

Community

CONNECTION



FALL 2011

DRBA merges E-ZPass ops with New Jersey E-ZPass



NEW CASTLE, DE — DRBA's E-ZPass operations merged with New Jersey's E-ZPass operations earlier this year. The seamless merger provides a number of advantages for the DRBA's former customers and the agency itself anticipates numerous cost efficiencies.

The New Jersey Customer Service Center manages about 2 million accounts with 4 million transponders compared to the DRBA's approximately 43,000 accounts and nearly 69,000 transponders. The DRBA expects to realize almost three-quarters of a million dollars in annual cost savings through the merger.

"We have constantly explored ways to be more cost effective with our resources, while at the same time provide transportation services that meet or exceed our customers' expectations," said Executive Director James T. Johnson, Jr., "With that in mind, the decision to consolidate our E-ZPass operation with New Jersey's was another step in that direction." Johnson also noted that the transition was expected to be straightforward given that New Jersey and the DRBA both use the same backoffice provider.

Advantages for DRBA account holders include:

- Reduced monthly account membership fee from \$1.50 to \$1.00
- Free transponders on private accounts, down from \$21-\$33
- Access to all discount plans offered by New Jersey
- Additional walk-in service centers on the New Jersey Turnpike, Garden State Parkway and Atlantic City Expressway.

Additional member organizations of the New Jersey operation include the Delaware River Port Authority and the Burlington County Bridge Commission.



Hawker Beechcraft lands at NCA



NEW CASTLE, DE — New Castle Airport will soon be home to a new aircraft maintenance facility. The Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) and the Delaware Economic Development Office (EDO) have reached an agreement with Hawker Beechcraft Global Customer Support (GCS) to open a new Hawker Beechcraft Services (HBS) aircraft maintenance facility to serve as the northeast regional service center for the HBS network. The new facility is expected to open in the second quarter of 2012.

"Hawker Beechcraft is an international leader in the development, construction, and maintenance of aircraft and the DRBA is pleased to welcome a tenant of their reputation to the New Castle Airport," said Bill Lowe, DRBA Commission Chairman, who noted that HBC's decision illustrates the airport's appeal to the aviation community.

Wilmington's proximity to Hawker

Beechcraft's local client base makes it a convenient location for many regional operators. The region is also home to a productive and talented workforce which helped the DRBA and the Delaware EDO to cement the deal with Hawker Beechcraft.

"Hawker Beechcraft has a large fleet of customers residing in the northeastern United States," said Hawker Beechcraft Vice President Christi Tannahill. "Our customers have been requesting a factory service facility in the region."

The New Castle Airport facility is nearly 60,000 square feet, including 40,000 square feet of hangar space, 8,500 square feet of back shop space and 10,000 square feet of office space. The upgraded facility will offer guest offices for customers to use while their aircraft are being serviced, with each workspace supplying full office amenities, such as computers, Wi-Fi access, printers and telephones.

Ferry seeking a private food and retail operator



NEW CASTLE, DE — DRBA officials are seeking an experienced private firm to take over the retail and food operations of the Cape May-Lewes Ferry as early as the spring of 2013.

According to Jim Walls, chief operations officer of the Authority, "We want to make sure our customer experience is the best it can be," Walls said. "We need to partner with a proven hospitality operator that can offer brand name menu selections and will provide a much needed source of revenue for the CMLF."

In addition, a hospitality operator has significant economies of scale and cost efficiencies that our small, stand-alone operation is unable to generate."

The retail and food service has had operating deficits of more than a half million dollars a year for the past three years.

Walls noted that the DRBA values its food and retail employees and has met with them on the change and will work with them to make the transition seamless. The DRBA employees will continue to operate the business lines until the privatization effort is completed.

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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, call 302.571.6300, fax 302.571.6367, visit our website at www.drba.net or email us at contactus@drba.net.

Renewable energy may be in DRBA's future



NEW CASTLE, DE — The DRBA is seeking information from qualified firms in the renewable energy industry on providing opportunities and strategies to implement cost effective renewable energy projects at its facilities in New Jersey and Delaware.

The goal is to identify feasible project concepts for wind and/or solar installations at Authority-owned facilities. However, the Authority will consider other technologies such as geothermal if experts show they are both feasible and beneficial.

“We are committed to protecting the environment and adopting practices that promote environmental stewardship,” the DRBA’s executive director, Jim Johnson,

noted. “Through a variety of short and long term initiatives, the DRBA seeks to accomplish a number of goals, including the generation of electricity from renewable sources, increasing efficiency of energy usage, and reducing energy-related operating costs.”

Over the past two years, the DRBA has completed two studies involving the feasibility of developing renewable sources of energy at the Delaware Memorial Bridge and Cape May-Lewes Ferry facilities. While the Authority is primarily interested in on-site renewable projects that will be privately owned and operated, with the Authority purchasing the electricity generated through a Power Purchase Agreement, the agency would consider other project arrangements.



GROWTH – Local farmers, crafters, artisans, and others took advantage of the perfect location to set up shop for the Ferry Fresh Market at the Cape May Ferry Terminal.

Growing a ferry fresh market at Cape May Ferry Terminal



CAPE MAY, NJ — Ten “Ferry Fresh Farm Markets” took place at the Cape May Ferry Terminal this past summer, drawing crowds who appreciated the fresh produce, the accessibility, and the atmosphere of one of New Jersey’s newest farmers’ market.

