

# County to sell methane gas from landfill



Superintendent Chris Murray (right) shows Freeholder Director William C. Barham how the county disposes of its compacted household solid waste. The decomposing trash produces methane gas.

*Deal worth  
\$1 million  
in revenue*

**FREEHOLD** – In a move that will increase revenue, the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders has struck a deal with GSF Energy LLC to sell the methane gas that is produced from the decomposition of solid waste at the Monmouth County Reclamation Center, Tinton Falls.

GSF Energy owns landfill gas recovery facilities across the United States and already has a landfill gas recovery operation at the Monmouth County Reclamation Center, in which it captures some of the methane gas and converts  
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## WELCOME TO THE COUNTY'S FIRST E-NEWSLETTER

You are reading Monmouth County's first-ever E-Newsletter.

The E-Newsletter is part of the Board of Chosen Freeholders' effort to keep Monmouth County residents informed. Here you will find news the county produced in the previous three months.

There's also feature stories, such as "Bright Ideas," where the work of a particular department or agency is highlighted to spotlight the services they provide.

The effort to make information about Monmouth County more accessible started with the creation of the new county Web site, where the E-Newsletter can be found.

Because the Internet is the future of mass communications, the freeholders believe the county's Web site needs to be a window into county government.

The new Web address is [www.visitmonmouth.com](http://www.visitmonmouth.com). We are sure you will agree, Monmouth County has taken a giant step forward.

For example, contacting your

freeholders has never been easier. And, despite moving all regular meetings to the evening hours, the freeholders realize not everyone can attend a public meeting. That's why all minutes from the freeholders' meetings are now posted on the Web.

A few bells and whistles have been added, too. Monmouth County is the first county in New Jersey to offer a virtual Newsroom. It is updated every morning so the latest news from around Monmouth County is delivered to you on this site.

In addition to press releases, visitors to the Newsroom will also find video clips, these E-Newsletters and others, photo galleries and proclamations issued by the freeholders.

Take your time and browse. Join our e-mail subscription service. Bookmark the pages you find resourceful. And don't forget – check out the online Newsroom section every day!

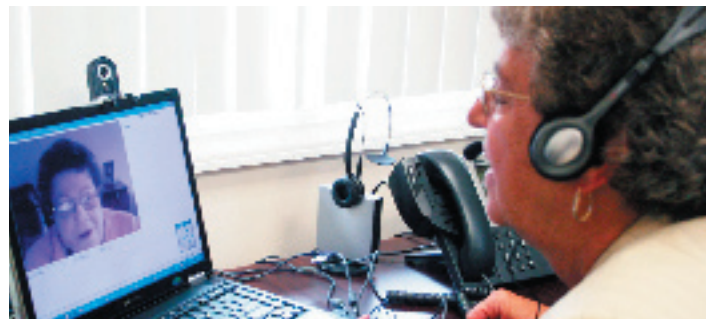
## VieBridge Connections addresses needs of chronically ill, caregivers

**FREEHOLD** – The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders, together with the county's Office on Aging, has launched VieBridge Connections, a Web-based application for caregivers and the chronically ill, accessible at [www.viebridgeconnections.net](http://www.viebridgeconnections.net).

Bringing together the perfect blend of the latest technologies

and educational materials for caregivers and the homebound suffering from chronic conditions, VieBridge Connections allows Monmouth County residents (or caregivers with a family under their management in Monmouth County) access to a broad range of tools that will help them self-

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Alma Strack of the Office on Aging speaks with Edie Berg of Howell, who is homebound, using program's video-conferencing feature.

# Got cow? Farmland is being preserved at a rapid pace in Monmouth County

• So far, 106 farms comprising some 9,835 acres have been protected from future development.

It's easy to spot a new housing development. One day it's a cornfield and the next there's a dozen new homes instead.

What's not so easy to detect is the many acres of farmland that are being saved from development. Except for a simple sign noting a particular farm is being preserved, there's no obvious clues to signal to passers-by that something beneficial has happened.

Yet, it's happening all over Monmouth County – and at an aggressive rate, thanks to the combined efforts of local, county and state government. So far, 106 farms comprising some 9,835 acres have been protected from future development.

“The preservation of farmland creates many benefits for agricultural industry producers and consumers in addition to protecting the environment and maintaining the rural character of Monmouth County,” said Joseph McCarthy, chairman of the Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board.

The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders recognizes that the window of opportunity to preserve the county's remaining agricultural land base is limited.

