



## Ocean County: Ready For Summer 2017

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Today, Governor Christie visited Seaside Heights to highlight the success of the Jersey Shore and its booming tourism numbers since Superstorm Sandy. The resiliency of Jersey Shore residents, small business owners, and restoration projects has been unmatched in the nearly five years since the region was devastated.

The Governor emphasized New Jersey's determination to fully restore and improve the Jersey Shore as he joined in the official reopening of the famous roller coaster on the Seaside Heights Boardwalk, which had been destroyed by the superstorm. The ceremony showcased a new rollercoaster, Hydrus, that features a 72-foot vertical drop, 1,000 feet of track, and speeds up to 45 mph. The boardwalk's classic look is additionally being restored through the rebuilding of a new 131-foot Ferris wheel at Casino Pier.

Governor Christie also stopped into Lucky Leo's Sweet Shop, a new candy store owned by the iconic Lucky Leo's arcade, a staple at the Seaside Heights Boardwalk for over 60 years. The 3,000 square-foot building is now a must-see attraction for anyone seeking homemade chocolate, fudge and candy apples. The new Sweet Shop is giving the Boardwalk a new look and flair, taking classic Swiss chocolate shop ideas and molding them into an already eclectic Jersey Shore.

The historic rebuilding and business additions have done more than to simply restore the Jersey Shore. It has given the region new life and an economic boost:

**Press Release:** "Ocean County saw its tourism dollars grow another 3 percent in 2016 bringing the amount tourism injects into the local economy to \$4.68 billion." (Press Release, "Ocean County's Tourism Revenues Continue To Grow," [Ocean County Press Release](#), 03/09/17)

**Star-Ledger:** "Hydrus, the twisting, turning steel contraption with a 72-foot vertical drop serves as the new focal point of the popular amusement area." (MaryAnn Spoto, "New Roller Coaster At Casino Pier Changing The Face Of Seaside Boardwalk," [Star-Ledger](#), 03/02/17)

**Asbury Park Press:** "Two new rides are redefining the amusement landscape at Casino Pier, nearly five years after superstorm Sandy badly battered this borough." (Jean Mikle, "New rides coming to Seaside Heights nearly 5 years after Sandy," [Asbury Park Press](#), 04/11/17)

**Inquirer:** "Thousands of coaster enthusiasts from across the country and around the world will likely

descend upon the new attraction this summer.” (Jacqueline L. Urgo, “Seaside Heights replaces coaster that fell into the sea during Hurricane Sandy,” [Inquirer](#), 03/20/17)

**Asbury Park Press:** “Lucky Leo’s Sweet Shop will feature homemade chocolate, fudge and candy apples, taking ideas from Swiss chocolate shops.” (Michael L. Diamond, “After 65 Years, Lucky Leo’s in Seaside turns to candy,” [Asbury Park Press](#), 04/25/17)

## **New Jersey’s Tourism Industry Is Vibrant And Growing**

New Jersey’s tourism economy has grown for seven straight years, including **\$44.1 billion** generated last year, a 2.9-percent increase, with visitation to our shores increasing by 3.3-percent. With the memory and impact of Superstorm Sandy fading, Ocean County was one of the fastest growing shore counties in 2016 — with revenue up **3.1 percent** in 2016.

In 2016, the tourism industry directly supported more than 321,231 jobs. When factoring in indirect impacts, more than a half million jobs – or nearly 1 in 10 of all New Jersey jobs – depended on tourism.

Seaside Heights has been built to last, and the remolding of its boardwalk makes this vacation stop an exceptional destination for anyone visiting the Jersey Shore.

