

CAPE MAY COUNTY CHAMBER



NEWSLETTER || DECEMBER 2025

From the President's Desk:

Dear Members,

As we turn the calendar to December, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude on this past year and on all of you who make the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce such a strong and resilient business community.

Our 900+ members truly are the backbone of the “Real South Jersey.” From family-owned shops and restaurants to professional services, hotels, attractions, manufacturers, and nonprofits, you have worked tirelessly through another busy season, navigating workforce challenges, rising costs, and an evolving regulatory and energy landscape. Your perseverance and partnership are what keep Cape May County vibrant, welcoming, and open for business year-round.

Over the past year, our Chamber has been hard at work representing your interests and amplifying your voice:

- **Advocacy & Policy:** We have continued to press for greater transparency and fairness in occupancy tax distribution, better recognition of our seasonal economy in state policy, and more attention to infrastructure and energy reliability in our region. We are making sure that when decisions are made in Trenton and beyond, Cape May County is not an afterthought.
- **Energy & Infrastructure:** In December we will host our NJ Vision for Energy Forum, bringing together key leaders from utilities and energy policy to talk candidly about New Jersey’s energy supply, reliability, affordability, and future. This type of program is exactly what our Chamber does best, creating a space where policy, business, and community needs intersect in a productive way.
- **Workforce & Education:** Through our partnerships with Atlantic Cape Community College, Cape May Tech, Workforce

Development, and others, we continue to focus on the workforce pipeline, especially the trades and skilled positions needed to sustain our tourism, services, and emerging sectors. Our Education Foundation and Leadership Cape May County program remain core to building the next generation of community and business leaders.

- **Military & Veterans:** We reconvened our Military & Veterans Affairs Committee to ensure we have a focused forum to listen to veterans’ needs, connect them with resources, and strengthen ties with our Coast Guard community and veteran organizations across the county.

Looking ahead, we are already planning strong, content-rich programming for the new year. In January, we look forward to welcoming a speaker from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia for a membership meeting on “Community and Commerce” - a timely conversation as we all continue to monitor interest rates, consumer confidence, and the broader economic outlook.

Your membership, sponsorships, committee participation, and everyday engagement are what keep this organization relevant and effective. When we say the Chamber is “your” Chamber, we truly mean it. Our role is to advocate for you, connect you, and provide the tools, information, and relationships you need to thrive.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and our staff, thank you for your trust in the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce, for your investment in our work, and for all you do for this remarkable place we call home.

*Warm Regards,
Barbara Stafford Jones,
President*



◆ **UPCOMING EVENTS** *

12/3—Mingle Bells Evening Networking—Cape May Seashore Lines

12/4—NJ Vision of Energy Forum—Cape Square Entertainment

12/18—Holiday Luncheon—The Lobster House

Chamber & Legislative Updates

- ◆ The Cape May County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the New Jersey Vision for Energy Forum on Thursday, December 4, 2025, at Harbor Square Theater. This forum will feature a timely discussion on navigating energy price volatility and exploring programs and technologies designed to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Industry leaders will share insights on energy reliability, innovation, and the future of energy in New Jersey and along the South Jersey coast. Panelists will include Mike Renna, President/CEO of South Jersey Industries; Jim Gilroy, State Government Affairs at PSEG Nuclear; Jake Sneed, Director of Regulatory Initiatives at Atlantic City Electric; and Erick Ford, President of New Jersey Energy Coalition. The panel will be moderated by Michele Siekerka, President/CEO of New Jersey Business & Industry Association. **[Learn more and sign up.](#)**

- ◆ The Cape May County Chamber Education Foundation is excited to announce that applications are now open for a variety of scholarship opportunities. These include funding for Post-Secondary Education (deadline Dec. 16, 2025), Dual and Concurrent Credit Programs (deadline Feb. 25, 2026), as well as scholarships for graduating high school seniors pursuing college or trade schools (deadline April 13, 2026). The Foundation provides scholarship opportunities to students in Cape May County who themselves, or whose parents or guardians are employed by, or own a business that is a member of the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce. Since its establishment in 2015, the Foundation has proudly awarded over \$73,000 in scholarships to support students in achieving their educational goals across a range of programs. **[Learn more about these opportunities and how to apply.](#)**

- ◆ The Chamber continues to closely monitor several key policy items included in the Lame Duck Session and the Sherrill Administration’s agenda. These issues include the proposed elimination of the tip credit over the next five years, the creation of a Cabinet-level Department of Commerce & Innovation to centralize business and economic development efforts, and multiple initiatives aimed at expanding New Jersey’s housing supply—such as converting underutilized commercial properties into residential units and incentivizing “missing middle” housing. Additional priorities involve streamlining state permitting and approval processes, increasing investment in clean energy initiatives like expanded solar deployment, and advancing tax relief measures through enhanced credits for families, caregivers, and students. The Chamber is also tracking proposals to improve government efficiency through shared services and reforms to the State Health Benefits Program.

