

# CAPE MAY COUNTY CHAMBER



## NEWSLETTER || FEBRUARY 2026

### *President's Message:*

As February unfolds, we find ourselves at that pivotal moment in Cape May County, looking ahead to the spring and summer season while continuing the important work that must happen year-round to support our business community.

Cape May County's economy is unlike any other in New Jersey. Tourism remains our economic engine, but behind every successful season is months of planning, advocacy, workforce coordination, and infrastructure readiness. Your County Chamber exists to ensure that the unique needs of our 900+ members and community are not only understood, but actively represented at the local, county, and state levels.

Over the past month, the Chamber has been deeply engaged in advocacy efforts focused on transportation infrastructure, workforce development, energy reliability, veterans' services, and education partnerships. These issues are not abstract policy discussions; they directly impact your ability to operate, grow, and plan for the future. Whether it's roads and bridges that bring visitors safely into our communities, energy capacity to support business growth, or workforce pipelines that sustain our hospitality and healthcare sectors, your Chamber is at the table.

February is also a time of collaboration. Our committees are active, our Education Foundation continues to strengthen Leadership Cape May and scholarship initiatives, and we are working closely with regional partners to ensure Cape May County's voice is included in broader South Jersey conversations. Representation matters, and we will continue to advocate for a seat at every table where decisions affecting our county are made.

As we move closer to the 2026 season, I encourage you to stay engaged, attend our events, participate in committees, share your challenges, and lean on the Chamber as a resource and partner. The strength of this organization comes directly from the businesses and leaders who make up our membership.

*Thank you for your continued support, your investment in the Chamber, and your commitment to Cape May County.*

***Warm Regards,***

***Barbara Stafford  
Jones,***

***President/CEO***



### ◆ **UPCOMING EVENTS** \*

2/4—South Shore Transportation Summit w/ Greater AC Chamber—The Flanders Hotel

2/9—New Member Reception—Chamber Office

2/19—Membership Luncheon—ICONA Avalon

2/25—Evening Networking Mixer—Anglesea Pub

3/6—Women in Business Conference—The Flanders Hotel

## Chamber & Legislative Updates

- ◆ The Greater Atlantic City Chamber and the Cape May County Chamber are proud to present the South Shore Transportation Summit on Feb. 4 at The Flanders Hotel, featuring a timely panel discussion, “Bridging the Gap: Transportation Solutions for Atlantic & Cape May Counties.” The Summit will bring together business and community leaders from across the South Shore of South Jersey to explore key transportation challenges and opportunities, focusing on regional connectivity, transit access, infrastructure priorities, and workforce mobility that support economic growth and long-term sustainability in both counties. [Learn more.](#)
- ◆ The Chamber will be hosting New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Dr. Dale Caldwell for the February 19, 2026 Membership Luncheon at ICONA Avalon. The keynote presentation will highlight initiatives in New Jersey. An update from the Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee will also be featured, with Chairman Assemblyman William F. Moen Jr. and committee member Assemblyman Antwan McClellan providing insights. The event is sponsored by the Mullock Family & Christopher Gillin Schwartz, South Jersey Gas, and Cape May County Democratic Organization. [Learn more and sign up.](#)
- ◆ The Cape May County Chamber Education Foundation scholarship applications are now available, which include funding for Dual and Concurrent Credit Programs (deadline Feb. 25) and graduating high school seniors pursuing college or trade schools (deadline April 13). 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. [Learn more about these opportunities.](#)
- ◆ Production is underway for the 2026 Calendar of Events, with limited advertising space now available. This high-quality, full-color glossy calendar highlights events, concerts, and activities throughout Cape May County and is distributed to 40,000 visitors and residents. The deadline to reserve advertising space is Feb. 28, 2026. [View rates and learn more.](#)
- ◆ The Chamber is proud to present the 21st Annual Women in Business Conference, taking place on Friday, March 6, 2026 at The Flanders Hotel. Centered around the theme “Innovate. Inspire. Influence.” this signature event will bring together women leaders from across the region for a day of connection, learning, and empowerment. Sponsored by 1st Bank of Sea Isle City and OceanFirst Bank, the conference will feature dynamic keynote speakers including LCDR Brittany Fifer, U.S. Coast Guard, Chief of Instructional Systems at Training Center Cape May; Chief Warrant Officer 3 Luisa Sanchez (Ret.), New Jersey Army National Guard; and Dr. Monica Amadio, Founding Chair of the Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship and Assistant Professor of Management at Stockton University. [Learn more and sign up.](#)
- ◆ **Bill A3451** was signed into law on Jan. 17, 2026 by former Governor Murphy prior to leaving office. The legislation amends the Family Leave Act by expanding employee protections to businesses with 15 or more employees, lowering the previous threshold from 30 employees. The changes will be effective July 17, 2026. [Read more.](#)
- ◆ On Jan. 20, 2026, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection adopted the NJ REAL rule amendments, incorporating both the August 2024 proposal and the July 2025 Notice of Substantial Change. This adoption significantly amended the Coastal Zone Management, Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, Flood Hazard Area Control Act, and Stormwater Management rules. The updated rules also include “legacy” provisions, allowing certain applications to be reviewed under the previous regulations for up to 180 days following adoption. This legacy period expires on July 20. The Chamber continues to monitor this. [Read more.](#)
- ◆ Governor Mikie Sherrill signed **Executive Order No. 7** on Jan. 23, instituting a 90-day pause on the proposal and adoption of new rules and regulations. Under the E.O., no agency shall propose or adopt any rule for a period of 90 days, subject to exceptions. Any rules that have been filed with the Office of Administrative Law but not published in the New Jersey Register shall be withdrawn. The Chamber continues to monitor this legislation. [Read more.](#)
- ◆ Effective Feb. 2, 2026, all Cape Regional Urgent Care locations will officially transition to a new name: Cooper Urgent Care. The rebranding of the urgent care offices is part of the transition related to the July 2024 transaction when Cape Regional Health System joined Cooper University Health Care. [Read more.](#)
- ◆ Atlantic Cape Community College will begin its Community Reporting and Community Journalism Course on Feb.10. In partnership with the New Jersey Council for the Humanities and Journalism + Design at The New School, the program offers noncredit community journalism workshops and courses designed to equip participants with the skills to effectively report on and articulate issues within their communities. [Learn more.](#)