“More than 50 percent of all farms preserved during the 20-year history of the Farmland Preservation Program have been preserved in the last five years alone,” Freeholder Lillian G. Burry said. “Preserving these



**New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Charles M. Kuperus and Freeholder Lillian G. Burry welcome the 75-acre Jennings Farm in Upper Freehold into the Farmland Preservation Program.**

farms not only strengthens the agriculture industry, but allows future generations to enjoy a county rich in rural character.”

There are several ways farms can be preserved.

- The Planning Incentive Grant farmland preservation program (P.I.G. Program). The P.I.G. Program provides state grants to eligible counties and municipalities to purchase agricultural easements on farms in designated project areas. It empowers municipalities to

take the lead in safeguarding their farmland resources.

- The County Easement Purchase Program, which is currently being transformed by the state into a more flexible program modeled after the P.I.G. Program. The new program would provide counties with “block grant” allocations of \$2 million each and the opportunity to compete for more money up to an annual maximum of \$8 million per county.

Under both of these

programs, the state typically pays 60 percent, the county pays 24 percent and the municipality pays 16 percent. The easement permanently retires the development rights, but the property remains in private ownership and can be used for agricultural purposes.

- The Direct Easement Purchase Program is similar to the County Easement Purchase Program, except that the property owner would apply directly to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC).

- The Fee Simple Program. Under this program, the state buys a farm outright, retires the land's development rights, then auctions the property to the highest bidder. The property must continue to be farmed.

- Eight-Year Program. With the Eight-Year Program, farm owners agree to restrict nonagricultural development for a period of eight years in exchange for certain benefits such as grants of up to 50 percent of the costs of approved Soil and Water Conservation projects.

The Board of Chosen Freeholders currently provides financial resources in support of farmland preservation efforts to 10 municipalities. Those municipalities comprise most of the county's remaining farmland and its overall land base.

“The county is committed to saving farms,” Freeholder Director William C. Barham said. “Farmland preservation protects not only the farm, it preserves the quality of life in Monmouth County that we have all come to enjoy and cherish.”

## Howell, site of first farm preserved, adds two more to the program

HOWELL – Another 15 acres of farmland has been preserved in Howell. The county acquired the development rights on the Brooklyn Cowboy Farm, a standardbred boarding and training operation, in late May. In early June, it obtained the development rights on the Peacock farm, an ornamental nursery farm.

Both properties are in close proximity to

other preserved farms, open space, or active farmland preservation acquisition projects. The Brooklyn Cowboy Farm is located within 1½ miles of two preserved farms and five active acquisition projects, while the Peacock Farm is less than half mile from a farm that will be preserved in July. Both properties are near the Manasquan Reservoir.

“The County is excited that Howell

Township is preserving farms at such a rapid pace and is committed to working with the township on future farmland preservation efforts,” Freeholder Director William C. Barham said.

The first farm preserved in Monmouth County was the 70-acre Meade Farm, a sod farm located on Howell Road. It entered the Farmland Preservation Program in 1987.



## CONSUMER AFFAIRS STAFF READY TO HELP RESOLVE COMPLAINTS

Inside the Veterans Memorial Building in downtown Freehold is one of Monmouth County's best kept secrets. At least that's what Patricia Watson says about the Monmouth County Department of Consumer Affairs.

"We handle everything from appliance repair and auto shop complaints to problems with contractors and misleading advertising," said Watson, who is the director of the office. "Any kind of problem a consumer can have, we can handle ... and if we can't, we will direct it to the people who can."

With a staff of six, the county Department of Consumer Affairs handles about 1,000 complaints each year.

"Consumers need to know what a great resource we can be for them," Watson said.

The department investigates residents' complaints against Monmouth County businesses. Often, rather than going to court, consumers who feel they have been victimized can turn to the Consumer Affairs' staff to mediate disputes, Watson said.

Already this year, the office has opened 378 cases for investigation and recovered more than \$225,000 for consumers who had



**Patricia Watson, director of the Monmouth County Department of Consumer Affairs, reviews cases at her desk in Freehold. Her office handles 1,000 complaints a year.**

merited claims against businesses in the county.

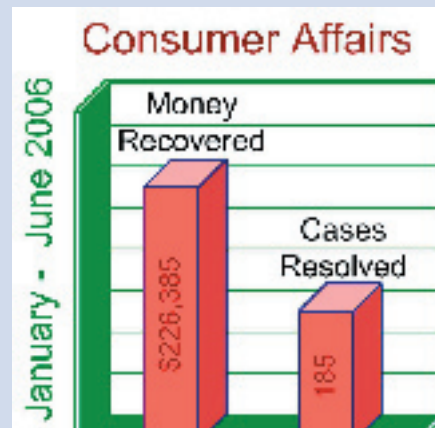
In June alone, 71 cases were opened and more than \$30,000 was recovered on behalf of consumers. Some cases take several months or even more than a year to settle. Watson said most cases are resolved within a matter of weeks.