- ◆ The Chamber’s first Membership Meeting of 2026 will feature an insightful program titled “Community and Commerce – A Dialogue with the Federal Reserve,” scheduled for January 15, 2026 at The Reeds. The session will be led by Ryotaro Tashiro, Outreach Economist and Advisor with the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, who will offer an economic outlook and discuss key trends shaping both local and national business environments. The event is sponsored by Reel Fire Protection and Sturdy Savings Bank. **[Learn more and sign up.](#)**

- ◆ The Chamber, in partnership with neKey, will host “AI: Beyond the Hype” seminar on January 29, 2026 at the Chamber office. Led by Russ Abdrakhmanov, Founding Leader of neKey, this engaging session will provide a balanced look at AI and how AI serves as a tool to enhance your capabilities and make you better, both personally and professionally. **[Learn more and sign up.](#)**

- ◆ New Jersey’s statewide minimum wage will increase by \$0.43 to \$15.92 per hour for most employees, effective January 1, 2026. Under the law, the minimum wage rate for employees of seasonal and small employers will continue to increase gradually until 2028 to lessen the impact on those businesses. The minimum hourly wage for these employees will increase to \$15.23 on Jan. 1, up from \$14.53. **[Read more.](#)**

- ◆ As 2025 draws to a close, businesses should keep key year-end deadlines in mind to ensure compliance and a smooth start to 2026. For calendar-year corporations, the New Jersey Corporation Business Tax 4th-quarter estimated payment is due Dec. 15, and federal 4th-quarter estimated tax payments are due Jan. 15. W-2s, 1099s, and the New Jersey W-3 (along with corresponding wage filings) must be submitted by Jan. 31. While certain licenses and permits may renew on Dec. 31, New Jersey annual reports are due each year by the end of a company’s anniversary month, not at year-end. Businesses are also encouraged to finalize 2026 health plan enrollments by mid-December and complete year-end tasks such as inventory, financial reviews, and budgeting. For more details, visit the **[NJ Business Portal.](#)**



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Chamber Event Highlights

November Membership Meeting — November 20



The Chamber was honored to welcome Kevin Reilly to our November 20 Membership Luncheon at the Avalon Yacht Club, sponsored by Exclusive Land Design. Reilly, a former Philadelphia Eagle and professional football player, is also a respected author and broadcaster whose powerful story of resilience has inspired audiences nationwide. He shared his remarkable journey from the NFL through a life-altering illness, offering insights on perseverance, leadership, and overcoming adversity.

Members enjoyed an engaging and uplifting afternoon, paired with outstanding hospitality and waterfront views which was an excellent way to head into the holiday season. We extend our sincere appreciation to Kevin Reilly for his inspiring presentation, to NBC Sports Philadelphia for their assistance, to the Avalon Yacht Club for hosting us, to our sponsor Exclusive Land Design, and to all members for their continued support of the Chamber.

Our next Membership Meeting is the Annual Holiday Luncheon on Thursday, December 18 at The Lobster House. Learn more and sign up.

Now Planning for 2026!

Want to bring a Chamber event to your location? Reach out to events@cmchamber.com to inquire about host venue opportunities!



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Chamber Member of the Month: Olympic Island Beach Resort

Nestled along the pristine shoreline of Wildwood Crest, Olympic Island Beach Resort offers a quintessential Jersey Shore getaway where comfort, relaxation, and family fun meet. Guests can unwind in well-appointed oceanfront rooms, lounge by the heated Olympic-size pool, or explore nearby attractions, restaurants, and boardwalk entertainment—all just steps from the beach. With a long-standing reputation for warm hospitality and memorable stays, the resort has been a proud member of the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce since 2018, continuing to welcome visitors who return year after year to experience the beauty and charm of the Wildwoods.



Learn more at www.olympicbeachresort.com.

