

NJAC COUNTY BIZ

An Educational and Informative Newsletter for Counties and Businesses

New Jersey Association of Counties

ISSUE 73 - MAY 2017

New Jersey's Clean Energy Program Your Power to Save



Join the thousands of New Jersey homeowners, businesses and municipalities that have taken advantage of incentives offered by New Jersey's Clean Energy Program™. These programs provide opportunities for you to save energy, money and help protect our climate and shoreline. New Jersey's Clean Energy Program strives to encourage and transform the way New Jersey consumes and manages its energy usage. Continue reading to learn more about how you can participate and watch your savings add up!

Does Your Home Suffer From the Blues?

Did you know that spiders build their web in areas that have air flow?

Looking for subtle signs like spider webs could point to energy related issues within your home. Let a specially trained contractor review your home to identify ways to lower your energy bills. With incentives up to \$4,000, the [Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® program](#) will make your home more comfortable, reduce your utility bill and check for any health and safety issues. Finding the webs is a first step; [call](#) a Home Performance with ENERGY STAR contractor today to check your home's health.

[Read](#) to see if one customer, Dianne, had spider webs!

A Guide to a Self-Home Energy Assessment

If 'yes' is your answer to the following questions, it's time to consider making adjustments.

- Are your electric and/or gas bills too high?
- Do you wonder if your furnace or boiler or central AC may *kick the bucket* soon?
- Does your home keep you comfortable despite the seasonal conditions?

Knowing what questions to ask when evaluating what home improvements can be made is crucial as you prepare for the change in seasons. With the help of [New Jersey's Clean Energy Program](#), we can be a guide in pointing out possible areas for improvements.

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Get to know your County Representative.....

How many years have you served as Warden for the Burlington County Department of Corrections?

I have been fortunate to serve as the Burlington County Warden for the past 2 1/2 years.

What was the first public position you held?

I joined the Burlington County Department of Corrections in 1992 as a Correctional Officer. I worked diligently to advance and assume more duties and responsibilities, which has led to being appointed as Warden in 2015.

Why did you choose to apply for Warden?

I have always had a passion for the County and Department of Corrections. I believed, if given the opportunity, I could provide effective leadership to successfully guide and improve the department. As a result, my appointment as Burlington County's first female Warden has been the highest honor.



Mildred Scholtz
Warden, Dept. of Corrections
Burlington County

What has been the most difficult decision you have had to make while serving as Warden?

No Warden has an easy job. One of my first and top priorities though has been to effectively create a succession plan for the department and for the Office of Administration. After I was appointed, my constant advice to our staff is "Every day is an interview."

What would our readers be most surprised to learn about you?

I love to travel the world, to immerse myself in different cultures and discovering different types of food. I bring the same passion for food that I do to my career and other interests.

Who is your role model?

My parents have inspired and driven me more than anyone else. They worked hard to raise a family of four children. While I was still a teenager, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Through her struggle, she continued to work and raise the family until she passed while I was in my early 20's. My parents taught me just how precious life is and to live each day to its fullest. They instilled discipline and a hard work ethic in me. My father's favorite saying to me was, "If you're 30 minutes early, then you're right on time."



What do you love about Burlington County?

I've lived in Burlington County all my life and I truly feel that it's the best county in the State of New Jersey. We have great farms, parks, and beautiful waterfronts. As I have been privileged to travel the world and experience a variety of things, Burlington County will always be home.

New Jersey's Clean Energy Program *(continued)*

It's Time



After a few erratic seasons of weather, you're finally convinced that it is now time to take action and replace a few things in the house. You've noticed that you can't buy a 60W bulb anymore and that there's more rust growing around the base of your water heater. Why contemplate about price points for equipment like a water heater and a washer and dryer when there are [rebates](#)!

Whether its spring or winter, any time of the year is a right time to replace a [heating](#) or [cooling](#) system.

If you're looking for new bulbs, click to learn more about [LED's](#) and [where](#) you can purchase them at a low price!

To apply for your rebate online, click [here](#)

When Moving is Not Your Only Option



Whether you're in the process of designing your dream home or conceptualizing one, why not consider an ENERGY STAR Certified Home! These home designs that will help you save up to \$400 annually on your utility bills.

With an ENERGY STAR Home the following [benefits](#) can be achieved:

- Higher resale value
- Building standards well above the rest!
- Wall to wall comfort and durability year round!
- Less energy use and overall savings

Learn more about how to build an Energy Star ready Home!

Own a Business

Is it time to renovate or brighten up the place where you work? Why not suggest giving the lighting system a makeover. Not only will visibility be increased within the facility but energy costs will decrease which will allow dollars to be shifted to other costs. With **up to 70%** of the costs paid by *New Jersey's Clean Energy Program*, update the lighting, the HVAC and/or the refrigeration needs.

Discover all [Direct Install](#) has to offer! No matter the size or your energy use, there's a program for businesses of all sizes.

Click [here](#) to learn more!

For additional information regarding New Jersey's Clean Energy Program please contact Kimberly Hoff, Market Outreach Manager at Kimberly.Hoff@clearresult.com or via telephone at (732) 218-3400.



NJAC County Vocational-Technical Schools Cook-Off

by Kathy Forsyth, Communications Director for the NJ Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools

At the NJAC 6th Annual County Vocational-Technical Schools Cook-Off Challenge held on Friday, May 12th, conference attendees were greeted with tantalizing aromas and eye-popping visual displays as they entered the final event of the conference, which took place at Caesar's in Atlantic City.

"Our freeholders and other county officials were awed by the creativity, talent and poise of the cook-off teams, and as always, the food was outstanding," said NJAC Executive Director John Donnadio. "The cook-off has become one of the most anticipated and popular events of the conference, and though it's hard to believe, every year it seems to get more exciting."

As the students carefully plated, presented and explained their entries, three panels of judges – a group of NJAC members, a group of professional chefs and all conference attendees, who voted for the People's Choice Awards – spent a very happy hour sampling the offerings and casting their ballots.