More than 20 vendors participated in the new undertaking, offering fresh vegetables and flowers, locally grown berries, farm fresh eggs, locally grown herbs, homemade breads and baked goods, crab cakes, handmade pottery, fresh sal-

ads, balsamic vinegars and oils and a local roasted coffee.

Michael Porch, DRBA marketing manager for the Ferry, noted that the market provided a customer service to ferry passengers and an economic opportunity for local vendors.

“We were really excited to have the market here at the terminal,” Porch said. “It provides a two-way benefit: one, it will introduce people to the ferry, and two, it provides an outlet for local farmers, bakers, and other merchants.



EXERCISE ON THE BAY — U.S. Coast Guard led a mass rescue operation exercise in Cape May giving local participants to evaluate how their disaster plans actually perform.

CMLF hosts Bay Mass Rescue Exercise led by U.S. Coast Guard



Imagine a DRBA ferry vessel experiencing an out-of-control fire in the engine room while transiting the Delaware Bay. The vessel loses all power with the exception of one generator and the captain orders all to abandon ship. More than 200 passengers and crew members heed the order to evacuate, but several passengers are injured during the evacuation and two crew members are severely burned.

On September 21, the U.S. Coast Guard sponsored an exercise that featured a mass rescue operation exercise in Cape May. The test operation included more than 100 Coast Guard recruits wearing makeup to simulate burns, cuts, broken bones and eye injuries. Numerous state and local fire and rescue units from both New Jersey and Delaware joined with the Coast Guard personnel to participate in the full scale exercise which took place at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May.

Triage centers were established during the exercise at both ferry terminals, one in Cape May and the other in Lewes.



The 87-foot Cutter Mako was dispatched to the scene of the "burning ferry" as well as a number of smaller boats. New Jersey State Police and a Delaware Bay Pilot's Association boat also "delivered" the injured to Cape May. Recruits were stretched out on the dock, some sitting, some clutching burned arms or broken legs.

The Cape May Fire Department transported the first "injured" ferry passenger while Fire Chief Jerry Inderwies Jr. manned a mobile command center.

Some of the other participating agencies included the New Jersey Emergency Medical Task Force, Sussex County Emergency Medical Services, Town Bank Fire Department, Lower Township Police, the Salvation Army and Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City.

The purpose of the exercise was to provide participating agencies an opportunity to evaluate the adequacy of plans, procedures, and coordination efforts in responding to a maritime mass rescue operation in the waters of the Delaware Bay.

Yep, the Ferry has an App for that



CAPE MAY, NJ — Tech savvy travelers had the opportunity during the summer season to win a one-week beach vacation — split between Cape May and Lewes — courtesy of the brand new Cross-Cape Adventure App.

The free App, available for mobile smart phones at www.ExploreTwin-Capes.com, www.cmlf.com, www.cafemaylewesferry.com or the App store, allowed explorers to check-in electronically at 50 specified Twin Capes attractions or landmarks located in either state. Each check-in earned travelers one sweepstakes entry. Although no purchase was necessary, players had to log in at least once on each side of the Bay.

The Adventure App was a great way for visitors to explore the Twin Capes — from amusement centers to a historic lightship, shopping outlets to vineyards. Organizers noted that simply by bird-watching at the Cape May Bird Observatory and playing the slots at Dover Downs, a lucky App aficionado was eligible to win a free week at Cape beaches.

The prize package, which must be booked 21 days in advance and which is subject to availability, includes hotel accommodations on both sides of the Bay, as well as round-trip auto fare on the Cape May-Lewes ferry. Hotel accommodations, for four people (two adults/two children) will be at the Inn at Canal Square in Lewes and Congress Hall in Cape May. Misty Morgan of Newberg, OR, the lucky winner, will also receive dinner for four at the Blue Pig Restaurant and a spa package for two, among other prizes.

Smart phone participation was limited to those using the iPhone (iOS4 or higher), Droid (2.1 or higher), or BlackBerry (6.0 or higher) platforms.

Ferry representatives noted that this was a unique promotion that aimed to make the ferry more accessible for the growing segment of ferry customers who use smart phones. The contest was accessible and modern — a scavenger hunt of the modern, mobile age.

DRBA
 P.O. Box 71
 New Castle, DE 19720



When is a Ferry vessel also a research vessel?



LEWES, DE —The University of Delaware College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment joined with the DRBA

in launching a unique research project with the installation of a complex, automated measuring and sampling system (shown in this photo) on the MV Twin Capes. The SeaKeeper 1000, manufactured and installed on the ferry vessel by YSI, Inc. of Ohio, collects water quality data while the vessel crosses the Bay.

Although historically, the Delaware Bay did not suffer the extreme pollution of the urban Delaware River, the Bay has suffered from more subtle pollution, habitat destruction and over fishing.

Jonathan Sharp, an oceanography professor at UD, has been studying the estuary of the river and bay for more than three decades.

Despite hundreds of research cruises and 40 years of monitoring, the sampling was not enough to quantify the water exchange across the Bay, he said. The summer's research effort is beginning to change this through the data gathered in eight daily crossings. Professor Sharp



noted that more detailed data and information has been gathered this summer than in all the previous research.

The DRBA notes that it is pleased to

take part in this effort to keep the unparalleled scenic beauty of the Delaware Bay secure for the enjoyment of future generations.