



## O.C. girls tennis team advances

The team shut out Clearview Regional to move on to the South Jersey Group III semifinals. **B1**

### BRIDGETON MOTHER DENIES KILLING CHILD

Nakira Griner pleads not guilty in an arraignment Monday. **A3**

Tuesday, October 8, 2019 // Serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland & southern Ocean counties // PressofAtlanticCity.com // Vol. MMXIX, No. 281 \$2.00 / Toms River and north: \$2.25

# N.J. school water checks for lead to get more frequent

New Jersey U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer speaks Monday in Bergenfield. He wants schools to do better at reporting lead levels in water. At left is Gov. Phil Murphy. **SETH WENIG / ASSOCIATED PRESS**



**DAVID PORTER**  
Associated Press

**BERGENFIELD** — Public schools in New Jersey will have to test their water for lead twice as often as they do now and share the results on a yet-to-be-created state database under guidelines announced Monday by officials.

The announcement continues a series of measures catalyzed by the recent water crisis in Newark, where residents in 14,000 homes with lead pipes have been given bottled water since mid-August after limited tests showed some filters weren't adequately reducing lead levels. Lead in drinking

water has been linked to developmental delays in children and can damage the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. It is most often caused by lead service lines — pipes connecting a home to a water main — or lead fixtures in a home or school. The state Legislature is holding hearings and

the state Department of Environmental Protection is stepping up its inventory of lead pipes in water systems around the state, a process that started earlier in the year. Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy was joined Monday at the Herbert Hoover Elementary

See **LEAD**, A2

# State still discussing school test changes

**CLAIRE LOWE**  
Staff Writer

**TRENTON** — The debate over how to revamp New Jersey's state standardized test continues as State Board of Education members Wednesday tabled discussion on a proposal to put in place testing and graduation requirements for current seventh-, eighth- and ninth-grade students in line with a court order.

The latest proposal, which would amend a 2018 proposal from the Department of Education, is based on a 2018 court ruling striking down the state's use of multi-year assessments as a requirement for graduation.

Education Commissioner Lamont Repollet said the proposal currently before the state board is "one step" and "a compromise" in the state's transition of its current standardized tests.

"But it's the best approach to avoid over-testing in high school, while still providing schools with years of continuous assessment data," he said.

The proposal considered Wednesday came as a surprise to Sen. Teresa Ruiz, D-Essex, chairwoman of the Senate Education Committee, who penned an op-ed in the Asbury Park Press condemning the changes as "directly contrary to the department's own messaging from last year that 11th grade was too late to test and remediate students."

"We must not throw thoughtful compromise and consideration of what is best for students out the window," Ruiz wrote. "This was a plan all parties agreed to until politics reared its ugly head, and now our students may be worse without it. I ask again that the administration support the path that gives the greatest flexibility to their department to do the best by our students."

Last year, the State Board of Education introduced a proposal that would eliminate some of the required state testing in high school. That proposal was advertised in the New Jersey Register for public comment in November 2018.

Shortly after, in a New Year's Eve decision, a three-judge panel of the Appellate Division of the Superior Court, struck down the New Jersey Department of Education's 2016 revision to state graduation requirements requiring two

See **TESTING**, A2



EDWARD LEA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Abby Pease, 33 of Linwood, rehearses Thursday at the newly finished Fusion Church on the Black Horse Pike in Egg Harbor Township. When the church held services in a Hamilton Township movie theater, work to set up for 10 a.m. services had to start at 6:45 a.m.

# Room for community

## Fusion Church replaces movie theater with refurbished Egg Harbor Twp. site



Fusion Church no longer holds services in a movie theater, though it still has a small church in Somers Point, where it hosted recovery teams in 2012 after Hurricane Sandy. The far bigger Egg Harbor Township church building will give Fusion room to do more. 'We wanted to find a place that would not just be a church on Sunday mornings, but a community center during the week,' says Pastor Brendon Wilson.

**VINCENT JACKSON**  
Staff Writer

**EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP** — Abby Pease used to arrive at 6:45 a.m. Sunday mornings at the Regal Hamilton Commons in Mays Landing to set up two movie theaters for Fusion Church services that started at 10 a.m.

"You are putting all the sound together, running wires, setting up drum kits. You are literally doing all the setup, all the lighting. Video projectors have to come out," said Pease, 33, who added they set up a second theater for children's

services. "Our volunteers, they were crazy. They were there building a tabernacle, building a church, every week."

No one complained because doing the work gave the volunteers ownership, and they were able to see what their contribution accomplished, but every week, they were rushing to break everything down, Pease said.

"We were doing the end of the service, and (movie) previews would come on," said Pease, a worship leader with the church.

See **CHURCH**, A2

# Early numbers indicate strong summer for S.J. tourism

**COLT SHAW**  
Staff Writer

Still months from a complete picture, early indicators for Cape May County and Atlantic City suggest tourism in South Jersey — consistently a primary economic driver — had a standout year.

In Atlantic City, gaming revenue across the summer months,

and revenue from the luxury tax through July, indicate a strong year for tourism to the resort, according to Larry Sieg, director of communications and marketing for the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority.

A complete picture for both Atlantic City and Cape May County won't be available until

See **TOURISM**, A2



PRESS ARCHIVES

Gaming revenue in the summer months jumped about 16% over last year, and nongaming revenue at casinos, only available on a quarterly basis, went up about 18%.

**NORTHEAST WINDS AT 15 MPH**  
**HIGH: 68 LOW: 54**  
See your South Jersey forecast on **C6**.

INDEX	
Classifieds.....	B5-7, 10
Comics.....	B8-9
Corrections.....	A2
Hometown.....	A4
Living.....	C3
Money.....	C2
Obituaries.....	C5
Opinion.....	A5
Puzzles.....	B8
Sports.....	B1-4, 10
Television.....	B9
World.....	C1,4-5

7 42999 00002 8 10089