



Ventnor's Price is right

Stacey Price helps the Beach Patrol to a win in the Bill Howarth Women's Lifeguard Invitational. **B1**

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\$2.00 / Toms River and north: \$2.25

MILLVILLE

Community rebuilds trust, security after coach's murder

AMANDA AUBLE
Staff Writer

MILLVILLE — Millville Midget Football League coach JT Burks said when his Thunderbolts team found out they would be going to the league's Super Bowl last year, 7-year-old player Joseph Jones Jr. vis-

ited his father's grave to share the news.

"Everybody rallied around that," Burks said. "Kids were really excited. Everybody wanted to try to win the Super Bowl for coach Joe."

Joseph's father, Millville Midget Football League coach Joseph "JoJo" Jones Sr., was

shot and killed one year ago Friday.

Since then, the case continues to be tried in court and the football community continues to try to rebuild a sense of trust and safety on the field.

"My initial thought was sadness, anger and frustration

because I felt as though it was supposed to be like a safe haven for kids," said Burks, 34, who has coached in the league for five years. "I felt personally that I failed to protect them as far as preserving them from the negativity."

Jones, 37, was shot in the parking lot of Lakeside Middle

School as coaches, parents and athletes, including his son, were leaving after football practice.

Officials conducted a two-month investigation into what they called a targeted attack. Six people were indicted in

See **JONES**, A2

Opinions mixed on BOE plan for hall

MICHELLE BRUNETTI POST
Staff Writer

ATLANTIC CITY — Community leaders touted the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority's \$12.6 million plan to renovate office space for the city's Board of Education, while a parent and real estate professionals Thursday called it a poor use of money that will harm businesses downtown.

CRDA held a public hearing Thursday on its proposal to renovate 25,000 square feet of space at Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall for the school board to occupy rent-free, allowing it to move from its current rental location where it pays \$650,000 a year.

The project would use \$10.5 million in luxury tax funds and \$2.1 million from the school district.

It's a way of using luxury tax funds to help the schools, while improving portions of the hall left vacant for decades, said CRDA Director of Project Implementation Thomas J. Meehan, who acted as hearing officer.

Under state law, the luxury tax on resort hotel rooms, ticket and alcohol sales can only be used at Boardwalk Hall and the Atlantic City Convention Center for debt payments, construction and maintenance.

The school board would leave the building it's been in since 2005 at 1300 Atlantic Ave., across from the county building and city library.

Charles Goodman of the NAACP said the project will save the school district money it can put into programs for kids.

"It will last past all of our lifetimes, probably," Goodman said. "It's one plus the CRDA

See **CRDA**, A8



LAUREN CARROLL / MULTIMEDIA REPORTER

Tyler Steele, 25, of Atlantic City, wears a weighted vest and carries a 50-pound medical bag to simulate standard firefighting equipment Wednesday during a training obstacle course set up at the Atlantic City Convention Center.

A test for the best

Atlantic City holds tryouts for prospective firefighters; unclear how many will join the department's ranks



AMANDA AUBLE / STAFF WRITER

Fire Chief Scott Evans walks the physical agility course Monday.

AMANDA AUBLE
Staff Writer

ATLANTIC CITY — Steven Cordero, 30, of Atlantic City, wore a 40-pound vest as he dragged a fire hose through two traffic cones. He then unscrewed the metal cap of a hydrant, all part of his practice run-through of the Fire Department's agility test course set up Monday inside the Convention Center.

After a class of fire-

fighters retired in early April, the number of firefighters in the city has dropped below 180, which Atlantic County Superior Court Judge Julio Mendez ruled in 2017 was the minimum needed to maintain safety in the city.

The Atlantic City Fire Department is in the process of hiring new firefighters to meet this number, but exactly how many and when they

See **ACFD**, A2

Cumberland officials hope outreach bus stems tide of addiction



MOLLY BILINSKI / STAFF WRITER

The mission of Recovery on Wheels is to go to where the people who need the services are, and to provide compassionate, nonjudgmental interventions in real time, said Melissa Niles, director of the county's Human Services Department.

MOLLY BILINSKI
Staff Writer

BRIDGETON — Cumberland County residents may spot a purple bus with two hands reaching for each other rolling through their streets starting this month.

Law enforcement and public health officials Thursday afternoon cut the ribbon on the county's Recovery on Wheels, or ROW, a mobile unit that aims to bring resources for addiction help to people who need it.

"The mission of Recovery on Wheels is to go to where the peo-

ple who need the services are, and to provide compassionate, nonjudgmental interventions in real time," said Melissa Niles, director of the county's Human Services Department. "ROW seeks to address addiction as a public health issue that deserves a public health response."

Niles' department, as well as the county Prosecutor's Office, Sheriff's Office and Health Department, collaborated with partners like Inspira Health Center to make it happen.

While national statistics show fatal overdoses are in decline,

most of South Jersey is going in the opposite direction, including Cumberland County.

In 2017, there were 169 drug-related deaths in Atlantic County, 59 in Cape May County and 75 in Cumberland County, state Health Department data show. Last year, those deaths spiked in Atlantic and Cumberland counties, rising to 190 and 113, respectively. Cape May County dropped to 47.

The bus, retired early from the county Office of Aging for the project, will offer peer recovery

See **ROW**, A8

DEW DROPS
HIGH: 88 LOW: 59
See your South Jersey forecast on **C6**.

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