"It is very satisfying to be able to help people get results," she said.

Consumers who wish to file a complaint can obtain a complaint form by calling the Consumer Affairs office at (732) 431-7900.

Watson also encourages people to contact her office before they sign a contract.

"Consumers can contact us to find out if a business has had any complaints filed against them recently," she said.



## County to hold economic development summit Sept. 29

FREEHOLD – To keep jobs and workers in Monmouth County, the Board of Chosen Freeholders is making preparations to hold the county's first Economic Development Summit at Branches in West Long Branch.

"This exciting event will bring together all of our top business, government and civic leaders in a setting where issues ranging from employee relocation to attracting new jobs and businesses to the county can be fully explored to gauge the impact these will have on our local economy," said Freeholder Anna C. Little, who is working with the county's Department of Economic Development and Tourism to coordinate the economic summit.

With the dot.com crash, the events of Sept. 11, 2001, increasingly restrictive state laws,

environmental regulation and the pending closing of Fort Monmouth, she said there is a pressing need for county officials to work proactively to make sure jobs are available in Monmouth County to replace the ones that are lost.

"Many of the forces changing the economic landscape in Monmouth County give very little to no warning," she said. "In the case of Fort Monmouth, we are fortunate to have some advance warning. While reacting to forces already affecting our economy, it makes sense to take the eventual closure of Fort Monmouth into consideration,



**LITTLE**

too. We must create a sustainable economic development plan for the county."

"Monmouth County has one of the finest workforces in America," said Beatrice M. Duffy, director of the county's Department of Economic Development and Tourism. "It is among the best educated and most experienced and diverse. They create and produce some of the most advanced medical, computer and communications products in the world. Our challenge today is to keep them here."

Issues to be discussed by a six-member panel include the possible consequences of the fort's closure, the aspects of the marketing program to protect the workforce and the opportunities for future growth, Freeholder Little said.

James Hughes, dean of the

Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, is guest speaker. Hughes is an economist and author who specializes in New Jersey's economy.

"We need to create an effective program preserve high-paying jobs, but also to attract new ones," Little said. "Monmouth County has a lot to offer. We want business decision-makers everywhere to give us a close look then locate, expand or remain here."

The summit will be held Sept. 29 at Branches, 123 Monmouth Rd., West Long Branch. Invitations will be sent to Monmouth County's business and civic leaders. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. For more information call the Department of Economic Development and Tourism at (732) 431-7470.

# County receives national award

## *'Homeward Bound' recognized for helping homeless*

FREEHOLD – Monmouth County has received national recognition for a program begun two years ago that provides rental subsidies and case management services to chronically homeless families and persons who suffer from mental illness and substance abuse.

The program, called "Homeward Bound," is federally funded and managed by a partnership of the county and community-based agencies that treat persons with mental illness and substance abuse. The goal is to provide safe and stable housing as well as substance abuse counseling and mental health services.

"Compliance with the service contract is mandatory in order for the program participant to continue receiving the Homeward Bound rent subsidy," said Freeholder Robert D. Clifton, liaison to the county's Department of Human Services. "In other words, the program recipient is an active partner in the program, rather than someone who simply receives a benefit. They must agree to treatment in order to get the housing subsidy."

In recognition of the program's innovative approach to providing housing, the National Association of Counties (NACo) has awarded Monmouth County a 2006 NACo Achievement Award for the its effort "to promote responsible, responsive and effective county government." Of the nation's 3,066 counties, 95 received a NACo achievement award this year.

"I continue to be amazed at the innovation and efficiency that counties have developed to address the new issues and problems they are facing," said Jacqueline Byers, NACo's director of research. "This year's programs did an exceptional job of doing more with less. Our achievement award winners have reaffirmed how county governments address problems with smart, creative solutions."

The driving need behind the Homeward Bound program is the lack of affordable housing for the chronically homeless population and the documented failure of the client to succeed in traditional mental health, substance abuse and social service programs. Further evidence of the need for this program is the ongoing loss of permanent housing stock in the county due to redevelopment.

"This is a difficult population to serve; the pattern of substance abuse, discontinuance from medication and withdrawal from treatment usually leads to aberrant behavior," said Lynn Miller, director of the county's Department

of Human Services. "As a result, many persons with mental illness are currently placed in a correctional institution.

