MAYOR'S MESSAGE *July 1, 2021*

The summer of 2021 is off to a great start! Not only is our seaside community bustling with activity, everywhere I turn I am seeing smiling faces on many people who tell me that they are happy to be out-and-about after being cooped-up during the pandemic. As I said earlier, I feel that this year will be like "two summers in one" – and that seems to be exactly what's happening!

Case in point, our first concert of the season took place on Saturday night, and I was very impressed by the large crowd of spectators that was in attendance. Also, our first Family Fun Night of 2021 entertained a very nice crowd of parents and youngsters on Monday evening, Sea Isle's weekly Farmers Market is once again delighting shoppers each Tuesday morning, beach-goers by the thousand are hitting the sand every day of the week, and many of our local business owners are telling me that customer traffic has been very steady.

I am also happy to report that this year's Skimmer Antique Auto Show on Father's Day was a tremendous success, with 100 vintage cars and trucks on display along the Promenade. The variety of classic vehicles that participated in the show was outstanding, and I am very grateful to all of the car owners who joined us that day. It was a difficult process choosing this year's auto show winners, but in the end the "Best in Show" trophy went to Robin and Stuart Cohen, of Vineland, NJ, and their fantastic 1928 Packard 526 Runabout, and the "Mayor's Choice" trophy went to Bob McArdle, of Ridley Park, PA, owner of a beautiful 1958 Ford Fairlane – both of which participated in the annual Skimmer Antique Auto Parade, which took place after the auto show came to a close.

More evidence that we are having a banner summer can be found in each of Sea Isle City's recreation areas, which are getting plenty of use every day. Last week, I had the pleasure of cutting a ceremonial ribbon and officially opening our new pickleball courts along 42nd Place, which have already become a hub of activity. I am continually amazed by how pickleball has grown in popularity in recent years, and I am happy that we were able to accommodate the many requests we received to create additional pickleball courts in Sea Isle City.

When we cut the ribbon at our new pickleball courts, we also officially launched a new "Photo-Op" program that we hope will inspire people to snap and share pictures of their loved ones while enjoying themselves in Sea Isle City. To make taking pictures more fun, we have added new decorative banners and signage to several of our recreation areas – including at both pickleball courts – and we also installed colorful new railings at various spots along the Promenade. We hope that people will enjoy these new whimsical photo-op locations and share their photos using our new hashtag: #PlaySIC.

July Fourth Weekend is upon us, and the days ahead promise to be very memorable. I do, however, have one announcement about this weekend's entertainment line-up. Originally, "Lights Out" (a Four Seasons tribute band) was scheduled to perform on Saturday night at the Band Shell. Unfortunately, Lights Out had to cancel because of unforeseen circumstances. The good news is that we were able to secure an equally sought-after band called "Beatlemania Again" that will be performing at 7:30 PM

on July 3. So, plan to be at Excursion Park on Saturday evening, and get ready to rock-and-roll to the sounds of the Fab Four!

After a full year without fireworks, we are very excited to be able to host our annual Independence Day Fireworks Display at 9:00 PM on July Fourth. The “rocket’s red glare” will be launched from an ocean barge near the 50th Street Beach, which means that Sea Isle City’s beaches and Promenade will offer ideal vantage points to view the fireworks show.

And speaking of which, I want to take a moment to remind everyone how dangerous fireworks can be. According to the Consumer Protection Safety Commission, there were twelve amateur fireworks-related deaths during 2019 – and during that same year Fireworks were involved with an estimated 10,000 injuries that were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. Needless to say, now that you can purchase what are considered “home” fireworks in New Jersey, everyone needs to keep in mind just how dangerous pyrotechnics are – and I hope you will consider leaving fireworks to the professionals.

I once again want to remind everyone to please be careful while driving through town – and to please be on the lookout for pedestrians AND terrapin turtles crossing our roads.

I also want to thank everyone again for being patient while shopping and dining out, because our local businesses are doing all they can to make your experience enjoyable – even with the shortage of seasonal and part-time helpers many businesses are experiencing across the country. While you might have to wait a moment or two longer to make a purchase or be served a delicious meal, please keep in mind that the members of our local business community are working day and night to serve you and ensure that you are a satisfied customer.

My congratulations go to City Council members Mary Tighe, Jack Gibson and JB Feeley, who were sworn-in to the new terms of office earlier today. I look forward to working with them and their fellow Council members, Bill Kehner and Frank Edwardi, as we all continue to work for the betterment of Sea Isle City.

This week’s “Shout Out” goes to the first female firefighter in the history of the Sea Isle City Volunteer Fire Department, Kerri Comly. While performing one of my various duties as County Commissioner, I was honored to hand Kerri her Certificate of Completion as she graduated from the Cape May County Fire Training Academy on June 18, and I could not be more proud to welcome her into the ranks of Sea Isle City’s first responders. Since it was founded in 1927, the SICVFD has had an impressive service record, and I am certain that Kerri’s presence and dedication to excellence will only enhance that organization’s stature. Congratulations Kerri – and welcome to Sea Isle City!

Have a happy and safe Fourth of July Weekend!

Smile…You’re in Sea Isle!

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Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio

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