

Monmouth Minute

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Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners

Thomas A. Arnone, *Director*; Susan M. Kiley, *Deputy Director*;
Dominick "Nick" DiRocco; Ross F. Licitra; Erik Anderson

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Commissioner Director



Monmouth County Continues to Invest in Infrastructure, Community Services, and Economic Growth

Monmouth County continues to make incredible strides in infrastructure, public services and community engagement, and I am proud to share some recent highlights.

The Division of Engineering remains laser-focused on enhancing our bridges and roads to ensure they are safe, efficient and well-maintained. I am pleased to report on the successful commissioning of the new movable bridge on County Route 520 over the Shrewsbury River, replacing the 75-year-old Rumson-Sea Bright Bridge. This marks a major improvement for our coastal communities.

Additionally, a new traffic signal has been activated at County Route 15 (Monmouth Road) and Palmer Avenue in West Long Branch, and construction is moving forward on a new roundabout at the intersection of County

Routes 8A and 8B (Locust Avenue/Valley Drive and Navesink Avenue) in Middletown, which we expect to be completed by year's end.

Preliminary engineering is underway for the full replacement of the Oceanic Bridge on CR 8A over the Navesink River, an essential project we will keep residents informed about as it progresses.

In the Department of Public Works, our Facilities Management Division played a critical role during the recent heat wave, keeping all County buildings operational and safe. They have also started renovations on a new facility for the Monmouth County MedStar program, which will serve as an advanced training hub for EMS and Sheriff's Office personnel.

Our Bridge Division has completed the restoration of Bridge U-92 in Upper Freehold Township, which included drainage extensions, stabilization and guiderail installation. Up next: Bridge MT-58 in Middletown, which will undergo drainage improvements, surface renewal and landscaping.

The Highway Division is in full summer mode with grass cutting, pothole repair and inlet inspections. Crews also recently paved sections of Phalanx Road and completed repair work at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution, all while continuing to support other divisions with traffic control and shared services.

Speaking of shared services, our Office of Shared Services is preparing for its largest Shared Services Summit to date this fall. This annual event brings together local governments to explore collaborative solutions that enhance services and save taxpayer dollars. We have seen outstanding growth in this program and I look forward to what this Summit will bring.

We also celebrated another successful Made in Monmouth event, held at the Robert J. Collins Arena on May 3. More than 200 local vendors, including Brewed & Distilled in Monmouth participants, welcomed more than 5,000 shoppers! Mark your calendars now, our Holiday Made in Monmouth returns on Dec. 13.

On the tourism front, Monmouth County has been everywhere this summer! From the New Jersey Seafood Festival and Asburyfest to Oceanfest and the Atlantic Highlands Car Show, our presence has been felt and celebrated. Looking ahead, don't miss upcoming favorites like Highlands Clamfest, Ocean Township's Italian Festival, San Gennaro in Belmar and Oktoberfests in Freehold and Red Bank.



Thomas A. Arnone



We are also thrilled to announce ParkStage, a new partnership with the Count Basie Center for the Arts which will debut in summer 2026. This large-scale, open-air venue will bring world-class entertainment to our community and further cement Monmouth County's reputation as a destination for arts and culture.

Meanwhile, the Division of Transportation is proud to report our Ride in Monmouth program (formerly SCAT) has seen impressive growth - completing over 300 more rides in June 2025

than the same time last year. This curb-to-curb transportation service remains free for medical trips, veterans and sponsored grocery runs, and serves our seniors, disabled residents and individuals in rural communities.

Additionally, I am thrilled to share that the Director's Wellness Challenge has been recognized by *NJBIZ* as a Workplace Wellness Hero – Organization. On behalf of my fellow Commissioners and our incredible County staff, we are honored to receive this award. What started as a goal of 5,000 steps on 20 out of 30 days each month has grown into a full-scale initiative, later increasing to 7,500 steps in the lead-up to Memorial Day Weekend. Congratulations to all who participated! We look forward to announcing the next phase of the Challenge very soon!