"In addition, with an average one-bedroom rental costing \$900 a month plus utility costs, the chronically homeless has no chance of securing stable, safe, decent, sanitary housing," Ms. Miller continued. "Yet we have been able to show that with our help through the Homeward Bound program these individuals and families can get the housing and treatment they need."

There are about 450 adults and 230 families in Monmouth County who are

to decent, affordable and stable housing," said Steven Horvath, assistant mental health administrator, who oversees the case management aspect of the Homeward Bound program.

The program is funded by a \$1,005,480 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. All of the funds are used to provide rent subsidies. Homeward Bound is currently providing 44 rent subsidies and is operating at maximum capacity.

Members of the Homeward Bound Coordinating Committee include the Monmouth County Mental Health Board, the Monmouth County Public Housing Agency, CPC Behavioral Health, Jersey Shore University Medical Center Addiction Services, Visiting Nurse Association-Central Jersey, Gateway Day Treatment program, the Monmouth County Division of Social Services, New Jersey Department of Veterans' Affairs, and Guiding Light Day Treatment program.

The first year of the program, Homeward Bound's steering committee approved 48 applications for housing assistance. Of those, 45 individuals were able to find suitable housing

and have a signed lease, translating into a 94 percent success rate. This compares to a 33 percent success rate under the traditional Housing Choice Voucher Section 8 program. Of the 45 approved leases this past year, Homeward Bound achieved a 97.8 percent success rate in keeping participants in the permanent housing placement – and in treatment.

"The Homeward Bound program is an ambitious attempt at providing permanent housing to a multi-problem and recidivist population," Freeholder Clifton said. "It is a county-sponsored, community-based coalition that provides a rent subsidy payment for permanent housing coupled with a coordinated case management program designed to break the cycle of relapse resulting from loss of housing. It is a successful merge of public and private resources, and I commend them on receiving the NACo award."

*'The program recipient is an active partner in the program, rather than someone who simply receives a benefit. They must agree to treatment in order to get the housing subsidy.'*



**ROBERT D. CLIFTON**  
DEPUTY FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR

in some form of emergency shelter at any given time, Miller said. Of those, more than 40 adults and families are considered chronically homeless due to drug dependency and mental illness.

The nature of the co-occurring disability (substance abuse and mental illness) is magnified by their instability of housing. An individual living in temporary or emergency shelter, or in an unsupervised transitional housing arrangement, are less likely to attend mental health or substance abuse treatment programs. Consequently, the population is trapped in an unforgiving, downward spiral. Homeward Bound evaluates the housing choice of participants to ensure they are in safe neighborhoods.

"Our past experience in dealing with the chronically homeless and HIV positive population indicates that successful health treatment is directly proportionate

## 'Slow the Flow – Recycle!'

# Freeholders aim to reinvigorate recycling

FREEHOLD – Landfill space is filling up and recycling rates have tapered off. To reverse this trend, the Board of Chosen Freeholders has announced a renewed commitment to recycling. The freeholders urge all residents to join them.

“Residents, schools, businesses and institutions in Monmouth County achieved the highest recycling rate of 61 percent in 1997,” Freeholder Director William C. Barham said. “Since then, the public’s interest and participation have waned and recycling rates hit an all-time low of just 48 percent in 2004. We must do better and take what we can reuse out of our waste stream.”

In April, Monmouth County kicked off its “Slow the Flow – Recycle!” initiative at the annual Earth Day Fair held at the Monmouth County Library headquarters in Manalapan. The initiative aims to increase the public’s awareness about the benefits of recycling, thereby boosting the county’s recycling rate and reducing the amount of waste that flows into the Reclamation Center in Tinton Falls.

This two-pronged initiative includes a general reminder about the benefits of recycling, supported by public service announcements on local radio, and a more targeted effort to

boost recycling in the schools. To demonstrate how much of what they throw out can be reused and recycled if disposed of properly, the county will sponsor a long-term recycling program beginning in September in which children from selected schools will record the volume of cans, bottles and newspapers they produce.

“Schools produce an enormous amount of recyclables,” Freeholder Anna C. Little said. “We do a good

job teaching our children about the importance of recycling, but we need to actively participate in a recycling program to bring that message home. Without a recycling program, all of the bottles, cans and paper that could be recycled wind up clogging our landfill. I challenge each and every school to get more involved in recycling. I am sure if given the tools, the children would do a wonderful job.”

In 1987, Monmouth County was one of the first counties to implement mandated recycling in New Jersey, Freeholder Theodore J. Narozanick recalled. “In 1991, the voters rejected a proposal to

burn trash and the freeholders adopted a non-burn waste plan. An important component of that non-burn waste plan was to extract as much trash as possible from the landfill through recycling. Unfortunately, over the years, we have made it easier to throw trash away than to recycle it. That needs to change.”

