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The Hammonton Gazette

ACUA's 32nd Earth Day Festival April 28

EGG HARBOR TWP., N.J.—The Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) invites the community to its 32nd Annual Earth Day Festival on Sunday, April 28, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at its Environmental Park located at 6700 Delilah Rd. in Egg Harbor Twp.

ACUA's festival is the largest and longest running Earth Day Festival in South Jersey and offers a range of activities for all ages.

The festival will include more than 150 local vendors, crafters, exhibitors, nonprofits, interactive activities, workshops, tours and more.

The festival provides an opportunity for the community to see ACUA's environmental services up-close. Guests can take a hayride to the top of the landfill and tour the wastewater treatment facility and Jersey-Atlantic Wind Farm on an Atlantic City Jitney.

Other activities include Touch-A-Truck, bouncy games, interactive performances, a "Dinosaurs Rock" show, nature walk, live animals and a petting zoo. Free workshops are scheduled throughout the day covering a variety of topics such as how to build a rain barrel, houseplants 101, making a sourdough starter and creating recycled artwork.

"ACUA's Annual Earth Day Festival provides an opportunity for the community to learn about the essential services that keep our community clean while having fun," ACUA President Matthew DeNafo said. "It has become a staple event in the community because of the many wonderful vendors and exhibitors that join us in celebrating our environment."

Guests may park at ACUA's facility located at 6700 Delilah Rd. or at Airport Commerce Center with shuttle

service from 6550 Delilah Rd. The Earth Day Festival will be held rain or shine.

ACUA acknowledges the many community partners and sponsors that make this festival a success, including its platinum sponsors Atlantic City Electric, New Jersey American Water and South Jersey Gas for its generous contributions.

In 2024, Earth Day takes on renewed significance as communities worldwide unite to address pressing environmental challenges. Originating in 1970, Earth Day serves as a reminder of our planet's beauty and the urgent need for conservation efforts. This year's theme, "Restore Our Earth," emphasizes the critical role each person plays in protecting and nurturing our shared home.

Folsom council tackles community concerns; unveils exciting developments

BY SHANIELE BROWN
 FOR THE GAZETTE

FOLSOM, N.J.—Mayor and council convened on April 16, where they handled community complaints such as extensive trash at Park Avenue, neglectful upkeep of portable toilets and the frustrating aftermath of the Road Department's untidiness.

"I've been getting complaints about the road department. Things such as them leaving out limbs for long periods," Councilman Albert Norman said.

Addressing the community, Councilman James Hoffman offered a proactive solution, suggesting that everyone chip into policing their surroundings, ultimately enriching the borough and maintaining its clean-

liness. Overall, residents were urged to formalize their grievances by filing complaints with the Borough's clerk.

Also present during the meeting was Joe Henry from Hardenbergh Insurance, who presented a safety presentation on accident investigation. He offered insights for law enforcement and claimants alike. He emphasized the importance of immediate reporting, thorough questioning and speaking to witnesses promptly, all crucial elements aiding in litigation.

"Report [accidents] as soon as possible; accidents reported within three days help with the case," Henry said.

A statement from the Collings Lakes Fire Department Fire Chief Bill Donnelly was shared. For March, firefighters were

busy with various refreshers covering ventilation, vehicle stabilization, airbags and use of struts along with numerous saw use and safety guidelines.

Later on that evening, Engineer Charles Kaenzig, PE, of Polistina & Associates, LLC provided updates on community developments. According to him, an application for the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' FY 2024 Local Recreation Improvement Grant was requested for \$60,000 for improvements and renovations at Falcon's Nest Park.

"The DCA typically announces grant recipients within three months of the application deadline," Kaenzig said.

"We have met with Councilman Blazer and the

Public Works Department to discuss the scope of work and proposed improvements that they would like to include in the project," Kaenzig said.

The improvements would include "regrading and installing sod around the infield perimeter, rebuilding the pitcher's mound and batter's boxes, regarding the infield with a fresh infield topsoil mix, new bases and installing concrete floors and new benches in the dugouts."

The council has agreed to separate the project into two contracts: Field Work and Dugouts.

Councilman Jake Blazer expressed how he's looking forward to working with Kaenzig on the park improvements.

"Parks are very important to the town of Folsom. We have a

good plan going forward," he said.