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# Chamber Event Highlights

## January Membership Meeting — January 15



The Chamber was pleased to welcome Ryo Tashiro, Outreach Economist and Advisor with the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, as our featured speaker at the first membership luncheon of 2026 on Jan. 15, held at The Reeds at Shelter Haven in Stone Harbor. Proudly sponsored by Reel Fire Protection and Sturdy Savings Bank, the program offered members valuable insights into the Federal Reserve System, including its history, monetary policy objectives, the role of the Federal Open Market Committee, and both short- and long-term economic growth. Ryo also shared an overview of current U.S. economic conditions, including the housing and job markets, and concluded with an engaging Q&A session.

Ryo is seeking to expand his Cape May County business contacts as part of his role, which includes quarterly conversations with regional accountants and corporate attorneys to gather anonymous insights that inform monetary policy discussions. He is also looking for local business leaders, particularly CEOs and CFOs, to participate in brief quarterly calls and optional monthly business surveys to help strengthen regional economic data. If you are interested, please reach out to the Chamber or **Ryo directly** to participate.

**Our next Membership Meeting is on Thursday, February 19 at ICONA Avalon. Learn more and sign up.**

### **Evening Networking Mixer — Jan. 21**

The Chamber's first Evening Networking Mixer of 2026 was held at Cold Spring Brewery, New Jersey's first nonprofit micro-brewery. The beautifully restored 1804 barn provided the perfect setting for our members, who enjoyed a great evening of conversation, connection, and the opportunity to sample Cold Spring Brewery's handcrafted beverages while getting to know one another. A special thank-you to the teams at Historic Cold Spring Village and Cold Spring Brewery for their outstanding hospitality. We also extend our sincere appreciation to our event sponsors,

Atlantic Title Agency and Wisner Insurance, for their generous support.



### **AI: Beyond the Hype Seminar — Jan. 29**



Chamber members joined us for "AI: Beyond the Hype", an engaging and informative seminar that explored how artificial intelligence can be used as a practical tool to enhance both personal and professional performance. Presented by Russ Abdrakhmanov, Founding Leader of neKey, the session broke down AI terminology, real-world use cases, prompt engineering, ethics and safety considerations, and the future of digital work. Attendees also learned how AI agents are transforming business processes and how to identify opportunities for AI-driven efficiency and ROI. The program wrapped up with a lively and insightful Q&A session. We extend our sincere thanks to the staff at Cape May County Technical High School for hosting this educational seminar and to everyone who attended.

