Great Day Gazette

The crown jewel of the Jersey Shore

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

AS PROMISED, HISTORY IS MADE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

CITY'S HOMELESS WORK PROGRAM MAKES HEADLINES

YOUNGER CITY EMPLOYEES SHINE AT THE LEAGUE

ENDING THE YEAR STRONG FOR OUR SENIORS

WISH COME TRUE

FROM THE MAYOR

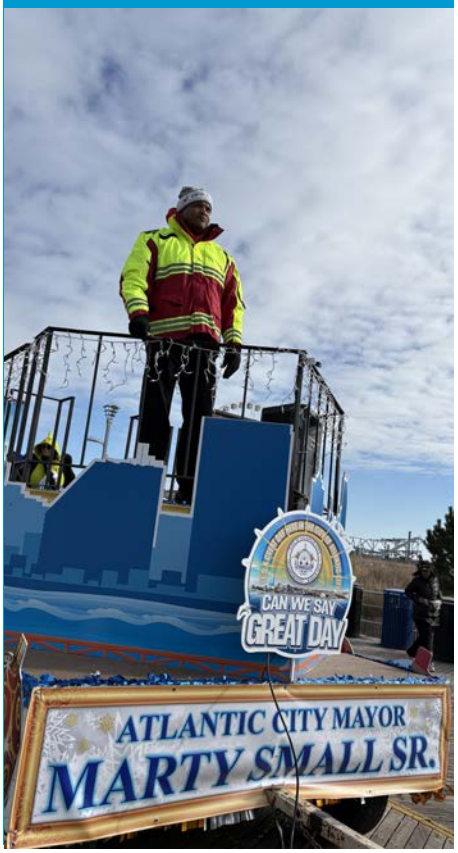
Dear Atlantic City Residents and Guests,

You all helped make my wish come true, because all I wanted for Christmas is for this year's Atlantic City Winter Wonderland Parade to be our biggest one ever, and it was! Thank you to the entire Atlantic City community and our visitors for packing the Boardwalk and bringing the energy needed to make this the spectacle that it was. We more than doubled the size of last year's parade, so I need to thank all our participants as well for being a part of this. The floats were festive and the performances were inspiring. I also must give kudos to the Mayor's Office of Special Events and our entire parade committee. I announced in February we were going to make history with this parade, and I challenged everyone to do what needs to be done to reach this goal. They rose to the occasion. And one last shout out goes to Police, Emergency Management, Public Works and the South Jersey Transportation Authority for making sure we got the safe, family-friendly atmosphere that we did. If you enjoyed this parade, I'm saying it now, wait until you see what we have in store next year!

This has been the season of giving back in Atlantic City, you'll see that as you read through this newsletter, but the Small administration did receive an early Christmas present from Standard and Poor's (S&P) Global Ratings, who raised its long-term rating and underlying rating on the City of Atlantic City's general obligation debt, while keeping a positive outlook. Just like with Moody's Investors Service, this puts Atlantic City one upgrade away from investment grade! With both S&P and Moody's citing strong management as one of the reasons for the upgrades, I hope you see that everything we've been doing, and all the decisions we make are for our taxpayers with the betterment of Atlantic City in mind.

I hope the rest of your holiday season is full of joy; and, as we near a New Year, if you think we accomplished a lot in 2024, you can't even begin to imagine what's about to happen in Atlantic City in 2025! Thank you for reading our newsletter, and remember, It's a Great Day Here in the City of Atlantic City!

- Mayor Marty Small, Sr.



CAN WE SAY GREAT PARADE?!

For the first time, the City of Atlantic City's annual Winter Wonder Parade was held on the world-famous Atlantic City Boardwalk on December 7th. With close to 100 area groups, organizations, businesses and performers participating, this was the biggest and most magical holiday parade in city history! Also, for the first time, each city department participated, with department directors and employees tossing candy and other treats to the many spectators.

