# Great Day Gazette

The crown jewel of the Jersey Shore

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## GO BIG OR GO HOME

### FROM THE MAYOR

November 3, 2023

Dear Atlantic City Residents and Guests,

Atlantic City is not perfect. I've always been very honest and open about this. When you hear me say 'It's a Great Day Here in the City of Atlantic City,' I say that because the Small administration is doing great things. It's important to distinguish between 'great' and 'perfect.' We have problems in our streets. We have people loitering. Atlantic Avenue has become a tragedy in recent years. It's important to note it is not 'Atlantic City homeless' causing all this, it is individuals who just happen to be in Atlantic City because other municipalities send them our way because of our supreme social services.

But we are addressing this. We recently hired an outreach team. We have been aggressively working with police to break up encampments all over the city. We are working with the state to bring a homeless czar to Atlantic City. And, as we announced publicly for the first time recently, we created the Boardwalk Improvement Group, or as we call it, 'BIG.' I told my policy advisor, Judge Steven Perskie, something needs to be done, and tasked him with forming a group consisting of city departments and stakeholders. That's how BIG was started. To the residents of Atlantic City, please be patient. This group has done some wonderful things already, as you'll read about in this newsletter, but we have a long way to go. Please know, cleaning up this city is, and has always been, a top priority of mine.

If you think this is "big" news, all I have to say is just wait, there's plenty more to come, including some updates on projects you've been asking about for a long time. Stay tuned...

I hope you all got to enjoy a safe and spook-tacular Halloween, and let me be the first to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving! Thanks for reading our newsletter, and remember, It's a Great Day Here in the City of Atlantic City!

- Mayor Marty Small, Sr.

During a news conference along S. Tennessee Ave, the Small administration announced the formation of the Boardwalk Improvement Group (BIG), to address homelessness concerns, among other quality of life issues. BIG is a proactive partnership between the public and private sector that aims to improve the overall quality of the Atlantic City Boardwalk and beaches. BIG features an integration of city departments that conduct 24/7 observation and reconnaissance, with attention to prevention, abatement, cleanup, engagement and enforcement. Since the formation of BIG, daily visual Boardwalk and beach inspections have been conducted, 'See, Click, Fix' was created internally to form one, central database where all information and communication comes from, and it was determined what ordinances needed to be changed or added.

BIG addresses homeless individuals sleeping and loitering around the Atlantic City Boardwalk and beaches, as well as removal of encampments, while supporting the idea of these individuals finding a successful path in life. The group was formed early this year under the leadership of Atlantic City Police Department Sergeant Brian Shapiro. The group originally featured police, the Atlantic City Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Atlantic City Department of Public Works and the NJ Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) Special Improvement Division (SID). By Summer, the group also consisted of the city's Department of Licensing and Inspection, Solicitor's Office, Information Technology Department and Health and Human Services Department. Also involved in BIG are the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Atlantic City Casino Association and social services groups from throughout the area. Representatives meet bi-weekly to discuss improvement tactics, and how to best coordinate with everyone involved. While homelessness is a major component, BIG also addresses aggressive Boardwalk performers, bicycle violations, public smoking, open container violations, and many other issues to keep the Atlantic City Boardwalk world class.

Also during the news conference, Health and Human Services Director Jarrod Barnes introduced newly hired, highly qualified employees to his department, who have been brought on to help deal with homelessness. They are Social Workers Joya Banks and Anthony Woodard, Drug Prevention and Recovery Specialist Keith Dunn, Director of Community Relations Kenneth Mitchem and a Reentry Services team staffed by Brandan Hargrose and Kamau Johnson (follow @acreentryservices on Instagram). The city is looking to fill eight positions to improve Atlantic Avenue through outreach and interaction. The jobs are posted under the Career section of the city website, under 'Community Service Aide.'

Leaf collection season is here. The Department of Public Works crews have been out on the streets since the beginning of October, and will continue to be out and about this Fall. If you need bags to gather leaves from your property, they are available at no cost in the Public Works Office at City Hall (6th floor). Crews will pick up the full bags from your curb.

Public Safety officials in Atlantic City -- under mission command of the Atlantic City Office of Emergency Management -- are turning to drone technology to keep residents and visitors safe. The technology gives rescue teams quicker intelligence and real time situational awareness. Using the drones, officials can let people know not to swim in the water after guarded hours, drop inflatable rescue devices to distressed swimmers and let those swimmers know further help is on the way. Plus, through thermal imaging capability, officials can detect locations of sharks and other marine life in the water, or lost swimmers.

