MAYOR'S MESSAGE *April 18, 2024*

As you may have heard, yesterday a local school bus caught on fire on the Garden State Parkway while traveling southbound from the Ocean City Intermediate School with ten Sea Isle City students onboard. I am very happy to report that each of the students and the bus driver exited the bus without any injuries prior to it becoming fully engulfed in flames.

Obviously, as both a parent and a member of this community, it was terrifying to hear the initial reports of a local school bus burning on the side of the road – and when I learned that there were no injuries, I felt a tremendous sense of relief. Afterwards, I was very impressed and grateful to learn about the swift action that some of the children displayed as they noticed the smell of smoke and then assisted their fellow students off the bus – including one student who had the presence of mind to phone 9-1-1 right away. I was also told that the bus driver responded quickly and followed all the proper procedures during that scary situation, and I am extremely grateful for her actions as well.

It's times like these that we are reminded of what is most important in life. I have never been prouder of the children of our community, and I will never forget how the kids on that bus kept their cool and worked together to reach safety. They are another reminder of all that is good in Sea Isle City, and my heartfelt thanks and best wishes go to those ten students and their quick-thinking bus driver.

Last weekend, we had very strong winds on Saturday, which prompted the Environmental Commission to reschedule their annual Spring Beach Clean-up from Saturday to Sunday. However, the change of date didn't stop a small army of eco-friendly volunteers from clearing trash and debris from Sea Isle's beaches, dunes, and public parks – which was wonderful!

Sea Isle's yearly Beach Clean-Ups always remind me how fortunate we are to live in a community where people care deeply for our local environment – and they often prove it by performing good work on behalf of Mother Nature. My thanks go to the Environment Commission members for once again running this important event, and to all the volunteers who generously donated their time on Sunday (as well as the handful of volunteers who braved the elements and cleaned our beaches on Saturday, despite the wind). My thanks also go to Mike and Jeannie Monichetti for hosting an appreciation luncheon for the volunteers at Mike's Seafood on Sunday afternoon. –Thank you all!

This weekend, the Chamber of Commerce will host their annual Spring Girls Weekend, and I hope you will be able to enjoy some of the many deals and discounts that will be offered at local eateries, retailers, and other participating businesses during the days ahead. Spring Girls Weekend offers ladies (and fellas too) a wonderful opportunity to enjoy our local business community before the hustle-and-bustle of summer arrives, so please check-out the Chamber's website for more information about this popular annual event (www.seaislechamber.com).

At 12 noon on Friday, April 26, volunteers from Sea Isle City's Garden Club, Environmental Commission, Beautification Committee, Green Team, and Historical Society will host their annual Arbor Day Ceremony at Dealy Field, where five new trees were recently planted courtesy of the Environmental Commission. I hope as many people as possible will be able to attend the ceremony, which will serve as a reminder of the important role trees play in every community – so please join us if you can!

Each spring, it is my pleasure and honor to host Sea Isle's annual Community Day, which takes place this year on Saturday, May 4. As is our tradition, Community Day will once again feature free document shredding (courtesy of 1st Bank of Sea Isle City), a municipal bicycle auction, a City Council meeting, an awards ceremony, and a "meet-and-greet" in the Community Lodge, where members of the public can speak with city and county government officials and representatives from local civic groups. This year, we will also unveil two bronze historical plaques that will tell the stories of "Haffert's Folly" and Sea Isle's Ludlam Beach Lighthouse – both of which I am sure everyone will find interesting.

In addition to being a wonderful opportunity to celebrate "all things Sea Isle City" during Community Day, May 4 is also when the Chamber of Commerce will host their annual Townwide Yard Sale, which takes place from 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Each year, this event has many participants all over Sea Isle City, who are eager to turn old items from their garages and attics into treasures for bargain hunters. So, if you love a good deal and searching for unique finds, don't miss the Chamber's Townwide Yard Sale on your way to our Community Day activities.

Smile…You're in Sea Isle!

Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio

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