



► The days are getting longer and the weather is getting warmer.

Looking for something to do?

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► Gypsy moths continue to threaten the county's trees, but the spray program is helping and will be expanded this year.

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► Freeholder Barbara J. McMorrow and 100 county volunteers and staff

participate in Project Homeless Count.

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► Monmouth County turns 325 years old this month. A series of events are planned throughout the year.

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# MONMOUTH *in focus*

ISSUE 5 | WINTER | 2008

## MONEY WATCH

# Addressing current needs and planting seeds for the future

## 2008 county budget holds the line on taxes

*The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders has adopted a 2008 budget that contains no tax increase.*

For the first time in recent memory, county taxes will remain the same as they were the previous year.

After three public hearings, board members slashed \$8 million from the spending plan in order to achieve what residents have asked for – a zero increase in taxes.

“There is no single power of government that directly touches the lives of more people than the power to tax,” Freeholder Director Lillian G. Burry said. “Therefore, I have directed that a budget amendment be drafted that meets my two objectives – preservation and continuation of our strong county programs and a zero tax increase.”

This is the third year in a row Monmouth County freeholders have crafted a budget that holds the tax levy to below the rate of inflation.

When the freeholders began their budget deliberations in December, they were looking at a \$13.2 million increase in the tax levy. That figure was whittled down to \$8 million, or 2.8 percent over the 2007 tax levy, before it was

slashed even further prior to its adoption on March 6. The total budget is \$481,114,000, which is an increase of \$9 million.

Freeholder John D’Amico Jr. agreed with the other freeholders who said they must continue to identify areas where savings can be found.

The county’s strategic plan is designed to identify those additional savings.

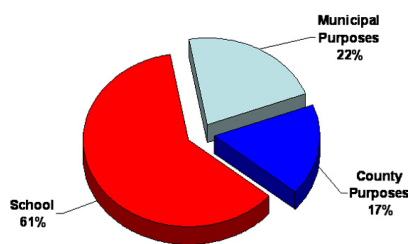
“Taxes have become the biggest concern to Monmouth County residents and business leaders,” D’Amico said. “This is a reasonable beginning. Many of the

cuts are responsible. Hopefully, there will be economies in the strategic plan.”

Finance Director Mark E. Acker has identified pension increases and utility costs as being largely responsible for the increase in the budget this year. He said the cuts that helped achieve a zero tax increase are not one-time events.

“Next year, the budget will stand on its own,” Acker said.

Freeholder Robert D. Clifton, who oversees the county’s Finance Committee and chaired the budget meetings, criticized the state’s mismanagement of the pension system, which



## John D’Amico Jr. reclaims seat on freeholder board

Retired Superior Court Judge John D’Amico Jr. is the newest member of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. He also is the longest-serving freeholder among current Board members.

That’s because he had served on the Board from 1984 to 1989, prior to becoming a state senator and judge.



“I decided to seek this office because I love Monmouth County and I want to help make it a better place,” he said.

D’Amico oversees Planning, Commerce and Education.

A major initiative spearheaded by D’Amico in 2008 is the revitalization of Monmouth County’s economic base.

A consortium that includes representatives from the county, area business leaders, Monmouth University and Brookdale Community College is examining ways to grow the county’s economic base in the face of Fort Monmouth’s eventual closure.

# BEST PLACES TO VISIT

The days are getting longer and the weather is getting warmer. Looking for something to do? Try these county destinations.

## STROLL THE BEACH

Seven Presidents Park in Long Branch is the perfect place to unwind and look for shells.

## TEE OFF AT BEL AIR

This golf course in Wall is affordable, and you can walk on most days and play a fast round.

## OBSERVE WILDLIFE

View birds and other wildlife up close at the Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center.

## FIND YOURSELF

Dig into your family's genealogy at the County Archives, at the county library in Manalapan.

## WALK IN THE WOODS

Huber Woods Park in Middletown has the most beautiful display of dogwoods in spring.



# County makes its television debut

To better serve the residents of Monmouth County, the Board of Chosen Freeholders has launched a televised partner to the county newsletter, with a program called "Monmouth In Focus." Airing on local access channels, the show will highlight the many county services that are available to residents.



**LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION:** Pictured taping the first "Monmouth In Focus" TV show are (from left) Finance Director Mark E. Acker, Freeholder Deputy Director Robert D. Clifton and host Cynthia Scott.

Monmouth County is hitting the air waves with a monthly televised program designed to bring the county's many government services directly to residents.