The districts participating this year and their entries were:

Bergen County Technical Schools - *Middle Eastern Delight*: Baba Ghanoush with a Kafta Ball served on Couscous Rounds with Cucumber Yogurt Sauce and Tomato Cucumber Relish

Camden County Technical Schools - Gloucester Twp. - *Braised Beef Short Rib Taco* with Mexican Street Corn Salsa and an Avocado Crema

Cumberland County Technical Education Center - *Mojo Pork Taco* with Pico De Gallo, Pickled Radish Slaw and Cilantro Lime Creama served with a Crispy Shrimp Spoon and garnished with Black Bean and Avocado Puree, Pineapple Pico, Roasted Jalapeno, Mango Coulis and Micro Corn Shoots

Essex County Vocational Schools - West Caldwell Tech - *Grilled Angus Beef Patty* with Sauteed Leeks, finished with Irish Whiskey Marmalade, topped with Beer Cheese Lemon Beurre Blanc Sauce and Irish Bacon, and served with Guinness and Onion Soup with an Irish Cheddar Crouton

Gloucester County Institute of Technology - *Crab Macaroni and Cheese* on a Crispy Cone with Pancetta Cream

Hudson County Schools of Technology - High Tech High School - *Sabor del Caribe* (Flavors of the Caribbean) - *Ropa Vieja Beef*

Mercer County Technical Schools - *Dark Honey and Bourbon Sausage* served with a White Corn Cake and a Roasted Tomatillo Stuffed with Smoked Gouda and Onion Bourbon Jam

Middlesex County Vocational & Technical Schools - Perth Amboy Tech - *Seared Barnegat Scallops* with Shiitake, Spinach, Corn Puree, Popcorn, Cranberry Dust and Micro Cilantro

Monmouth County Culinary Education Center - *Hazelnut-Crusted Pork Tenderloin* served with a Strawberry Balsamic Glaze and paired with Strawberry Salsa and Micro Greens

Morris County School of Technology - *Pork Belly Buns*

Passaic County Technical Institute: *All-American Grilled Cheese* with a Smoked Tomato Bisque Shooter

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NJAC County Vocational-Technical Schools Cook-Off *(continued)*

At a very exciting awards ceremony following the event, the team from Camden County Technical Schools took home the People's Choice Gold Medal, guaranteeing Camden a chance to defend the title in the 2018 competition.

Other honors went to:

NJAC Judges Panel - Taste Category:

- Gold - Camden County Technical Schools
- Silver – Cumberland County Technical Education Center
- Bronze – Hudson County Schools of Technology

NJAC Judges Panel - Station Display Category:

- Gold – Cumberland County Technical Education Center
- Silver – Passaic County Technical Institute
- Bronze – Monmouth County Culinary Education Center

Professional Chef Judges Panel - Taste Category:

- Gold – Cumberland County Technical Education Center
- Silver – Middlesex County Vocational & Technical High Schools
- Bronze – Monmouth County Culinary Education Center

Professional Chef Judges Panel - Presentation Display:

- Gold – Middlesex County Vocational & Technical High Schools
- Silver – Hudson County Schools of Technology
- Bronze - Cumberland County Technical Education Center

People's Choice Awards:

- Gold – Camden County Technical Schools
- Silver – Cumberland County Technical Education Center
- Bronze - Hudson County Schools of Technology



pictured l to r: NJAC 2016 President & Hunterdon County Freeholder John W. King, NJAC 2017 Secretary-Treasurer & Hunterdon County Clerk Mary H. Melfie, Camden County Technical Schools - Gloucester Twp. Culinary Arts team, and NJAC 2017 President & Gloucester County Freeholder Heather Simmons



pictured l to r: Dominick DiRocco, Director of Government Affairs for Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, engaging with a Culinary Arts Program student of Cumberland County Technical Education Center about the school's program and how the students prepared for the Cook-Off Challenge.



Group photo of all schools participating in the 2017 NJAC County Vocational-Technical Schools Cook-Off Challenge



Hudson County Schools of Technology Culinary Arts Program Students & Instructor Peter Turro

Maintenance and Infrastructure Insights

by Erin Skimson, Director of ITS Product Managing for Miovision

In [part 1](#), [part 2](#) and [part 3](#) this series, we covered Miovision's vision for data-driven traffic operations.

This post covers how insights can help improve Maintenance and Infrastructure operations.

Citizens expect traffic lights to work. City traffic teams are responsible for traffic signal maintenance and field operations, but without a system that informs the traffic department of problems in the network it can be difficult to meet the public's expectation.

Even simple questions, like the ones below, can be hard for traffic pros to answer:

- Where are the trouble spots for equipment failures in my network?
- Which detectors appear to be performing unreliably?
- How can I remotely determine if my maintenance contractors have resolved the signal issue to my satisfaction?
- How often are signal issues occurring?

To help cities answer these questions proactively, Miovision has a set of reports and dashboards in [Spectrum](#). They are called Maintenance and Infrastructure Insights.

Three Key Reports

Maintenance insights forecast and justify maintenance and operating budgets across cities. They also have an eye toward elevated system performance. Here's a look at the key reports:

- **Exception Reports:** Roll-up views to occurrences of power loss, signal flash, detector failure, pre-emption failure, connection failure and UPS activity.
- **Maintenance Ticket Management:** Reporting and tracking of average open ticket time from incident alert to resolution.
- **Intersection Maintenance Profile:** Intersection history including uptime, summary of persistent maintenance issues and performance rankings of maintenance teams.

How Are These Reports Generated?

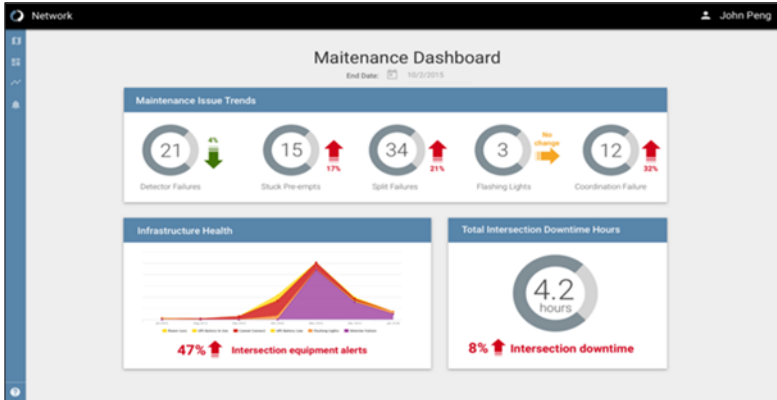
To generate these reports, Spectrum hardware monitors the intersection for maintenance issues or infrastructure failure. Data sources include the traffic controller, detection systems, and power supplies. This information generates maintenance alerts to the appropriate technicians or contractors as part of Spectrum's core signal management module. All event data associated with infrastructure or service issues are logged in Spectrum's cloud database. When the problem is fixed, a resolution event is logged in Spectrum's cloud database.