The county’s decline in recycling mirrors rates recorded by the state. The decline coincides with a decision by the Legislature in 1997 to end funding for recycling programs. The only money for municipal recycling programs is the annual recycling grants funded through the “Clean Communities tax.” Unfortunately, the amount towns receive is only a small portion of what was originally provided. The state provides no funding to the county for recycling programs. Existing recycling programs are funded through the Reclamation Center’s budget.

“Monmouth County needs to be more aggressive to increase awareness in our communities of our need to recycle and control waste disposal costs so we can lengthen the life of our Reclamation Center in Tinton Falls,” Freeholder Robert D. Clifton said. “We cannot continue to allow recyclable materials to take up valuable space at our landfill. We are running out of room.”



First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day is designed to broaden support for environmental programs, rekindle public commitment to the environment and build community activism around the world through a broad range of events and activities.

“I was delighted to see so many children participating in our Earth Day Fair and learning about the environment,” Freeholder Lillian G. Burry said. “Earth Day is a time to renew our commitment to building a healthier and cleaner world, and that includes our commitment to recycle. To ensure a clean environment and protect our natural resources, we also must be willing to work year round.”

In the schools, students in Monmouth County celebrate Earth Day each year by participating in a variety of art and science competitions, which were are judged by the Planning Board members and staff. For a list of winners, click here.



**NAROZANICK**

## WIB exceeds all federal performance standards

FREEHOLD – Monmouth County’s Workforce Investment Board, in collaboration with the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders, has exceeded all 15 performance standards established by the U.S. Department of Labor for the program year that ended June 30, 2005. The standards measure the effectiveness of programs and services supported by the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

“The fact that we are not only reaching our goals but actually exceeding them is good news for Monmouth County residents who are looking for jobs, and for area businesses that are seeking qualified, pre-screened job candidates,” said Freeholder Robert D. Clifton, liaison to the WIB.

Among the areas measured are the employment and re-employment rates

**The Monmouth County  
One-Stop Career Center  
is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Monday through Friday. To  
make an appointment, call  
(732) 747-2282.**

of job seekers who are served with WIA funding, including their wages and length of employment. The success of programs designed to prepare youth for the workforce by teaching them job readiness skills also are measured.

“Exceeding performance standards means Monmouth County is eligible to receive federal incentive funding for use in developing new

or expanded programming,” said Wyatt Earp, chairman of the WIB’s One-Stop Career Centers Committee. “This allows us to enhance the quality of our service delivery, and to serve more customers.”

In fact, Earp said Monmouth County’s performance was among the strongest of New Jersey’s Workforce Investment Boards. He also commended the staff of the Monmouth County Division of Employment and Training for their efforts.

“I look forward to continuing to help people develop the skills they need to find gainful employment, and to working with the WIB and Monmouth County to strengthen the area’s economic development and social well-being,” said Bill Wood, Executive Director of Monmouth County’s WIB.

## Fitch, Moody's, S&P agree

# Monmouth County scores AAA bond rating

*All three agencies praise county's conservative financial management*

FREEHOLD – Once again, Monmouth County's bonds have been granted AAA ratings by Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's, the nation's three bond rating agencies.

Only a small percentage of counties throughout the United States have been granted AAA ratings, the highest rating, and only a handful of those have received the highest score from all three rating agencies, according to Mark E. Acker, Monmouth County's Finance Director.

The AAA ratings recognize Monmouth County's sound financial management, stable growth and low debt burden, according to the three bond rating agencies. As a result, each agency also awarded the county a favorable stable future outlook.

"This is the eighth year in a row Monmouth County received AAA ratings by these agencies," Freeholder Director William C. Barham said. "This means the county is doing a good job managing its resources. I commend Mark Acker for the way he has handled the county's finances."

According to Moody's Investors Service, the AAA rating is a reflection of the county's strong local economy; active residential and commercial/retail development; substantial and rapidly growing

tax base; wealth and income levels that exceed the state and national levels; regular operating surpluses and high current fund balances, and manageable overall debt.

"The AAA rating with a stable outlook incorporates the county's sound financial operations and healthy reserves, substantial and expanding tax base and modest debt position," Moody's reported.

"Moody's anticipates the county will continue to benefit from low unemployment rates that are below the state and national medians."

"As liaison to the Finance Department, I am very pleased that Monmouth County was rewarded once again for its continued demonstration of sound, fiscal management," Freeholder Anna C. Little said. "We are able to enjoy greater flexibility in providing services to our residents because we have been conservative in our spending and we continue to maintain very low debt levels."

