessions at no cost. A survey of these viewers conducted by the Center demonstrated that there was representation from different towns, states, and even countries.

Morris Museum in Morristown

The Morris Museum in Morristown is the only accredited museum in the United States with a fully rigged proscenium theatre. It integrates the performing arts into its museum programming. The museum was able to adapt an empty elevated parking garage and started to offer concerts on what is called the "the back deck," which attracted many people because they could be outdoors, and even stay in their

cars. Patrons were able to bring their own chairs and refreshments and make an evening of the occasion.

Reeve History and Cultural Center

The Reeve History and Cultural Center, owned by the Township of Westfield and built in 1870, is an Italianate-style structure that houses a museum, hosts events, and features permanent and changing exhibits throughout the year.

The Center created "First Wednesday Luncheons" where attendees can lunch together virtually and learn about various histories.

Perkins Center for the Arts

The Perkins Center for the Arts, owned by the Township of Moorestown, created online virtual art galleries and interactive exhibits, as well as online art classes to continue to enrich lives, inspire learning, collaboration, interdisciplinary and intercultural experiences through the arts.

Opening up

As things get better, historic destinations will continue to open, so there are glimmers of hope. In March 2021, daily tours and trolley tours resumed at the MidAtlantic Center for the Arts Physick Estate, owned by the City of Cape May, where visitors now have an opportunity to go back in time to the Victorian era through architecture, decorative arts, customs, and the lives of the Cape May Physicks family.

Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty Museum have reopened with restrictions and established procedures to safeguard visitors and employees.

In a post COVID-19 future, the one constant is history, and its ability to engage, inform, and excite all sectors of the population. 🇺🇸

Addressing Needs During Pandemic

As the primary funder of capital preservation, the Trust has prioritized addressing the critical institutional needs of New Jersey's history community amid the ongoing financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the sites mentioned have relied on Trust funding to preserve and enhance their properties for many generations to come.

To address the impacts of the pandemic, two programs offered relief funding to help with these efforts. The New Jersey Historical Commission awarded one-time supplemental grants through a COVID-19 Grant Program to not only benefit historic organizations today but to create stronger and more viable institutions in a post-pandemic environment.

Additionally, the New Jersey Arts & Culture Recovery Fund (NJACRF), created by a coalition of private funders to ensure the strength and survival of the nonprofit arts, cultural and historical sector statewide, launched a second phase of grant funding to offset expenses incurred due to pandemic cancellations, reopen adaptations, and provide support for artists and sector professionals. In the first phase of funding, NJACRF awarded over \$2.6 million to 100 NJ-based nonprofits.

@ Created in 1967, the New Jersey Historic Trust advances historic preservation in New Jersey for the benefit of future generations through education, stewardship, and financial investment programs that save our heritage and strengthen our communities. For more information on the New Jersey Historic Trust, visit www.njht.org

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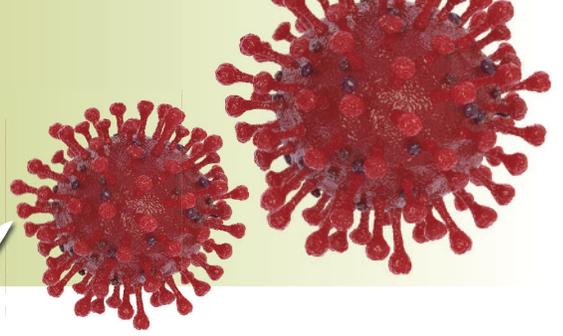
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COVID Recovery



Despite COVID-19, Flemington Attracts New Business

FLEMINGTON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP, FLEMINGTON

Despite challenges presented by COVID-19, the historic Borough of Flemington announced that 18 retail businesses (14 exclusively local) opened in the 1-square-mile borough between 2020 and today. The community, the historic seat of Hunterdon County and home to more than 400 businesses, led a unified effort to support local businesses during the pandemic. Retaining local business and assisting new businesses with opportunities was a team effort.

Flemington Mayor Betsy Driver lauded the resiliency of Flemington's businesses during the public health crisis—a strength that speaks to the borough's potential for future business growth. The community, approximately 60 miles southwest of New York City in central New Jersey, is experiencing sustained small-business growth, as sought-after shops and restaurants open in diverse core business areas. In addition, the borough has seen robust interest in redevelopment.

"Our historic Central Jersey community swiftly adapted to new market conditions, pursuing an active, 'open for business' plan," said Driver. "We continue to explore ideas of how to promote and support our local businesses, focusing on our many boutiques, cafes and other shops, and pursuing the larger, long-term, community-appropriate redevelopment and revitalization."

According to the BID Executive Director, Robin Lapidus, providing material and promotional assets and information about grants and loans to the borough's businesses helped allow them to focus on changing their business models. The FCP [Flemington Community Partnership] restructured its year-out communication plans targeted at attracting visiting consumers to a hyper-local campaign that communicated the basics on "how to access and support local business." This outlined all the shifts—from online, curbside, and take-out, to walk-in and dine-out and in—as restrictions changed.

"The pandemic renewed interest in consuming close to home and awakened everyone to the absolute need to support local businesses or see them perish," Lapidus added.

Dave Norton, co-owner of a new Main Street business, said, "We were working from home when the space we always admired opened up on Main Street and we fast-tracked our dream to open The Corner, a retail store and photography studio, in January 2021."



Ally and Dave Norton, co-owners of The Corner.

The Corner co-owner, Ally Norton, added, "We felt encouraged by local civic leaders, the FCP, and other neighboring businesses. We live a short walk from The Corner and plan to remain here as our family, our business, and the community grows. We feel really strongly that Flemington is our home, and we are committed to investing in it to continue to make it a lively and thriving town."

Paul Marciano, chair of the FCP board and author of *Let's Talk About It: Turning Confrontation into Collaboration at Work*, said, "We hope that the momentum of our community planning and constructive dialogue about the future will attract new neighbors and business owners desiring to build an equitable and creative community in Flemington Borough. Our historic borough in the heart of Central New Jersey, with our small-town feel, is ripe with opportunities to become a highly desirable walkable, authentic and beautiful place to live, work, play, and create."



Robin Lapidus,
BID Executive Director



Betsy Driver,
Mayor, Flemington

Open for Business

New or expanding businesses in Flemington include:

- **39 Mine Boutique** – expanded into a new, larger location
- **Act II** – expanded into a new, larger location
- **Action Bid or Buy**
- **Chirp Workshop** – new ownership
- **The Corner** (new in January 2021)
- **Dream Cakes**
- **Echelon Studio** – purchased building & expanded to larger location
- **Honor Yoga Flemington**
- **Insightfulspace.com**
- **Koros Wargames**
- **Kyle Cook Real Estate**
- **Lash Lounge**
- **The Men's Salon at Flemington**
- **Nature's EnerQi**
- **Premiere Waxing Boutique**
- **Slim Chickens**
- **Stork's NEST European Deli**
- **Theresa's Café** – New Ownership!

Flemington recently hired urban development experts, Stantec's Urban Places, to gather extensive community input, revitalize several core business districts, and improve overall walkability and livability. The project is funded by the November 2019 Opportunity Zone grant award of \$100,000 from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA). Flemington was one of just five recipients of the NJEDA grant, and New Jersey's only rural community.

The borough is well-positioned to offer a vibrant downtown that addresses emerging real estate trends. Jeff Sauser, senior associate and urban planner at Stantec, added, "We are going through a dramatic shift. Singles and couples without children will make up the majority of new homeowners. They'll be looking to settle in communities that are walkable, with downtowns that offer amenities such as coffee shops, restaurants, and outdoor cafes."

This planning initiative is being led by Flemington's mayor and council, the FCP, the Hunterdon County Chamber of

Commerce, and the Hunterdon County Office of Economic Development.

Flemington-based developer Jack Cust also recently began façade restoration for the borough's famed 15-room Union Hotel (circa 1814), along with the redevelopment of Courthouse Square (to house 200-plus residential units and 20,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space and an outdoor plaza). Additionally, the 162,000-square-foot and formerly highly trafficked Liberty Village, notably America's first outlet mall, also awaits future redevelopment as new owners seek community input on future use.

Said Lapidus, "We plan to continue Flemington's history of innovation—in agriculture, commerce, crafts, railways, commerce, and more—in our pursuit of placemaking, community building, and sustainable growth for the future." 🇯🇵

@ For more information about the Flemington Community Partnership, visit: www.loveflemington.com.

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NJ League of Municipalities Educational Foundation Partners with Walmart

Grants to address educational connectivity issues and encourage partnerships

The last year has challenged us all in ways we may not have imagined. Our return to normal will force us to confront the status quo and how local governments do business. It'll be a challenge that local officials and the League will meet head on, and it offers an opportunity for the New Jersey League of Municipalities' Educational Foundation (NJLMEF).

The NJLMEF will look to help local governments and their officials navigate the post-COVID recovery. Its first steps were taken this spring thanks to a generous donation from Walmart. A supporter of the League Foundation, Walmart has provided funding that supports the small grants program from Sustainable Jersey. Demonstrating its continued commitment to the state of New Jersey and its local governments, Walmart has provided a grant of \$100,000 to the League Foundation to help address educational connectivity issues. In an effort to reach this objective, the foundation requested joint proposals from municipalities and school districts. The initiative's intent was to bring these two vital divisions of government together in the hope of forming a more powerful solution to this widespread issue.

"Walmart has a longstanding commitment to supporting the League Foundation's efforts throughout New Jersey," explains Jennifer Hoehn, director, Public Affairs and Government Relations for New Jersey. "This \$100,000 grant will help the League

address the ongoing challenge of school connectivity, with an emphasis on virtual instruction. It's an issue with potentially serious negative implications for education across the state, and we're proud to support the League in seeking solutions."

"The NJLMEF appreciates Walmart's ongoing partnership and looks forward to seeing the successful implementation of improvements in communities all around the state resulting from this generous grant program," said Foundation president Mayor Timothy McDonough of Hope Township.

For more information on the initial round of grants, please see the Local Governing column in the May issue of *NJ Municipalities*.

We hope that this program and the initial round of awards is the first step in an active role for the NJLMEF as we move into the second half of 2021 and look forward to recovery. Please keep an eye out for our publications, programs, and other grants initiatives in the months and years ahead.

The NJLMEF is an informational resource for local government that offers timely research and a proactive approach to resolving the complex issues affecting New Jersey's diverse communities. It brings together municipal officials, academics, government officials, business leaders, and other stakeholders to share their visions and hopes for the future of public policy as well as their solutions to the compelling issues facing the state.

Selection Criteria

The foundation requested proposals to address internet connectivity challenges related to virtual/distance learning.

These included:

- Remote learning from school buildings with connectivity issues.
- Limited internet access among students and faculty in particular school locations.
- Shortage of necessary devices to access web-based services.

Priority was given to applicants who have a definable need and who demonstrate a partnership between the school districts and municipal officials. 📍

NJLM Events

JUNE

June 15-17

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Webinar—Your Computer

Visit www.njlm.org/seminars or contact Danielle Holland-Httut at dholland@njlm.org or 609-695-3481, Ext. 118.

▶ UPDATE



ADDRESSING THE PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Over a year has passed since the beginning of the pandemic. The MEL and its 19 affiliated joint insurance funds immediately went into action to help members meet this crisis.

- CLAIMS** ▶ MEL members have reported \$20 million in COVID-19 related Workers Compensation claims. This will not impact member budgets because the cost will be paid by a combination of excess insurance and surplus.
- MEMBER MUNICIPAL BONDS** ▶ The Governor's Office requested the MEL to help solve the municipal bond crisis that emerged at the beginning of the pandemic. Within a week, the MEL Joint Cash Management and Investment Pool started purchasing debt securities issued by member municipalities and authorities – \$135 million to date. The MEL's quick response stabilized this market.
- SAFETY** ▶ When classroom safety training was suspended, the MEL offered its programs on line. As a result, attendance at safety courses actually increased 16%. In 2020, the accident rate was reduced 20% and the MEL reported the lowest accident rate since it started to keep records 30 years ago.
- CYBER** ▶ The pandemic increased local government vulnerability to cyber attack. To address this issue, the MEL released an enhanced Cyber Risk Management program that is available on its website.
- COVID RESOURCE CENTER** ▶ Many additional questions have arisen concerning COVID related safety and personnel procedures. The MEL Fund Attorney and Safety Director drafted numerous model policies and procedures that were placed on the MEL website.

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Kean University Hosts Watson Institute, NJ Urban Mayors

Kean University announced the establishment of a new John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research to focus on research and practical, achievable solutions that will improve the lives of people living in urban communities.

which is now affiliated with the University and includes mayors from 32 urban centers across the state. The association works with state and federal agencies, lawmakers and nongovernmental and community-based organizations to develop and advance progressive and effective public policy for urban communities.