As the evening drew to a close, Councilman Greg Conway provided updates for upcoming events. The street cleanup, hosted by the Environmental Commission, for 14th Street and Park Avenue has been rescheduled for May 4. On May 26, a Memorial Day service honoring veterans will start at 9 a.m.

"Want to remind all students to come to a short Memorial Day Service... it will be a bit more somber than Veterans Day," Conway said

Additionally, he spoke on the distribution of the seedlings for the community; he remarked that the state has a shortage of supplies and has decided to give them to the students at this time.

Other key updates included the Next E-Waste Drop-off Day scheduled for May 11 from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m., and the closure of Borough Hall on Memorial Day, May 27.

The mayor and council reconvene on May 14 at 6 p.m. inside Borough Hall, 1700 12th Street, Folsom, N.J.

This article was produced in collaboration with New Jersey Civic Information Consortium and Rowan University.

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Mullica Twp. discusses Registration of Rental Units ordinance

BY KRISTIN GUGLIETTI
GAZETTE STAFF WRITER

MULLICA TWP., N.J.—Mullica Twp. Committee members continue to make changes to the short-term rental ordinance during the April 16 Committee meeting.

Ordinances on second reading include the following: 2024-4 creating a new chapter of the municipal code of the Township of Mullica entitled “Registration of Rental Units,” 2024-5 amending and supplementing Chapter 177 of the Township Code entitled “Property Maintenance” regarding requirements for inspection of lead-based paint in certain residential dwellings, and 2024-6 creating a police department promotional process.

Solicitor David Patterson said there needs a motion to amend the 2024-4 ordinance on rental units. Section 16, paragraph C the short-term rental registration fee went from \$100 to \$200, and section 16, paragraph E the renewal registration fee went from \$75 to \$100.

When it was time to vote on amending the ordinance, committee member Glen Forman voted no while everyone else voted yes.

The Committee voted to have the short-term rental ordinance to go into effect June 30, which would give them more time to make any amendments if necessary. Everyone voted yes except for Forman.

During the public hearing for the short-term rental ordinance, former Mullica Twp. mayor Janet Forman asked what’s the rush to pass the ordinance.

Committee member Charles Muller responded and said the ordinance will help control short-term rentals and give the Planning Board some direction to help regulate them.

Later in the meeting, Mayor Edward Hagaman made the motion to direct the business administrator to prepare a report to the Township on the impact of allowing short-term rentals.

He said the report is to be done six months after the effective date of the ordinance.

“The Committee can consider any changes that may be needed including fees, the capping allowed in zoning districts and where they should be located. By gathering this information, the Committee will be in a better position to make those decisions,” Hagaman said.

Everyone except for Forman voted yes.

During the meeting, the Committee approved a resolution affirming Mullica Twp.’s objection to New Jersey’s Department of Environmental Protection’s proposed plan to implement a new vehicle usage map and road closures at Wharton State Forest.

Earlier in the meeting during committee reports, committee member DeAnna DeMarco gave the following Mullica Twp. police report: 702 total calls for service, 169 were motor vehicle stops, 136 were summonses, six were motor vehicle accidents, seven arrests, eight domestic violence calls and two DWIs.

The police will be participating in a distracted driver cam-

paign, DeMarco said.

She also gave an EMS report from Oct. 1, 2023: 158 calls, 104 patients transported, three calls for 28, no standbys, 18 refused transport, six public assistance, one pronouncement and one unfounded.

Committee member Kristi Hanselmann said the Superintendent of Public Works Albert Gras wants residents to know many potholes have been filled.

“He knows there are still quite a few, but the plan is shut down and we have not been able to get the material. As soon as we do, then we will be back filling them as soon as we can,” Hanselmann said.

She said they received a second grant from working with Atlantic City Electric in the amount of \$7,000. The money was used to replace light bulbs to LEDs to bring them up to standard on field one behind the concession stand.

During Hanselmann’s report, she said the Mullica Twp. Municipal Alliance will have

Narcan training on May 14 at 6 p.m. at the Mullica Twp. School cafeteria. Free Narcan kits will be provided. There will be crafts for kids in the library during the training, so parents can attend.

When the mayor gave his report, he thanked building inspector John Holroyd for his many years of service in Mullica Twp.