**Press Release:** “AAA is expecting more Memorial Day travelers this year than any time in the past 12 years, as confident consumers come out of hibernation, ready to explore the Jersey Shore and more.” (Press Release, “The Great American Road Trip is Back,” [AAA Mid-Atlantic](#), 05/23/17)

**Asbury Park Press:** “Tourism officials think the Shore is poised to surpass last year, when visitors to Ocean and Monmouth counties spent \$7.1 billion.” (Michael L. Diamond, “These iconic Jersey Shore tourism businesses plan comebacks,” [Asbury Park Press](#), 05/25/17)

**Star-Ledger:** “New Jersey’s beaches are in their best shape in decades heading into the summer.” (MaryAnn Spoto, “N.J. beaches are clean, open and ready for summer tourists, officials say,” [Star-Ledger](#), 05/24/17)

**Star-Ledger:** “Wildwood Crest recently bested 49 vacation destinations across the country to be named the No. 1 Summer Hot Spot in 2017.” (Kelly Roncace, “N.J. spot named best summer vacation destination in U.S. by Trip Advisor,” [Star-Ledger](#), 03/22/17)

**Star-Ledger:** “Beach replenishment for the northern Ocean County peninsula is set to start. The work eventually will give Ortley Beach a 225-foot wide beach. Today’s announcement by the DEP is welcome news to the residents and businesses in Toms River that they will be protected from future storms.” (MaryAnn Spoto, “Long-awaited \$128M Jersey Shore beach replenishment to start next month,” [Star-Ledger](#), 05/11/17)

## **2016 OCEAN COUNTY TOURISM**

**2016 Tourism Direct Sales– \$4.679 billion**

- Lodging – \$1.383 billion
- Food & Beverage – \$1.147 billion
- Retail – \$997.5 million
- Recreation – \$642.7 million
- Transport – \$507.7 million
- Second Homes – \$1.228 billion

**2016 Direct Tourism Employment – 26,636**

- Direct Share of Total Employment – 10.5%
- Percent Change (from 2015) – 2.0%

**2016 Total Tourism Employment Impact – 37,694**

- Total Share of Total Employment – 14.9%

**2016 State and Local Tax Receipts – \$463.1 million**

- Percent Change (from 2015) – 3.0%
- Share of State Tourism Tax Impact – 9.5%

Governor Christie has maintained a steadfast commitment to rebuilding and revitalizing New Jersey since Superstorm Sandy. The proud citizens of this State have maintained their resilience, joining arm in arm to rebuild in the aftermath of the devastation. Visitors from across the country and overseas have been welcomed with open arms back to destination areas such as Ocean County and the Jersey Shore over the last four summers, and we are prepared to continue that momentum into the Summer of 2017.

**BY THE NUMBERS: OCEAN COUNTY RECOVERY SINCE SUPERSTORM SANDY**

**\$2.3 Billion** Ocean County residents and businesses have received \$2.3 billion in payouts from their policies under the National Flood Insurance Program.

**\$515 Million** 4,064 homeowners in Ocean County have been paid a total of \$515 million from the Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Elevation and Mitigation (“RREM”) and the Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) Homeowners programs. The RREM and LMI programs provide grant awards to homeowners to restore their Sandy-damaged homes, including reconstruction, rehabilitation, elevation and/or other mitigation activities. To date, almost 3,000 homes in Ocean County alone have already been completed through the RREM and LMI programs.

**\$247 Million** FEMA has obligated over \$247 million in Public Assistance funding to Ocean County

for debris removal, emergency services and rebuilding activities.

**\$191 Million**

Ocean County residents received approximately \$191 million in FEMA Individual Assistance, which includes repair costs, replacement costs, rental assistance and other needs assistance.

**\$98 Million**

The Essential Services Grants program distributed nearly \$98 million to Ocean County, Brick Township, Lavallette Borough, Lavallette School District, Seaside Park Borough, Seaside Heights Borough, Seaside Heights School District, Toms River Township and Toms River Regional School District. These grants were used in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy to ensure that these communities funded essential services in areas such as public safety, public works, sanitation and education while recovering from Sandy.

**\$70 Million**

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority approved nearly \$70 million in funding for 514 local projects and small businesses in Ocean County through the Stronger NJ Business Grant Program, Stronger NJ Business Loan Program and the Neighborhood Community Revitalization Program.

**\$15 Million**

The towns of Beach Haven, Lacey, Little Egg Harbor Township, Seaside Heights, Seaside Park, South Toms River and Tuckerton received over \$15 million through the Neighborhood Community Revitalization Program to support local economic revitalization projects.

**\$681,928**

Thirteen Ocean County school districts received \$681,928 in funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Project School Emergency Response to Violence Grant Program, which provided services designed to maintain safe learning environments for children in schools disrupted by Sandy.