The new Institute will work closely with the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA),

Kean Vice President Barbara George Johnson, brings more than 25 years of experience as a public policy professional and will head the Institute under the leadership of Kean Senior Vice President for External Affairs Joseph Youngblood, Ph.D., a seasoned academic and higher education executive with policy expertise who is also joining Kean.

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NJ's Municipalities Celebrate Local Government Week



In the face of ongoing demands and pressures from the year-plus of pandemic stress, New Jersey's Municipalities never stopped reaching out to help their citizens live their best lives in tough conditions. Some of those efforts were celebrated during Local Government Week, held this April.

The following images feature communities that held events around the state shared with the League through event forms and social media. We thank all municipalities for their hard work and look forward to Local Government Week 2022, April 3-9.



1



2



3



4

1 A walk with Mayor Jackie Veasy in Evesham; **2** the library staff in Bloomfield Township; **3** local government celebrates a new business opening in Toms River; **4** the Morris Minute Men EMS team shares information with residents of Morris Township and Morris Plains.

2021 MUNICIPAL DIRECTORY UPDATES

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Bethlehem Township

Administrator: Walter F. Baumgarten (interim)

Bloomfield Township

Administrator: Anthony G. Dezenzo (acting)

Brielle Borough

Administrator: Thomas F. Nolan

Burlington City

Administrator: David Ballard

Byram Township

Manager: Joseph W. Sabatini

Califon Borough

Administrator: Laura Eidsvaag

Camden City

Mayor: Victor Carstarphen

Chester Borough

Administrator: Margaret Nordstrom

Clinton Town

Administrator: Richard Phelan

Cranford Township

Administrator: Jamie Cryan

Dennis Township

Administrator: Jessica Bishop

East Orange City

Administrator: Solomon Steplight

Edgewater Borough

Administrator: Gregory S. Franz

Edison Township

Administrator: Maureen Ruane

Elizabeth City

Administrator: Bridget S. Anderson

Ewing Township

Administrator: James P. McManimon

Fair Lawn Borough

Manager: James Van Kruiningen

Franklin Lakes Borough

Administrator: Gregory C. Hart

Franklin Township (Gloucester)

Administrator: John Salvatore

Galloway Township

Manager: Christian Johansen

Haddonfield Borough

Administrator: Sharon McCullough

Helmetta Borough

Administrator: Matthew Crane

Interlaken Borough

Administrator: Lori Reibrich

Mansfield Township (Burlington)

Administrator: Michael Fitzpatrick

Montague Township

Administrator: No position

Montgomery Township

Administrator: Donato Nieman

Moonachie Borough

Administrator: Anthony Ciannamea

Moorestown Township

Manager: Thomas J. Merchel

Mount Olive Township

Administrator: Andrew Tatarenko

Netcong Borough

Administrator: Ralph Blakeslee

New Hanover Township

Administrator: Donna Mull

Newark City

Administrator: Eric S. Pennington

Pemberton Township

Administrator: Daniel Hornickel

Pennington Borough

Administrator: Eileen Heinzl

Penns Grove Borough

Administrator: Sean Brown

Port Republic City

Administrator: No position

Rahway City

Administrator: Robert Landolfi

River Vale Township

Administrator: Gennaro Rotella

Rockaway Township

Administrator: Patricia Seger

Roseland Borough

Administrator: Maureen Chumacas

Rumson Borough

Administrator: Thomas S. Rogers

Rutherford Borough

Administrator: Robert Kakoleski

Saddle Brook Township

Administrator: Peter Lo Dico

Sea Isle City

Administrator: George Savastano

Seaside Heights Borough

Administrator: Christopher Vaz

Sparta Township

Manager: Neil Spidaletto (interim)

Stillwater Township

Administrator: No position

Stratford Borough

Administrator: John Keenan Jr. (acting)

Municipal Clerk: Bill Bray, billbray@stratfordnj.org

Summit City

Administrator: Michael F. Rogers

Tinton Falls Borough

Administrator: Thomas Fallon (interim)

Union Township (Union)

Administrator: Don Travisano

Vineland City

Administrator: Robert E. Dickenson Jr.

Waldwick Borough

Administrator: Patrick C. Wherry

Warren Township (Somerset)

Administrator: Mark M. Krane

Washington Borough

Manager: Matthew C. Hall

Washington Township (Warren)

Administrator: Peter H. deBoer Jr.

West Caldwell Township

Administrator: Nikole H. Baltycki

West Windsor Township

Administrator: Marlena Schmid

Wharton Borough

Administrator: Jon Rheinhardt

Wildwood Crest Borough

Administrator: Constance Mahon

Wood-Ridge Borough

Administrator: Christopher W. Eilert

Woodstown Borough

Legal: Joseph DiNicola Jr.

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Celebrating Juneteenth

A day of liberation and freedom

LT. GOVERNOR SHEILA Y. OLIVER, *Commissioner, NJ Department of Community Affairs*

As New Jerseyans prepare to celebrate Juneteenth as an official State holiday for the first time this year, many people are just becoming familiar with its meaning and cultural, historical, and societal significance. Juneteenth has for centuries been known as a day of liberation that marks the freedom of the African American people from slavery in our country. While President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, it was not until 1865 that many slaves knew that they were able to leave their lives of forced servitude and live freely in society.

It was on June 19, 1865 that Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, with the news that the Civil War had ended and enslaved people were free. It is the oldest-known celebration in our country marking the end of slavery. It signified that enslaved people could finally go about creating a life for themselves and their families. Many spent years seeking to reunite with family members from whom they were separated. The purpose of Juneteenth is for us to collectively understand the trauma and struggles that our forebears and ancestors endured and to remind us of the journey that they took to bring us to where we are today.

But I am not quite prepared yet to call Juneteenth the day that celebrates the freedom of African American people. Because we will not be truly free until we can celebrate economic, educational, and political freedom as well as freedom from the unjust and unequal laws and policies that hold back our communities of color.

Fortunately, we are blessed in New Jersey to have a Governor, who long before the Black Lives Matter movement took hold and long before he was our Governor, knew and understood our historical struggles. Governor Murphy has followed through with reforming and supporting the core issues that affect communities of color: environmental justice, criminal justice reforms, elevating the minimum wage, funding early childhood education, and improving Black maternal fetal health. His agenda has clung on to the things that are representative of freedom for people of color.

So when Governor Murphy signed into law a bill that established Juneteenth as an official State holiday last year, it was a pledge that all residents of New Jersey would stand alongside our communities of color in the fight for freedom. And it was an affirmation to the African American community that we do not stand alone and we are all in this together.

Now, Juneteenth will forever be observed and celebrated so that we can collectively reflect upon the indelible mark that slavery has left on our country as we fight for meaningful reforms.

Municipal leaders may be wondering how they can celebrate

Juneteenth in their communities. First and foremost, the focus of the holiday is to shine a spotlight on the humanitarian, cultural, innovative, and educational contributions made by the African American Community. It is also to highlight the accomplishments of everyday unsung heroes, as well as prominent African Americans in our nation.

You can encourage activities in your communities such as exhibits, speaker series and educational events, arts and literature readings, as well as various family activities. Some traditions have included reading the Emancipation Proclamation, singing, brass bands, and athletic events. Some people follow the traditions of drinking red soda or eating red velvet cake, signifying the luxuries that enslaved people could not afford and the color red representing perseverance and struggle. The colors of Juneteenth are red, white, and blue, which symbolize the American Flag and reinforce the fact that enslaved Americans who descended from Africa are Americans.

Local governments can also help promote the new holiday by passing a resolution or proclamation at the county or municipal level officially recognizing Juneteenth as a holiday.

While some of the Juneteenth activities may change due to COVID-19 this year, we can still continue with virtual forums and educational activities that celebrate, honor, and empower the African American Community.

I urge local government leaders to fully embrace and encourage these activities in their towns and cities to give people the opportunity to authentically celebrate their cultural heritage and publicly revel in the true meaning of the holiday for the first time in New Jersey.

No matter how we choose to celebrate, Juneteenth will forever be a day we can come together in New Jersey to collectively understand the true meaning of freedom in this nation and to acknowledge that our fight for freedom, equality, and justice still continues.

In the words of human rights activist and leader Coretta Scott King, “Struggle is a never-ending process. Freedom is never really won, you earn it and win it in every generation.” 

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Fight Lead Poisoning, Removing Lead Service Lines

GARY SCHAER, *Assemblyman, District 36*

Every year, New Jersey records 4,500 new cases of childhood lead poisoning. Allowing this cumulative toxin to cause permanent harm generation after generation is a compounding legislative and policy failure. Lead pipes connecting homes and businesses to water mains (lead service lines) continue to be a major cause of this silent epidemic. New Jersey's estimated 350,00 lead service lines currently expose 1.4 million New Jersey residents to water systems with elevated and dangerous levels of lead.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, lead was ubiquitous in American life. Lead was used to build our water infrastructure, added to paint, and included in gasoline. Studies on children aged 1-5 years old concluded that between 1976 and 1980, 99.8% of children had a blood lead level greater than 5 micrograms per deciliter, averaging 15.2 mcg/dL. Current health standards use 5 mcg/dL as a high-risk threshold when diagnosing children. Beginning in the 1970s federal policy began to eliminate lead paint and leaded gasoline, drastically reducing childhood lead poisoning. Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act passed in 1986, ending the practice of using lead in new service lines but failed to address existing lead contamination.

For decades we have understood the harmful effects of lead poisoning on children: brain and nervous system damage that can irreversibly lower a child's IQ, compromised growth and development, and learning and behavioral problems. All lead exposure inflicts life-long and catastrophic damage to a developing child. At high levels, lead poisoning can lead to seizures, coma, and death. Compelling evidence suggests that as lead exposed children mature, the effects of prolonged lead exposure to the brain manifests in various antisocial behaviors.

Due to aging infrastructure and community segregation, lead service lines are disproportionately concentrated in struggling urban centers and communities of color. The racial disparities in lead poisoning are an urgent public health crisis that has reverberations throughout New Jersey. Throughout our State, public policy experts must confront the impact of lead contamination in minority communities and recognize its universal harm. Overcoming the inequalities in our infrastructure is not

a zero-sum endeavor. The consequences of inaction are not limited to individuals but have repercussions that affect us all, no matter where we live. Government inaction today increases the cost of future services to these individuals affected by lead at an early age. Inertia costs every taxpayer a lifetime of health-care, behavioral, and special education costs, along with lifetime earning losses for every case of childhood lead poisoning.

As an additional benefit, large-scale lead abatement efforts will create new jobs and help repair our State's aging infrastructure. For every dollar invested removing and replacing lead pipes, an estimated \$17 is gained in economic development and growth.

In 2018, I wrote legislation to end lead contamination in our water, and I have since reintroduced a revised version (Assembly Bill A-5343). Since then, on March 25, with Assembly Speaker Coughlin's welcomed support, it was passed by the New Jersey General Assembly, bringing us closer to a lead-free future. We await the bill's passage in the New Jersey Senate as the next step in making this monumental change a reality. From there the bill will go to the Governor's desk for his signature and support.

Through this legislation, public water systems (PWS) will be required to create an initial inventory of their lead service lines within 60 days of this legislation being enacted, with a more detailed inventory completed after 12 months. The bill mandates that all systems both commercial and public inform customers within 30 days of the initial inventory—providing information concerning health effects and directives to reduce exposure. Under the bill, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will then oversee a 10-year replacement schedule, requiring that each PWS replace a minimum of 10% of its lead service lines each year. At the discretion of the New Jersey DEP, a water system may apply for a 5-year extension provided it demonstrates that the additional time is necessary. The estimated cost of such a transformational undertaking is \$2.65 billion, \$265 million per year, bringing needed economic stimulus and new jobs to our working families for the next decade.

Through this landmark legislation, we will eliminate lead contamination in New Jersey's water. Ending the childhood lead epidemic in New Jersey is not insurmountable; it is achievable. Allowing every child to develop and grow without the threat of an unseen contamination is long overdue. 🇯🇵



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Immigrants are Public Health Heroes: How Jersey City became a model for integration during the COVID-19 pandemic

STEVEN M. FULOP, *Mayor, City of Jersey City; Member, NJLM Executive Board*

As the most diverse city in the entire nation, Jersey City is not only unique, but we are also serving as a model to help other cities and towns appreciate immigrants the way Jersey City does—as public health heroes.

Health, not politics

In 2018, I chose to close my own mayoral office for immigration services. With the support of the City Council, we created a Division of Immigrant Affairs. In breaking with tradition, we didn't keep immigrants in the political realm, but rather, we put Immigrant Affairs within the Department of Health and Human Services.

Too often, immigrants are the subject of partisan debates while their roles within our interdependent communities are overlooked. Immigrants aren't enemies to be scrutinized and detained. They're allies, ready to work for the common good.

"Public health isn't just diet and exercise—it's social and economic, income, education, access to services," explains HHS Director Stacey Lea Flanagan. "The pandemic has not only shown us that immigrants are overexposed and underserved, but it has also brought to light just how those health disparities are devastating for all of us."