The database of infrastructure events is analyzed to determine maintenance trends and performance metrics.

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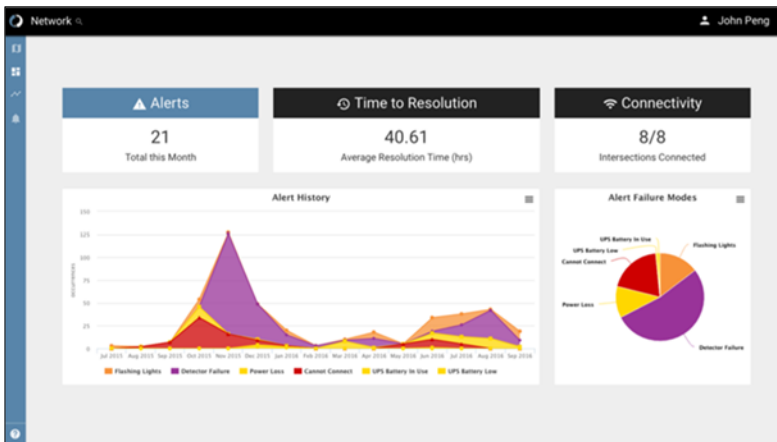
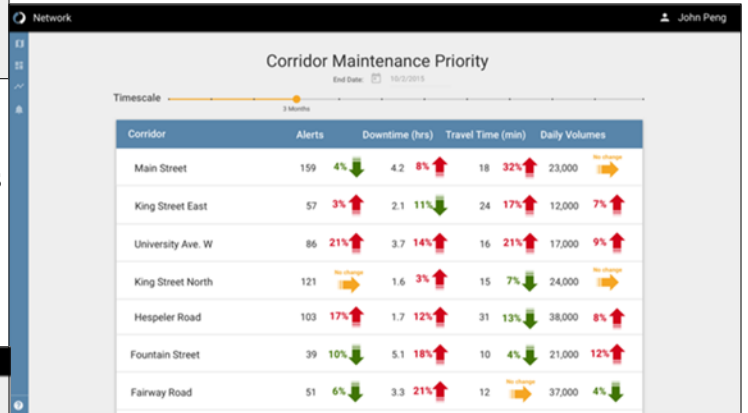
Maintenance and Infrastructure Insights *(continued)*

What do Maintenance and Infrastructure Dashboards and Reports Look Like?



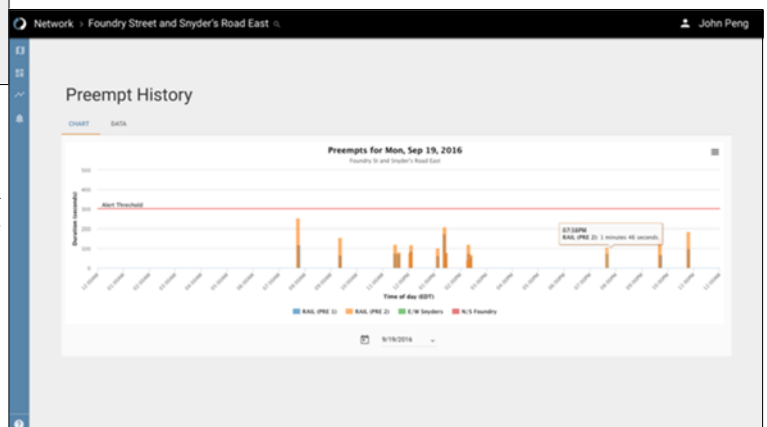
Maintenance Dashboard: Allows investigation of key trends in maintenance resolution time, uptime, and call volume. This information can be segregated between multiple zones in city, allowing comparison between multiple groups of technicians.

Corridor Maintenance Priority: Offers corridor-level trend reporting on alert frequency, downtime, travel time and daily volumes.



Summary of Alerts: An annualized view highlighting monthly statistics for a given intersection, broken out by maintenance category, and time-to-resolution.

Pre-emption Summary: A history of pre-emption events, including those that remained active beyond the alert threshold.



That's All She Wrote

Thanks for reading our series on Traffic Insights. Hopefully it provides some key information on how to optimize your traffic intersections using key insights. If you'd like to learn more, check out our [Spectrum page](#).

For additional information, please contact Andrew Fonseca, Account Executive, at afonseca@miovision.com.



Talking to Kids When They Need Help

by Janie Feldman, PsyD for the New Jersey Psychological Association

The New Jersey Psychological Association Offers Tips to Help Parents and Caregivers Talk to Kids During Mental Health Awareness Month



May is National Mental Health Awareness Month and The New Jersey Psychological Association (NJPA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) offer tips to help parents and caregivers recognize the signs of mental illness and emotional distress in their children. Approximately one in five children experience a severe mental disorder at some point during their life, according to the National Institutes of Mental Health.

When kids experience difficulties, it's important that they feel comfortable going to their parents or other adults for help. Some children may keep their feelings inside. If something is troubling them, they may not speak up and ask for help. Sometimes, kids don't realize that help is available. As the first line of support, parents must be able to have open conversations about feelings so they can identify when their children are struggling emotionally.

NJPA Public Education Chair, Janie Feldman, PsyD, states, "Parents have the weighty responsibility of being the primary role model for their children, particularly in the area of emotional development. How parents express their emotions is almost as important as how they talk about their feelings with their children. So, when parents talk to their children about their feelings, they introduce important concepts such as emotion identification, communication about feelings, and validation of feelings. Parents can teach even young children these essential life skills, which can serve as the foundation of developing effective communication about feelings and personal needs."

Getting kids to open up and talk can be a challenge, but the following tips can help start a conversation.

Talk about feelings from an early age.

Parents and caregivers should use language that is appropriate for the age and development of their child. Help them learn to name their emotions. Let children know that people can experience all kinds of emotions and it is ok- it's what they do with the emotions that matters.

Make them feel safe.

Put kids at ease so they feel comfortable opening up. It is essential to make it clear why the conversation is happening, as kids can be fearful that they may be in trouble or are being punished if they are pulled aside to talk. Parents and caregivers might consider creating a time to talk one-on-one on a regular basis, such as a weekly lunch or after school snack.

Listen to them.

Take the time to actively listen to what children have to say. Many times, all kids want is someone who will listen. Try to understand their perspective before offering suggestions. It's not necessary to try to fix everything. In many cases the best help is to listen attentively.