I am also proud to share that for the third consecutive year, the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners has declared Sept. 11 as a County Day of Remembrance. All County offices will be closed to allow employees time to reflect on the tragic events and lasting impact of September 11, 2001. As a nation we pledged never to forget and I encourage everyone to honor the memory of those we lost, whether by attending a memorial ceremony, visiting a monument, thanking a first responder, or simply spending time with loved ones.

At the County's 2022 September 11 Memorial Ceremony, we called upon our federal and state officials to officially recognize this day of remembrance. While we are disappointed no action has yet been taken, we remain steadfast in our commitment to continue honoring the lives lost and the heroes who emerged that day, right here in Monmouth County.

Finally, the Department of Public Information continues its vital mission of keeping residents connected. With more than 80 press releases, three livestream events and constant updates across all our Monmouth County Government social media platforms, the Department ensures residents stay informed about County resources, public works projects, County events and more. The staff is currently hard at work on the County's September 11 Memorial Ceremony and the next edition of this newsletter.

As always, I want to thank all of our County employees for their unwavering dedication to excellence. Your efforts allow us to continue delivering high-quality services and improvements our residents can count on.

Commissioner Deputy Director Susan M. Kiley

Monmouth County is committed to achieving health equity by ensuring that every resident, regardless of background or circumstance, has access to the information, resources and support needed to live a healthy, safe life. This commitment is reflected in a broad range of public health, community outreach and social service initiatives here in Monmouth County.

Addressing health equity sometimes means confronting challenges in substance use and mental health. The County's newly named Local Advisory Council on Substance Use Support Services, formerly the Board of Addiction Services, not only embraces more inclusive, stigma-free language, but also more accurately reflects the Council's mission to provide compassionate, evidence-based support and advocacy for individuals and families impacted by substance use.

Community outreach teams remain out in the community, continue sharing vital resources and offering essential support services to those most vulnerable, ensuring no one is left behind in receiving care.



Equity in access also extends to economic and educational empowerment. Through the Displaced Homemakers Program at Brookdale Community College and donations from the Handbags of Hope initiative, women gaining job readiness skills are provided with resources to boost confidence and dignity. These efforts ensure individuals have equitable opportunities to rebuild their lives.

The Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services promotes health equity for older adults and veterans by listening directly to their concerns at public hearings and community listening sessions. These forums provide critical

information and support for aging in place with dignity, while events like the upcoming Senior Art Show on Aug. 20, 2025 and the Veterans Resource Fair on Aug. 13, 2025 are additional opportunities to foster connection, awareness and access to services.

The Monmouth County Health Department remains committed to the health equity of our residents by continuing the efforts of our clinical services by providing immunization services, our consumer health services by remaining diligent in performing local retail and food inspections, and public health with increased staff training to support readiness and program delivery to the community.

Summer is here and so are mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile virus. So far this year, West Nile virus has not been detected locally but the Monmouth County Mosquito Control Division conducts routine testing and community-wide prevention including scheduling targeted spraying when necessary. Residents are encouraged to reduce mosquito breeding by eliminating standing water and wearing protective clothing - practical steps that contribute to equitable health protection for everyone.

Monmouth ACTS (Assisting Community Through Services) continues to demonstrate the County's innovative approach to health equity with its efforts to build bridges between education, community and service, providing easy access to agencies and resources across the County including food, behavioral health, housing, medical care, employment and more. Residents can call one phone number and be connected to a trained, compassionate social worker who will discuss their needs, ask about any existing services being provided and connect the resident with resources.

Together, these initiatives reflect Monmouth County's dedication to making health equity not just an ideal, but a reality.

Commissioner Dominick “Nick” DiRocco



I am honored to serve as the County Commissioner liaison to the Department of Finance, where my primary responsibility is to work with my colleagues on the Commissioner Board to ensure that we provide a fiscally responsible government that protects the taxpayer, delivers high quality services in an efficient manner, promotes public safety and makes proper investments in our infrastructure, parks and educational institutions.

As a result of years of hard work and a focus on fiscal prudence, Monmouth County has earned and maintained a “AAA” bond rating (the highest available) from all three major Wall Street rating agencies. In fact, Monmouth is the only county in the State of NJ with this distinction. This top tier bond rating reflects our exemplary fiscal practices and dedication to our taxpayers.

