

40 Years



New Jersey Meadowlands Commission 1969-2009

ELECTRONIC NEWS

MAY 2009

For more details on any of these stories visit our Web site at www.njmeadowlands.gov click on "Press Room"

May Flyway Gallery Exhibit



Nature-themed works in a variety of media by members of the Highland Park Artists' Collective will be on display at the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission's Flyway Gallery from May 3 through May 30. The Flyway Gallery is located in the Meadowlands Environment Center and is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekends. For more information, call 201-460-8300 or visit www.njmeadowlands.gov

NJMC Today

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY MEADOWLANDS COMMISSION

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Greetings from Chairman Doria



Welcome to the latest edition of NJMC Today, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission's electronic newsletter. It has been an exciting past month at the Commission, full of awards and good news for the region. This included two very positive

developments with the former EnCap project. First, an AIG subsidiary agreed to make good on a \$148.8 million performance bond it promised years ago, allowing the Commission to advance our long-standing goal of cleaning up the abandoned landfills to protect the area's residents and environment. Second, Governor Corzine requested that the Commission reexamine land-use options appropriate for the site - once slated for luxury housing and golf courses - to see what makes the most sense, both environmentally and economically.

Also in April, the NJMC Center for Environmental and Scientific Education became the first public building in the state to attain LEED Platinum certification - the highest level - from the U.S. Green Building Council. We are very proud of this honor, which reflects the Commission's commitment to green building. Our work promoting sustainability was also acknowledged by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, which awarded the NJMC a \$15,000

grant for use toward the Commission's Sustainable Meadowlands programs, which encourage green building, recycling, the use of alternative energy sources, and similar sustainable efforts. In addition, the NJMC's own Ralph Venturini was named the recipient of the state's 2009 Public Service Recognition Award for Community Service. Ralph is an extraordinarily dedicated public servant and we congratulate him on this honor.

Looking ahead, our popular Hackensack River Pontoon Boat Tours launch in May. These leisurely and informative guided tours are a great way to experience the river's recovery up-close. The tours fill-up quick, so register early. With spring upon us, it's also the perfect time to discover the parks and many natural resources the Meadowlands District has to offer. The Commission will also continue its 40th Anniversary Celebration in May with the touring Meadowlands History slide show and a Mother's Day bird walk. There's always something happening in the Meadowlands, and we'd love for you to join us. For more information on our boat tours, parks, special events and more, visit our Web site at www.njmeadowlands.gov.

Thank you, Joseph V. Doria, Jr. Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Chairman, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission

Land-use Review, Cleanup Advance at Former EnCap Site

At the request of Gov. Corzine, the NJMC announced in April that it will reexamine land-use options for the former EnCap redevelopment site, which consists of 785 acres of former landfills and adjacent property in Lyndhurst and Rutherford. The site had been slated for luxury housing, golf courses and other upscale development by EnCap Golf Holdings, which declared bankruptcy last year. The evaluation process will consider market and environmental conditions, and involve input from the mayors of Rutherford and Lyndhurst, as well as the public. Also in April, the NJMC announced that American Home Assurance Company, a subsidiary of insurer AIG, will honor a \$148.8 million performance bond it issued to fund the cleanup of the site's four former landfills. Under the terms of the bond, AHA promised to complete, or pay the cost of, the remaining work should EnCap default. The NJMC insisted years ago that EnCap secure the performance bond to ensure the cleanup would be completed should the company fail to finish the work.

NJMC Science Center Attains LEED Platinum Certification



The NJMC Center for Environmental and Scientific Education attained LEED platinum certification - the highest rating - from the U.S. Green Building Council in April, becoming the first public building in New Jersey to achieve the honor. The science center qualified for LEED platinum certification by meeting a number of green building criteria under the USGBC's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards. The 10,000 square-foot science center, which opened in March 2008, features rooftop solar panels that generate nearly half the building's power and ceiling solar tubes that further reduce reliance on artificial light. Recycled building material was used in countertops, floor tiles and other parts of the center, and energy-efficient heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems were installed, as well as low-flow toilets and waterless urinals.

Approximately 2,000 children in grades K-12 from throughout North Jersey participate in educational programs at the science center every month. As one of the "greenest" classrooms in the state, the building is used by educators as a teaching tool for lessons on conservation, renewable energy resources and sustainability. Architect Frederic A. Rosen and Linwood Engineering Associates played an integral role in the NJMC achieving LEED Platinum certification. Rosen and Linwood Engineering were part of the building's design team, and went above and beyond their contractual obligations to help guide the NJMC through the LEED certification process. Additionally, Dome-Tech, Inc., as the project's Commissioning Agent, ensured the building's energy-related systems were installed and calibrated properly to operate efficiently, resulting in lower energy and maintenance costs.