Be Genuine.

Try to avoid speaking from a script. Kids can tell when you're not being genuine. Be open, authentic and relaxed to help them do the same.

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Talking to Kids When They Need Help *(continued)*

Affirm and support their need for help. It's ok for children to express sadness or anger. Normalize those feelings by telling them you're proud of them for sharing their feelings. Let them know how courageous it was for them to trust an adult for help. If it seems like they need more help than you can provide, consult with an appropriate professional. It might be best to start by talking to the school psychologist.

Don't be afraid to say I don't know. As a caregiver, it is ok to admit that you don't have all the answers. However, if a child asks a question, make every effort to find an answer or someone who can help.

Dr. Feldman adds, "Talking to children about their feelings opens up communication which can be extremely important during times of great stress. Children can learn how to handle their feelings when parents encourage open, caring communication from an early age. Feelings can inspire us, but they can also be troubling, which is why it is so important to spend time talking with children and young people about their feelings to foster important conversations and provide them with understanding, compassion and support."

The New Jersey Psychological Association (NJPA) is recognized as one of the strongest state psychological associations in the country. NJPA is an indispensable network of resources for the public and media, a staunch advocate for psychologists in the state, and an influential presence helping shape mental health policies in New Jersey. Visit us at www.PsychologyNJ.org to locate a psychologist or to find the most current news, articles, and events that may be of interest to you.

For more information, contact Executive Director, Keira Boertzel-Smith, JD or Communications Manager, Christine Gurriere at 973-243-9800.



NEW JERSEY
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

LAN Ranks as a New Jersey Top Architectural Firm

by Jennifer Gangeri, Marketing Coordinator for LAN Associates

NJBIZ recently recognized LAN Associates as one of New Jersey's Top Architectural firms in the April 10th issue. The firm was ranked as the 13th top architectural firm in New Jersey.

"We are honored that NJBIZ ranked us as one of the top firms in the state," said Kim Vierhelig, Vice President of LAN Associates. "The firm takes a holistic, client-driven approach to architecture, which has been tied to LAN's successes for the last 50+ years. NJBIZ's recognition is a testament to the passion and creativity of our staff."

LAN Associates is honored to appear among the top Architectural firms in New Jersey and more importantly recognizes all of the hard work and dedication from its staff and clients to have made it possible.

LAN Associates is a full service engineering, planning, architecture, and surveying firm that operates in New York and New Jersey. The firm services a variety of federal, state, county, and municipal governments, boards of education, healthcare, housing authorities, religious facilities, and private clients. LAN's main office is located in Midland Park, New Jersey with a second location in Goshen, New York and a satellite office in Trumbull, Connecticut.



FLSA-What Does the Future Hold?

by Jennifer Dowd, Marketing Manager for Kronos Public Sector

Still confused about the status of the proposed overtime regulations? Well, you are not alone. Since the preliminary injunction on Nov 22nd, 2016, many employers are left wondering if they will ever need to implement the courses of action they had ready for December 1st. And this is one scenario where being prepared ahead of time was a disadvantage. In a recent [SHRM](#) article, [What's Next for Employers Under the FLSA Overtime Rule?](#), we learn more than half of the audience at a conference on employment law already moved forward with reclassification changes.



Tammy McCutchen

In the same SHRM article, Tammy McCutchen, former administrator of the DOL's wage and hour division under President George W. Bush and a principal with Littler in Washington, D.C, talks about what she sees as the future of the regulation. She encourages the [Department of Labor \(DOL\)](#) to consider a "restart and redo". This would include proposing a new rule with the opportunity for another comment period before the final ruling.

There are some general thoughts that the threshold was set too high, especially for parts of the country where cost of living is lower. More than doubling the existing threshold (\$23,660 to \$47,476) can put a drain on employers. McCutchen goes on to say in the article that she thinks a threshold of \$35,000 is a better place to start. Most people agree an increase is needed, but a smaller step should be taken.

Unfortunately, there is still more waiting we must do until we know which direction this regulation will take. In the meantime, keep those plans ready because you never know what will happen next.

To learn more about Kronos, please contact Wesley Witherington, Kronos Sales Executive State of New Jersey, Public Sector and Education, at wesley.witherington@kronos.com or via telephone at (973) 331-5465.



BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Learn about the benefits of being a part of NJAC and how you can join
by contacting
Loren Wizman, Business Development Director, at
(609) 394-3467 or loren@njac.org.

Kid's Chance of New Jersey

by Joseph Sabatini, Advisory Board Member for Kids' Chance of New Jersey

In 2012, McKenzie Kurnath was a normal teenager enjoying life; and then one day while having lunch with her friends her life changed forever when her mother called. Like many teenagers Mackenzie expected a reminder about chores or school. However, she knew this was anything but routine when she heard her mother's panicked voice. McKenzie raced home to discover that her father had been severely injured at work. He suffered a catastrophic spinal injury leaving him paralyzed. His life and that of his family would never be the same.

Flashback to 1988 when a Robert Clyatt, a plaintiff's attorney, formed the first Kids' Chance organization in Georgia after witnessing firsthand the life- changing impact that a parent's injury has on their family. Not only is there a physical and emotional burden but also a financial one. Although basic necessities may be covered through insurance, other things families take for granted, for example sending their sons and daughters to college, may be way out of reach.

Fast forward to 2012 when Justin Derkack and Lenny August of Comp-X Medical made the decision to form Kids' Chance of New Jersey. Their decision changed McKenzie's life for the better as she and her family no longer had to worry about how to pay for her college education. Mackenzie is able to attend college because of the financial relief offered by Kids' Chance of New Jersey. This relief comes in the form of scholarship funds for each year of school.

Kids' Chance of New Jersey has been immensely successful due to the tireless commitment of dozens of volunteers who work both in and out of the insurance community. Their fundraising efforts have changed the lives of 33 children here in New Jersey with close to \$500,000 raised that goes directly into scholarship funds. One of the primary fundraising events is the annual Black Tie Gala. This year's gala, to be held at the East Brunswick Hilton on July 13th, marks the five-year anniversary of helping children achieve the goal of higher education. We honor those students like McKenzie who have worked hard to overcome adversity, and also to thank those who support this worth worthwhile cause.