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***Want to bring a Chamber event to your location? Reach out to [events@cmcchamber.com](mailto:events@cmcchamber.com) to inquire about host venue opportunities!***

## Chamber Member of the Month: Gaiss' Market

Gaiss' Market, located in Villas, has been a proud member of the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce since 2012 and is a long-standing, family-owned butcher shop, grocery, and deli that has served the community since 1928. Known for its custom-cut meats, award-winning sausages and hams, and wide selection of fresh and prepared foods, Gaiss' Market combines old-fashioned quality with friendly, personalized service. With deep local roots and a commitment to excellence, the market continues to be a trusted destination for residents and visitors seeking high-quality products and a true neighborhood market experience.



*Learn more at [www.gaissmarket.com](http://www.gaissmarket.com).*

## Out on the Town with Our Members



A Chamber staff member recently had their car serviced at **Gentilini Chevrolet**, and had an excellent experience from start to finish. From the moment they arrived, the staff were friendly, professional, and attentive, making them feel welcome and valued as a customer. The service advisors took the time to listen carefully to their concerns and thoroughly explained what work needed to be done on the vehicle, as well as the expected timeline and costs, which was really appreciated. While their car was being serviced, the waiting area was clean, comfortable, and well-equipped, making the wait much more pleasant. Throughout the process, updates on the status of their vehicle were relayed, which helped them feel informed and confident that everything was proceeding smoothly. Overall, their experience at Gentilini Chevrolet was extremely positive, and they would not hesitate to return for future service needs. Their professionalism, attention to detail, and genuine care for customers make them stand out as a dealership that truly values the people they serve.

***Gentilini Chevrolet is located at 500 John S Penn Blvd in Woodbine. Please visit their website at [www.gentilinichevrolet.com](http://www.gentilinichevrolet.com) for more information.***

The Chamber recently enjoyed lunch to go from **The Perch**, the student-run café located inside **Cape May County Technical High School** in Crest Haven, just steps from the Conference Center. Soup and lunch items were prepared quickly, served warm, and full of fresh flavor, making it an ideal option for a busy workday. Beyond the quality and efficiency, The Perch offers a unique opportunity to support local high school students as they gain hands-on experience in culinary arts and hospitality. With a recently renovated, welcoming space, rotating weekly specials, and convenient online ordering, The Perch is a standout choice for a quick meal, casual meeting, or takeout lunch while investing in the future workforce. They are open Tuesday-Thursday from 11am to 1pm, during school hours.



***The Perch at Cape May County Technical High School is located at 188 Crest Haven Road in Cape May Court House. Please visit their website at [www.capemaytech.com/community/the-perch-cafe](http://www.capemaytech.com/community/the-perch-cafe) for more information.***

# Maximize Your Chamber Membership in 2026

Your Chamber membership is more than a listing: it's a powerful platform to promote your business, build relationships, and stay connected to Cape May County's business community.

With **900 members and growing**, the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce offers countless opportunities to increase your visibility and engagement:

⇒ **Spread the Word**

Share your events, news, job openings, and special offers directly on the Chamber's website and member portal.

⇒ **Boost Your Visibility**

Keep your member profile up to date with your products, services, hours, and contact information to help potential customers easily find you.

⇒ **Attend Chamber Events**

Network and build meaningful connections at our monthly luncheons and mixers, signature events, educational seminars, and more. We proudly host events throughout Cape May County to showcase the diversity of our membership.

⇒ **Join an Action Committee**

Share your expertise and get involved by joining one of the Chamber's Action Committees. Some meet year-round, while others convene just a few times per year—there's an option for every schedule.

⇒ **Ribbon Cuttings**

Celebrate new beginnings or milestones with a Chamber-hosted ribbon cutting for your new or existing business.

⇒ **Sponsorship Opportunities**

Support the Chamber while promoting your brand through sponsorships of Chamber and Foundation signature events, membership meetings, advertising opportunities, and more.

⇒ **Advertising Opportunities**

Promote your business in the annual *Jersey Cape Vacation Guide* and *Calendar of Events*, a highly visible resource for visitors from across the region. A variety of ad options are available to fit all business types and budgets.

⇒ **Email Blasts**

Reach our database of more than 1,000 email addresses to promote your events, specials, or important announcements.

⇒ **Conference Room Rental**

Host your next meeting in the Chamber's beautiful, newly renovated conference room, accommodating up to 20 people and equipped with modern video conferencing technology.

**Don't miss out on the full value of your membership. We encourage you to reach out to the Chamber staff to learn how we can help you get the most out of your membership and make meaningful connections in our growing business community.**

## Cape May County Chamber of Commerce

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