A recent demonstration of the new technology held on the beach included an inflatable device drop from the drone, with a staged distressed swimmer, who was then rescued by an Atlantic City Beach Patrol lifeguard on a jet ski.

"Drone technology can expand the reach and reduce the response time of lifeguards and public safety crews responsible," said Atlantic City OEM Coordinator Scott Evans. "We are a proud leader in the use of drones to enhance public safety."

The Atlantic City Beach Patrol is expected to have regular deployment of drones in time for the Summer of 2024.

In recognition of National Faith & Blue Weekend, the Atlantic City Police Department, in partnership with the City of Atlantic City and local faith-based organizations and community groups, hosted a community unity walk from Kennedy Plaza to the Public Safety Building. At the end of the walk, participants of all faiths prayed together and celebrated as one with music and performances from various cultures.

Atlantic City Municipal Courts teamed with the One Neighborhood Evolution Anti-Violence Program and Reentry Services for a Lift Warrant Event. The public had a chance to get vacating bench warrants lifted, learn about expungment eligibility and obtain child support information at no cost. A similar event will be held in November.

The Atlantic City Police Department (finally!) honored Patrolman Laverne Harrison Carr, who died in the line of duty on June 6, 1929. Patrolman Carr's death was not known to the ACPD until earlier this year, when it was discovered by the Officer Down Memorial Page (ODMP). With the help of local media, the ACPD was able to locate two of Patrolman Carr's great grandchildren. Those relatives, along with their families, joined police as a plaque was revealed in front of the Public Safety Building. It now sits next to the plaques of other Atlantic City police officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The City of Atlantic City teamed up with the Atlantic City Board of Education for another successful Harvest Day Festival in the City Hall Courtyard. Kids got to enjoy some pre-Halloween candy, with music and other family fun in the mix. The different city departments, along with other Atlantic City organizations, had resource tables set up during the event.

City Hall went pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month...

...then went purple for Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Both events featured resource tables in the lobby, and the staff wearing colors to support survivors.

These events were organized by the Mayor's Office of Special Events and the Multicultural Services division.

In yet another colorful showcase at City Hall, LGBTQ+ History Month was celebrated during the last full week of October. Judah Dorrington, the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs liaison, set up a table in the lobby with giveaways and educational videos. The week ended with a ceremony featuring Atlantic City Boxing Hall of Fame Inductee Jamillia Lawrence and an Ally Day where everyone was encouraged to wear Pride.colors. Also in October, the LGBTQ Office, along with the NAACP Silver Linings Committee, hosted a successful Silver Linings Day at the Claridge.

The Small administration proudly took part in two recent unveiling ceremonies. A Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Statue now stands at Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall, while Westminster Avenue has been renamed Schultz-Hill Blvd to honor John Schultz and Gary Hill for all they've done for Atlantic City over the years.

During the October City Council meeting, Council unanimously passed a resolution to Confront and Combat Antisemitism. Council Vice President Kaleem Shabazz then presented the American Jewish Committee Philadelphia/ Southern New Jersey with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of all council.

Atlantic City Youth Services co-hosted a memorable College & Career Week at Atlantic City High School. The event started with a lively pep rally at ACHS with performances from students and the Johnson C. Smith Marching Band. The week also featured secondary education prep workshops, information on collegiate sports, Greek organizations and the army reserves, as well as 'A Day in the Life' professional series that had participation from many City of Atlantic City department directors. The week concluded with the College and Career Fair, where students learned about all the options available to them after high school. More than 40 students even received on-the-spot decisions from academic institutions.

ACYS brought Atlantic City students on a College Tour to Temple and Cheyney Universities. This tour went so well there will be another one on November 8th, this time to Villanova and Saint Joseph's Universities, with more to come this Fall!

T-Ball season is in full swing in Atlantic City. Youth are getting to learn all the skills they need to be future baseball stars, courtesy of Atlantic City Recreation.

Senior Appreciation Day gave all Atlantic City residents 55+ the chance to enjoy free massages, haircuts manicures and pedicures at the PAL Building. This was one of many free October activities offered to all seniors citywide, a list that included two Paint & Sip events, BINGO, a show at the Stockton Performing Arts Center, and was capped off with an unforgettable trip to Washington DC for a tour of the US Capitol. Follow Atlantic City Senior Services on Facebook to see what's happening in November.

# Can We Say Great Day?!

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