For more information on Kids' Chance of New Jersey or any of the 36 chapters across the country please contact info@kidschancenj.org



SAVE THE DATES 2017 NJAC MEETINGS AND EVENTS

June 23	Board of Directors Meeting - <i>Trenton</i>
July 20	7 th Annual Night of Baseball & Fireworks <i>Trenton Thunder vs. New Hampshire Fisher Cats</i>
September 22	Board of Directors Meeting - <i>Trenton</i>
December 8	Board of Directors Meeting & Year End Summit <i>Trenton Country Club - West Trenton</i>

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



Advanced Infrastructure Design, Inc. (AID) is a research-driven consulting engineering firm that specializes in (in-situ) evaluation of the integrity of existing infrastructure and providing sustainable design and repair strategies to prolong useful life. AID is a leader in Pavement Engineering, Bridge Condition Assessment using NDT such as GPR, Forensic Investigation, Utility Mapping, and Tunnel Scanning and Mapping using 3-D Laser.

To learn more and discuss further please contact Kaz Tabrizi, Ph.D., P.E., Executive Vice President, at ktabrizi@aidpe.com or call (609) 586-1301.

Enovative Technologies is a specialty retail organization that focuses on providing unique products to targeted markets. Backed by private equity, Enovative designs, manufactures, markets and sells its brands of products through both retail and wholesale channels, and is the leader in the specialty retail space for its product categories.

For more information please contact Chelsea Nichols, Event Coordinator at chelsea.nichols@enovativetech.com or call (443) 863-6645.

Keyword Strategies is uniquely qualified to assist your business through the maze of New Jersey politics. With 562 municipalities, 21 counties and the strongest form of State government in the United States, New Jersey is unlike any other state in the nation. From "home rule," to major elections every year, navigating New Jersey politics and government requires experience and knowledge.

To learn more about Keyword Strategies please contact George Devanney george@keywordstrategies.com

Spruce Technology/Veracode have decades of combined experience in IT consulting and a vast network of partners and advisors. The firm's principals are committed to delivering Big-4 expertise at highly competitive rates, without ever compromising the quality of our results.

To learn more about the services provided please contact Peter Sylvester, Director, Cyber Security and Cloud Services at psylvester@sprucetech.com or call (917) 331-9930.



Growth: Exploring the Roots and Reach of the Community Garden

by Alannah Dragonetti, Head of Marketing for GovPilot

Community garden: a public plot of land maintained by a city's residents. In recent decades, the prevalence of property blight has reignited interest in this age-old concept. Vegetation has sprouted in place of asphalt in United States cities from Detroit, Michigan to Jacksonville, Florida. This piece digs deep to explore the roots and reach of this increasingly popular use of vacant property.

Planting the Seed

The concept of a communal garden is an ancient one and its practice in the United States predates the nation itself. Native Americans tended crops as a tribe and other early American community gardeners included residents of [Brook Farm](#)—a Transcendentalist utopian living experiment in 19th century Massachusetts.

Approaching the turn of the century, an industry boom caused millions of Americans to flee to US cities. Land that wasn't dedicated to housing or office buildings was largely reserved for commercial farm use. On hiatus in times of economic prosperity, the community garden would reemerge nearly two centuries later in response to economic decline.

The 1970s were marred by a worldwide recession—a fact evidenced by the decay of large stretches of New York during this period. A previous GovPilot article discusses the rubble that covered Charlotte Street in the South Bronx (see page 12 of the November 2016 issue of *NJAC County Biz*) and Manhattan neighborhoods including Hell's Kitchen, East Harlem and the Lower East Side were ravaged by vacant lots left after the demolition of abandoned buildings. This last neighborhood became the site of the first modern-day community garden.

In 1973, the aptly named environmental nonprofit, the Green Guerillas, began tossing "seed bombs" over fences surrounding the Lower East Side's many vacant lots. Filled with fertilizer, seed and water, these bombs were part of the Guerillas' larger mission to beautify the blighted city.

When not dropping seed bombs, the Guerillas focused their efforts on a vacant lot on the northeast corner of Bowery and Houston streets. The group spent a year adding topsoil, erecting a fence and otherwise transforming this clear sign of blight into fertile ground.

New York officials took notice. In April 1974, the City Office of Housing Preservation and Development approved a lease for \$1 a month for the "Bowery Houston Community Farm and Garden".

From Vacant to Verdant

Today, Manhattan boasts over 60 community gardens and other US cities have followed suit. The community garden is more than a green oasis in a desert of concrete. It's a source of pride, a safe haven and a step toward revitalization.

Examples abound. In the 1980's, North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's Norris Square district was consumed by drug-related crime and vacant, rundown buildings.



Green Guerillas founder, **Liz Christy**, Observes the progress of the group's community garden-New York's first, 1975.

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Community Garden *(continued)*



A mural at Las Parcelas.

The community garden is credited with pulling Philadelphia's Norris Square neighborhood out of a state of despair in the 1980's.

That is, until, a group of neighborhood women reclaimed a vacant lot and established the Las Parcelas Community Garden. Murals provided a vibrant backdrop for the garden's rows of organic herbs and vegetables.

This splash of color created ripples that brightened other areas of Norris Square. Locals cleaned graffiti, enrolled their children in gardening classes at Las Parcelas and began to take pride in their neighborhood.

The findings of a study conducted by Texas A&M University provides further evidence of the community garden's potential to improve life in underserved districts. Researchers plotted the amount of green vegetation in Austin, Texas on a geographic information system (GIS) map to determine an average percentage of greenery for the city. They then compared a neighborhoods' percentage of green areas to its crime rate. The researchers found rates were lower in areas with an above-average amount of greenery and vice versa, regardless of residents' income levels.

GovPilot's Green Thumb

The establishment of a community garden provides residents with a beautiful view, organic food and a reason to come together. GovPilot's digital Community Garden application and associated automated workflow makes this rewarding undertaking more attainable than ever.

Clients place a digital application form on their official website. Through the form, civic-minded gardeners can request that a plot of land be reserved for a community garden. The form prompts them to provide local officials with all relevant information.

An automated workflow carries the request through the appropriate internal channels to produce a swift, definitive answer. Once approved, volunteers can start preparing the soil to sow the seeds of rehabilitation.

After the garden has been established, forms can be customized to allow residents to register as gardeners, reserve a patch of private soil within the garden and otherwise contribute to a gift that keeps on giving.

GovPilot is committed to helping local government manage vacant and abandoned properties to bounce back from blight. Some clients choose to auction foreclosed upon properties to responsible homeowners. Others choose the community garden route. GovPilot offers the versatility and strength to guide communities through their preferred path.

