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Analysis

County Towns Prepare to Compete for Infrastructure Funds

By VINCE CONTI

WASHINGTON - Earlier in November, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure and Jobs Act, which cleared the Senate in August. The bill, signed into law by President Joe Biden Nov. 15, is over 2,700 pages long. Even at that length, the bill is short on details regarding what it might mean for New Jersey and Cape May County.

The hype around the bill does, however, give

some insight into what it might mean for the Garden State. The broad outlines of spending are provided, but the actual allocation of funds to projects will be an ongoing activity for numerous federal agencies.

New Jersey will receive an estimated \$12.3 billion in guaranteed transportation and transit funding over the next five years. Funding intended for Northeast corridor transportation improvements will also benefit many New Jersey citizens.

After that, it looks like the bill sets up a competitive environment in which states and counties

can vie for project funding through a variety of grant programs.

Funding Outline

Transportation

Roughly \$110 billion will go to transportation programs. New Jersey should see almost \$8 billion for highways, roads, bridges, and dams. Even at that massive level of funding, the bill is providing only about 14% of the national \$786 billion back-

log for repairs to roads and bridges identified by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

ASCE's 2021 Report Card on New Jersey notes that the state has roughly 8% of bridges rated structurally deficient, along with 229 dams considered to be high hazard potential, with 37% of roads in poor condition. What it all means is a high level of need to be prioritized for funding.

Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) outlined the almost

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Demolitions Proceed on Pacific Avenue

By REBECCA FOX

WILDWOOD - After months of delay, demolitions are finally underway on the 3600 block of Pacific Avenue, in Wildwood.

The former locations of the Fairview Café, 2nd Street Annie's, and M.T. Bottles were supposed to be demolished in the spring for a 74-unit housing complex intended for foreign students who work in Wildwood during the summer on a J-1 visa. However, the demolition was delayed due to a lack of Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA) permits.

"They were received probably within the last 30 days," Mayor Pete Byron said, regarding the permits. "Unfortunately, we lost the summer, as a result of needing the CAFRA permits, but better late than never."

Needing CAFRA permits was not originally anticipated, but the state admitted it made a mistake and that the developers would need permits for both demolition and construction.



Rebecca Fox

Demolition is taking place in the 3600 block of Pacific Avenue, in Wildwood.

"We're moving forward," Byron said. "What you see on Pacific Avenue and around town is called progress."

Recently, residents noticed the demolition, pointing out that some dated structures have

come down.

Particularly in the Herald's Spout Off, someone wrote, "Wow! Wildwood is really cleaning house on Pacific Avenue. Those old buildings are finally

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Dennis School Officials Seek \$9.5M to Upgrade Facilities

By CAMILLE SAILER

DENNSVILLE - Dennis Township School District officials attended Dennis Township Committee's Nov. 16 meeting to inform the governing body of their plans to improve facilities and seek support with taxpayers to fund the work.

Superintendent Susan Speirs, accompanied by Board of Education members, a representative from Garrison Architects - the firm which prepared plans with offices in Bellmawr - and the school's facility manager, started the briefing by noting, "We serve, for this school year, 623 students, which is an increase from 2019 when our school enrollment was 593."

"We have two school buildings: The primary

school for grades pre-K to second grade was built in 2004 and the original elementary/middle school building we are still using for grades three through eight was built in 1950.

"Over the years, we have been diligently maintaining the buildings as best we could using our capital budget. However, there are several serious issues, including roofing and HVAC, that really need replacement, as well as other structural problems that must be taken care of. Our buildings also need interior renovations, including ceilings, installation of new pipe insulation, and painting."

She said that under state law, the school district could tap into state funding for 40% of the projects "if we incur debt through a bond to finance them, which our consultant has estimated to

cost \$9,452,651," noting they already have the necessary approvals.

She added that to cover the expenses, the district is planning to incur debt that must be approved by a taxpayer referendum, which they proposed for Jan. 25.

School officials explained three funding proposals that would be options to pay for the projects.

The first option is the school board would finance the elementary/middle school project for \$5 million. The net tax impact per municipal home would be zero. In this case, there would be no state aid to cover any cost of the project.

The second option is the board would finance

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Daylight Fireball May Have Dropped Rocks in Court House

By KAREN KNIGHT



Provided

Court House residents should be on the lookout for black rocks like these, which may have fallen from a meteorite Nov. 13.

COURT HOUSE - Scientists are asking residents who were lucky enough to witness a late afternoon fireball traveling from east to west Nov. 13 to keep an eye out for small, black rocks, which may have fallen on the streets, buildings, and yards around the Court House area.

Data from eyewitnesses, video, and weather radar indicate that a meteorite fall may have occurred in or near Court House and Sea Isle City about 4:30 p.m., according to Marc Fries, a scientist at NASA's Johnson Space Center, in Houston, Texas, who works on using publicly available data to find meteorite falls.

Fries said the rocks are "dark, almost black inside. There is a thin rind on the outside that looks like a pottery glaze, called 'fusion crust.' Fusion crust forms when the

outside of the rock is flash-melted during passage through the atmosphere."

"If anyone finds one of these, they should handle it with a fresh piece of aluminum foil instead of with their bare hands," he advised. "The meteorite will not hurt you, but oils, dirt, and other contaminants from your hands will hurt the meteorite."

Fries said the weather can destroy the rocks, as well.

If anyone finds a rock, they can email a photo to marc.d.fries@nasa.gov who will advise the sender on what they found and what lab may be interested in it.

NASA does not purchase meteorites, but Fries said other options exist for identifying potential meteorites, including the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C., nearby universities and private dealers.

Fries said if a rock is found, it is likely from the

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Nov. 13 - 19, 2021

CAPE MAY COUNTY COVID-19

New reported cases: 121

Active cases:	Hospitalizations as of Nov. 22:	Deaths this week:
191	5	0

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To address this dilemma - so we can continue to report the news of Cape May County, the Herald is augmenting our free distribution program with paid circulation of different kinds depending on location.

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