In preparing the 2006 budget, the county's Board of Chosen Freeholders focused on minimizing

the tax levy. As a result, the freeholders adopted a spending plan that contains a 3.3 percent increase in the tax levy, which is lower than the rate of inflation and does not impact county services.

Standard & Poor's said the county's conservative financial management has resulted in strong operation and financial flexibility, stable growth in its \$90 billion tax base, and low debt levels. Conservative budgeting practices contribute to Monmouth's performance, S&P said.

"Monmouth County consistently exhibits strong financial performance and management," S&P said in its financial report.

Fitch commented on the county's strength in the areas of financial planning, management and budgeting. "The adopted 2006 budget maintains the county's practice of controlling expenditures while conservatively estimating revenues and is performing as expected."

"It is gratifying when rating agencies affirm our AAA ratings," Acker said. "These are our financial report cards, and we passed with the highest grade possible."

Moody's, S&P and Fitch also anticipate that the eventual closing of Fort Monmouth will not have any long-term impact on the county's economy.



ACKER

## Transportation vision for Asbury Park unveiled

ASBURY PARK – The Board of Chosen Freeholders recently unveiled a conceptual Transportation Improvement study that supports the city's exciting revitalization efforts.

The study identifies appropriate physical improvements to the city's Transportation Center and key connecting street corridors, as well as a new transit shuttle service needed to support a revitalizing community.

"The City of Asbury Park is at the beginning stages of a tremendous renaissance," said Freeholder Theodore J. Narozanick, who secured federal and county funding to conduct the study. "With its beautiful beaches and boardwalk, coupled with the



economic opportunities of its unique downtown business district, Asbury Park is reclaiming its glory days as a vacation hot spot and shopping destination."

The Transportation Improvement Study complements vibrant residential, business and waterfront redevelopment plans already adopted by city officials.

Features of the study include:

- Surveys of transit riders and members of the business community about important transportation needs and issues.
- An emphasis on tying together the Transportation Center, surrounding residential neighborhoods, the business district, and the waterfront area with improved streetscapes on major corridors leading to the Transportation Center.
- An approach that also considers transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel and other means of transportation to help restore the community.

The full study and appendices can be found on the county's Web site at <http://www.monmouthplanning.com/asburyparkrfp.htm>

## County soliciting applications for park grants

FREEHOLD – The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders is once again soliciting applications from municipalities wishing to compete for their share of \$2 million from the Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program to build or expand local parks facilities.

Applications for the fourth round of grants have been mailed recently to all 53 Monmouth County municipalities.

The grants, part of a competitive matching-funds program for municipalities, are administered by the Monmouth County Park System and funded through the Monmouth County Open Space Trust Fund. Last year, nearly \$2 million was distributed to 13 municipalities.

"I encourage all of our municipalities to submit their plans for park improvements or open space acquisitions," said Freeholder Lillian G. Burry, liaison to the Monmouth County Park System. "This is a wonderful opportunity for towns to participate in a program that shares the costs of improving their local parks or acquiring more open space."

All 53 Monmouth County municipalities are eligible to apply for funding awards. Last year, 18 towns submitted requests for grants seeking a total of \$3.4 million, of which the Board of Chosen Freeholders approved 13 applications and awarded \$2 million in grants.

The deadline for submitting a grant application is 4 p.m. Sept. 20, and only complete applications will be considered for funding. Winners will be announced in December.

"Quality parks and open space contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by all Monmouth County residents," Freeholder Burry said. "I hope we get 53 applications."

Further information on the grant program can be found at the Monmouth County Park System's Web site at [www.monmouthcountyparks.com](http://www.monmouthcountyparks.com)

# Methane

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it into electricity and sells it. Under this new contract, GSF Energy will recover nearly all of the methane gas produced at the landfill and, in addition, will assume responsibility for all capital improvements, operation and maintenance costs for the gas facilities.

"This is a very good deal for Monmouth County – to be able to fully tap this valuable energy-producing resource from our landfill and bring a sizable revenue into the county coffers," Freeholder Director William C. Barham said. "Because the county's share is tied to revenues, this deal has the potential of being worth up to \$1 million a year for the county."

Under the agreement, Monmouth County will be paid a monthly royalty calculated as a percentage of GSF Energy's gross revenues from the sale of output at the Monmouth County Reclamation Center, with a guaranteed minimum royalty of \$50,000 per month, or \$600,000 a year.