About GovPilot

GovPilot is a web-based Management Platform developed exclusively for local government. GovPilot optimizes workflow and revenue streams by replacing antiquated paper processes with digital automation. GovPilot unifies fragmented data and facilitates communication between employees and departments to promote informed decision-making. The platform offers 100+ templated processes, which can be used "off the shelf" or modified to fit a department's specifications. GovPilot grants unlimited users the ability to manage and share data 24/7, from the office, the field, or the comfort of home.

For more information about this topic, please contact Alannah Dragonetti by telephone at 201.222.1155 or via email at alannah@govpilot.com.



Nationwide Economics

Weekly Economic Review & Outlook for May 15, 2017

by Ben Ayers, Senior Economist of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company and
Ankit Gupta, CFA, Junior Economist of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company

Weekly Economic Review

For a second consecutive month, inflation readings were softer than expected with the overall Consumer Price Index (CPI) increasing by 0.2 percent in April. Moreover, the 12-month change in the CPI, a better measure of trend inflation, has fallen back to 2.2 percent—the slowest pace of the year.

Core inflation (stripping out the volatile food and energy components) was unexpectedly slow in April as well, rising by only 0.1 percent. This is on the heels of the extremely rare decline in the core CPI during March (the core rate has declined in only eight monthly readings since 1957). The weak core CPI figures for the past two months has lowered the trend rate to 1.9 percent—the first time this has been below 2.0 percent since October 2015 (and it may pull down the broader price index for personal consumption expenditures that the Fed prefers).

The past two month's weaker inflation readings are a slight reversal of what had previously been a trend rise in price pressures. Core inflation is expected to start moving upward again soon with other recent economic indicators show accelerating economic growth. For example, the Atlanta Fed's GDPNow estimate for the second quarter at 3.6 percent, and unemployment has dropped to the lowest levels of the expansion. There is a risk that the weaker core inflation is signaling a more fundamental slowing in the economy, but volatility in the survey data is the more likely cause.

Retail sales increased by 0.4 percent in April, slightly less than expected, but the strongest pace since January. A modest rise in auto sales and jump in gasoline prices helped to spur retail activity and offset weaker growth in other spending categories. Online spending remains the area of greatest strength, up more than 12 percent over the past year.

Core retail sales (removing autos, gasoline, and building supplies) increased by only 0.2 percent in April - a slowdown from March. This was a smaller gain than expected, and it suggests that the optimistic survey data from consumer sentiment/confidence have not yet translated into a sustained pickup in spending.

Even with slower retail sales over the past couple of months, the trend pace of spending has clearly accelerated in 2017, with increases of around 4.5-5.5 percent from year-earlier levels. With inflation just above 2.0 percent over this period, real retail sales have accelerated to a range of around 2.0-3.0 percent this year.

We continue to expect that the combination of solid job gains and signs of accelerating wages will boost consumer spending activity in coming months. Moreover, consumer sentiment remained near the expansion peak at 97.7 in the first half of May (likely lifted by the pickup in job growth). U.S. consumers continue to be hopeful about future growth prospects. Historically, this had led to stronger spending—something that we expect to be repeated in this cycle.

The Week Ahead

Housing starts should rise in April following increases in both new home sales and household formations. The trend in new home sales has been up for a while, and builders are attempting to meet this demand by increasing production—especially single-family units. Household formations have accelerated over the past year—up by 1.2 million in the first quarter. Each of those new households takes up space in a housing unit and responsible for

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Nationwide Economics *(continued)*

the reduced number of vacant units (both single-and multifamily). We expect housing starts to move higher to an annualized pace of 1.28 million.

On a longer-term basis, housing starts have increased for seven consecutive years, and we expect that 2017 will continue that upward trend. While the ratio of starts to households has also trended higher over this period, it remains below levels normally seen at the depth of recessions-let alone this far into an expansion. Accordingly, there is significant scope for start to expand further, as long as the economy continues to grow.

Industrial production should move higher with the latest Institute for Supply Management (ISM) survey data indicating an improved pace of manufacturing production over the month of April. In addition, The Baker Hughes rig count data showed yet another gain as higher oil prices boost domestic energy production. Weather is likely to be a modest negative for industrial production, as a small uptick in cooling degree days is offset by a drop in heating degree days (both measured as deviations from normal). Taken together, look for monthly growth of 0.2 percent in industrial production which should push up capacity utilization to 76.2 percent.

If you are interested in providing a social security or healthcare workshop for your employees, please contact your local Nationwide Retirement Specialist or Emanuel Mahand (Program Director) at Cell:609-923-8859 or mahande@nationwide.com.



Atlantic City Electric Provides Tips to Help Customers Spring into Savings

by Frank Tedesco, Media Relations for Atlantic City Electric

Customers should take action now to save energy this summer

The spring season is in full bloom. Atlantic City Electric encourages customers to take the necessary steps now by following a few simple tips and making a few energy efficiency improvements that can help save money on their energy bills this summer.

Here are some easy steps customers can take to help make a difference:

- Insulating your home can significantly reduce your heating and cooling costs, while increasing the comfort of your home in both hot and cold weather.
- Proper selection and placement of trees, shrubs, and vines adds attractiveness and also helps lower the heating and cooling needs of a home.
- If health permits, customers can save money by setting their thermostats at 78 degrees, a reasonably comfortable and energy-efficient indoor temperature. Close window shades, blinds, or drapes to keep out the sun and retain cooler air inside.
- Customers who regularly change filters to maintain their cooling systems can save money and increase the comfort level in the home.



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Tips to Help Customers Spring into Savings *(continued)*

- Ensure that no furniture or other obstacles are blocking ducts or fans. This will enable cooled air to circulate freely, making your home more comfortable.
- Keep lamps, televisions or other heat sources away from the air conditioner thermostat. Heat from these sources may cause the air conditioner unit to run longer than it should.
- If you have a crawl space, inspect it regularly to ensure that the insulation inside is dry. When insulation gets wet, it isn't as effective. Be sure to find the source of the moisture and replace any damaged insulation.
- The water heater is typically the third highest energy expense in the home. Lowering the temperature on the water heater can also help save energy.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with more efficient, compact fluorescent ones. Besides saving energy, you will also save money in the long run, since the life span of a fluorescent bulb is substantially longer.
- By purchasing Energy Star certified appliances, smart thermostats and other qualifying high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment, customers can earn rebates.