Moreover, our focus on fiscal responsibility has established an environment where we are able to increase services and programs for County residents without adversely impacting the tax rate. For instance, we have established and fostered economic growth through small-business friendly programs like Made in Monmouth and Grown in Monmouth. The County has also invested in our infrastructure to ensure a safe and reliable transportation system and has continued to support our top-rated Community College and Vocational Schools. Likewise, the County Commissioners continue to expand and invest in our award-winning County Park System through the dedicated open space funding program to preserve and protect land from overdevelopment while providing outstanding recreational opportunities. These investments and initiatives continue to make Monmouth County one of the most desirable places to live, work and raise a family.

In addition to sharpening our pencils and delivering government services in a cost-efficient manner, the County also leans in on shared services arrangements to save tax dollars. Some examples of shared services include regional 911 dispatch, fleet vehicle fueling and repair services, shared technology programs for municipal flood plain management and mapping, and our innovative and first-of-its-kind county-wide emergency medical services initiative, called MedStar. Through this program, the County Sheriff’s Office works with local and volunteer EMS agencies and professionals to ensure improved emergency medical response for county residents.

As a result of these efforts, Monmouth County now has the lowest effective general tax rate among New Jersey’s 21 counties (tied with Cape May County). According to information published by the State of New Jersey, Division of Local Government Services, the Statewide average County tax rate is \$0.325 per \$100 of property value, while Monmouth County’s rate is \$0.172 per \$100 of value (2024 State Equalized rates). While we recognize that New Jersey is a high cost of living State, we are doing everything within the County’s control to maximize services in the most cost-effective manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Board of County Commissioners to continue the progress we have made in positioning Monmouth County as the best county in the State of New Jersey.

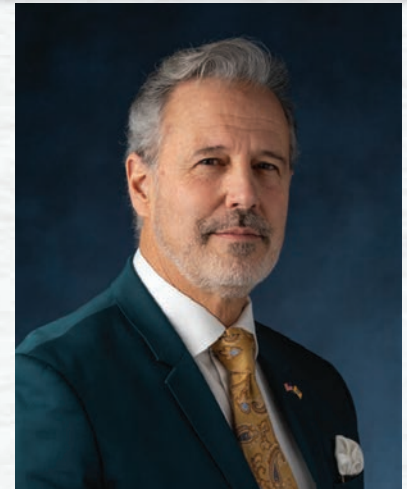


Commissioner Ross F. Licitra

We are at the height of summer, with temperatures at an all-time high, but they will soon drop as September rolls in and local summer begins. I want to take a moment to recap the past few months, touch on a few projects we've been working on, and share some exciting plans for the near future.

As liaison to the Monmouth County Park System (MCPS), I want to take this opportunity to brag about our parks; our parks are truly the crown jewel, with over 30 park areas to explore and six above-par golf courses. Protecting and preserving our beautiful 18,091+ acres of landscape while providing programs and recreational activities will always be our top priority.

Our golf courses are top-tier, providing an exceptional experience that rivals that of private courses. Over the past six years, our number of golf rounds has significantly increased by 48%; in 2024, the total amount of rounds played was 356,517, which is the highest number of rounds played in the history of MCPS golf. This growth is a testament to our pristine courses as well as the dedication of our incredible golf instructors, managers, and staff members. Our facilities can accommodate golfers of all skill levels. We offer five championship 18-hole courses, two 18-hole executive courses, a 9-hole, par 3 course, and three warm-up ranges. Check out Bel-Aire, Charleston Springs, Hominy Hill, Howell Park, Pine Brook, and Shark River, and for more information and to book a tee time, visit monmouthcountyparks.com.



Hominy Hill Golf Course

I'm excited to announce the development of an outdoor concert venue at the East Freehold Showgrounds in summer of 2026, ParkStage. Monmouth County, in collaboration with Count Basie Center for the Arts, ParkStage will serve as a premier location for live entertainment, music, comedy, and more! This concert series is part of a greater effort to celebrate and commemorate America's 250th anniversary.