The Winter Wonderland Parade is just part of the Atlantic City Tinseltown Holiday Experience, organized by the CRDA. There is plenty more holiday fun in Atlantic City to experience this season, to see a list of all the holiday displays, pop-ups, entertainment and more, visit the DO AC website - www.atlanticcitynj.com.

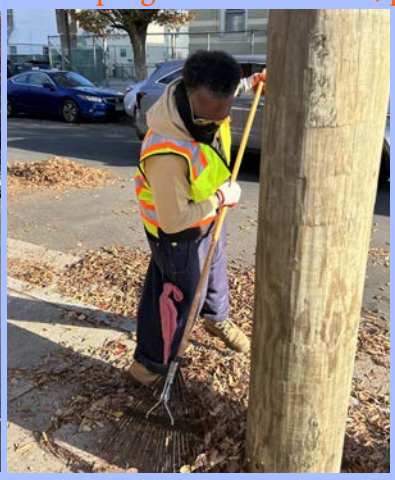
Leading up to Thanksgiving, Atlantic City Senior Services, with assistance from the city's CDBG Office, held a successful Food Box Giveaway for residents. In total, 500 turkeys and hams were distributed at City Hall along with all the fixings. Another Food Box Giveaway will take place on December 16th.

Atlantic City Reentry Services and the city's Homeless Outreach unit organized a Coat Drive for residents, where more than 250 Winter coats, more than 1,000 articles of clothing (hats, scarfs, gloves) and more than 100 pairs of shoes were distributed. These items were collected at City Hall ahead of the Coat Drive. Hot soup and resources were also available.

The Atlantic City Police Department continued its annual 'Shop with a Cop' tradition, taking 200 Atlantic City kids on a holiday shopping spree at Walmart. Each kid is partnered with an officer and gets to spend $150 (thanks to our partners at O.C.E.A.N, Inc.) on toys and other presents for them and their families.

OFFERING HOPE JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The City of Atlantic City's Homeless Outreach unit, under the Department of Health and Human Services, kicked off its Hope Work Initiative, a new program that provides temporary employment for homeless individuals with the city. Through the program, ten individuals who the city's Homeless Outreach unit encountered during their daily homeless sweeps in Atlantic City are offered a job with the City of Atlantic City Department of Public Works. These individuals work 15-hour weeks (five hours a day, three days a week) in the Public Works Beach and Boardwalk, Sanitation and Building Maintenance divisions. The individuals earn $75 a day, money that comes from the City's Opioid Settlement funds at no cost to the taxpayers of Atlantic City. The Hope Work Initiative employees are fully supervised during their work hours. City of Atlantic City Social Worker Anthony Woodard oversees the program. Upon successful completion of the ten-week program, the city will strongly consider hiring the participants in the Hope Work Initiative to permanent employment with the city. The city also plans to move forward with this program in the future, possibly employing more than ten individuals at a time.



Checking in on the streets of Atlantic City, New Hampshire Avenue from Parkside Avenue to the Boardwalk is now fully paved. Next up on the paving schedule is Baltic Avenue from Maine to Missouri Avenues, followed by the long-awaited paving of the rest of Atlantic Avenue as part of phase II of the Road Diet. Also scheduled is the paving of MLK Boulevard from Mediterranean Avenue to Route 30 in early 2025.

After 28 weeks of training, the Atlantic County Police Training Center held a police academy graduation. Fourteen Atlantic City police officers were members of Class 29. The ceremony was held at the Atlantic City Convention Center. Chief James Sarkos and Deputy Chief Stacy Herrerias presented each Atlantic City officer with their graduation certificate. The new officers will be assigned within the Operations Division.

Many city employees took advantage of Ernest Trucking's CDL certification program - an initiative from Mayor Small to help expand their skill sets and open new doors for growth and success. Congrats to the 20+ graduates!

Atlantic City Fire Department Chief and Atlantic City Office of Emergency Management Coordinator Scott Evans was deployed down South earlier in the Fall as a member of New Jersey Task Force 1 to assist with rescue efforts during Hurricane Helene. Upon his return, he shared his experiences in a Q&A you can read in its entirety at www.acnj.gov, including what he learned in North Carolina that can assist him in his public safety roles in Atlantic City.