Out on the Town with Our Members



On a busy Saturday night, a few staff members and their families visited **Harry's Ocean Bar & Grille's** “Jingle Bar”, which is fully decked out for the holiday season. The group had a reservation (highly recommended), and the place was buzzing with energy. The entire bar was transformed with festive décor, from the iconic Leg Lamp to sparkling ornaments and mini tinsel trees on every table. The holiday-themed cocktails were a fun touch, and they even offer a festive drink tree for groups. Christmas music played throughout the evening, adding to the cheerful atmosphere. Everyone in our group had a fantastic time, and it was the perfect spot to get into the holiday spirit!

Harry's Ocean Bar & Grille is located at 1025 Beach Ave in Cape May. Please visit their website at www.harryscapemay.com for more information.

A Chamber staff member and a friend (both Wicked superfans) recently followed the “Yellow Brick Road” to **La Mer Beachfront Resort** in Cape May for their enchanting *Screen to Table* dining event. Guests were welcomed by staff dressed in Oz-inspired attire and joined fellow fans for an evening that was nothing short of “popular”. As the film unfolded, attendees enjoyed an eight-course menu that paid delicious tribute to the magical world of Wicked, with each dish crafted to reflect iconic scenes and moments from the musical. To add an extra touch of sorcery, themed cocktails and whimsical beverages were available for purchase. La Mer hosts seasonal *Screen to Table* events throughout the year, offering a truly unique and wonderful way to enjoy dinner and a show!

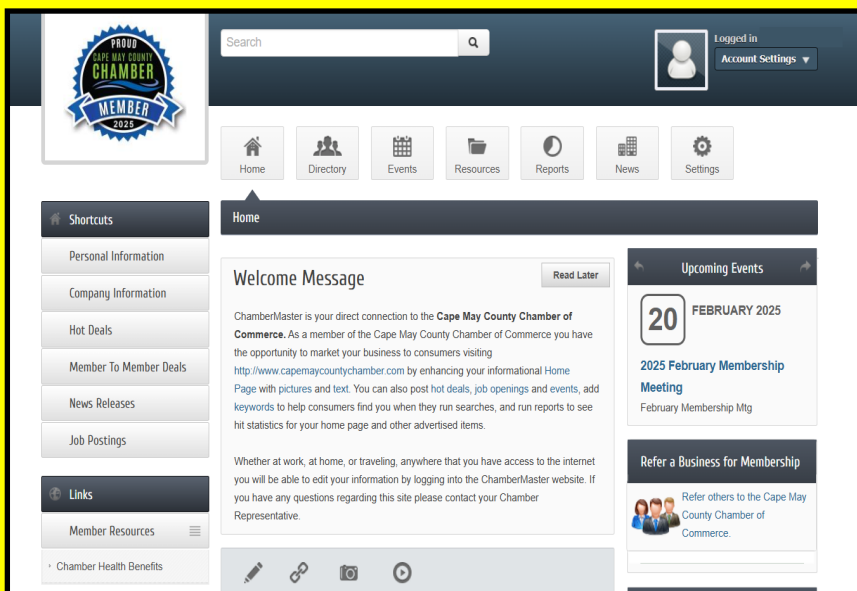


La Mer Beachfront Resort is located at 1317 Beach Avenue in Cape May. Please visit their website at www.capemaylamer.com for more information.

Maximize Your Membership: Share, Connect, and Shine!

Did you know your Chamber membership gives you a platform to amplify your business?

- **Spread the Word:** Post your events, news, job openings, and special offers directly on the Chamber's website and membership portal—it's easy and effective!
- **Boost Your Visibility:** Keep your member profile updated with your products, services, hours, and more to help potential customers find you.
- **Shop Local & Save:** Discover products, services, and exclusive member-to-member deals and discounts from fellow Chamber members.



Don't miss out—make the most of these benefits and let your business shine!

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Sponsorship Opportunities for 2026 are Now Available!

These include Chamber & Foundation signature events, membership meetings, advertising and *more!*

For more information, please reach out to Camille Fitzmartin at membership@cmcchamber.com or (609) 465-7181.

Your sponsorship will directly support the ongoing programs and initiatives central to the Chamber's mission!

Conference Room Rental

Convenient Location | Free Parking | Wi-Fi access | Video Conferencing Capabilities
Complimentary coffee, tea and water | Comfortably seats up to 22 people

Host your next meeting, seminar, workshop, board retreat, client appointment, or even just enjoy a quiet, professional space to be productive. With modern amenities, a convenient location, and a professional atmosphere, the Chamber is your go-to destination for business success.



CONTACT US FOR RATE INFORMATION

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