I would be remiss not to mention our flagship event of the summer, the Monmouth County Fair; this year, we celebrated our 50th anniversary, welcoming over 75,000+ guests. Highlights included petting farms, home and garden displays, entertainment, rides, games, food trucks, and agriculture exhibits. The Fair never

disappoints. A huge thank you and shoutout to all our staff and Monmouth County 4-H for all their efforts in ensuring the Fair is an unforgettable experience.

I'm proud to announce that the County has formed a partnership with the Veterans Foundation of America to provide saltwater fishing excursions for local veterans. Spending a day on the water fishing with their fellow veterans generates camaraderie among the participants and gives us a chance to thank those who have served. Veterans wishing to request a fishing outing can contact the Veterans Foundation of America at www.thevfa.org.

Take advantage of all that the Monmouth County Park System has to offer! Our Fall Program Guide is now available, and registration starts on August 13th. We have a wide range of activities available, including golf, tennis, and pickleball lessons, as well as birdwatching, equestrian programs, fishing, and pottery classes. There truly is something for everyone to enjoy!

Follow us on socials to stay in the loop on all our projects. I look forward to the upcoming fall and winter season here in Monmouth County, and as always, I remain committed to serving our residents to the best of my ability.

Commissioner Erik Anderson



As we approach the final weeks of summer, I would like to share some important updates from the Monmouth County departments with which I have the privilege of serving as Liaison.

The Monmouth County Board of Elections is seeking poll workers for the 2025 General Election. If you are interested in serving your community, either on Election Day or at one of the 10 early in-person sites throughout the County, please call the Board of Elections at 732-431-7802, ext. 7150.

Applications are now open for the Monmouth County Historical Commission (MCHC) 2026 History Preservation Grant Program and History Regrant Program. The Preservation Grant, funded by Monmouth County, offers matching grants to help nonprofits and municipalities restore historic buildings. The Regrant Program supports local history organizations through project-based or general operating grants. MCHC is also excited to launch its 33rd annual Fifth Grade Essay Contest this fall, so keep an eye out for more information!

Nominations for the Monmouth County Planning Board Merit Awards are due Sept. 18. The Merit Awards recognize and honor plans, projects, programs and individuals that have made a significant contribution to the advancement of civic planning and planning outcomes in Monmouth County.

Our Division of Planning has also been working hard and coordinating with our municipalities and the State of New Jersey as part of the Cross-Acceptance process, which is how the State updates its development and land use plans. With Monmouth County's population growing and major projects like Netflix moving to the area, it is more important than ever to ensure our planning meets the needs and priorities of our communities.

It was all hands on deck for the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office at the 50th annual Monmouth County Fair. Youth 4-H members showcased their achievements, Rutgers Master Gardeners were available to answer home gardening questions, and Family and Community Health Sciences were on hand at the Agriculture Tent to give fair-goers information about healthy living.

Our Monmouth County Library System (MCLS) is actively planning educational and interactive programming to celebrate America's upcoming semi quincentennial in 2026. MCLS is proud to be one of only 21 public libraries selected to receive a New Jersey State Library REV250 Grant, which supports public library celebrations of America's 250th Anniversary. The grant is titled "From Allentown to Manalapan to Shrewsbury, every corner of the county fought for independence," which sums up Monmouth County's rich Revolutionary War history.



One of the best parts of serving as a County Commissioner is having the privilege of attending different events throughout the County, including a naturalization ceremony, where I witnessed new Americans from 15 different countries of origin become fellow U.S. Citizens; the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Netflix Studios on Fort Monmouth, which will bring a tremendous amount of new jobs and economic growth to our area; and Shrewsbury's annual Declaration of Independence reading at the historic Allen House on July 4, which was especially exciting this year as we start counting down to our Nation's 250th Birthday!

For additional updates, you can find me on Instagram @Erik_AndersonNJ, Facebook @Monmouth County Commissioner Erik Anderson, and on X @ErikAndersonNJ.

For more information, you can visit Monmouth County's website, visitmonmouth.com.