GSF Energy's responsibility for all capital improvements and maintenance of the gas collection system will include regulatory monitoring, data collection and preparation of all environmental compliance obligations and reports. This represents a guaranteed savings of \$300,000 a year for Monmouth County, on top of the \$600,000.

Freeholder Theodore J. Narozanick said GSF Energy has been paying the county \$250,000 a year since 1995.

"I am happy to see that GSF Energy will be

expanding its operation and we will be able to substantially increase our revenues from the sale of excess methane gas that is naturally produced there," Narozanick said. "The Reclamation Center is producing dividends for the public that we had not envisioned 20 years ago."

GSF Energy, a subsidiary of Montauk Energy Capital, has owned and operated landfill gas recovery systems for more than 25 years. The company has more than 20 landfill gas investments in the United States, and converts landfill gas into high Btu, pipeline-quality gas and/or electricity at about half of those sites.

Since 1998, a GSF Energy affiliate has owned and operated a 10-megawatt electric generating station at the Reclamation Center, where it uses a portion of the methane gas from the landfill and turns it into electricity, which it then sells to Jersey Central Power & Light Co.

Under the contract, Monmouth County will still be able to use a small portion of the methane gas if and when it builds its own electric generating station. The county is seeking a grant to build a small electric generating station to produce enough electricity to power its operations at the Reclamation Center, for a potential savings of up to \$1 million a year.

With the expanded gas-to-energy operation, GSF Energy will build, at its own cost, a gas processing facility at the Reclamation Center capable of processing nearly all of the excess methane gas. After it is collected, the gas can be

compressed into a high-grade, pipeline quality product that could be sold onto a nearby natural gas pipeline. The gas pipeline company would be able to blend it and use it to heat homes in Monmouth County.

"This new facility will take advantage of the high natural gas prices we expect to see for the foreseeable future," said John Schmitt, president of Montauk Energy Capital. "The ability to channel the methane gas into both our electric generating station and our gas processing facility will provide us some flexibility in our operations and, at the same time, generate a benefit for Monmouth County."

Schmitt said he hopes to have the new facility up and running in 18 to 24 months, depending on how long it takes to obtain the required permits from the state.

"These gas-to-energy plants operate very cleanly," Barham said. "Most of the methane gas is being burned off into the atmosphere. Now, we will be turning it into a product that will significantly boost county revenues. This is one more example of how this Board of Chosen Freeholders is finding ways to make Monmouth County government more efficient."

Landfill gas recovery systems have an additional environmental benefit – the methane gas displaces the consumption of other fuels, including coal, oil or natural gas.

"Unlike coal, oil or natural gas, landfill gas is a man-made renewable fuel," Schmitt said. "Using it to produce electricity or to heat homes decreases our nation's dependence on fossil fuels, particularly coal and oil, which do not burn as cleanly as natural gas."



BARHAM

# VieBridge

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manage chronic conditions, stave off the isolation frequently associated with being a caregiver and review the latest disease management and wellness information.

"Meeting the needs of the growing numbers of people coping with chronic illnesses and aging issues is acknowledged to be one of the most pressing U.S. health care issues," said Freeholder Robert D. Clifton, liaison to the Office on Aging. "Most people with chronic illnesses rely on informal caregivers such as family members to help them stay at home and manage their conditions."

Industry research shows that almost 75 percent of health care spending is for chronic care. Many people with chronic conditions struggle with staying independent,

and are further challenged by the complexities in the health care system that hamper accessibility to the services they need.

"While family members are critical support resources, they often lack the formal training and knowledge for proper care giving and, being put in the role of caregivers, put their own health at risk," Clifton said. "VieBridge Connections provides caregivers the tools they need to manage the care of a loved one – even over great distances, thanks to the Internet. This puts Monmouth County on the cutting edge when it comes to making applicable use of modern technology."

VieBridge Connections is currently available as a free service for Monmouth County residents.

Simple to use, VieBridge Connections requires a personal computer with a standard Web browser and a broadband connection, such as those available through local cable providers. By logging into VieBridge Connections

and establishing an account county residents can easily start to connect with other caregivers and their family members and friends who are homebound.

"VieBridge Connections creates a virtual community of caring for those who need it most," said Janet Corbally, program director for VieBridge Connections. "This online offering brings our county residents together, with the tools they need to manage some of the toughest situations in their lives. VieBridge Connections expands mutual support among consumers, gives informal caregivers a strong sense of support, and helps professionals stay in the know about clients."

VieBridge Connections also supports a wide range of health professionals, including nursing care managers, dietitians, fitness coaches, therapists, social workers, pharmacists and physicians' offices. In addition to health professionals, VieBridge Connections is flexible

enough to also extend a caregiver or chronically ill person's network to include their financial advisor, attorney, religious advisers and others in their support network.