THRIVING YOUTH OF ATLANTIC CITY

As part of a four-year commitment to the youth of Atlantic City, Mayor Small announced he is sponsoring two, multi-state College Tours Run by local organizations (NAACP Youth Council and Omega by the Sea Foundation). During the first of these College Tours, the kids visited Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Hampton University, Morgan State University, Howard University and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. The tours also included football games and a tour of the National Museum of African American history and Culture. Funding from Mayor Small covers 100 spots this year, and in 2025, 2026 and 2027 (50 kids per tour). High school sophomores, juniors and seniors who are Atlantic City residents are eligible to sign up, regardless of what high school they attend. Round trip bus transportation and hotel accommodations are included in the tour.

During November Mental Health Month, Atlantic City Youth Services hosted its first-ever Wellness Week, an entire week dedicated to holistic health for our students with a focus on mind, body and soul. Activities throughout the week included lessons on healthy eating and tea making, meditation and a trip to Split Elm Equestrian for horse-assisted therapy.

Our young gamers got to compete to see who is Atlantic City's top Madden 25 player in a tournament organized by Atlantic City Recreation. Thank you to Stockton Esports Innovation Center for donating the $400 gift card to our winner - who also got an awesome title belt!

The City of Atlantic City was well-represented at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs "Career Connection Fair" during the New Jersey State League of Municipalities Conference at the Atlantic City Convention Center. Some of the city's younger employees --

Tim Aboderin (Administration)
Jorge Llosa Davila (Purchasing)
Ayana Plummer (Planning)
Alexxus Young (Administration)

-- all spoke to college students from across New Jersey about their experiences working in government. Mayor Small also spoke about his efforts to recruit more youth into Municipal Government.

SENIOR SHOPPING, SHOWS & SAVING LIVES

It was a day of sales and socializing for Atlantic City residents ages 55 and older, who were given the opportunity to get some of their holiday shopping done early thanks to the Atlantic City Senior Services division, who organized a bus trip to the Cherry Hill Mall. Other recent activity for our seniors include a play at the Stockton University Performing Arts Center, a Senior Appreciation Holiday Luncheon and a free CPR and First Aid certification course in partnership with the American Red Cross for our Senior Buildings Captains. And keep an eye out in the January edition of the Great Day Gazette for a recap of the annual end of year Senior Gala!

The city's One Neighborhood Evolution Anti-Violence team met with anti-violence departments from all over the region in North Jersey, sharing best practices with each other in hopes of improving the effectiveness of each program. The event featured healing circles, team building projects and other networking events. One Neighborhood Evolution will continue attending staff training events like this to further improve its operational efficiency.

And mark your calendars for Monday, December 30 at 5:00 PM as Atlantic City Reentry Services hosts a Vision Board Event for the community at All Wars Memorial Building to help get everyone's short and long-term goals in order for 2025!

The Atlantic City community came together for the 4th annual Transgender Day of Remembrance event organized by the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs. This is one of many efforts to support one another in the fight for a world where everyone can live safely.

Mayor Small and ACPD Chief Sarkos surprised Showboat Hotel Atlantic City owner Bart Blatstein during the city's professional development day by making Blatstein's late son, Ryan, an honorary police officer. Prior to his death earlier this year, Ryan had always been a strong supporter of Law Enforcement, especially in Atlantic City.

On behalf of the ACPD, the city would like to thank everyone for the outpouring of support following the passing of Sgt. Jefferson Rivera after a courageous battle with cancer. Sgt. Rivera will always be remembered as a one-of-a-kind person who loved serving the people of Atlantic City. He is missed deeply.

Can We Say Great Day?!

FOLLOW US

Website: www.acnj.gov

X (formerly Twitter): AtlanticCityGov

Facebook: AtlanticCityGov

Instagram: AtlanticCityNJGov

Tik Tok: AtlanticCityGov