Administrator Teri O'Connor

The Monmouth County Fair celebrated its 50th anniversary this July. Fortunately, the weather cooperated most days to assist in record setting attendance on three of the five days. Overall, 98,000 visitors attended the Fair -- with 26,000 attending on opening day -- where visitors enjoyed a hot air balloon display, games, rides, animal exhibits, and a kick-off to America's 250th birthday which included a visit by George Washington! A huge thank you to all County staff who ensured the public had a fun and safe experience. On prominent display during the Fair was the Monmouth 4-H Youth Program.

Monmouth 4-H itself is part of the larger Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) of Monmouth County. Our County RCE leads the state in both innovation and outreach. Our County Extension Office provides a diverse range of research, extension, and education programs that serve the people of Monmouth. Our residents have access to dedicated 4-H agents, Extension specialists, Family & Community Health Sciences educators, Rutgers Master Gardner programs, and Agriculture and Natural Resources agents. These public servants work to provide unparalleled support and expertise to individuals and communities in every corner of our county to improve the quality of life.

These programs and resources are available to all County residents, and the Rutgers University faculty and staff are based at the Monmouth Agricultural Building located in Freehold where many staff members are also members of the community of Monmouth.

All Monmouth residents are encouraged to contact their Monmouth RCE Office by either visiting them in the Freehold or by going to: monmouth.njaes.rutgers.edu.

You can stay informed about County happenings by checking out Monmouth in Focus which you can watch on your local access channel or visitmonmouth.com. Monmouth in Focus is an engaging TV show hosted by Commissioner Director Arnone during which he conducts interviews and has conversations with officials and business owners in Monmouth County who are making a positive impact on our community. For example, the Director recently interviewed five business owners who participated in the spring Made in Monmouth. In addition, Commissioner Deputy Director Sue Kiley hosts a Veteran's Corner segment where she speaks with Monmouth County veterans about their service and ways the County has assisted them after their time in uniform.



Monmouth County is proud of its workforce and is hiring! The Monmouth County Department of Human Resources regularly conducts job fairs. Most recently, we recruited drivers possessing a CDL to drive clients for our "Ride In Monmouth" Program. The Job Fair was held on July 9th where site interviews were conducted, and several employment offers were extended. On September 13th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., we will host another job fair at the County's Agriculture Building. If you are looking for employment or thinking about a career change, please stop by or go to visitmonmouth.com to submit an application.

Please enjoy the remainder of the summer enjoying all that Monmouth County has to offer.



Sheriff Shaun Golden

Sheriff Shaun Golden was proud to announce critical technological upgrades to Monmouth County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), in early June, made possible by the generous federal funding secured by Congressman Chris Smith and supported by the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners.



Thanks to this funding, the EOC will be better equipped with innovative technology to protect residents and coordinate emergency response efforts more efficiently. With forecasts predicting an active storm season, these upgrades will help Monmouth County stay ahead of evolving threats and ensure that the Office of Emergency Management is fully prepared to serve and protect communities when it matters most.

The series of technological upgrades designed to enhance emergency response and public safety operations include the replacement of an aging multi-monitor video wall that is essential for real-time situational awareness during emergencies and large-scale incidents. Additionally, enhancements to the Monmouth County Flood Warning System will provide county and local responders with real time weather and tidal data, enabling faster and more informed decision making during severe weather events in Monmouth County. The upgrades also include the deployment of tablets equipped with advanced and instant tracking capabilities to municipal reception centers and county operated shelters, that would assist with accountability of residents, reunification, and recovery. Furthermore, the tablets will facilitate the collection of Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) in the field, an essential function for accurately documenting damages during natural or manmade disasters.

With the continued partnership of leaders like Congressman Smith and the dedication of county officials, residents can be confident that Monmouth County is more equipped than ever to face emergencies head-on and safeguard communities in times of crises.



Clerk Christine Giordano Hanlon

Every time a home is bought or sold in Monmouth County, our Recording Division is where property deeds are filed. With property fraud on the rise, the Monmouth County Clerk's Office is especially vigilant to protect our residents.



We are pleased to offer a free Property Fraud Alert program at no cost to provide Monmouth County homeowners with peace of mind. Signing up takes just minutes to receive notifications via email, phone or text should any activity be detected on your property record. Learn

more at PropertyFraudAlert.com/NJMonmouth.

