MAYOR'S MESSAGE *November 13, 2025*

I begin this message by extending my heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended our annual Veterans Day Ceremony on Tuesday – especially each of the veterans who were with us! As you probably know, I have tremendous respect for America's veterans, and I am extremely happy that so many of them call our town "home."

Just as I have said many times before, during yesterday's ceremony I once again stated: "Here in Sea Isle City, we don't just honor our veterans on Veterans Day, we honor them every day of the year." To indicate how important our veterans and active duty military members are to our community – and to our nation – my office is launching a new "Hometown Heroes Banner Program" which will result in customized banners being displayed on our decorative light poles, featuring images of veterans and military members who have a connection to Sea Isle City in one way or another (ranging from our ancestors and other loved ones who served in uniform, to current veterans and military personnel who we know and love). Those who want to participate in this tribute program and order a customized banner with the image of their favorite veteran or active duty military member can click the "Hometown Heroes" link on the home page of www.seaislecitynj.us.

You may have noticed that Sea Isle's outdoor holiday decorations are beginning to appear across town – and that we have added some new items to our displays that we hope will enhance everyone's holiday experience. Like many other communities, we "got the jump" on our holiday decorating because we have many decorative pieces to install – plus we want to make certain that our lights are all working properly and that everything is in place prior to Thanksgiving Weekend, when we officially kick-off the holiday season.

And speaking of Thanksgiving Weekend – don't miss our annual Tree Lighting Ceremony with Santa Claus on Friday night, November 28, at Excursion Park. This year, the Tree Lighting festivities will begin at 6:00 PM with a Holiday Procession along JFK Boulevard, featuring decorated vehicles, costumed characters, and (of course) Santa Claus. When the Holiday Procession reaches Excursion Park, our Tree Lighting Ceremony will begin as soon as Santa and I reach the Band Shell's stage, where we will keep the fun going with carols and other holiday fun. In addition to our Holiday Procession and Tree Lighting Ceremony, the Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Winter Village will also take place that weekend – so why not spend the entire Thanksgiving holiday in Sea Isle City!

One more thing about the Holiday Procession: Our intention was never to "cancel" any of the holiday fun we all look forward to each year – we simply decided to change the way Santa arrived at our Tree Lighting Ceremony. As I mentioned before, there has been a lot of misleading "chatter" on social media; however, please know that we never lost sight of the fact that the holidays are very special to many people, and we were always planning a special way for Santa to arrive in town on Black Friday. Now that our plans are in place for a festive Holiday Procession along JFK Boulevard, I look forward to seeing everyone as we kick-off the holiday season together on November 28!

In addition to everything that's happening over Thanksgiving Weekend, don't forget the many other special events planned that will help you celebrate the holidays in grand style, including the Sea Isle City Fire Department's "First Responders Parade" on Friday, December 12, which will include decorated fire engines, ambulances and other vehicles from neighboring first response organizations parading throughout town. To learn more about the First Responders Parade and the many other holiday events we have planned, please go to the "calendar" page at www.VisitSICNJ.com or phone the Tourism Office at 609-263-8687.

As is the case each year, the Chamber of Commerce will host their annual Autumn Girls Weekend just prior to Thanksgiving, from November 21 to November 23 – which is great news for everyone who wants to spend time with their mothers, sisters, aunts and girlfriends before the "hustle and bustle" of the holidays begin. Another annual tradition happening that weekend is the launch of Sea Isle City's newest Holiday Beach Tag, which will go on sale on Friday, November 21, at the preseason rate of $25 each. Our 2026 Holiday Beach Tag features a familiar local scene submitted by Sonia Bonita during this year's Beach Tag Art Contest – and I am certain it will make many people happy. Sonia was one of 189 youngsters who entered designs during this year's competition, including Owen Thomas Kates, who drew the image for our new Seasonal Beach Tag, Genevieve Conte, who created the design for our Saint Patrick's Beach Tag, and Michael Marchio, who submitted the winning image for our Veterans Beach Tag – all of which will be available in 2026!

This week's "Shout Out" goes to Veterans Advocate and host of The Welcome Home Radio Show, Joe Griffies, who is featured in the latest issue of "NJ Veteran" magazine. Thank you for all the good work you perform on behalf of our nation's veterans, Joe!

I hope everyone is enjoying the autumn season!

Smile…You're in Sea Isle!

Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio