

CAPE MAY COUNTY CHAMBER



NEWSLETTER || OCTOBER 2025

From the President's Desk:

Dear Members,

October in Cape May County is one of my favorite times of year. The ocean is still warm, our streets are lively with fall festivals and shoulder-season visitors, and many of you are pivoting from a busy summer to planning, hiring, and reinvesting for 2026. Thank you for everything you did to make this season successful for our community and for the thousands of families who rely on our tourism economy.

Your Chamber continues to push hard on the issues that most affect our business climate:

- **Fair return on Occupancy Tax:** We're advancing conversations with state leaders to modernize the distribution formula so shore counties like ours receive a more equitable share that reflects the services and infrastructure we provide year-round.
- **Energy Reliability & Costs:** Following member input, we're refining the "NJ Vision for Energy" program into a deeper, more solutions-driven forum with BPU, PJM, utilities, and industry experts. Our goal is clear: reliable, affordable energy that sustains business growth and protects jobs.
- **Regulatory Environment:** We continue to monitor NJ PACT rulemaking and other regulatory changes that affect coastal communities, construction, and small business compliance.

If you have data points, case studies, or cost impacts we should bring to Trenton or Washington, please send them, your real-world

examples make our advocacy stronger.

Our Leadership Cape May cohort is underway for 2025–26 with an expanded countywide footprint. We're grateful to Stockton University for recognizing our graduates with advanced standing (three graduate credits and a waiver of MBA application fees). Thank you to the employers who invested in rising leaders this year.

The Education Foundation will also be reviewing our scholarship strategy in light of rising tuition and training costs. If your company can sponsor a scholarship or host a hands-on learning day, please reach out as these partnerships are game-changers for students and mid-career learners alike.

The Chamber now represents more than 900 businesses across industries from hospitality and retail to healthcare and construction, giving us a strong and unified voice. With committees, programs, and events for every interest, ranging from policy and tourism to education and leadership, members have countless opportunities to engage, connect, and make an impact.

Thank you for your continued trust and engagement. Together, we'll keep Cape May County competitive, welcoming, and resilient through every season.



Warm Regards,

Barbara Stafford Jones, President

◆ **UPCOMING EVENTS** *

10/7—New Member Reception—Chamber Office

10/10 —Glow Golf Social—Big Little 9 Golf Course

10/15 —81st Annual Meeting & Installation Dinner—Wildwoods Convention Center

10/17—Cape May County Non-Profit Summit—ACCC Cape May Campus

10/29—Evening Networking Mixer—The Chalfonte Hotel

Chamber & Legislative Updates

- ◆ Get ready to light up the night at the Cape May County Chamber's first-ever Glow Golf Social! Join us on Friday, October 10, at the Big Little 9 Golf Course in Cape May Court House for an evening of glowing fun, networking, and friendly competition. Kick off the night with hospitality and food provided by Mudhen Brewery, then hit the greens for a unique 9-hole glow-in-the-dark golf experience. [Learn more and sign up.](#)

- ◆ The Cape May County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce its 81st Annual Meeting & Installation Dinner, presented by Simonsen & McClellan of Legislative District One, on Wednesday, October 15 at the Wildwoods Convention Center. Nearly 200 prominent members of the Cape May County business community are expected to attend. Guests will enjoy a lively social hour and elegant dinner featuring the installation of Officers and Directors, as well as the presentation of special awards recognizing exceptional contributions to the Cape May County business community. [Learn more and sign up.](#) [Click here to read list of Award Winners.](#)

- ◆ The Chamber, in partnership with Atlantic Cape Community College, ACENDA Integrated Health, Cooper University Health Care, and the Cape May County Women's Commission, has announced the return of the Cape May County Non-Profit Summit. The event will be held on Friday, October 17, at Atlantic Cape Community College's Cape May Campus. Designed exclusively for non-profit organizations, the summit provides a valuable opportunity to share its mission, highlight current projects, and explore collaborative opportunities. [Learn more and sign up.](#)

- ◆ The 2026 Jersey Cape Vacation Guide is accepting advertisers for its 59th edition until November 15. The Guide highlights the best of Cape May County with engaging content on attractions, dining, accommodations, and activities. This year's package includes expanded digital marketing opportunities like a visitor-focused website, email blasts to 7,000+ subscribers, an e-newsletter, and social media features. [Learn more.](#) [View the digital version.](#)

- ◆ The Chamber is collecting new diapers to support families facing diaper need, a serious but often unseen challenge. According to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, many low-income parents must choose between diapers and food, as diapers aren't covered by programs like SNAP or WIC. CFBNJ's diaper drive initiative shows that even \$1 can provide six diapers, making every donation meaningful in helping infants stay clean, dry, and healthy. The Chamber office is serving as a drop-off location for anyone wishing to contribute. [Learn more.](#)

- ◆ The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) has opened applications for the Next New Jersey Manufacturing Program. The program will encourage growth in New Jersey's manufacturing sector by offering long-term benefits to manufacturing companies. Last month, Governor Phil Murphy signed [Bill A5687/S4407](#) into law, establishing the \$500 million tax credit program, which Senator Michael Testa and Assemblyman Antwan McClellan were key sponsors of. [Read more.](#)

- ◆ Congressman Jefferson Van Drew met with mayors from Cape May, Atlantic, and Ocean Counties, along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the NJ DEP, to address both short- and long-term solutions for protecting South Jersey's beaches. Van Drew announced plans to introduce legislation that would secure permanent funding for beach projects nationwide, ensuring stability for coastal communities while lowering costs. Local leaders praised his efforts and commitment to safeguarding the Jersey Shore from erosion, emphasizing the importance of working together as one united coastal community. [Read more.](#)

- ◆ Cumberland Salem Cape May Workforce Development Board & Business Services announce various business incentive programs in New Jersey aimed at supporting employers through training and hiring initiatives. Programs include On-The-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Tax Credits, and Federal Bonding. [Read more.](#)

- ◆ The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, a service offered through Cape May County Division of Aging and Disability Services in partnership with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), is actively seeking volunteers for the upcoming tax season. No prior tax experience is needed, as the IRS and New Jersey State Tax Office provide free training and certification, with additional non-tax roles also available. [Read more.](#)



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Chamber Event Highlights

September Membership Meeting – September 18



The Chamber was honored to welcome Senator Michael Testa, Assemblyman Antwan McClellan, and Assemblyman Erik Simonsen of Legislative District 1 to Sept. 18th's membership luncheon at The Flanders Hotel, sponsored by Workplace HCM.



Our legislators provided valuable updates, including the passage of the Next New Jersey Manufacturing Program, a credit initiative designed to incentivize manufacturing investment and job creation, in which Senator Testa and Assemblyman McClellan served as key sponsors of this bill. They also addressed energy issues in the state and ongoing efforts alongside the Chamber and Cape May County to improve the state funding formula.

Evening Networking Mixer – Sept. 10



Chamber members gathered for a wonderful networking mixer at Stowaways at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry Terminal. Guests enjoyed great conversation in a relaxed bayside setting, with some members also taking part in a memorable sail aboard the AJ Meerwald on the Delaware Bay. A special thank-you goes out to the teams at Stowaways and the AJ Meerwald for their warm hospitality and helping make this event both fun and unique.



Leadership Cape May County – Sept. 17

The ninth, and largest, class to date of Leadership Cape May County launched with an engaging day focused on learning and connection. The morning featured DiSC Training with Maria Grande, where participants explored their behavioral patterns and communication styles. In the afternoon, teams tackled challenges at EscapeMay Escape Rooms and participated in a scavenger hunt around Cape May County. The day concluded with a reception at Bellevue Tavern where current and past Leadership participants mingled.



Sunset Cruise – Sept. 19

The Chamber's first Sunset Cruise aboard the Cape May Whale Watcher was an unforgettable evening, featuring perfect weather, a beautiful sunset, live music by local favorite Animal House Band, and delicious food provided by MudHen Brewing Company. Guests enjoyed the scenic atmosphere of being on the water while bringing their own great energy to the night. The Chamber extends special thanks to ICONA Resorts and Harris Technology for sponsoring the event, and to the Whale Watcher/Stewart family for their partnership. The Chamber looks forward to making this an annual event!



Chamber Member of the Month: Chef Dawn Michele

Chef Dawn Michele, a Chamber member since 2023, offers custom vegan cuisine prepared right in clients' homes. With a focus on healthy, personalized menus tailored to individual tastes and preferences, she handles everything from planning and shopping to cooking and cleanup, leaving clients with a fridge full of flavorful, ready-to-enjoy dishes. In addition to weekly meal services, Chef Dawn also specializes in small parties and special occasions, giving hosts the chance to relax and enjoy their guests. Serving Cape May and Atlantic Counties, she is passionate about creating seasonally inspired meals that showcase both new and familiar flavors.