More than half of Jersey City's frontline workers are immigrants and one-third of our immigrants are undocumented, which means they're excluded from social safety nets and a host of relief programs. There are even more immigrant groups—people with lawful status—who are also left out. This is just as unfair as it is a terrible health policy putting everyone at risk.

The COVID-19 virus doesn't discriminate based on immigration status, so our health strategies shouldn't either.

Relationships & trust

Jersey City's response to the pandemic has been one of the most impressive mobilizations of local government and community I've ever seen. We launched our own testing sites, contracted local restaurants for emergency meals, deployed neighborhood contact tracers and health educators, made sure every resident has PPE, and we now have more vaccination sites than any other city in the state.

Enlisting immigrants as partners in these pandemic responses has made all the difference—but it isn't always easy.

"It's all about relationships and trust," says Jersey City's Immigrant Affairs Director, Mike McLean. "Most immigrants don't see the difference between municipal and federal government, so we have to go above and beyond to show that we're the helping hands, not deportation enforcement."

Integrating immigrants improves the local economy, strengthens the social fabric of our communities, and protects the health of all.

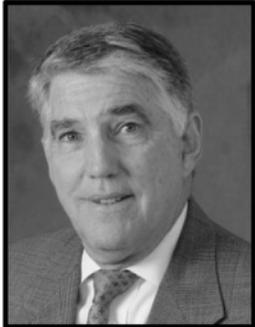
The message of trust is important, but having a trusted messenger to deliver it is even more essential. The Partnership for a Healthier Jersey City unites hundreds of community groups to take action for public health, and they give us the communications reach when we need it most. We depend on immigrant leaders and community organizations in the Partnership to share life-saving information, co-sponsor testing events, and deliver aid.

The *New American Economy* recognized us as one of America's 12 best municipalities in integrating immigrants in pandemic relief. We were even able to hire refugee medical professionals to work our testing sites. Imagine, fleeing the frontlines of war to serve on the frontlines of the pandemic in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.

Beyond the pandemic

The pandemic is showing us how immigrants can be public health partners, and Jersey City is continuing its commitment to our newcomer neighbors by expanding immigration services.

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- Mayor Mary Jane Canose, Bernardville Borough

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In the same year Jersey City was named the nation's second-best city for integrating immigrants, we also became the first and only city in America to offer federally accredited immigration legal services. This means every Division of Immigrant Affairs staff person is an Accredited Representative authorized to help people apply for Green Cards and citizenship, and navigate some of the most difficult corridors of the immigration system.

"We help families with immigration applications that would normally cost thousands of dollars—and we do it all for free," says Immigrant Affairs staffer, Melad Latif, an Egyptian-American who made Jersey City his new home when he was just 15-years-old. "We also make sure residents get what they need—food, health screenings, English classes."

And that's not all. Just this month our City Clinic's Dr. Orlando Gonzalez was designated as a Civil Surgeon who can provide immigration medical exams for refugees and asylees seeking Green Cards. It's another big step for immigrants that we'll be providing for free. And—I'm sorry to brag again—Jersey City is the first city in the country to do it.

These kind of municipal investments in immigration services have ample returns. Newly naturalized citizens are much more likely to own homes and businesses. A more secure immigration status affords fuller employment. Integrating immigrants improves the local economy, strengthens the social fabric of our communities, and protects the health of all.

Jersey City is America's Golden Door, and we're living up to the name. We want to encourage all cities and towns across New Jersey and the United States, even those with few foreign-born residents: Invest in integration, make public health more inclusive, and welcome newcomers, regardless of their status. Immigrants are public health heroes, for the benefit of us all. 

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By Land & Sea

The Long Beach Island Region of the Jersey coast welcomes business

LORI PEPENELLA, CEO, Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce, Ship Bottom

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit over a year ago, the importance of travel and connection to spaces that meet safety comfort levels has been a top priority to businesses of every sector. The Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce operates destination management services on all levels from a fully staffed visitor center at the gateway of LBI, real time social media content on all platforms, weekly radio FM broadcasts, published travel guide, and a fully integrated website.

Last May the chamber chose National Tourism Week to introduce their Refresh initiative. This regional and detail-oriented approach was rolled out to their members with a call to action to participate in welcoming all by land and sea when restricted are lifted. The Refresh Initiative was structured with three parts:

- Updated COVID resources for members to stay on top of relief efforts.
- A Welcome Campaign playbook that featured new calls to action each week for businesses to have an opportunity to receive amplified outreach through digital marketing, earned, and social media. The campaign was analyzed each week to help stay current and responsive to consumer sentiment with new playbooks being sent directly to members to participate in the ongoing marketing. The chamber invited their EMS members and Downtown Driven Municipalities to have input in the campaign to raise awareness to their messaging as well.
- The third part was a May launch of a new destination website that houses tools, an interactive directory, and local insights. The main feature is our virtual visitor center that updates with the latest travel offers and digital guides. The visitLBIregion.com site provides “Find your Favorite” themed listings that direct visitors to business sites as well as calendars, beach information, even an online shipwreck guide.



Barnegat Lighthouse.
Image courtesy of Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce.



Beach Haven sunrise. Image courtesy of Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce.

Focus: By Land & Sea

at no cost. The collaboration will assist getting responses to job openings, and how to get trained so Southern Ocean County businesses are on the forefront of the next generation of hiring.

Saying I Do to wedding meeting

Long-term planning is key to our local businesses, with special events filling up

Eat, Drink, & Buy LBI

In November, the chamber launched the EAT, DRINK, & BUY LBI Region campaign. These digital guides feature the latest of seasonal travel information, insider tips, and local expert blogs. From cozy winter getaways, Valentine Dinners, and Finding Irish Flavors, to spring and summer planning are all part of holiday, winter and spring guides.

Summer 2021, a reintroduction of the Welcome by Land & Sea travel guide, will be housed as part of the ongoing marketing. The 2021 Land & Sea Passport Guide combines two popular publications into one pocket-friendly education and business piece, perfect for exploring the area with deeper dives through QR codes placed throughout the book. A digital, fully linked version is also available through the Virtual Visitor Center and can be shared on all devices. These marketing investments were made possible with funding by the NJ Division of Travel & Tourism through its Destination Marketing Organization grant program.

Staffing up

Currently, the organization is working on a daily basis to connect business members with the talent needed to staff and manage local operations. With the popular Southern Ocean Job Opps program, job listings are posted and seen by almost 2,700 potential job seekers. This year, the chamber has partnered with Ocean County College Career Services to bring the cutting edge of online hiring to the Long Beach Island region as well as the college's connections with high school, higher ed, and alumni candidates.

Launched this February, local employers were invited to explore the new digital platform through a webinar series that trains businesses to use this online service

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shoulder seasons. Though 2020 went through curbed gatherings, promotion has always continued. The Long Beach Island Region has hosted generations of celebrations, and since 2008 the Wedding Road Show & Party Planning tour has been the top resource for planning and booking local experts to make milestone occasions complete.

About the Chamber

The Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce works to create regional storytelling as it partners with businesses and nonprofits in Lacey Township, Ocean Township, Barnegat Township, Stafford Township, Eagleswood, Tuckerton, Little Egg Harbor, and all of Long Beach Island.

With strategic business support, marketing plans, and ongoing messaging, it has risen to the challenge of providing visitors with the right information for their travel plans. The region's 107-year-old chamber and its members were honored for rising to the challenges of 2020, especially those of small business. They were presented with a certificate from the Ocean County Board of Commissioners that cites that the organization developed a host of meaningful and beneficial programs, never losing hope, and always displaying resilience during these difficult times.

For more information on visiting, starting a business, or relocating to the Long Beach Island Region, go to the website www.visitLBregion.com, call 609-494-7211, or stop by their information window at 265 W. Ninth Street in Ship Bottom.



Summer fun on LBI.
Image courtesy of Fantasy Island.

As COVID-19 restrictions are still a concern, relying on established businesses and organizations is crucial to a successful event. As an accredited Destination Marketing Organization, we continue to bring much-needed, up-to-date information for all who are interested in scheduling an important event.

In the height of lock down the chamber pivoted from an in-person

event to a pre-produced virtual experience drawing in over 300 decisionmakers. An online event was held recently, where preregistered attendees gained access to a virtual party planning showroom with interactive classes, exhibit booths, schedules for in person appointments, one-on-one tours, and chances to win prizes from all vendors. 🇺🇸



Nautical history lives. Image courtesy of Tuckerton Seaport.



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Down the Shore

Monmouth County readies for influx of summer visitors

TOM ARNONE, *Commissioner Director, Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners; Liaison, Tourism Division of Monmouth County*



Sea Bright. Images courtesy of Michael Colarusso/Monmouth County Government

The summer season is on the horizon and for officials in Monmouth County, that means ensuring our shore towns and businesses are ready to safely welcome back our out-of-area visitors.

Tourism in Monmouth County is a \$2.6 billion industry and one of the top employers for our residents. Our small businesses, both seasonal and year-round, depend on the summer boost to get them through another year and we don't take that fact lightly. Unfortunately, we know how devastating a bad summer can be for our tourism industry and we want to do everything we can to support our businesses during this difficult time.

While we continue to deal with the ongoing health crisis as we enter our second summer season since it began, I can confidently say our tourism industry is more equipped and prepared, as we know more than we did last year, to welcome the influx of visitors in a safe manner. After all, Monmouth County sees 8 million visitors annually who are looking to relax and enjoy their weekend getaway or extended stay and we must be prepared for their arrival despite the circumstances.

My fellow Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners

and I assisted our businesses—including our tourism and hospitality businesses—in several ways, over the course of the last year. We knew immediately that our business owners needed our help not only to stay open, but to keep our residents employed and able to provide for their families.

Grant program

When Monmouth County received federal funding to assist those struggling amidst the pandemic, we decided to utilize our own consultants to coordinate a grant program for small businesses, aptly named the Monmouth County Economic Assistance Grant Program. As a result of our decision to keep the grant application process and distribution in house, I am proud to say the feedback we received included positive messages about quick turnaround times—something we knew was important. The quicker funding got into the hands of those who needed it, the quicker we assisted our businesses.



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Down the Shore

Since the start of the pandemic, Monmouth County has received over \$107 million in federal funding to assist towns and businesses, as well as address other needs as a result of the health crisis. To date, Monmouth County disbursed over \$45 million of that funding directly to small businesses and nonprofits. Should more funding become available, it will again be a priority to assist our small businesses.

On a smaller scale, but doing what we could at the time, my fellow Commissioners and I purchased thousands of takeout bags to give away for free to our restaurants that were forced to provide takeout at the start of the pandemic. While it was a small gesture, our businesses were extremely appreciative. I'm proud to say we have delivered over 40,000 takeout bags—for free—to over 150 restaurants and eateries in Monmouth County.

Pandemic summers

As we look ahead to the second summer season during the pandemic, I must take a moment to look back at last April. Just weeks into the pandemic and extremely uncertain of what the future summer would look like with social distancing, I knew it was important to



Asbury Park



Bradley Beach



Red Bank

get all of our shore mayors together on a series of conference calls to discuss and share ideas of how to open our beaches safely. I must say, we were unsure if we would be able to have our beaches open in time for Memorial Day, let alone at all, and our pre-summer phone calls were very effective in sharing ideas among towns on how to do so and do so safely at that.

All our beaches were open by the time summer rolled around and that was no easy feat. Each step of the way, our shore town mayors knew they could count on their partners at the county for any assistance they may have needed. I'm proud of their efforts, and the efforts put forth by the beach employees, lifeguards, law enforcement and public works employees who made sure visitors would be able to safely enjoy a day at the beach.

Our Tourism Division also put together a wonderful "Know Before You Go"



campaign that included a website with up-to-date information on how visitors could purchase beach badges and if beaches had reached a capacity limit for the day. Our mayors knew they could contact us any day of the week and we would make sure the website was updated. This helped reduce the number

of visitors who showed up to get onto a beach only to find out they could not. We also followed up with the Know Before You Go campaign with numerous radio and print ads, as well as social media. The county also just finished a Keep Monmouth Safe campaign, where a video production team filmed interviews

with businesses that posted messages at their establishment regarding social distancing, mask mandates and the over all promotion of good hygiene. We complemented these videos with the same messaging on numerous billboards throughout the County. Our intent was to let our business community know we support them and the restrictions they are required to do per the State.

Summer 2021 is already looking like it will be a good one, with the rental market already full of bookings by people who are looking to getaway in Monmouth County. Our hotels and bed-and-breakfast resorts are also ready. Our restaurants are ready. Monmouth County is ready to make sure our visitors know we—and the businesses—are doing everything to ensure a safe and happy summer. 🇺🇸

@ To learn more about Monmouth County tourism, visit our newly updated tourism website, www.tourism.visitmonmouth.com

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Recreation & COVID

The profession's response to COVID-19 has been essential, exceptional, and extraordinary

JUDITH LEBLEIN JOSEPHS, *CPRP, RA, Past-President, New Jersey Recreation and Park Association; President, JLJ Enterprises LLC*

Filling the basic needs of their residents is steeped in the history of the recreation and park profession. Since the Industrial Revolution, parks, playgrounds, and recreation programs have served the public to provide social services, mental and physical health programs, childcare, and nutrition under the mantle of “fun.” Parks and recreation staff are participating members of most municipal OEM responses and COVID-19 response was no different.