Titled "Monmouth In Focus," the show is a televised companion to this county newsletter of the same name. It is hosted by Cynthia Scott, a former News12 reporter now employed by the county, and will be airing on local access channels throughout Monmouth County.

"This is a great way to bring the county's services directly into the homes of our residents," Freeholder Deputy Director Robert D. Clifton said. "Activity on the county's Web site is increasing, and the newsletter that was mailed last summer was very well received. The television program will cap an aggressive effort to improve our communication with residents about county services."

The show is a half-hour program with two, 12-minute segments. Each segment features a different

aspect of county government. Shows have already been produced about the county budget, the library system, parks and a general overview of the functions of county government. Future shows will feature the Reclamation Center, Social Services and economic development, to name a few.

"Television is a great medium to get the county's message out," said William K. Heine, director of the county's Department of Public Information.

"There are many good government programs available in Monmouth County and it is incumbent upon us to make residents aware of them. The TV show will bolster communications efforts that have seen improvements to the county Web site, the county newsletter, the county directory and in the Department's news releases."

The show is produced at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, by students enrolled in the television production classes.

## WOMEN IN MONMOUTH:

For the first time in Monmouth County's 325-year history, the director of the Board of Chosen Freeholders is a woman. Lillian G. Burry was appointed director in January, and serves on the Board with Freeholder Barbara J. McMorrow. Another milestone: For the first time, the three elected constitutional officers are all women, too. Sheriff Kim Guadagno and County Clerk M. Claire French won election in November, and Surrogate Rosemarie D. Peters was elected to her post last year. No other county in New Jersey can make the same claim.



BURRY



McMORROW



Pictured from left: M. Claire French, Kim Guadagno and Rosemarie D. Peters

## PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT: County participates in statewide count of those in need

In January, Freeholder Barbara J. McMorrow joined a team of 100 volunteers and county employees at Monmouth County's 2008 Project Homeless Connect event, part of a statewide effort to collect information from individuals and families who experience homelessness and work toward



Freeholder Barbara J. McMorrow (right) and Lezma C. Bowen serve sandwiches at the 2008 Project Homeless Connect event in Long Branch.

providing them the needed services.

"Our goal was to offer a warm meal, a warm coat and friendly services to people," Freeholder McMorrow said. "Project Homeless Connect works to end homelessness throughout the state and nation, but our volunteers and staff are making a difference right now. Food and coats are a great start, but we want to make sure each person who needs and wants assistance is being helped."

The county invited citizens without a permanent residence and who were at risk of being homeless to participate in the program at locations in Asbury Park, Freehold, Long Branch and Red Bank. They were asked to fill out survey forms and were offered food, clothing and services, including free health screenings and employment services.

The event was a part of an annual point-in-time survey of the homeless population in the New Jersey and is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## County to celebrate its birthday

Monmouth County has a lot to celebrate this year, most notably its 325th anniversary.

On March 7, 1683, the County of Monmouth was officially established by an Act of the Provincial General Assembly. The name recognized the influence of Col. Lewis Morris, whose family estate in England was named Monmouthshire.

Monmouth County has played an important role in the historical events that created the United States. In the Revolutionary War, for example, the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse was a turning point in the war and a triumph for the Continental Army led by Gen. George Washington.



A kickoff celebration will be held March 13 in the Hall of Records. A number of other events have been scheduled throughout the year.

For a complete listing of those events, visit us online at [www.visitmonmouth.com](http://www.visitmonmouth.com)

## Spraying for gypsy moth caterpillars



The Monmouth County Shade Tree Commission will hold its Annual Spring Forum featuring the county's 2008 planned gypsy moth spray program at 7 p.m. on March 26 at the Monmouth County Agriculture Building, 4000 Kozloski Rd., Freehold.

Homeowners and town representatives who attend the Spring Forum will learn how to deal with gypsy moths to minimize the damage from these and other pests.

"This year's program will focus on how towns and homeowners can understand and tackle gypsy moths, other insect problems and tree diseases," said John W. Tobia, director of the county's Department of Public Works & Engineering. "We will focus on ways in which we can all work together to keep damage caused by gypsy moth caterpillar defoliation to a minimum."

Forum topics include:

- ▶ New Jersey's gypsy moth program and spray block program in Monmouth County – Joseph Zoltowski, Chief, Bureau of Plant, Pest & Disease Control, NJ Department of Agriculture.
- ▶ Monmouth County's 2008 aerial suppression program, and what homeowners can do to control

these pests – Brian Gosnell, Monmouth County gypsy moth coordinator.