To further facilitate collaboration and support in the best interest of the caregiver and the homebound, VieBridge Connections includes online reminders, video conferencing and Webcasts, chat rooms and discussion forums, and the ability to monitor vital signs, such as blood pressure, glucose levels and weight. VieBridge Connections also includes an "ask-the-expert" feature that enables consumers, caregivers and professionals to submit questions and receive a private response.

VieBridge Connections is available now by signing up for a membership account at [www.viebridgeconnections.net](http://www.viebridgeconnections.net). For more information, please contact the Monmouth County Office on Aging at (732) 431-7450.

# Shade Tree, Park System employees help to save American chestnuts

## *Chestnut trees once towered above forests in Northeast*

There's a love story to be told about the work being done high in the canopy of some of Monmouth County's woodlands.

With a little help from the Shade Tree Commission and the Monmouth County Park System, American chestnut trees are mating.

This is not your typical boy-meets-girl love story. Rather, it is a love affair many volunteers in Monmouth County have with the American chestnut tree.

Once a towering giant among forests across the Northeast., the trees are now fighting for their very lives. The native tree has been devastated by blight, a type of fungus that eats away at the base of the tree trunks.

To help save the species, Monmouth County officials have teamed up with the American Chestnut Foundation to locate American chestnut trees in the county's parks and woodlands, and pollinate them with the blight-resistant Asian chestnut.

The idea is to produce, over time, a tree that has mostly American chestnut characteristics, but with the blight-resistant qualities of the Asian chestnut.

"There was a time when all of the trees you see here were underbrush to the American chestnuts," Bob Summersgill of Warren Township and past president of the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Chestnut Association said of the trees in Tindall Park, Middletown. "They were a very significant and important part of the landscape."

In early July, Summersgill and other volunteers with the American Chestnut Foundation, met with the county's Shade Tree Commission and Park System employees to begin pollinating what is believed to be the only American chestnut tree in the 564-acre Holmdel Park.

A tree found in Tindall Park in Middletown was pollinated, too.



**Tony Rosati (above) of Middletown shows the blight that is killing American chestnut trees. This tree, which was pollinated recently with an Asian chestnut tree in an effort to save it, is in Holmdel Park. At right, a worker demonstrates the artificial mating technique used to pollinate the trees.**



"The American chestnut is estimated to have comprised as much as 50 percent of forests in the Northeast," said Gary Livallo, superintendent of the county's Shade Tree Commission. "No single event related to trees is more devastating than the chestnut blight. It changed the entire ecosystem."

The rescue mission in Monmouth County began last year when the Shade Tree Commission, the Park System and the chestnut foundation began planning their work.

The blight was first discovered in 1904 in New York City after the lethal fungus was accidentally imported on Asian chestnuts. By 1950, the American chestnut - once numbering one out of every four trees in the forest - was finished as a healthy tree.

To this day, the stumps send up sprouts that also quickly succumb to the blight.

Volunteers trying to save the species tie plastic bags around the newly pollinated flowers. They will return to the parks in the fall to harvest the chestnuts for planting.

At ground level, volunteer Tony Rosati of Middletown pointed to the trunk of the tree, where the blight was very visible. New shots spring up around the blighted trunk. If they are not eaten by deer first, they will eventually get the blight, too.

"There are a several other chestnut trees in Monmouth County, but this is the largest we have found," Rosati said of the tree in Holmdel Park.

The last hope for the American chestnut rests with its Asian cousins that brought the disease.

"As long as the American chestnut tree keeps sprouting, there's always a chance to cross-breed with a resistant strain," Livallo said. "This research is extremely important."

## *Freeholder Burry to represent county on fort panel*

FREEHOLD – Freeholder Lillian G. Burry has been chosen to represent Monmouth County on the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Planning Authority. The Board of Chosen Freeholders appointed her to the post, citing her experience with Earle Naval Weapons Station, when it was targeted for closure.

"Serving on the Colts Neck Township Committee, Lillian Burry has worked with top naval attorneys and ultimately was able to secure Earle's position in Colts Neck," remarked Freeholder Theodore J. Narozanick, who nominated her for the post.

"We believe she is most qualified to help in the development of a bright future for the Fort Monmouth community."

"I feel very strongly that the best years are ahead for our residents who work at Fort Monmouth now and for the businesses that currently serve them," Freeholder Burry said.

The panel's role is to develop a comprehensive revitalization plan for Fort Monmouth after its closure by the U.S. government in the Base Realignment and Closure process.



**BURRY**



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