Learn more at www.chefdawnmichele.com.

Out on the Town with Our Members



Dining at **Grana BYOB** in Cape May is a true culinary experience. Refined yet unpretentious, with every dish crafted to delight. We started with the seared foie gras, which was rich and indulgent, perfectly balanced in flavor and texture. The tomato and feta salad was a fresh, vibrant contrast, simple, seasonal ingredients elevated with care. For the main course, the T-bone steak was cooked to perfection, juicy, flavorful, and generously portioned while the branzino was a standout: delicately crisp on the outside, tender and flaky inside, with subtle flavors that let the fish shine. Homemade ice cream was a delicious end to the evening. The ambiance is warm and intimate, with a relaxed elegance that makes you want to linger. Bringing your own wine adds a personalized touch, making the experience feel even more special. Grana is the kind of place where every detail, on the plate and in the room, comes together beautifully. Congratulations to Chef Messick for the creative menu.

Grana BYOB is located at 413 South Broadway, Cape May. Please visit their website at www.granabyob.com for more information.

A Chamber team member recently visited **Arden's Kids**, a charming children's boutique nestled just a block from the Washington Street Mall in Cape May, to shop for a birthday gift. Welcomed by friendly and helpful staff, they found a beautiful "Cape May" sweater that's sure to last through the season, while browsing their curated collection of children's clothing, toys, and accessories. Arden's Kids has been delighting families for over 35 years with its quality, personalized offerings and remains a go-to destination for thoughtful gifts and keepsakes. Whether you're shopping for everyday wear or a special occasion, the store offers something unique for every child.



Arden's Kids is located at 315 Ocean Street, Unit 15 in Cape May. Please visit their website at www.ardenskids.com for more information.



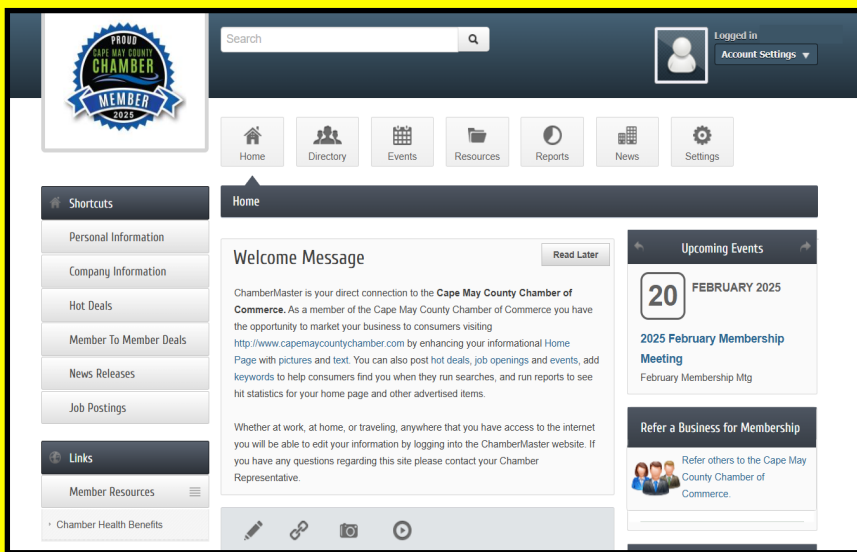
- Managed Services
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Maximize Your Membership: Share, Connect, and Shine!

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!

LOGIN NOW.



Flavors for Every Taste

Whether you're in the mood for casual beach fare or elegant and elevated cuisine, there's a Cape Resorts flavor for every taste. Farm-to-table, fine dining, classic American, light bites—you'll find something to satisfy your every craving at one of our Cape May restaurants.



THE BLUE PIG TAVERN
Savored farm fresh American fare in cozy tavern ambience.

THE BOILER ROOM
Delicious wood fired pizza in a vibrant night club setting.

THE EBBITT ROOM
Award-winning farm to table. Fine dining and cocktails.

THE RUSTY NAIL
Cape May's famed surf-tour bar and restaurant.



TheBluePigTavern.com



BoilerRoomCapeMay.com



EbbittRoom.com



RustyNailCapeMay.com

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Please join us for the

81st Annual Meeting & Installation Dinner

OCTOBER 15, 2025
WILDWOODS CONVENTION CENTER
5-8:30 PM

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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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