Since the Clerk's Office also functions as the Clerk of Elections, we are busy preparing for the upcoming General Election. Election Day will be Tuesday, Nov. 4, and there will be nine days of early in-person voting beginning on Saturday, Oct. 25.

Visit MonmouthCountyVotes.com for more information, forms and deadlines, as well as the link to download our free mobile elections app, Monmouth County Votes.

Another key function of the Monmouth County Clerk is as the "Keeper of Records." We oversee the Monmouth County Archives Division, which is hosting our annual Archives and History Day on Saturday, Oct. 11, at Brookdale Community College.

As America's 250th birthday draws near, the theme chosen for this year's Archives and History Day is Revolutionary Monmouth County. Visit tinyurl.com/MCArchivesDay for event details, award information and more!

It is my honor to serve you as Monmouth County Clerk. Learn more about my services at MonmouthCountyClerk.com.

Surrogate Maureen T. Raisch



The Monmouth County Surrogate's Office continues to expand and improve how we serve residents, especially during life's most meaningful and delicate moments.

Our AI Voice Assistant and AI Web Search tools are available 24/7 in over 100 languages, providing support to more residents than ever before. Whether navigating probate, guardianship, or adoption filings from out of state or after hours, families now have access to guidance whenever they need it, especially on

nights, weekends, and holidays at visitmonmouth.com/surrogate.

We are proud of the continued success of our secure online eFile system. To date, more than 1,170 families have submitted their probate filings from the comfort of their homes. This service has proven to be both convenient and reassuring for many during difficult times.

Our website now features an expanded FAQ section, comprehensive guardianship guides, and valuable adoption resources, designed to help families understand their options before they even walk through our doors.

Equally important is our commitment to community outreach. I've had the privilege of connecting with residents through Mobile County Connection events, Office on Aging Listening Sessions, Caregivers Retreats, faith-based gatherings, and local clubs. These events enable us to distribute free booklets and officer personal assistance right in the heart of our local neighborhoods.

The true importance of the Surrogate Office is often felt during unexpected life events, such as when a loved one passes away, a guardian is needed for a family member, a child's funds require legal protection, or a new family begins through adoption. We are here for those moments. It is our privilege to serve as a trusted resource when it matters most.

I am truly honored to serve as your Monmouth County Surrogate.

Prosecutor Raymond S. Santiago



The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office (MCPO) is proud to announce the launch of the redesigned MCPO Mobile App. The App serves as a resource for residents in our local communities to stay in touch with the Prosecutor's Office. The user-friendly App allows residents the ability to have access to resources and services, notifications, news and events. The App provides insight in the day-to-day operations of the Prosecutor's Office.

The MCPO App features include:

- MCPO Initiatives
- MCPO News Releases
- Community Connection to local events
- Inmate Lookup
- Victim Witness services
- Links to several Monmouth County services including the Special Needs Registry and links to other Monmouth County apps.

"As technology continues to grow, law enforcement's digital footprint must grow along with it," Prosecutor Raymond Santiago stated. "I'm confident that the re-envisioned MCPO App offers our residents a convenient way to communicate and stay engaged with our Office-right at their fingertips. We have made a commitment to build and strengthen our relationships with our residents, and this is just another means by which we

can accomplish that goal. We encourage our residents to download and utilize this valuable community resource. Since this App is the first of its kind, we will continue to review its functionality to insure that it is providing pertinent information to our residents when they need that information."



The App is available for download in both the Apple Store and Google Play, or simply by scanning the QR code.

SCAN FOR
NEWSLETTER



Freedom's Battleground

America's 250th Birthday is coming in 2026!

Monmouth County is ready to celebrate!

Join us as we commemorate 250 years of our great country
and be a part of this historic milestone.

MonmouthNJ250.org



@MonmouthNJ250



Christine G. Hanlon
Monmouth County Clerk

Co-Chairs



Thomas A. Arnone
Monmouth County Commissioner Director



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2025

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Dominick "Nick" DiRocco
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