NJMC Awarded Dodge Foundation Grant

The Commission's efforts to create a more sustainable Meadowlands received a boost this month in the form of a \$15,000 grant awarded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. The funding will be used toward the NJMC's Sustainable Meadowlands programs, which promote the use of alternative energy sources, increased recycling, green building

and other aspects of sustainability. Part of the funding will be used toward the NJMC's new Green Living Program, designed to educate the public on sustainability through a series of workshops on topics such as home energy audits, green shopping and sustainable gardening. The NJMC also plans to assist District Municipalities in

achieving certification under the state's Sustainable Jersey Program, making them eligible for grants and other financial incentives. This Dodge Grant will allow the NJMC to build on its existing sustainability programs, which include efforts to promote green building, municipal solar use, recycling and other sustainable goals

The Gift of Trees



The NJMC celebrated Arbor Day and Earth Day by distributing 140 American linden trees to District Municipalities as part of its Arbor Day Community Tree Planting Program. The American linden, also known as the basswood, is an ideal shade tree, with bountiful, fragrant flowers and large, heart-shaped leaves that form a domed crown. The NJMC has provided more than 1,200 trees to District Municipalities at a cost of more than \$110,000 since the Arbor Day program's inception in 2003. In addition to American lindens, towns have received tulips, green ash, northern red oaks, dogwoods and honeylocusts. Thirteen District Municipalities participated in this year's program, the highest number in its history.

Tree Swallows Get New Homes



It has become a rite of spring at the NJMC: the installation of nesting boxes for the hundreds of tree swallows who began arriving in the area this past month after wintering in Florida and points south. Commission naturalists installed more than 250 nesting boxes, many made by volunteers and local scout organizations, along the wetlands. The birds couldn't wait to move into their new homes, in some cases claiming the boxes while they were still on boats waiting to be installed. The nest-box program began nearly 20 years ago when a Meadowlands Commission naturalist put up a few boxes for the six-inch-long birds, which have slowly been losing places to nest as the region gets developed. Tree swallows are a popular bird for many people, not just for their iridescent-blue beauty and graceful speed, but also because they love to eat insects. It has been estimated that a family of tree swallows can eat hundreds upon hundreds of midges, mosquitoes and other insects in a day. Last year more than 60 percent of the boxes were occupied by nesting pairs, with 610 eggs laid and 485 nestlings successfully fledged last summer. The Meadowlands and its more than 8,000 acres of urban wetlands are prime habitat for tree swallows and scores of other birds. The District provides a year-round or seasonal home for more than 275 avian species, many of them threatened and endangered.

40th Anniversary Walks and Talks

The NJMC's 40th Anniversary Celebration events continue in May with a special slide show and Mother's Day bird walk. The slide show, "The Meadowlands: Past, Present and Future," features great archival photographs and amazing nature photography tracing the history of the Meadowlands District from its formation by a melting glacier 20,000 years ago to the environmental restoration and economic development launched here by the NJMC in recent decades. The NJMC plans to bring the slide show to each District Municipality, with each presentation tailored to that host town with specific facts and local photographs. The next presentation is

scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Wednesday May 6 at the Lyndhurst Public Library. For more information, or to schedule a presentation for your town, contact Jim Wright at 201-460-2002 or jim.wright@njmeadowlands.gov. The Mother's Day Bird Walk will meet at the Ridgefield Nature Center at 8 a.m. on Sunday, May 10. The 45-minute walk will take you through this beautiful wooded natural area off Shaler Boulevard by Ray Avenue. To register, or for more information, contact Jim Wright at the number or email above. For listings of other special events, click on the 40th Anniversary Section in the lower right hand corner of our Web site, www.njmeadowlands.gov.



NJMC Pontoon Boat Tours Begin In May



Starting in May you can experience the Hackensack River and the marshes of the Meadowlands up-close on a leisurely and informative NJMC Pontoon Boat Tour. The popular tours kick off on May 19 and run through September. The approximately two-hour guided cruises give visitors a unique opportunity to see the waterfowl, other wildlife and vegetation that make this recovering ecosystem an urban oasis. Experienced NJMC tour guides augment the experience, providing a wealth of information on the history of the river and its tributaries, as well as its wildlife. The NJMC also offers guided canoe tours of Mill Creek in Secaucus, and Saw Mill Creek in Lyndhurst and North Arlington. The boat and canoe tours book quickly, so register early. For more information and a registration form, visit www.njmeadowlands.gov/environment/tours.html.

NJMC Employee Honored

The Commission's Ralph Venturini has been named the recipient of the state's 2009 Public Service Recognition Award for Community Service. In addition to his duties as the NJMC's Assistant Director of Land Use Management and Chief Plan Examiner, last year Ralph created the NJMC's first Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and formed a mutual-aid pact with Bergen County for emergency inspections. Ralph also received a Shield Award from the Ramsey Knights of Columbus for his volunteer work with the Ramsey Office of Emergency Management, which led to a Congressional Citation. Ralph serves on the Ramsey Rescue Squad, where he founded its Scholarship Fund, and also rides with the Ho-Ho-Kus Volunteer Ambulance Corps. He also volunteered in 2008 as co-plan coordinator for the Bergen County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, which makes all county communities eligible for certain federal flooding and natural disaster funding. In his "free time," Ralph coaches youth soccer and helps lead a Boy Scout troop in Ramsey.

