



# Community CONNECTION

SUMMER 2008

A PUBLICATION OF THE DELAWARE RIVER & BAY AUTHORITY

## Whales and Northern Gannets amaze CMLF passengers and crews

CAPE MAY, NJ — During the early spring months, customers and marine employees are often treated to a fascinating show, put on by some creatures, both finned or winged, that inhabit the Delaware Bay.

When the weather cooperates and the seas are calm, customers and employees aboard the Cape May - Lewes Ferry vessels often spot the water spouts of Finback Whales or are thrilled by the torpedo-like dives into the water of the bay by Northern Gannets as both prey on local bait fish, primarily Atlantic herring.

Both species feed on bait fish near the shipping lanes of the lower Delaware Bay. Their dining habits provide a free



*Finback Whale*

glimpse of nature in action from the decks of the CMLF ferries as they crisscross the bay.

According to CMLF Captain George Nason, the Gannets have been showing up by the thousands. He also noted that

he had seen three Finbacks each day on weekend trips in March and early April. He noted that a pair of whales was always seen together, one 60 feet and the other about 40 feet in length.

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## Construction begins on Delaware approaches to bridge

NEW CASTLE, DE — Phase III of the Delaware Approach Road Rehabilitation program, focusing on I-295 northbound from I-95 to the U.S. 13 interchange, is under way. The construction work includes earth moving, bridge construction/rehabilitation, signage and drainage efforts.

Motorists should expect delays from time to time, as the safety of the traveling public as well as the contractors and DRBA employees continues to be the Authority's highest priority. The Authority does not anticipate that the approaches to the bridge will need to be closed although some lanes may be temporarily unavailable or shifted during construction.



**CONSTRUCTION** — Part of the Delaware Approach Road Rehabilitation Program Phase III, the replacement of this railroad overpass, is scheduled to be completed in September. Built in the early '60s, the approach roads and ramps will receive significant improvements which will enhance roadway safety and efficiency.

Commuters and other travelers are urged to stay alert in and around construction zones which are clearly marked. There will be detours and varying speed limits posted during different phases of the work. The Authority urges all travelers to add a few additional minutes to their travel plans particularly during rush hour periods.

In general, the multi-year program includes new lighting, drainage, pavement, signage and rehabilitation or relocation of approach ramps and interchange bridges. Phase III is scheduled for completion in December 2010. ❖



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*Community Connection* is a publication of the Delaware River and Bay Authority. For further information, please contact the DRBA at PO Box 71, New Castle, DE 19720, or call 302.571.6300, fax 302.571.6367, visit our website at [www.drba.net](http://www.drba.net), or email us at [contactus@drba.net](mailto:contactus@drba.net).

## DRBA receives national FAA award for DBE excellence



*AWARD — Michael D. Freilich, the FAA's National External Program Manager (right) presents the FAA 2008 DBE Advocate and Partner Award to DRBA employees Michael Schirmer, DBE Program Manager (center) and Kelly Phillips Parker, Purchasing Administrator.*

INDIANAPOLIS, IN — The DRBA was one of two recipients of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) 2008 DBE Advocate and Partner Award, which recognizes airport sponsors who have demonstrated excellence in meeting both the letter and the spirit of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program in the previous year.

The award was announced in May at the 24th Annual Airport Business Diversity Conference here.

The DRBA was recognized for its 2007 achievements in reaching out to DBEs and in obtaining significant DBE participation.

In addition to the federal program, the Authority has also extended its DBE goal methodology to its local contracting efforts. As a result, more than \$3 million in subcontracts have been awarded by prime contractors to disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned businesses since 2006. ❖

## Authority hosts African American, Latino Chamber of Commerce of Delaware

NEW CASTLE, DE — The DRBA hosted a Minority Business Enterprise Networking Breakfast for the African American and Latino Chamber of Commerce of Delaware in May.

The event introduced minority entrepreneurs with the business opportunities

available at the Authority.

Michael Schirmer, DBE Program Manager for the DRBA, provided a brief overview of the agency's contracting and procurement process and outlined upcoming opportunities to participate in the contracting process. ❖

## Community Giving

DOVER, DE — DRBA Chairman Michael Parkowski, left, and fellow Commissioner Gary Patterson, right, present to Reneé Bullock, center, Director of Mom’s House, a \$7,500 check, which will be used to support the organization’s effort to provide free day care to single parents who attend school full-time. Mom’s House is a faith-centered, nonprofit, licensed childcare center that also helps single parents tap into support services that enable them to complete their education, find jobs, and avoid being dependent on welfare. ❖



## Remembering fallen comrades

NEW CASTLE, DE — The annual Memorial Day Ceremony was held at Memorial Park near the Delaware Memorial Bridge Plaza on May 30.

Sponsored by Colonial Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of American, the ceremony honored the men and women of Delaware and New Jersey who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Delaware celebrates Memorial Day on May 30 while most other states observe the national holiday on the final Monday of May. ❖



**REMEMBRANCE** — Major General Francis Vavala of the Delaware National Guard shows his respect for fallen comrades during the Memorial Day Ceremony at the DRBA’s Veterans Memorial Park.

## CMLF promotes facilities to regional event planners

LEWES, DE — The Cape May - Lewes Ferry has begun a program to aggressively market the use of its stunning terminal facilities and its ferries for memorable weddings, special occasions and business events.

In the photo at right, Heath Gehrke, director of ferry operations, and Dave D’Imperio, food and retail manager, are shown welcoming event planners and members of the local business community to an informational open house at the Lewes Terminal in early June.

Anyone interested in reserving the Cape May - Lewes Ferry for an upcoming event should contact Mr. D’Imperio at 609.889.7207. ❖





DRBA  
PO Box 71  
New Castle, DE 19720

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## New same day return-trip fare to debut at the CMLF \$10 return trip vehicle fare valid during '08 -'09 winter season only

CAPE MAY, NJ — It's good news for customers of the Cape May-Lewes Ferry who use the service during the winter months. In May of this year, the DRBA Commission approved a new, same day return trip fare of \$10 for a standard-sized vehicle and its driver.

The fare, valid for a same day trip only, is valid for a one year trial period.

"The Authority wants to make the ferry service more affordable for customers who travel round trip on the same day, in standard-sized vehicles during the winter months.

"We anticipate that the new fare will encourage more people to use the service and thus generate additional revenues for the operations," said Jim Walls, chief operations officer for the DRBA.



The Authority's management team will evaluate the results of the new fare class on vehicle traffic and then report the findings and resulting recommendations to the Commission at the end of the trial period.

The Authority also hopes to promote business and commerce activity in the communities of Delaware and New Jersey that might result from such a reasonably priced same-day, round-trip package.

The new fare class for same day, return trip travel follows:

Vehicle & Driver Nov 1 - Mar 31  
Car, SUV, Pickup truck  
(Vehicles < 20')  
Same-day Return Trip

VALUE FARE

\$10.00

## Whales

*Continued from page 1*

This whale species is the second-largest in the world, growing to 70 feet in length and 60 tons in weight. An endangered species, the Finback is the world's fastest whale, capable of traveling at speeds up to 35 miles per hour.



*Northern Gannet*

The Northern Gannet, a black and white bird with long pointed wings and a long bill, is the largest seabird in the North Atlantic with a wingspan of nearly two meters. ❖