Readington holiday hunt



Summit Community Center becomes Vaccination Center with Overlook Hospital. Photo Credit: City of Summit

Throughout New Jersey, local parks and recreation agencies responded to the basic needs of their citizens in ways that most of us never conceived. Reassignments tapped into the varied talents of recreation department staff members. Most challenged were our cities where COVID hot spots ravaged entire neighborhoods. Traditional recreation programs and athletics were put aside while cities filled the most crucial vital needs of their residents.

Securing the insecure

Ken Ortiz, Director of Human Services and Superintendent of Recreation in Perth Amboy and his staff never stopped working through the early days of the pandemic. They were immediately reassigned to help to provide food and

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Recreation & COVID

rental assistance. They staffed testing sites and a phone bank for social services, while other staffers delivered prescriptions to seniors.

They packed and distributed 175,000 boxes of food in the earlier days of the pandemic in all weather conditions. Programming took a back seat to these life-challenging needs. “I am extremely proud of our staff. Many are young, entry-level employees who showed an incredible passion to serve their community,” Ortiz said. “This commitment remains strong today!”

He added, “staff came to intimately understand the challenges of food insecurity when we made a food delivery to a home that had only had water for days. This furthered their resolve, and today we are a more well-rounded organization. We are more in tune with our community, and the community now knows why recreation is an essential service.”

The members of the department came to understand that moving forward their mission would be focused on residents’ mental and emotional health and providing them with healthy outlets with dignity and respect. As a result, Ortiz said, “the community saw us in a



Terrance the Turkey was hiding in Readington’s parks. Kids followed his trail for some outdoor fun with word scrambles for prizes. Families submitted photos.



Crystal Springs Staff Training – COVID style
Photo Credit: Mike Reissner, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks & Community Services, Township of East Brunswick

different light. It created an interest in the recreation profession and in the young employees of his department. They have seen that recreation is way more than they ever thought.”

This same experience was repeated around the state by agencies of all sizes. Reassignments to food banks, testing centers, phone banks, and senior citizen home visits became just a few of the meaningful roles filled by parks and recreation staff.

Re-imagining recreation

In Jersey City, Keith Donath, Division Director was reassigned to supervise a call center for addressing citizen concerns. “The call center grew quickly. What started as an outlet for COVID testing questions, became grief-ridden conversations and a kind person to listen as our residents faced unfathomable losses. We became counselors of sorts for a disease we knew truly little about at that time. Our challenge was keeping healthy and focused while working, finding people who were willing to take the risks of going to work and being concerned for our families and friends.”

From Summit to Clifton to Trenton, Newark and Orange, community centers morphed into food banks, lunch programs, testing centers and now vaccination sites. Parks and recreation staff played important roles as COVID Ambassadors at city halls, assisted with public information offices and internet communication.

Joe Napolitano, Camp Director, was one of Jersey City’s COVID Captains who was charged with making sure all services had the appropriate PPE needed for their tasks. Once parks could open,

Jersey City started with five parks, then nine, and then all were opened. “Our staff distributed over 6,000 masks, stationed at all of our park locations in all kinds of weather. Communication and education with the public was the key to compliance,” he said.

Lucinda McLaughlin, Department Director in Jersey City added, “Our staff performed and adapted every day. It was our time to engage in our community. We accomplished things when others said it couldn’t be done! We have proven

Building the Future

The experiences of Parks and Recreation departments around the state are expected to have long-lasting impacts. A positive result was the coordination and cooperation between communities. Keith Pressey, Recreation Superintendent from Orange, said he will “forever be grateful for the surrounding communities who shared information, answered questions and offered support to me and my staff, whenever called upon.”

Another good impact is the long-term bonds formed between parks and recreation departments and residents, Pressey added. “We came to understand that keeping people healthy during COVID-19 would enable them to enjoy the outdoors and recreation programs for the rest of their lives!”



Teen Park Clean Up Events got young people outdoors in a safe environment and fixing up parks. Photo Credit: Township of East Brunswick

ourselves as essential and residents have a newfound confidence and respect for our work.”

Patrick Council, City of Newark’s Director of the Department of Recreation, Cultural Affairs and Seniors faced some of the highest infection rates in the state and still managed to pack and serve over 5 million meals. “Balancing the health of the community while trying to provide healthy outlets for our residents was the greatest challenge. Looking down the road, we must recognize food insecurity and create smaller pockets of activities. We are looking at things now through a different lens, the COVID lens,” Council added.

Meaningful virtual experiences

Other recreation departments around the state provided meaningful virtual programs for children, teens, and families, providing emotional relief. From drive-in movies to virtual yoga, Readington’s holiday scavenger hunts, Westfield’s Camp in a Bag to East Brunswick’s Teen Park Clean Ups.

Amazing programs including Zoom social activities for seniors and special needs residents abounded. Mental Health Mondays, an online outreach program was created by Plainsboro Recreation in response to the growing concerns about mental and emotional

stability during this time.

There are positive outcomes from the pandemic that greatly affected parks and open spaces. New Jersey’s residents headed for the great outdoors in unprecedented numbers to soak up the solace that nature can provide. Parks professionals around the state had to adapt to the reduced capacities and increased maintenance, while balancing the health of their employees.

Len Celluro, President of the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association said, “he has never been prouder of the work of our membership. This time in our history has proven that we are not only essential, but we are exceptional and extraordinary!”

Judith Leblein Josephs, CPRP, RA, has had a 40-year career in the fields of parks, recreation, amusements, and aquatics. Recently retired from the City of Summit, she represented the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association in preparing their membership with COVID operations recommendations and protocols. She is an accomplished speaker, trainer, and author. jleblein@optonline.net

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Mayors Wellness Campaign

“Healthy Towns” respond to the pandemic

JULIE DESIMONE, *Program Officer, Mayors Wellness Campaign, New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute*

New Jersey communities, supported by the Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC), spent the last year responding to the emerging needs of residents throughout the pandemic. Communities addressed food insecurity, helped residents stay physically and mentally active, and supported COVID-19 efforts, such as keeping residents up to date with important information and supporting testing clinics.

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute has been leading the MWC in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities since 2006. The MWC recently recognized towns for their perseverance as they responded to the pandemic while also continuing to provide regular programming to improve overall health in their communities.

Eight communities participating in the MWC were named 2020 Healthy Towns: Asbury Park, Evesham Township, Montclair, Paterson, Plainfield, Scotch Plains, Wildwood Crest, and Woodbridge. Another nine towns were designated as 2020 Healthy Towns to Watch, and five were designated as 2020 Healthy Towns Up-and-Coming.

E-JIF Continues to Defend its Members in Passaic River II Litigation



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E-JIF provides the broadest pollution coverage available from any source to its 393 member local governments. Commercial insurers and many JIFs do not cover superfund pollution liability.

An excellent example of how E-JIF benefits its members is its response to ongoing litigation related to chemical plant pollution in Passaic and Essex Counties. Of special concern is dioxin used to manufacture Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Because of tidal movement, dioxin has also contaminated various areas of the river and the NJ/NY harbor.

In 2005, the New Jersey DEP sued Occidental Chemical to pay for the clean-up. Occidental then countersued numerous municipalities alleging that municipal storm water and discharge from sanitary processing plants contributed to the contamination. 32 of these municipalities are E-JIF members.

E-JIF took the following actions to protect its members:

- Saved over \$5 million in legal fees by retaining only three attorneys who each represented ten or eleven members.
- Settled the case on behalf of the 32 affected members for just over \$2 million.
- Paid the \$50,000 policy limit for each member along with defense costs of the settlement.
- Hired an archivist to identify prior insurers who paid most of the remaining settlement share of the members.

PLEASE NOTE:

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS RECENTLY REOPENED THE LITIGATION.

The E-JIF is committed to continue taking the actions necessary to defend its members.



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Mayors Wellness Campaign

Getting started

Each year, communities participating in the MWC complete a comprehensive Healthy Town Application outlining the research they've done to identify their community health needs and explaining how they have organized their local MWC committee. This year, the application focused on a community's ability to utilize their local partnerships and MWC infrastructure to adjust programs to meet challenges that surfaced due to the pandemic.

Collaboration is key to the success of MWC programs across the state.

In Evesham, the Township partnered with the Quality Institute and Cooper University Health Care to address one of the top concerns for New Jersey communities: mental health. Mayor Jackie Veasy moderated a presentation hosted by Cooper University Health Care, "Coping with Stress During the Pandemic," to answer important mental health questions from residents and to connect them with resources to support their own mental health during these challenging times.



Norwood Day

The Borough of Freehold, a 2020 Healthy Town to Watch, launched a comprehensive initiative to address emerging food insecurity, "Freehold

Food Safety Net." The initiative raised \$27,000 in less than a week and enabled the Borough to:

- Provide 3,200 meals to students and families over spring break.
- Offer senior and homebound resident food delivery.
- Provide meals served by volunteers for families at the Borough elementary and middle schools.
- Distribute more than 6,000 fresh produce boxes to residents on holidays and weekends.
- Provide a series of 10 popup produce distributions for fresh produce to 1,500 residents. The program also offered a 10-week voucher program at the Farmers Market, providing nearly \$37,000 in vouchers to 700 people.

Highlands Borough, a first-time designee for 2020 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming, spent 2020 collecting important data from its residents to gauge health needs. Top health concerns identified included mental health and substance use issues, and concerns for the aging population. This localized data collection will set the stage to provide



Scotch Plains Rose Checchio Walk to Wipe Out Breast Cancer

Your Town: Mayors' Wellness Campaign

Here are the steps you can take to launch or further your MWC campaign:

- Join the MWC or demonstrate your ongoing commitment to the health and wellness of your residents by signing your Annual Pledge of Participation today.
- Use our new MWC Handbook to guide your program start up or enhance current programming.
- Contact the MWC Program Officer, Julie DeSimone at jdesimone@njhcqi.org.
- Check out the Quality Institute's COVID-19 Resources.

targeted programming in 2021 to improve the health and wellness of the communities.

Other success stories

Other examples of innovative programs by Healthy Town designees include:

- Senior Yoga in the Park.
- At Home Activities Challenges.

- Mental health awareness and suicide prevention workshops.
- Weekly COVID-19 video updates.
- Conversation of Your Life (COYL) programming to educate residents about advanced care planning.
- Farmers markets and community gardens.

- Health screenings, including blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, and lead screenings.

The continuation of these important programs during the challenges of the pandemic provided a safety net for residents. The MWC continues to support this important localized work and the community leaders who make it possible. This past year has shown that having the tools and strategies to address health and wellness at the local level is imperative to supporting New Jersey residents.

The MWC thanks all of the 2020 Health Towns for their dedication to this work. 

About the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute: Our mission is to improve the safety, quality, and affordability of health care for everyone. Our vision is to create a world where all people receive safe, equitable, and affordable health care and live their healthiest lives.



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Hanover's "Hit the Trail" Program

A Community Passport to fitness and fun

DENISE BRENNAN, *Superintendent, Hanover Township Recreation and Park Administration*



Team working on the Eagle Scout project: (left to right) Nicholas Shtynski, Brandon Leone, Jimmy Teca, Pat Mulligan, Project leader Tim Wainscott, Andrew Gigantino, Colin Rodgers.

Walking is often described as the most ancient exercise and the most modern exercise! As Hanover Township's 14,000 residents shook off the malaise caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic, walking emerged as a favorite no-cost, high-benefit exercise of choice for people of every age. Coming on the heels of loosening COVID restrictions, the timing was perfect for the January 2021 introduction of "Hit the Trail."

This innovative program is a partnership between Wegmans Food Markets and Hanover Township Recreation's "Healthy in Hanover" initiative which is part of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign. Residents and locals can discover the parks and trails of Whippany and Cedar Knolls, the two sections that comprise Hanover Township, while they get fit, stay healthy and have fun!

Outdoor exercise

Promoting good health through exercise is one cornerstone of Hanover Township Recreation's commitment to the community. The installation of outdoor exercise equipment at Whippany's Central Park four years ago was the beginning of broadening the border of outdoor fitness.

The next extension of self-directed outdoor exercise, the



This map of the Malapardis Park Loop makes the trail easy to follow.

"Hit the Trail" program, encourages visitors to explore Hanover's diverse parks and trails and record their efforts as they go. The Township's outstanding outdoor facilities provide the backdrop for much-needed relief to a community that has been cooped up for far too long due to the pandemic. In fact, the community's response to the "Hit the Trail" program was immediate and positive.