The next Mullica Twp. Committee meeting will be on May 21 at 7 p.m. at 500 Elwood Rd.

Stockton inaugurates 6th president with focus on ‘building a community of opportunity’

GALLOWAY, N.J.—Joe Bertolino wants to build a community of opportunity—for everyone—at Stockton University.

“My role, and my goal, here at Stockton is to build meaningful, impactful relationships. Relationships that strengthen our bond with the community; that enable our students to develop into engaged, effective citizens with a passion for lifelong learning; that bolster the positive development of New Jersey,” he said.

Without the traditional pomp and circumstance of an inauguration ceremony, Bertolino was formally installed as the sixth president of Stockton on Friday, April 12. The celebration, including a parade, confetti cannons and a taco bar, was in keeping with the laid-back style of Bertolino, who welcomes being addressed as “President Joe.”

“To see individuals from every stage of my life here today is overwhelming and humbling. I am a product of my upbringing and the opportunities I’ve been afforded along the way. I honor those relationships by continuing to pay it forward,” Bertolino said to an audience of nearly 750 faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members.

“Today, I am charging all of you, all who are part of Stockton, to do the same for someone else. By building a community of opportunity, we provide the space and resources that enable our students, faculty and staff to grow, thrive and be a part of something bigger. No opportunity is too small, and no opportunity is too large. When we do certain things, or build certain relationships, we may be providing others with opportunities that we don’t even realize,” he said.

Bertolino brings more than 30 years of experience in higher education to Stockton, serving previously as president at Southern Connecticut State University and Lyndon State College in Vermont. He was vice president for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs at Queens College/City University of New York and dean for Community Development at Barnard College in New York.

Bertolino said in the months since becoming president on July 1, 2023, he has taken time to meet and listen to all of Stockton’s constituencies to shape his plans for the future.

“Our vision is for Stockton to become the college of choice in South Jersey. The first choice for prospective first-year and transfer students. The destination of choice for renowned faculty and academic trailblazers. The college of

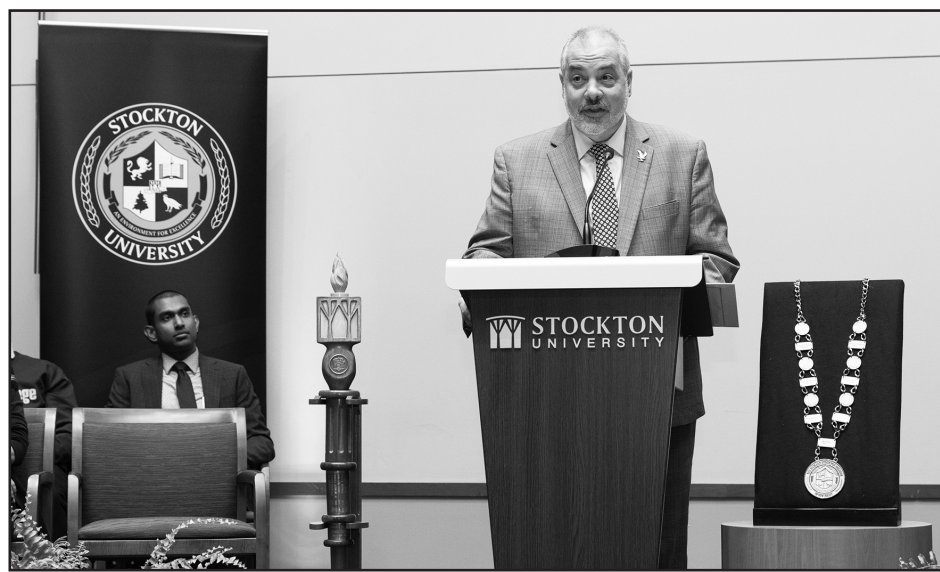


Photo Courtesy of Stockton University/Photo by Susan Allen

President Joe Bertolino spoke about building a community of opportunity during his inauguration address on April 12.

choice for partnerships with local and regional leaders in business. The first choice for donors, friends and supporters to contribute to our work,” he said.

“This spring, we will begin to write Stockton’s next chapter together through a comprehensive and thorough strategic planning process,” he said. “A key component of our vision is for Stockton to serve as a model for the future of higher education. We will be a destination campus, connecting our environmental resources in Galloway with our beachfront property in Atlantic City.”