Customers can also take advantage of Atlantic City Electric's Energy Wise Rewards Program (EWR). EWR is a voluntary program that offers customers a choice of a web-programmable thermostat or an outdoor switch, which the utility installs at no charge to the customer. During summer periods of peak electric demand, EWR works to reduce electricity usage by cycling central air conditioner compressors off and on for short periods of time during periods of peak electricity use. Customers will receive a one-time bill reduction of \$50 when Atlantic City Electric installs the EWR device in their home.

Atlantic City Electric customers can find home energy saving tips and information on reducing their bills at www.atlanticcityelectric.com.

For more information about Atlantic City Electric, visit atlanticcityelectric.com. Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/atlanticcityelectric and on Twitter at twitter.com/aceleconnect. Our mobile app is available at atlanticcityelectric.com/mobileapp.



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2017 NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE

July 21-24



Columbus - Franklin County, Ohio

Register Today

The National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference is the largest gathering of county officials in the country and the foremost opportunity to exchange information with your peers and learn from nationally renowned experts on topics directly related to serving your residents. The Annual Conference is also where we set our federal policy agenda for the year ahead.

NACo's 2017 Annual Conference in Franklin County (Columbus), Ohio will offer over 50 committee meetings, plenary sessions and educational workshops, including four mobile workshops designed to give you first-hand insights into:

- Nationwide Children's Hospital – one of America's leading health care and research facilities supporting more than a million patients and families annually
- Ohio State University Campus Agriculture – Franklin County, the City of Columbus and community partners leverage food system development to revitalize neighborhoods, improve health, address food insecurity and foster economic growth
- Rickenbacker Inland Port – a global multi-modal logistics hub for product distribution to U.S. and Canadian consumers
- Scioto Mile and National Veterans Museum

The Annual Conference also features an exhibit hall with over 150 companies displaying the latest products and services geared towards county needs. Make new contacts with vendors and NACo partners offering potentially cost-savings solutions specific to county governments. Columbus – Ohio's capital and the 15th largest city in the United States – is located within 550 miles of more than half of the U.S. population.

Conference registration fees are significantly discounted for those counties that are already members.

If your county is a non-member, then NACo is offering FREE individual registrations to the 2017 NACo Annual Conference upon your county joining NACo. Contact Andrew Goldschmidt, Director of Membership Marketing, at 1 (888) 407-6226 x221 or agoldschmidt@naco.org for more information on this unprecedented offer. Learn why your county should be a member by visiting www.naco.org.

Omnibus Budget Bill is Good News for Counties

by Austin Igleheart, Legislative Associate for NACo

County interests fare well in \$1.163 trillion omnibus spending bill

In recent years, as partisan battles over federal spending have intensified, Congress has been unable to enact stand-alone appropriations bills through the regular appropriations process.

Instead, Congress has started to rely more heavily on year-end omnibus appropriations measures (that combine some or all of the 12 annual spending bills) or continuing resolutions (which fund federal government programs and agencies at prior-year spending levels) to finalize the annual process.

This year was no different with Congress needing to pass two separate short-term continuing resolutions before finalizing the annual appropriations process.

On May 1, just days before the May 5 shutdown deadline, House and Senate appropriators released the text of \$1,163 billion, 1665-page omnibus spending package (H.R. 244) that would fund the federal government through the remainder of FY17.

One trillion dollars of the funds (\$1.07 trillion) are considered “base pending” funds, while the remaining \$93.5 billion was included for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) and Global War on Terror funding. OCO funding does not count against statutory budget caps.

The spending plan combines the remaining eleven FY17 appropriations bills into one large measure and would provide a slight increase in overall spending from FY16 levels, while keeping base discretionary funding roughly equal.

Under the omnibus, most programs important to counties fare very well. For example, many Department of Agriculture Rural Development and water programs receive funding above or equal to FY16 levels. Water and Waste Disposal Programs, the Rural Community Facilities program and Rural Development Grants all receive slight increases under the omnibus.

Programs under the Department of Housing and Urban Development also generally fare well. The Community Development Block Grant program receives level funding at \$3 billion compared to FY16, while the HOME Investment Partnerships program also receives level funding at \$950 million.

Although EPA takes a small cut under the omnibus, most programs important to counties receive level funding. For example, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, grants to assist with water quality improvements, receives level funding under the omnibus package, as do regional water grant programs and the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program.

Certain health programs, including the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) and those to address the nation’s mental health crisis, also fared quite well under the spending package.

PPHF, the first dedicated funding stream that was established out of the Affordable Care Act to support community prevention efforts, is fully funded at \$1 billion. Efforts to combat the opioid epidemic received \$800 million, a more than five-fold increase over FY16. In addition to increased funding for opioids, the omnibus provided level funding, at \$1.9 billion, for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant; \$30 million in increased funding for

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Omnibus Budget Bill is Good News for Counties *(continued)*

SAMHSA's Community Mental Health Services Block Grant, for a total of \$541.5 million; and an additional \$50 million for mental health divided between SAMHSA and the Health Resources and Service Administration.

Human Services programs are largely level-funded. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, for example, receives level funding of \$3.39 billion compared to FY16. The Community Services Block Grant, a NACo-supported program, does receive a cut of \$9 million and will be funded at \$742 million for FY17. The Head Start Program, funded at \$9.25 billion through the omnibus, receives an increase of \$8.2 million.

State and local homeland security grants, such as those administered by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), are also spared major cuts. The State Homeland Security Grant Program (\$467 million) and FEMA grants (\$2.7 billion) both receive level funding, FEMA Mitigation Program funding, on the other hand, is increased by \$600 million to help provide disaster relief to local communities.

Programs of interest to counties under the Department of Justice such as the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) and Second Chance Act grants are level-funded at \$210 million and \$68 million, respectively. SCAAP reimburses states and local governments for the cost of incarcerating undocumented immigrants convicted of certain crimes. Second Chance Act grants help reduce recidivism by improving individuals' reintegration into the community after release from incarceration.

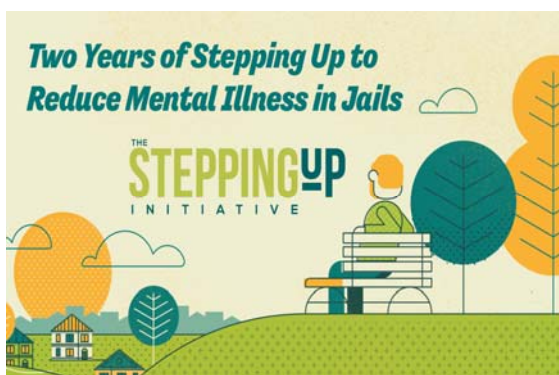
County public lands priorities were also addressed in the omnibus, though the bill does not include a reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Program. The Payments In Lieu of Taxes Program will be fully funded in FY17, receiving \$465 million in the omnibus package.