First in New Jersey

The Hit the Trail Program was initiated in 2005 by Wegmans in Penfield, N.Y. The underlying goal is to encourage residents to explore their local nature trails and thereby enjoy an increased level of fitness. Today, more than 60 Wegmans stores partner with town and city recreation programs, park conservancy groups, fitness programs and more. The Hanover Township Recreation Hit the Trail program is the first in New Jersey.

"The program has received a lot of great feedback over the years,"

explained Wegmans spokesperson, Tracy Van Auker. "The passports serve as a great resource to community members who are interested in getting outdoors and exploring. Offering a program like this is part of our commitment to helping our customers enjoy a healthier, better life through great food and healthy activity."

Passport to Fitness

The free, pocket-sized Hit the Trail Passport is the key to discovering the diverse and beautiful parks and trails located throughout Cedar Knolls and Whippany. Passports featuring easy-to-read maps and fitness tips, are available at the Hanover Township Wegmans and at the Hanover Township Recreation Department.

The passport highlights 10 outstanding parks and trails of various terrains and lengths. Participants may elect to start their wellness journey by taking in the serenity of the Whippany Burying Yard. This short but inspiring walk encourages

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Hanover's "Hit the Trail"

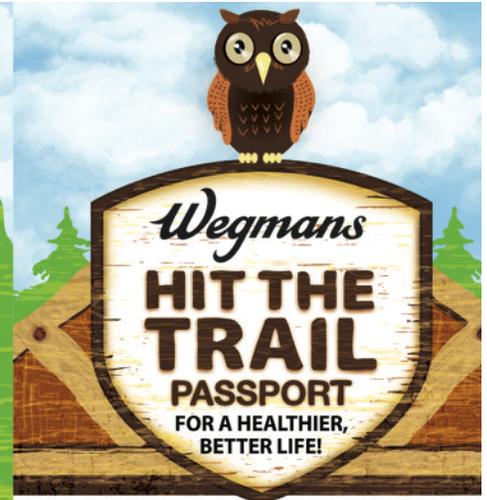
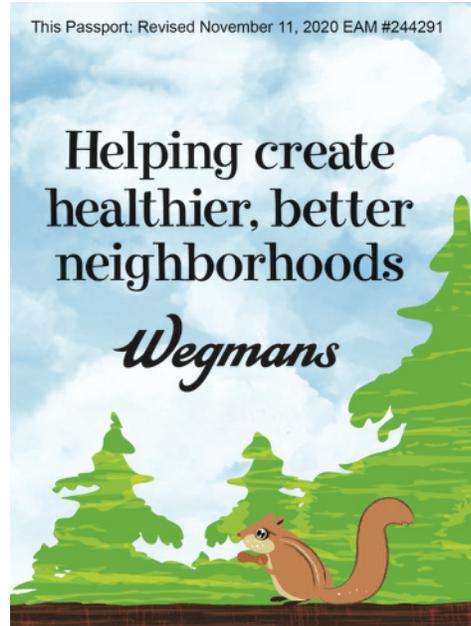
participants to wander throughout one of Hanover's most treasured historical sites to see the outstanding examples of 18th century gravestone carvers' art dating back to Pre-Revolutionary War times.

If visitors prefer to begin in a more energetic setting, the longer and slightly more difficult Malapardis Park Walk is a good choice. Visitors can check out the action at the tennis, pickleball, roller hockey, and sand volleyball courts, catch a game on the multi-purpose field or watch the anglers hoping for a big catch at Malapardis Pond.

Most Picturesque: The Bee Meadow Park Loop

Hanover Township's most scenic pathways are at the Bee Meadow Park facility. Here, The Bee Meadow Park Walk is Phase 1 of a series of walking paths located behind the Bee Meadow Pool.

Hanover Township Committeeman and Recreation Director Mike Mihalko spearheads the four-phased project. "The initial Bee Meadow Park Loop allows visitors to the park to walk along the interior edge of the two outer ponds," says Mihalko. The trail is approximately .5 miles long and its six-foot wide stone-dust surface easily accommodates walkers, strollers, and bicyclists. The trail also includes benches, kiosks, and interpretive signage about the natural features of the park.



Hanover Township has received additional grant funding through the Morris County Trail grant program for additional phases of the trail. "Once all four phases are completed there will be over two miles of looped trails through this scenic and secluded area of the park," says Mihalko.

Eagle Scout Project helps track walkers' progress

To track a participant's progress, there is a spot in each passport for participants to record their visit to a trail by using a pencil or crayon to make a rubbing of



Wegmans Passport rewards



The view from the Stoney Brook Park Loop overlooks the Community Farm and Garden.

the mounted trail markers located along each trail. Showcasing the community commitment to the program, these trail markers were designed, built, and installed by Whippany resident Tim Wainscott as his Eagle Scout project.

"I believe that making these trail markers is a great benefit to the community as it will allow people to discover the great trails that are a beautiful part of Hanover Township," says Eagle Scout candidate Wainscott. "Even I discovered how great the trails can be while doing this project, so it is definitely a worthwhile experience to keep healthy and active and walk the many trails of Hanover Township," he adds.

For those visitors unable to maneuver the trails, participants can attach to the passport two pictures taken from around the park where the trail is located.

Not just fitness but nutrition—and prizes

Exercise is only one component of overall fitness. It comes as no surprise that Wegmans Nutrition Team provides wholesome food selections to the program. Their recommendations are highlighted on a page in the passport called, "Tips for Packing Healthy Picnic Baskets."

If overall good health, fitness, exercise, and nutrition are not motivation enough, there is the added incentive of prizes!

These tangible rewards are available once the walker completes seven trails in the passport. At that point, the participant brings the passport to the Hanover Township Recreation Department and receives a water bottle.

Once all 10 walks are completed, the passport is entered into a free drawing

for a \$250 Wegmans Gift Card. One gift card will be awarded at Hanover Township Day, to be held this year on Saturday, September 18, 2021. (Only adults 18 and older are eligible to win the gift card.)

Hanover Township Recreation is excited that its partnership with Wegmans further helps Hanover Township residents

and Morris County neighbors in getting Healthy in Hanover. They invite the community to hit the trail for the exercise, scenic beauty, and adventure that await!

Hanover Township residents can easily reconnect to a sense of normalcy by participating in the program at their own pace. 

Advocacy from the Mayor's Office

Mayor John L. Ferramosca is a strong advocate for the Hit the Trail program.

He pointed out, "Hanover Township greatly values our parks and trail system. We are fortunate to have Patriots Path, a multi-use trail in New Jersey with a total length of 90 miles, going through our town."

He added: "We have strategically built upon the Patriots Path system with a comprehensive connectivity plan built upon trails. The goal of our connectivity trails is to provide our residents and corporate neighbors with a means to enjoy nature and promote cardio health and fitness."

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From the Mayors' Life Science Committee

In an age of disinformation, we can and should trust science

DENARRA SIMMONS, *Senior Scientist, Merck*

As children, we are told to always tell the truth and that honesty is always the best policy. Today, we might think this childhood lesson has been lost on many, given how rampant disinformation is on the internet and elsewhere. It seems inescapable, and it leads us to distrust things—even honest and true things like science and scientific research. We need only look at some untruthful things that have been said about COVID-19 vaccines to know this has been happening. We've all seen it right here in New Jersey.

Honesty as guide

Speaking as a pharmaceutical scientist, I can say with certainty that the brilliant people in our field, who have contributed to saving the lives of many, have never lost that ultimate lesson from their youth. Honesty guides every aspect of their work, because they know it is the best policy. For the scientific community, there is no other way.

When researching and testing a new medicine or treatment, scientists cannot fudge or hide the results. They are what they are and they will be known. Scientists have to try and try again until they find a way that works, works consistently, and is safe. The findings must then be shown to our peers to verify the claims are true. Then, trials are run to test the findings, over and over again.

Only after all of this does the research go to the government in an application for approval to share the medicine we created with the general public. All decisions are data driven. It is challenging and exciting work that we do every day because the intent is to help people.

This is how #ScienceWorks. This is why I trust science, and why I believe everyone else should, too. When it comes to taking the COVID-19 vaccination, the resistance we're seeing has been a cold, sobering reminder of just how dangerous distrust in science can be. In many cases, it's a matter of life or death.

Ongoing science

The need to trust science extends far beyond the current pandemic. Cutting edge biomedical research is ongoing to develop new treatments, and even cures, for cancer, Alzheimer's, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and the list goes on. Our

ability to avoid, survive, and live more comfortably with these debilitating diseases and conditions is ever more within our reach thanks to our passionate, determined scientists. We need them and we need to support the scientific community if we are to continue making heroic strides in medicine to benefit us and future generations.

It is essential that trust in science be the foundation on which we build more and more "medical miracles."

In the face of reckless disinformation throughout the current pandemic, our public officials—from town and city halls to state legislatures and governors' mansions, to the halls of Congress—have shown steadfast support for scientific research that is the key to stemming the COVID-19 tide and allowing our lives to get back to normal.

In New Jersey, that support was critical for the health and recovery of our state. Organizations like We Work for Health New Jersey and the campaign I volunteer for, #ScienceWorks, have been advocating for trust in biomedical science as a key to a healthier future.

Our scientists, our heroes, they need that trust and support to continue. The pandemic shined a bright light on just how important the biomedical science field is. Looking forward, it stands ready to usher in a new era of scientific breakthroughs and improved well-being we can honestly say we are proud of. 🧬

@ To learn more about how you can promote trust in science and even become a #ScienceWorks ambassador, please visit www.scienceworks.us.

Conference Preview

Expanded Schedule for 2021

This year the League is striving to create a diverse and expansive educational and exhibit program while maintaining high health and safety standards. The means increased time built into the schedule for room cleaning and setups. As a result, sessions will begin on at 9 a.m. on Tuesday and session length will be changed to 75 minute intervals. **League educational sessions will begin at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 16, and continue through 4:45 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 18.**

Please plan your schedule and accommodations accordingly.

Session Times

This year's League and Affiliate sessions will be 75 minutes long broken up into four blocks of time.

9:00 a.m.-10:15 a.m.

11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

1:15 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

3:30 p.m.-4:45 p.m.

Exhibit Hall Hours

This leaves plenty of time to visit the wider aisles and safety conscious design of the Exhibit Hall and network with current and new connections.

Exhibit Hall hours are:

Tuesday, Nov. 16 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 17 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 18 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.



**Creating
Your
Legacy**

2021

NJLM Conference
106th Annual • Atlantic City
November 16-18 #njleague

An Invitation to Atlantic City!

We have every expectation to host an in-person Conference in the great city of Atlantic City! Please join us for the 106th Annual Conference.



As we roll out our planning, please know that our top priority is your health, safety, and wellness. This Conference may not look like others, as we will employ social distancing, and avoid long lines and large crowds. Every effort will be made to make this safe for you, but still be a very productive and valued event.

I know we all look forward to the exchange of ideas and networking that is a trademark of the League. Our plan is to provide another great Conference that builds a legacy for all of us going forward. Join us to help create legacy.

I'll see you in AC!

Janice Kovach
President NJLM, Mayor, Clinton Town

TIME/PLACE

We look forward to seeing you at the Atlantic City Convention Center, Tuesday, Nov. 16 through Thursday, Nov. 18! The 106th League Conference, will continue a long tradition within the safest and most effective parameters.

ACCOMODATIONS

Get the most from the League Conference by staying in Atlantic City to conveniently attend all three days! This year, your municipality's clerk received an easy-to-reference Conference Planner in the mail (download from www.njlm.org/Conference) packed with useful information in the place of the traditional housing form mailer.

Visit the new and improved Conference website, www.njlm.org/ConferenceHousing, to make your reservations directly online or to download and print the Universal Housing Form for reservations. The housing department reserves blocks of rooms for assignment only to League delegates using these official reservation methods.

Using unauthorized reservation services creates real problems for you and the Conference as a whole. You cannot be assured your payment information is secure and your room reservations may not actually be made. Also, your room block will not be part of the official Conference housing block, so you won't get emergency housing information, nor will there be adequate shuttle bus services to your hotel.

Transportation from official conference hotels to the Convention Center will be provided by shuttle services. The contracted service providers will observe safety protocols that are posted at www.njlm.org/ConferenceHealth.

EDUCATION & EXHIBITS

NJLM launched a new and improved website experience this year. It will include a searchable session schedule and speaker list, a customizable account allowing saved events and exhibitors, and many more features. Check back frequently for updates.

You can also "favorite" particular sessions on the website or in the app to create your own personalized session calendar and exhibitor highlights.

The app will be ready for download starting October 6. Because the free app is all new for the 2021 Conference, it must be downloaded from your device's store.

REGISTRATION www.njlm.org/ConferenceRegistration

Due to health and safety protocols we have expanded the registration pricing for the Conference to encourage early Conference registration. More details on registration will be mailed in late July.