▶ Pest Problems Heading Our Way – What to Expect and How to Prepare – Richard Obal, County Agricultural Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension Service.

The Annual Spring Forum is open to all Monmouth County residents. Register by calling (732) 431-7903. Aerial spraying is expected to begin in early May using a product called Bt, which is harmless to humans, pets and other wildlife.



*"Gypsy moth caterpillars continue to damage trees on hundreds of acres of forest throughout Monmouth County. The gypsy moth problem is cyclical, and the county's Shade Tree Commission has been on top of the situation since the reappearance of the gypsy moth caterpillars in 2005."*

**Freeholder William C. Barham**

# SERVICES YOU GET FOR YOUR TAX DOLLARS

Taxpayers benefit from county services every day. Whether you're driving on a county road, visiting a park or checking out a book from the library, you are seeing your tax dollars at work.

## ○ | 38 COUNTY PARKS.

Monmouth County has the finest parks in the nation.

## ○ | BROOKDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

The No. 1 community college in New Jersey.

## ○ | BLUE-RIBBON VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Five career academies are the jewels in the education system.

## ○ | LIBRARY SYSTEM.

Monmouth County has the largest collection in the state.

## ○ | 911 EMERGENCY.

When you call for help, the county dispatches aid.

## ○ | POLICE/FIRE TRAINING.

Your police and firefighters are trained at county facilities.

## ○ | WASTE DISPOSAL.

The Reclamation Center turns your trash into cash.

## 2008 COUNTY BUDGET: Zero tax increase

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is causing mandatory pension payments throughout local government to increase by 50 to 100 percent a year to cover a shortfall incurred when the state declared a pension "holiday" and payments were deferred.

"Monmouth County residents are fed up with high state taxes," Clifton said. "In view of the state's proposed cuts, many of which will shift the tax burden to local government, we felt it was incumbent upon us to deliver real tax relief now."

Freeholder William C. Barham noted that in today's economy, people are having a tough time. "People are struggling, and I'm glad we were able to do our part," he said.

Freeholder Barbara J. McMorrow thanked the public for their input during the series of budget presentations held around the county in recent weeks.

"The input from the public was invaluable," Freeholder McMorrow said. "These are hard times financially. We know Monmouth County is 'The Place You Want to Be,' but we also want to make sure it's the place where you can afford to live."

Noting the state's ongoing fiscal woes, Freeholder Burry said, "Tax troubles for the people of New Jersey may be far from over, but one thing will be certain – Monmouth County won't be part of the problem."

## County urges companies to relocate here

*A new promotional video aimed at encouraging businesses to move to Monmouth County was developed by the Monmouth County Department of Economic Development & Tourism.*

### ADAPTATION IS KEY

"Monmouth County is changing, as evidenced by the impending closure of Ft. Monmouth, one of the county's largest employers," said Freeholder John D'Amico Jr., who oversees the county's Department of Economic Development & Tourism. "Fueling economic development is the best way of making sure we maintain the ratable base to support the quality of life we all enjoy. Monmouth County has the best workers, great corporate and industrial parks, as well as the best location – between New York and Philadelphia. Encouraging businesses to relocate to Monmouth County makes sense."

### THE FINEST WORKFORCE

"The Department has seen steady and progressive growth in inquiries from business outside the county that are considering relocation," said Bea Duffy, director of the Department of Economic Development & Tourism. "Monmouth County has one of the finest workforces in America. It is among the best educated, most experienced and diverse. They create and produce some

of the most advanced medical, computer and communications products in the world."

### OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE

The Department offers a variety of services that can be found online. There is an office space locator, which shows businesses what office space is available around the county. Department staff also assists these businesses in finding the right space. There is also a corporate listing of major employers and their contacts, statistics on the county, utilities that serve the area, shopping outlets and transportation information.

"Monmouth County has a lot to offer," D'Amico added. "We want business decision-makers everywhere to give us a close look then locate, expand or remain here."

### WATCH VIDEO ONLINE

The video was produced in-house and is posted on the county's Web site at [www.visitmonmouth.com](http://www.visitmonmouth.com). It also will be sent to businesses inquiring about relocation. The video highlights the resources Monmouth County offers, from park facilities to office complexes and education.

**PUBLISHED BY THE  
MONMOUTH COUNTY  
BOARD OF CHOSEN  
FREEHOLDERS**



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
INFORMATION**

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[www.visitmonmouth.com](http://www.visitmonmouth.com)

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