Nelida Valentin ‘86, chair of the Stockton Board of Trustees, presented Bertolino with the Presidential Medallion, which symbolizes the transfer of responsibility of the Office of President and the obligation to promote and maintain the values represented by Stockton University.

“Higher education is experiencing significant changes, and these come with challenges and opportunities. We are grateful to President Joe because he brings commitment to students and a wealth of leadership and experience to this role. We support and believe in his ability to advance Stockton into the future,” Valentin said.

Speakers also emphasized why Bertolino is in the right place at the right time.

“Joe’s selection as your new president serves as a significant professional accomplishment for him. It is meaningful and personal to him and our family because his mother, Eileen, was an alumna of Stockton, and it also has allowed him to finally return home to South Jersey to be with his family,” said Bil Leopold, vice chancellor for

Enrollment Services and Experience at Rutgers University-Newark and Bertolino’s husband of more than 30 years.

“It became clear to me throughout the interview process and my first few months on the job that I was meant to be here,” Bertolino said, acknowledging his father, Joseph A. Bertolino Jr., and sister, Eileen Russell, in attendance. “Everything that has happened in my life, every opportunity that has been presented to me and every connection I’ve made along the way guided me here. Returning to my roots in South Jersey and serving the very institution where my mother earned her degree as an adult student very much feels like a homecoming.”

Bertolino has brought to Stockton the value of Cura Personalis, or care for the whole person, which he has carried through his professional career since graduating from University of Scranton, a Jesuit institution.

“We have a responsibility to support one another, to treat each other with kindness, respect, dignity, compassion and civility, to reach out and listen to one another. As an institution of higher education, Stockton wields tremendous power in transforming lives,” he said.

“Take those opportunities when they’re presented. Say yes, even if you’re scared or intimidated. If a mentor, a friend, a professor or colleague says you’ve got what it takes, they’re probably right. Lean on this community to seize your opportunities,” Bertolino said.

This resonated with Student Senate President Andrea Sandoval. “I never feel afraid to be myself around him. Thank you so much for letting students create that connection with you and going out of

your way to meet with other students. I know a lot of other universities don’t have that same opportunity,” she said.

Students and community were a key focus of the day. The Osprey Parade, led by the Absegami High School drumline, kicked off the celebration, which included alumni from throughout Stockton’s 50 years and student leaders representing many diverse and engaged clubs and organizations on campus. Numerous student performances dotted the celebration, which culminated in Prez Fest, a community party in the Galloway Campus Center.

“This inauguration is a celebration of Stockton and the faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters who make it a truly special place. His presidency at Stockton is unique. President Joe knows firsthand the transformative impact of a Stockton degree,” said Bridgid Harrison ‘88, chair of the Stockton University Foundation Board of Directors.

Other well wishes were shared from U.S. Sen. Cory Booker, Faculty Senate President Michael Law and Staff Senate President Lauren Fonseca. Jacquelyn Suarez, acting commissioner for the NJ Department of Community Affairs, delivered a message from Gov. Phil Murphy.

Delegates from 40 higher education institutions in New Jersey and beyond were represented. President emeriti Harvey Kesselman (2015-2023) and Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. (2003-2015) and the family of Vera King Farris (1983-2003) attended.

The inauguration incorporated performances by: Student Classical Ensemble, Stockton Dance Company, Stockton Student Chorus, Stockton Music Union, Stockton All-Starz Dance Team, Stockton Cheer Team, Joseph Sramaty ‘15 and Keldy Penarda ‘24.

Inauguration week festivities included the Arts & Culture Summit on April 8, where about 150 local and state arts representatives gathered at Stockton University Atlantic City to discuss the potential for arts and cultural expression to bridge real and imagined divides in our neighborhoods and around the world.

An Inauguration Scholarship Dinner on April 11, hosted by the Stockton University Foundation, supported the Eileen M. Bertolino ‘77 Memorial Endowed Scholarship set up by Bertolino and Leopold for nursing students.

The annual Stockton University Foundation Scholarship Benefit Gala on April 20 at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City will also celebrate Bertolino’s inauguration. For more information, visit www.stockton.edu.