	Early Bird Discount (Aug 1-Oct 1)	Advance (Oct 2-Nov 12)	Onsite (Nov 16-18)
Government/Nonprofit: Employees or elected officials of municipal, state, county, and local government. Also includes municipal utilities/authorities, and nonprofits.	\$60	\$70	\$100
Non-Government: For-profit organizations/non-exhibiting companies.	\$120	\$150	\$180
Student: Undergraduate students who are not government employees.	\$25	\$25	\$55

Your Conference Planner

June

01

Housing Reservations Open
www.njlm.org/ConferenceHousing

Event Schedule Posted Online
www.njlm.org/ConferenceSchedule

Aug

01

Registration Opens
*Register Between Aug. 1-Oct. 1
for the early bird rate!*

www.njlm.org/ConferenceRegistration

Oct

1-15

**Conference Resolutions
Submissions Window**

Details on this process:
www.njlm.org/ConferenceResolutions

Oct

06

App Download Day

A full session schedule & exhibitor
listing conveniently on your device.

www.njlm.org/ConferenceApp

Nov

12

Last Chance to Register Off-site

*Advance registration is available
October 2-November 12.
On-site rates increase by \$30.*

www.njlm.org/ConferenceRegistration

Nov

16-18

Annual Conference Week

www.njlm.org/Conference

EXHIBITORS SHARE VISIONS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

After over a year of virtual meetings, this year's Conference offers opportunities to network, learn, and meet face-to-face again!

The following companies (as of press time) are exhibiting at the 2021 NJLM Conference in a safe and convenient environment to reconnect with longstanding partners and check out new prospects. Be sure to visit their booths to see how they can assist you.

Visit www.njlm.org/Exhibit for more exhibitor information or to learn more about becoming an exhibitor.

Contact: Kristin Lawrence, Director, Conference Business Development, at 609-695-3481, Ext. 125; klawrence@njlm.org.

A & K Equipment Co., Inc.	City of Long Branch	George Ely Associates	Mitchell Humphrey & Co.
Abbingtion Engineering	CivicPlus	GovDeals	Municipibid.com LLC
Absolute Fire Protection & Vehicles	Classic Turf Company LLC	Granturk Equipment Co., Inc.	Municipal Clerks' Association of NJ
AccessRec, LLC	Cliffside Body Corp	Greenfields Outdoor Fitness	Municipal Excess Liability Fund
ACCSES NJ	CME Associates	Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.	Municipal Management Software
AccuScan	Colliers Engineering & Design	Groff Tractor Mid Atlantic	Munidex, Inc.
ACT Engineers, Inc.	Conner Strong & Buckelew	Grotto Engineering Assoc LLC	Munisite Networks
Allen Associates	Consolidated Steel & Aluminum Fence Co.	GSMJIF	Musco Sports Lighting
Altec Industries, Inc.	Convault-Diesel Pure	Hackensack Riverkeeper	New Horizon Lighting
American Massage Therapy Association	Cooper's Office Furniture	Herc Rentals	New Jersey Natural Gas NGV Advantage
American Recycling Resources	Creative Composites Group	Hoffman Services, Inc.	New Jersey Planning Officials, Inc.
Aqua New Jersey, Inc.	Creston Hydraulics, Inc.	Hudson County Motors	New Jersey Recreation and Park Assoc
ARI-Hetra	CUES, Inc.	Hudson Machinery LLC	NJ - DEP Local Gov't Assistance
ArtPride New Jersey	De Block Environmental Services, LLC	Hunter Technologies	NJ - Dept of the Treasury - DPP/DSS
ATC Corp	Dejana Truck & Utility Equipment	Hunter Truck	NJ - Dept of Transportation
Atlantic Coast Recycling	Direct Flooring	IBEW Local 102	NJ - Division of Taxation
Atlantic County Government	Downes Forest Products	ICON & Universal Compliance Fuel Tanks	NJ - Unclaimed Property
Atlantic Infra	Eastern Lift Truck/ GEM/Polaris	Insurance Design Administrators	NJ Carpenters Union
Aurora Environmental, Inc.	EAW Security	Integrated Technical Systems, Inc.	NJ Certified Animal Control
Bayshore Family of Companies	Electronic Risks Consultants, Inc.	Integrity Health	NJ HIF
Beyer Bros	Elizabeth Truck Center	International Code Council	NJ I-Bank
Beyer Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram	Environmental Resolutions, Inc.	Interport	NJ Shade Tree Federation
Beyer Fleet	Esposito Construction LLC	J&J Truck Bodies & Trailers	NJ TRANSIT
Beyer Ford	Excel Environmental Resources, Inc.	JCT Solutions	NJ Water Environment Association
Bobcat of North Jersey	Extra Duty Solutions	Jersey Cape Tags	NJHCQI
Boyce Associates	EZ Docks Mid-Atlantic	Jersey Professional Management	NJSEM
Bruno Associates, Inc.	EZ Street Company	JESCO, Inc.	Norcom Solutions
Bryan Electric Co.	Ferriero Engineering	Jewel Electric Supply	Norris Sales Company, Inc.
Bulk Storage, Inc.	Finger's Radiator Hospital Inc.	John Guire Supply Inc.	Northeast Communications, Inc.
Buyers Products Company	Fire & Safety Services, LTD	Kärcher Municipal North America	Northfield Bank
CAI-NJ	Foley, Inc.	Kueper North America	One Source of New Jersey
Cambria Truck Center	FuelForce Multiforce Systems	Liberty Parks and Playgrounds, Inc.	OPW Fuel Management Systems
Campbell Supply Company	Gametime Park & Play Equipment/ MRC	Maco Office Source	Pac-Van, Inc.
CASA Payroll Services LLC	Gasboy & Veeder Root Fuel Management	Max Spann Real Estate & Auction Co.	Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission
Cascade Cart Solutions	Gateway Cleaning Equipment LLC	Mazza Recycling Services	Pennoni
Chambers Architecture, Inc.	General Recreation, Inc.	McGrath Municipal Equipment	Phoenix Advisors, LLC
Cherry Valley Tractor Sales		MGL Printing Solutions	Pitt Bull Secure Technologies

Exhibitors continued on next page

Exhibitors continued

PMA Management Corp.

PNC Bank, N.A.

Precision Hydraulic and Oil

Public Works Association of NJ

Rave Mobile Safety

Republic Services

RFP Solutions, Inc.

Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.

Ricoh USA, Inc.

Rileighs Outdoor Decor

RIO Supply & Neptune Technology Group

RJP Hotsy LLC

Roberts Engineering Group, LLC

Sanitation Equipment Corporation

Schaefer Systems International, Inc.

Sherwin Williams Company

SOLitude Lake Management

Sonitrol Security System

Stormwater Compliance Solutions, Inc.

Storr Tractor Company

Suburban Consulting Engineers, Inc.

Sunrise Systems

Syntech Systems/FUELMASTER

The Dumpster Guard Inc.

The Gillespie Group, Inc.

The Goldstein Partnership
Architects

The LandTek Group

Trackless Vehicles LTD

Traffic Plan

Trius Inc.

Turf Equipment and Supply Company

UNIQUE Paving Materials Corp.

V.E. Ralph & Son, Inc.

Valk Manufacturing Company

Van Cleef Engineering Associates

Van Note-Harvey Associates, Inc.

VCS Intelligent Workforce
Management

Vermeer North Atlantic

Versalift East

W.E. Timmerman Co. Inc.

Waste Management of New Jersey

WeatherWorks, LLC

Whitemarsh Corporation

WildcoPES-Vehicle Fueling
Equipment

Y-pers Inc.

Ready Resources

Attending the conference is easier than ever with a variety of information resources to help keep you in touch and up-to-date.

WEBSITE

Visit the new and improved Conference website, www.njlm.org/Conference to catch up on the latest developments for the 106th Annual League Conference

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Follow us on Facebook & Twitter at @NJ_League or #njleague for immediate notices on changes to the schedule of League education sessions, shuttle bus changes, announcements about sold-out League events, and more.

DOWNLOAD THE APP

Download the 2021 Conference app on October 6 for an interactive exhibit floor plan and searchable list of exhibitors along with fully searchable session schedule and up-to-the-minute event information. Create a personalized schedule before you arrive to maximize your Conference experience!

CEUs for Municipal Professionals In addition to dozens of League sessions approved for CEUs, NJLM's 21 Affiliated Associations are also producing sessions approved for CEUs:

American Public Works Association—New Jersey Chapter

Association of Municipal Assessors of New Jersey

Community Recreation Society of New Jersey

Government Finance Officers Association of New Jersey

Governmental Purchasing Association of New Jersey

Jersey Access Group

Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey, Inc.

Municipal Court Administrators Association of New Jersey

Municipal Electrical Inspectors Association of New Jersey, Inc.

Municipal Welfare Association of New Jersey

New Jersey Association of
County and City Health Officials
(NJACCHO)

New Jersey Building Officials
Association

New Jersey Fire Prevention
and Protection Association

New Jersey Institute of
Local Government Attorneys

New Jersey Municipal
Management Association

New Jersey Planning Officials, Inc.

New Jersey Society of Municipal
Engineers, Inc.

New Jersey State Municipal
Prosecutors Association

New Jersey State Plumbing
Inspectors Association, Inc.

Registrars' Association
of New Jersey

Tax Collectors and Treasurers
Association of New Jersey

MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

**Invite Your Vendors to Exhibit at
the NJLM Annual Conference**

Located right here in New Jersey!

- **Face-to-face networking with municipal clients**
- **Exhibitors provide solutions and expertise**
- **League and Affiliate sessions on critical issues**

Exhibit Registration is Open!

Contact: Kristin Lawrence, *Director, Conference Business Development*
klawrence@njlm.org or 609 695-3481 x125
www.njlm.org/exhibit

**Creating
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Legacy**

2021

NJLM Conference

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League Conference Health & Safety Plan

Each attendee plays a critical role in the success of this plan and we depend upon everyone to create a safe environment. The following are the highlights of the plan, the details are posted online at www.njlm.org/Conference and sent to each attendee.



MASK POLICY: PENDING

The League will determine a policy for masks based on current CDC guidelines and NJDOH recommendations closer to the Conference.



SOCIAL DISTANCING

Measurers will be in place throughout the Atlantic City Convention Center, exhibit hall, session rooms, and all other conference events.



CONTACTLESS NETWORKING

All participants will be encouraged to maintain distance and forgo handshakes and other forms of close physical contact.



PERSONAL HYGIENE

Proper hand washing, sneezing into your arm or a tissue, and other hygiene measures will be encouraged to all participants.



HAND SANITIZER

Stations will be placed throughout the conference center to promote hygiene and stop the spread of germs.



Enhanced Cleaning Protocols at the Atlantic City Convention Center

In accordance with the CDC, NJ Department of Health, and the Atlantic City Convention Center GBAC STAR certification protocols, the League is creating a plan to keep all conference participants healthy, safe, and comfortable. The Atlantic City Convention Center has achieved the GBAC (Global Biorisk Advisory Council) Star accreditation. This accreditation is awarded to facilities for stellar cleaning, disinfection and infectious disease outbreak prevention protocols to help promote safe events.

The Convention Center is the first convention center and arena in New Jersey to receive GBAC Star Facility Accreditation. To read more about this recent accreditation, visit the Meet AC webpage's recent press release, The Convention Center has also published a detailed guide to reopening: Atlantic City Convention Center Guide to Reopening (PDF).

League Stands by Code of Conduct for 2021 Conference

This Code of Conduct outlines our expectations for all those who participate in League meetings and events, as well as the consequences for unacceptable behavior.

This policy applies to any “participant” at League of Municipalities (NJLM) events, including but not limited to staff, contractors, vendors, exhibitors, venue staff, members, presenters, and all attendees. We expect all participants to abide by this Code of Conduct in all venues at NJLM meetings and events, including ancillary events and official and unofficial social gatherings.

The League intends to maintain a welcoming professional atmosphere in all aspects of the Annual League Conference. To that end, conduct that violates this Code should not be tolerated by anyone who witnesses it, or is subjected to it.

Professional conduct includes using care in words that you choose. Harassment, even harassment that a person believes is a “joke,” is unacceptable behavior. Sexist, racist, and other exclusionary jokes are unacceptable and offensive to those around you. Excessive swearing and offensive jokes are not professional behavior and violate the League code of conduct. Retaliation for reporting harassment is a violation of the Code of Conduct.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviors and Conduct

- ◆ Intimidating, harassing, abusive, discriminatory, derogatory or demeaning speech or actions.
- ◆ Harmful or prejudicial comments or images related to gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, appearance, or other personal characteristics.
- ◆ Deliberate intimidation, stalking or following.
- ◆ Harassing photography or recording.
- ◆ Sustained disruption of talks or other events.
- ◆ Unwelcome and uninvited attention or contact, including unwelcome touching or groping.
- ◆ Assault.
- ◆ Real or implied threat of harm including physical, professional, or financial.
- ◆ Advocating for or encouraging any of the above behavior.