This is an increase of \$15 million over FY16. Further, the omnibus fully funds the 10-year average cost for wildland fire suppression for both the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service. These accounts are funded at \$42 billion with \$407 million in emergency funding.

For transportation-related funding, the omnibus maintains critical programs such as the Essential Air Service and TIGER Grant Programs, providing level funding for each. Both had been scheduled for elimination under President Trump's "skinny budget."

The bill also allows \$44 billion from the Highway Trust Fund to be used for federal-aid highways. This represents a \$905 million increase over FY16.

For more information or questions pertaining to this article, please reach out to Austin Igleheart at (202) 942-4260 or via email - aigleheart@naco.org.



Join the National Association of Counties and its partners at the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation for a **live video panel discussion** commemorating two years of Stepping Up: A National Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails. Panelists will discuss the progress their counties have made as part of the initiative and the continuing challenges and barriers they face to eliminating the use of jails as a response to people experiencing mental health crises. The event will be livestreamed for a wide audience at StepUpTogether.org and [Facebook.com/NACoDC](https://www.facebook.com/NACoDC) on **May 31, 2017 from 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you to everyone who joined us for a terrific 67th annual celebration of county government where our numbers were at an all-time high. Believe it or not, we've already begun planning on how to make next year's celebration even better, which includes just brownies for lunch at the President's Luncheon. With this in mind, please take a moment to share with us your thoughts and suggestions that we'll discuss with our conference committee within the next week or so. In the meantime, please join me in congratulating NJAC's 2017 award winners:

MAURICE FITZGIBBONS FREEHOLDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

John W. King, *Hunterdon County Freeholder*

COUNTY SERVICE AWARDS

Oscar Aviles, *Hudson County Assistant Administrator*

David Miller, *Mercer County Finance Officer*

Michael Oppegaard, *Monmouth County OEM Coordinator*

Dominic Vesper, Jr., *Camden County Deputy Administrator*

PETER PALMER BUSINESS ASSOCIATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Primepoint



John G. Donnadio, Esq.

The 6th Annual NJAC County Vocational-Technical Schools Cook-Off Challenge once again stole the show as the culinary arts program students from Bergen, Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris and Passaic counties competed for titles in taste, creativity, and food presentation. Congratulations to all the students and instructors that participated. (*Please see page 4 for a list of the award winning schools and their entries.*)

As equally enjoyable and impressive were the talented students who joined us for the Second Annual County College Acapella Sing-Off. Led by instructor Dave Anderson, Cumberland County students sung beautiful renditions of: *Yesterday by Lennon & McCartney* and *Can't Help Falling in Love by Elvis Presley*. Led by instructor Zulema Cheek, Union County students followed with fantastic versions of: *Summertime by Porgy & Bess*, *Hello by Adele*, and *Home by Phillip Phillips*. My two favorites were a powerful "Summertime" and a classic "Can't Help Falling in Love."

Thank you again for your support, and I look forward to seeing you on June 23rd for our Board of Directors Meeting that takes place in Committee Room 6 of the State House Annex Building.

Also, be sure to mark your calendar for Thursday, July 20th. NJAC is hosting another fabulous Night of Baseball and Fireworks at the Arm and Hammer Ball Park in Trenton. Game starts at 7:00 p.m. Only 30 tickets are available to watch the game while having a picnic style dinner with refreshments from a suite. Contact [Loren Wizman](#) or [Kim Nolan](#) for more details.

NJAC Night of Baseball & Fireworks

July 20, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Arm & Hammer Park - Trenton, NJ

Join us for a night of fun!



Baseball

Picnic dinner *in a luxury suite*

Networking

Fireworks



vs.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR COUNTY?

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	<u>MAY</u> 15	16	17	18  Jazz Concert 7:30 p.m. Bergen Catholic HS Oradell Bergen County	19 Vineland's 20th Annual Founder's Day Weekend through May 20th Grounds of Elwyn Cumberland County	20  Lewis Morris Park Dow Meadow Field 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Morristown Morristown County
21	22 Egyptian Dance Class 8:00 p.m. Grove Street Path Plaza Jersey City Hudson County	23  Patriotic Spring Concert 7:00 p.m. Vocational-Technical School Woodstown Salem County	24  Edible & Medicinal Plants of Muscumelcong Gorge 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Bloomsbury Hunterdon County	25  Piano Club ages 6-19 7:00 p.m. Public Library Hawthorne Passaic County	26  Tour of Somerville Cycling Series through May 29th Main Street Somerville Somerset County	27  FOOD! BEER! MUSIC! HISTORY! FOOD TRUCKS! LIVE MUSIC! PERFORMANCE! Official 4th Annual PORK ROLL FESTIVAL SATURDAY, MAY 27th 2017 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. CASA @ the Score - New Jersey
28  4-H Equestrian Dressage 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Fairgrounds Mount Holly Burlington County	29  memorial DAY	30  Leap into the Pond 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. ages 2-6 North Edison Branch Library Middlesex County	31  Annual Strawberry Fair through June 4th Owegoport Monmouth County			
				JUNE 1  THE BEST OF Gloucester County 2017 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Aultetto Caterers Almonesson Gloucester County	CRAWFISH FEST 2 through June 4th Sussex County Fairgrounds Augusta Sussex County	3  92.5 TU ANNIVERSARY SHOW Anniversary Show 4:00 p.m. BB&T Pavilion Camden Camden County
4 Paint Hammonton: Plein-Air Exhibition Noyes Museum of Art Stockton University Kramer Hall Hammonton Atlantic County	5	6	7  WINE DOWN Wednesday Renault Winery - Joseph's Bar 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Egg Harbor City Atlantic County	8  17th Annual Feast of St. Anthony through June 11th Rustic Park Union County	9	10  Strawberry Social through June 11th Villa Milagro Vineyards Phillipsburg Warren County
11 Gardens & Glass Fundraiser 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Van Vleck Gardens Montclair Essex County	12	13	14  Cruisin' Downtown 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Toms River Ocean County			