Participants engaging in unacceptable behavior are subject to responses deemed appropriate by the League including but not limited to:

verbal warning, removal from NJLM events, prohibition from attending future events, notifying the offender’s employer. If you are subjected to, or witness such behavior, contact League staff. All reports are confidential to the extent permitted by law.

To Report Unacceptable Behavior – All Reports Are Confidential:

During the Annual League Conference, contact any League Staff Member at 609-695-3481. League Staff will direct you to a trained person who will assist you. Your report and any assistance will remain confidential to the extent permitted by law.

In Case of Sexual Assault

To Connect with Professionals with Relevant Expertise 24/7:

New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA)
609-631-4450

New Jersey Crime Victim’s Law Center:
973-729-9342

National Sexual Violence Hotline:
800-656-HOPE

Rape Crisis Center in Atlantic County:
Atlantic County Women’s Center 609-646-6767

List of New Jersey Sexual Violence Service Program in Each County:
<https://njcasa.org/find-help/>

GOLD DOME



Transportation in Transition: The exciting implications and daunting challenges of federal infrastructure funding

BEN DWORKIN, PH.D., *Director, Rowan University
Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship (RIPPAC)*

The positive effects of a strong transportation system on New Jersey's economy are obvious. Every dollar invested in state transportation generates more than two dollars in economic activity.

And yet, despite some clear advantages, New Jersey has seldom had enough resources to handle all of its immediate transportation infrastructure needs, much less the needs of the future.

Currently, the state's Transportation Trust Fund (TTF), relying on gas taxes, spends \$2 billion annually for infrastructure projects. This is certainly significant, but with 7.4% of all New Jersey bridges rated as "structurally deficient" and thousands of residents living in "mass transit deserts," the funding only scratches the surface of what is needed.

The TTF also expires in 2024. With no holistic, generation-spanning, funding system, the state is forced to focus on only the most pressing transportation infrastructure needs.

That is likely to change in the next few months.

If passed, the American Jobs Plan (AJP) offered by President Joe Biden will deliver several billion dollars in new funding for New Jersey infrastructure projects. With Republicans likely to take over Congress in 2022, Democrats are intent on passing some version of the AJP this summer.

There are exciting implications if New Jersey were to receive a burst in federal funding for infrastructure.

Gateway Tunnel Project. The need to replace the two aging rail tunnels connecting Pennsylvania Stations in Newark and Manhattan has been well documented. The current tubes are over 100 years old and suffered severe saltwater damage during Superstorm Sandy.

Closing just one tube because of another major storm or other unforeseen situation would reduce capacity by 75% and puts upwards of 10% of the nation's economy at risk.

The \$14.5 billion Gateway Tunnel Project would build two new tunnels and, once they are open, rehabilitate the two existing tubes, thereby doubling current capacity. Aside from the 7,200 jobs that will be created by undertaking this project, the economic benefits will ripple across New Jersey.

Of course, \$14.5 billion in financing is hard to come by,

which is why the AJP and the Biden administration's stated commitment to Gateway holds out so much hope for fully funding this project.

Non-transportation infrastructure. In the 21st century, transportation systems are not the only kind of infrastructure needed to make things work and move. Broadband access and reliability, energy resilience, and lead-lined water pipe abatement are all critical infrastructure projects that require billions in new investment; money that states struggle to generate on their own.

The Biden proposal recommends over \$300 billion to address these additional infrastructure projects, and New Jersey would likely receive some significant funding from that amount.

Transportation of the future. The size and scope of the AJP allows it to make investments that go beyond current resiliency and capacity to address the nation's needs for future transportation systems.

For example, electric cars are increasingly popular and the technology is now expanding to electric buses and other large vehicles. The bill will help New Jersey adapt by funding the installation of convenient charging stations in parking lots and along major roads.

New money, new problems

With new money comes new challenges. All the financing in the world doesn't guarantee a good system. The shiniest infrastructure can still fail under poor management.

What this means for New Jersey is that government will need to start doing things they never had to worry about the same way before because the money, which was always the initial hurdle that no one could overcome, is on the precipice of no longer being the problem.

Most of the challenges fall into three key areas:

Delivery. The NJ Department of Transportation is already under pressure to implement the TTF projects capably and quickly. The state now has a gas tax that is more than 50 cents/gallon. If transportation advocates want to convince taxpayers to do more in 2024, the TTF has to deliver on its promises.

So, if New Jerseyans see less than 2/3 of TTF projects actually completed as some critics believe might happen, then

Gold Dome

it will be far easier for opponents to decry the inefficiency of big government and suffocate future funding, regardless of need or funding source.

Consistency. During the Trump administration, there was rampant speculation about an upcoming “infrastructure week” that never seemed to materialize. More importantly, it was just too small. What’s needed, many experts believe, is an “infrastructure decade.”

Such an effort must be matched at the state level, which will require something bigger, and preferably more permanent, than the typical six- or eight-year plan relied upon in the past.

Any long-range state infrastructure program requires vision and new technology that hasn’t arrived yet. Gas tax reliance was undermined by the decrease in commuting during the pandemic. As businesses discovered the benefits of remote work, New Jersey shouldn’t expect gasoline purchases to increase anytime soon. The rising number of hybrids and

electric cars makes gas tax dependence even more unreliable in the future.

One alternative is a shift from the gas tax to an assessment on miles travelled. After all, every vehicle, regardless of how it’s powered, causes wear and tear on roadways. The problem is that current technology charges only those who have the appropriate device in their car to measure mileage. The gas tax at least allows NJ to collect huge amounts from out-of-state drivers who fill up while passing through. Sharing the burden with non-voters is almost always helpful politically.

Developing consistent state funding mechanisms that account for technological changes in transportation is critical if New Jersey’s economy is to grow substantially.

Equity. In any area, a transition will benefit some and hurt others. If gas stations are needed less, what kinds of retraining can be offered to displaced workers? Reducing carbon emissions with

new buses doesn’t mean much to those who don’t see them come through their neighborhoods reliably and frequently.

Historically, the lack of robust transportation infrastructure funding meant consequences like these didn’t have to be considered very seriously, if at all. But if the AJP is passed, New Jersey’s transportation development will accelerate and equity issues will come to the fore.

Transportation transition

As the transportation world enters a period of transition, President Biden’s administration is set to put more money into the system than at any time in recent history. Federal officials, Trenton bureaucrats, and lawmakers will be facing significant new management challenges; challenges that almost always could be avoided in the past.

New Jersey’s ability to handle it all will shape the state’s economy, housing and commercial development, tax structure, and workforce for years to come. 

McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC

Our Bankruptcy and Restructuring Team Can Guide You Through Today’s Unprecedented Legal Issues

In these challenging times, the bankruptcy and restructuring professionals of **McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC** offer our clients a unique perspective into the relationships among redevelopment, public finance, environmental, and bankruptcy law.

We are as familiar with the rights and needs of public entities and agencies as we are with the intricacies of federal bankruptcy and state insolvency laws. Our attorneys are leaders in the fields of debtor/creditor relations and insolvency, and include trustees, mediators, and court-appointed fiduciaries.

Our team is well-prepared to assist your community, your business, and you in addressing today’s unprecedented legal and economic challenges, and to provide you with the same level of service you have come to expect of us. For more information, contact **Anthony Sodono, III**, Chair of the Bankruptcy Practice Group.



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

LORI BUCKELEW, NJLM Assistant Executive Director and Director of Government Affairs;
ANDREW LAFEVRE & PAUL A. PENNA, Legislative Analysts; FRANK MARSHALL, NJLM Associate General Counsel



S-3491/A-5457

Administering or dispensing opioid antidotes

Status: S-3491. Favorably reported out of Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee with amendments, 2nd Reading. A-5457 was introduced and referred to Assembly Health Committee on March 15, 2021.

This legislation repeals the “Overdose Prevention Act,” P.L.2013, c.46 10 (C.24:6J-1 et seq.) in order to facilitate the dispensation of opioid antidotes without government regulation. Any person in New Jersey would be permitted to acquire an opioid antidote from a licensed pharmacist or other health care professional authorized by statute to prescribe and dispense prescription drugs.

In addition, any person in the state would be permitted to administer or dispense opioid antidotes to any individual they believe, in good faith, is experiencing an opioid overdose. Any person who prescribes, dispenses, furnishes, or administers an opioid antidote in good faith, cannot, as a result of the person’s acts or omissions, be subject to any criminal or civil liability or any professional disciplinary action under the state statutes for such administering or dispensing.

The League supports this commonsense measure as an additional tool to help eliminate the opioid epidemic in the state and facilitate treatment. – PAP



S-3549/A-4843

Forest stewardship plan requirement

Status: S-3549 has been referred to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee. A-4843 was reported favorably out of the Assembly Agriculture Committee and second reference to Assembly Appropriation Committee.

S-3549/A-4843 would require local governments and nonprofit organizations to prepare and implement a forest stewardship plan anytime Green Acres funding or constitutionally dedicated Corporate Business Tax (CBT) money is used to acquire lands that contain 25 acres or more of forested area.

The plan would be required to be developed and implemented within two years of land acquisition. Once the plan is developed, it must be submitted to NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for review and approval. Within 30 days, DEP must take action. If DEP disapproves of the plan the local government or nonprofit organization must work with DEP to

develop a mutually acceptable plan.

This legislation could dissuade municipalities from taking full advantage of the Green Acres program by forcing the expenditure of municipal resources to prepare and implement a forest stewardship plan, which may be unnecessary, thereby undermining the very purpose of the program and allowing significant land that should be preserved and protected to be developed for other purposes.

Additionally, S-3549/A-4843 would require forest stewardship plans be written only by State-approved foresters. Foresters are professionals who are trained to cultivate the forest to maximize timber yields. To a professional forester, the value of accessible recreation, water resource production and filtration, carbon sequestration, and maximum biodiversity, might be considerations, but they are not equivalent values.

In New Jersey, given our limited forest resources, and wide interests that must share in the values forests provide us, New Jersey’s forests need professionals who promote the full spectrum of a forest’s ecological values in the stewardship. – FM



A-5156/S-3299

Reimbursing broadband infrastructure expansion to rural areas

Status: A5156/S-3299 was introduced and referred to the Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee.

A-5156/S-3299 would appropriate \$50 million from the general fund out of the federal “Coronavirus Relief Fund” to the Board of Public Utilities to reimburse up to 50% of project costs related to broadband infrastructure expansion in rural areas in the state. The legislation defines “rural area” to mean any municipality that has a population of 30,000 or less and a population density less than 4,000 persons per square mile based on the latest Census. –AL



S-3550/A-4844

Municipal approval not required for forest stewardship plans

Status: S-3550 has been referred to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee. A-4844 was reported favorably out of the Assembly Agriculture Committee and second reference to Assembly Appropriation Committee.

S-3550/A-4844 would eliminate the current requirement of municipal approval for forest stewardship plans. It would also

Legislative Update

void any current and prohibit future municipal ordinances that require municipal approval of a forest stewardship plan or that conflicts, prevents, or impedes the implementation of a forest stewardship plan approved by the DEP.

This bill violates home rule principles that are at the foundation of our state's land use law. The benefits provided by forests extend far beyond the landowner, especially in areas like the Highlands and Pinelands that have already been designated for special protections.

The considerations of the local community should not be minimized when it comes to approval of forest stewardship plans. – FM



Prohibits certain utilities and authorities from increasing rates and assessing late or restoration fees or charges during and within 180 days after major public health emergency

Status: A-4678 has been referred to Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee. S-3592 has been referred to Senate Economic Growth Committee.

This legislation would prohibit public utilities and authorities including sewerage authority, municipal authority, or municipality that owns and operates its water and/or sewer system from:

- Increasing any rate, fee, or similar charge for service rendered to a customer
- Charging interest on a delinquent payment
- Assessing to a customer any late bill payment fee or similar charge
- Charging any service restoration fee
- Placing a lien on real property for unpaid balance for any service charge
- Discontinuing service for failure to pay
- Including in its rate base any increase in those cost or expenses incurred by the municipality during a major public health emergency

During and within 180 days after the end of a declared “major public health

emergency.” The legislation defines a “major public health emergency” as a health emergency that has resulted in the Governor declaring a public health emergency pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:13-3 and a state of emergency pursuant to c. App A:9-33 et seq.

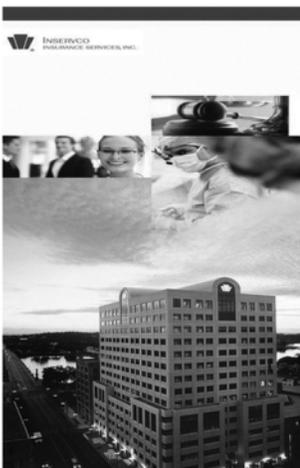
In addition, the bill would prohibits a public utility from:

- Increasing any rate, fee or similar charge for service rendered to a customer during and within 180 days after the end of a declared public health emergency
- Including in its rate base any increase in those costs or expenses incurred by the public utility during a major public health emergency.
- Assessing to a customer any late bill payment fee, similar charge or any service restoration fee during and within 180 days after the end of declared major public health emergency.

The League opposes A-4678/S-3592 as the intent of the legislation can be achieved by Executive Order of the Governor during a public health or state of emergency. The decision to implement the provisions of this legislation should not be taken lightly. By providing the Governor with the discretion based on facts and circumstances provides the appropriate flexibilities to achieve the same goal outlined in the legislation.

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DEP Community garden grants

Status: A-5409/S-3539 was introduced and referred to the Assembly and Independent Authorities Committee

A-5209/S-3539 directs the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to establish a grant program for local governments that

would support the development and maintenance of pollinator friendly community gardens in the state. As part of the grant program, local governments would be required to partner with a nonprofit organization in establishing and maintaining the community garden.

The intent of the legislation is to provide readily available sources of fresh, healthy foods to communities that may lack easy access to affordable fruits and vegetables.– AL

 **A-4267**
DOH social distancing signage for State and local government buildings

Status: A-4267 was introduced and referred to the Assembly Health Committee.

A-4267 would require the Department of Health to develop uniform signage

that would be easily understood by the public, with the guidance of wearing masks, washing hands, maintaining social distances, and any other pertinent recommendations as determined by the department of health. The signs developed by NJ Department of Health would be permitted to be display in every municipal, county, and State public building. A-4267 would expire at the end of the COVID-19 emergency.

The League opposed this legislation as this matter would be best suited to be addressed at the local level. – AL

 **A-5226/S-3347**

Allowing school bus video footage for violation enforcement

Status: A-5226/S-3347 introduced and referred to Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee

A-5226/S-3347 would allow a municipality to use school bus video camera footage to assist in enforcement of N.J.S.A. 39:4-128.1 which prohibits vehicles from passing a school bus while passengers are picked up or dropped off. A law enforcement official of the would review the recorded images and determine if there was a sufficient evidence to conclude that a violation has occurred.

If determined that a violation has occurred, the law enforcement officer must issue a summons within 90 days of the violation. The fine would be \$100 for a first offense and \$250 for each subsequent offense. If no summons is issued, all recorded images and information collected must be purged.

The recorded image or information produced in connection with a school bus video camera will not be a public record under OPRA or the common law concerning access to public records. – AL 

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Down Payment Assistance Program Assisting New Jersey residents over the down-payment hurdle

NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY (NJHMFA)



For New Jersey residents looking to buy their first home, saving enough money for a down payment often comes second to more immediate costs of living—student loans, childcare, rent, insurance, and additional expenses. Although many New Jersey residents have the income to support their first home purchase, the down payment and closing cost hurdle is their primary impediment to investing in their community through homeownership.

Renter households save an estimated 2.4% of their income each year, according to Moody's Analytics. At that rate it would take a typical renter over nine years to save \$10,000. A \$10,000 down payment opens the door to homeownership for millions of renters.

New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) understands the value of direct financial support to potential homebuyers who could not achieve homeownership without down payment support. The NJHMFA Down Payment Assistance (DPA) program provides \$10,000 in down payment assistance, while also providing eligible first-time homebuyers highly competitive mortgage rates. These funds need never be repaid if the borrower lives in their new home and retains their original home loan for at least five years, contributing to neighborhood stability.

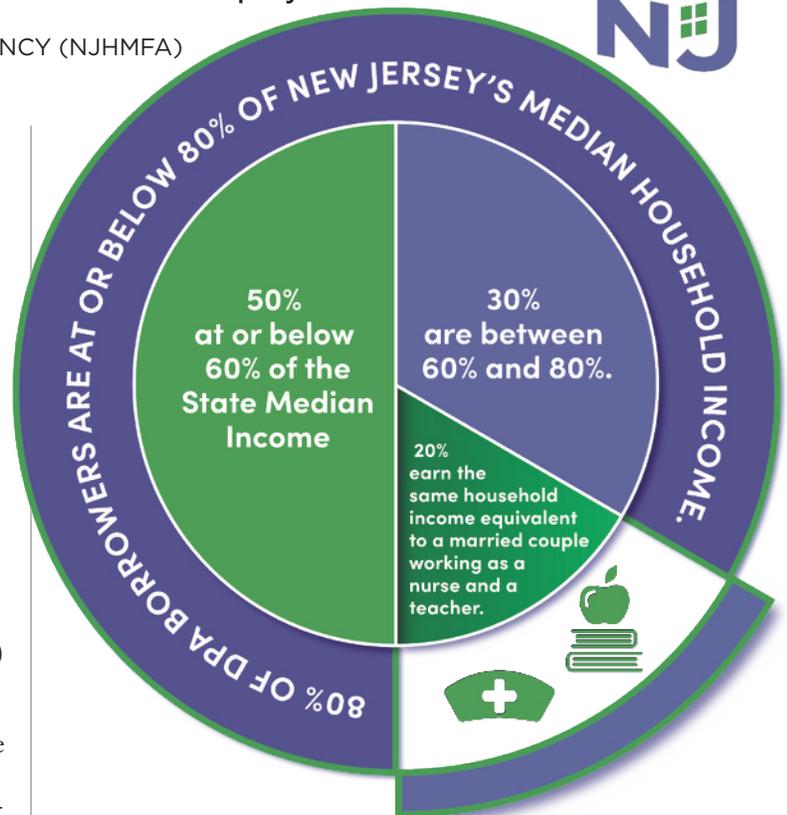
Long-term impacts of homeownership

Down payment assistance is a commitment to empowering people to become homeowners, strengthen their communities, and build wealth through home equity.

Many families can benefit from this assistance. It may be particularly impactful for those from traditionally underserved populations. As recent as 2019, Black and Latino families had substantially lower median net worth compared to white families. The average difference, about \$290,000, is roughly equivalent to the equity in many homes. This recalls the impact of historic barriers to intergenerational wealth creation, such as redlining and exclusionary lending.

Getting people over the down payment hurdle is a proven, simple way to help people and families move up the ladder, much in the way that Pell Grants and the NJ Stars program have advanced educational opportunity.

HUD-approved credit counseling, part of the Down Payment Assistance Program, helps position potential homeowners for success. Improving financial literacy and assessing homebuying readiness can include providing information on income, credit,



savings, and homeowner responsibility as well as evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of renting versus owning a home, including scope of payments, upfront costs, and tax implications. Credit counsellors provide an impartial and valuable knowledge partner throughout the homebuying process.

The benefits of homeownership to Municipalities

In addition to benefiting New Jersey families, sustainable homeownership can benefit municipalities in numerous ways, such as motivating civic participation, property improvements, and community investment.

The real estate taxes paid by homeowners go towards strengthening infrastructure projects and services. When you live in the community where you pay taxes, your commitment to investing in its success is often greater; the parks, infrastructure, public safety, and schools impact your daily life. 

New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency is a statewide and national leader in providing and advocating for affordable housing and homeownership. The Agency provides financing to developers to create quality homes and provides mortgage loans and down payment and closing cost assistance to help homebuyers achieve their dream of homeownership.



Sales of Municipally Owned Tax Certificates



After a previous auction failed to provide a successful bidder, our municipality now finds itself in possession of several tax certificates. We have no reason to hold these certificates and would like to sell them. How do we go about offering these tax certificates?



Generally speaking, the tax sale law (*N.J.S.A. 54:5-1 to-137*) governs the creation, enforcement, and collections of liens on real property to secure payment of delinquent municipal taxes and assessments. Several methods are available to municipalities in liquidating delinquent taxes, but from time to time, under certain circumstances a municipality is forced to purchase a tax sale certificate itself.

When this happens, the tax sale law provides two methods for the assignment of tax sale certificates by a municipality. The first method is assignment to the highest bidder at a public sale. See, *N.J.S.A. 54:5-114.2(a)*. The second method involves the assignment for an amount lower than the balance due on the tax sale certificate. See, *N.J.S.A. 54:5-114.2(b)*.

If using the first method, your municipality must provide public notice of the sale, describing the time and place of the sale, providing a description of the lots and parcels of land covered by the certificate of sale, along with the name of the owner of land, together with the total amount required for redemption including interest and costs to the date of sale and the amount of subsequent liens with interest, and stating in substance that the respective certificates of sale, including subsequent municipal liens will be sold to the highest bidder at said public sale subject to confirmation of the governing body at the next regular meeting after the sale.

This notice must be placed in five of the most public places in the municipality, and a copy of the notice must be published in a newspaper circulating in the municipality one in each of the two calendar weeks preceding the week of the sale.

If your municipality seeks to use the second method—that is, selling for an amount lower than the total amount due—the municipality must first determine by resolution that the municipality deems it advisable to sell using this method. A municipality must follow similar notice requirements as method one prior to taking bids, with the notable difference being that notice for the second method does not include language regarding the acceptance of the highest bid.

This is an important distinction because use of the second method does not require your municipality accept the highest bid. This distinction helps serve the underlying purposes of the tax sale law, which is to see the prompt return of property to tax rolls or to be used for the benefit of the public.

Upon receiving a bid which the governing body may be inclined to accept, public notice containing the same information required for notice prior to the acceptance of bids must be published in a newspaper circulating in the municipality at least once in the week preceding the date set for the regular meeting of the governing body at which the bid will be considered. The owner of the property subject to the tax sale certificate must also be mailed a copy of this notice.

The governing body at the meeting may accept or reject the bid or may accept or reject any higher bid which may then be made by any person at the meeting.

On a practical note, it is advisable at this meeting to place into the record information regarding why the governing body reached the decision to sell to a specific bidder. This could prove important if the sale is challenged, especially if there is a higher bid. 

 For more information about the League's Legal team and activities, please visit www.njlm.org and explore the Bureau of Municipal Information.

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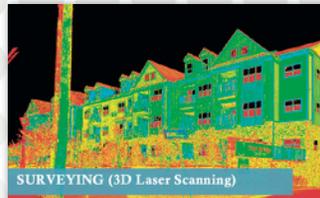
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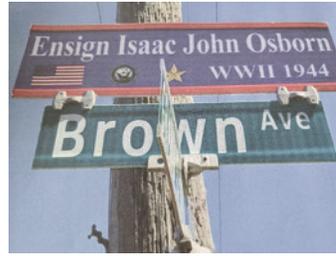
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Memorial Day and Veteran's Day are opportunities for municipalities to thank their resident service members for their sacrifices. Each year, Lavallette pays tribute to residents who have served in the military. The last Monday of May they hold an outdoor ceremony at the town's Memorial Park, one of the town's best-attended events.

Last summer the six Lavallette residents who gave their lives for their country in World War 1, World War 2, Korea, and Vietnam were additionally remembered for their ultimate sacrifice with the placement placards of their name, rank, overseas campaign, and year of death added to the signs for the streets on which they'd lived.

Councilman Robert Lamb noted, "I felt recognition once a year seemed very slight for their ultimate sacrifice." The rest of the Council agreed and with the help of Borough Administrator Robert Brice and Ted Golubowski of the Lavallette Public Works Department the signs were installed where the streets intersect Grand Central Avenue, the town's main thoroughfare.

The beachside town also recently added its first woman to the marker honoring service members from town. Lillie Leonard Gough served in the Navy during World War I and followed her son into the Air Force in World War II, although both stints involved some fudging about her age. While Gough died in 1999, her service remained a family story until her grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren who live in town brought it to the attention of municipal officials. Her name was subsequently added to the Lavallette Veterans Memorial.

These acknowledgements illustrate how local governments can bring to life the men and women who represent the rich background that fills the portrait of a municipality.

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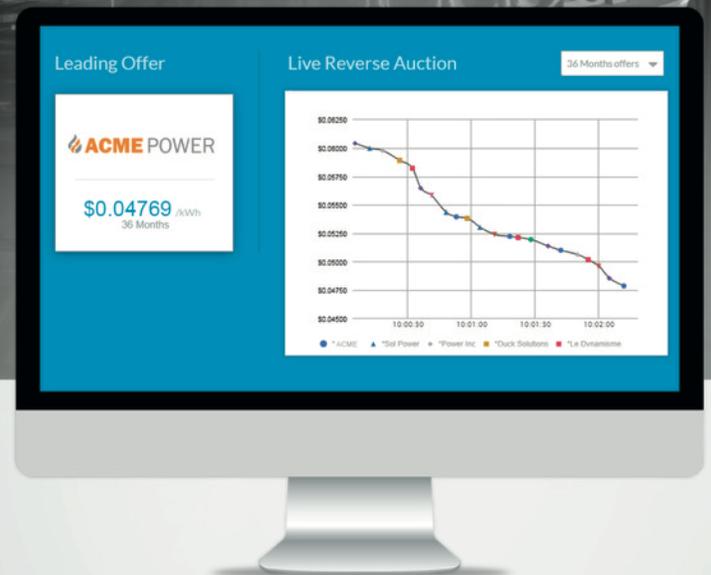
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