


The CHRONICLE

A SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL PUBLICATION

SECOND QUARTER 2023

The Table is Set for **South Jersey Tourism**

- 
- Exploring Salem County: A Gem of Local Tourism
 - Escape the Everyday, Year-Round on the Jersey Cape
 - Connecting South Jersey by Trail – the LINK!
 - Visit South Jersey: Marketing South Jersey to Visitors & Residents

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The CHRONICLE

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The Chronicle is Published by The Southern New Jersey Development Council

Editor: Benjamin Gallinelli

Publisher: Marlene Z. Asselta

Creative and Design:
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Printing: Bellia Printing

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President’s Message

Tourism is a cornerstone of South Jersey’s economy and is one of the many avenues that distinguishes New Jersey from its neighbors. The Second Quarter edition of the Chronicle highlights a wide scope of Tourism hotspots and upcoming projects within South Jersey’s eight counties.

In *Escape the Everyday Year-Round on the Jersey Cape*, Cape May County outlines the rich variety of destinations in and around America’s oldest seaside resort town.

Cross County Connection’s *Connecting SJ by Trail – the LINK!* details the planned 34-mile multi-use off-road trail that will travel from the Camden Waterfront to Winslow Township, through seventeen municipalities and several downtown business districts.

The article *Greater Wildwoods Tourism and Development wins Prestigious Award for Branded Content* highlights the organization’s award-winning campaign that showcases the many charms of Wildwood.

Exploring Salem County – a Gem of Local Tourism describes the unique blend of history, agriculture, and community that is Salem County. The area offers much to visitors, from a vibrant small business scene to the famous Cowtown Rodeo, the longest running weekly rodeo show in the country.

Grassi’s *Behind the Numbers: Key Takeaways from Grassi’s 2023 Food Manufacturers Survey* highlights Grassi Advisors & Accountant’s efforts to assess the state of the food manufacturing industry in New Jersey and New York.

NJ Division of Travel and Tourism’s article on *Year-Round Jersey Getaways* highlights the numerous amenities offered by the Garden State, from the largest indoor amusement park to the scenic nature trails, and all the culture and history in-between.

Ric & Jean Edelman Fossil Park at Rowan University: A World Class Museum Comes to South Jersey details the University’s upcoming project that is garnering national attention.

In *Live to Meet in Atlantic City, New Jersey*, Visit AC showcases one of the East Coast’s premier destination hotspots that continues to grow, offering a range of high-class dining and entertainment options.

Lastly, *Visit South Jersey: Marketing South Jersey to Visitors & Residents* offers insight into the agency’s efforts to create awareness of South Jersey’s tourism assets and increase local revenue.

We once again thank the contributors to this Edition of The Chronicle, and we look forward to connecting with members and representing the best of what South Jersey has to offer. We welcome your comments at marlene@snjdc.org. To learn more about the SNJDC, visit our website at snjdc.org.

Sincerely,



Marlene Z. Asselta
President
Southern New Jersey Development Council

Escape the Everyday, Year-Round on the Jersey Cape

By Diane Wieland, Cape May County

Life takes an unhurried pace at the Jersey Cape, endlessly unfolding the time and space needed to slip away from the everyday. Stretching beyond traditional beach settings and activities, the perfect getaway in Cape May County, New Jersey extends inland to encompass quaint small towns, idyllic farmlands rich in history and a variety of outdoor adventures too.

Begin with a trip to enchanting Cape May. Come for the outstanding examples of Victorian architecture, often referred to as “painted ladies,” and stay for the modern cuisine, arts, and cultural scene in America’s oldest seaside resort town. Plan to take a tour of one of the many museums, including the Harriet Tubman Museum, to learn about the City’s rich heritage.

Just over the bridge, you’ll find the Wildwoods, a destination where modern oceanfront hotels exist amid the country’s largest concentration of mid-century commercial “Doo Wop” architecture featuring a touch of space-age design. Spend time on the wide beaches,

visit the Historic Hereford Inlet Lighthouse or chill and thrill to your heart’s content on the Boardwalk.

Take a ride to Sea Isle City to get fresh seafood on Fish Alley, or to Ocean City, known as “America’s Greatest Family Resort”. Take a stroll on the Beach or down Asbury Avenue downtown shopping district lined with quaint restaurants and eclectic shops.

(continued on page 15)





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Connecting South Jersey by Trail – the LINK!

By Nate Dorfman, Senior Transportation Planner,
Cross County Connection

Camden County is advancing an active transportation project that will promote regional economic development and connect communities. A planned 34-mile multi-use off-road trail, the Camden County LINK is the “spine” of a proposed County-wide trail network. The LINK will travel from the Camden Waterfront to rural Winslow Township, through seventeen municipalities and several downtown business districts. Additionally, the trail will enable users to access hundreds of acres of public open space. When complete, the LINK trail may become a major outdoor recreation corridor, and potential local tourism destination, in South Jersey.

Jack Sworaski, Camden County’s Trails Project Manager, noted the LINK would yield over \$19 million annually in economic benefits. Restaurants and shops may open along the corridor, particularly in Audubon, Barrington, and Haddon Heights. The LINK would increase Camden City residents’ outdoor recreation opportunities, potentially improving public health and reducing healthcare costs. These findings are noted in a 2017 LINK Trail feasibility study.

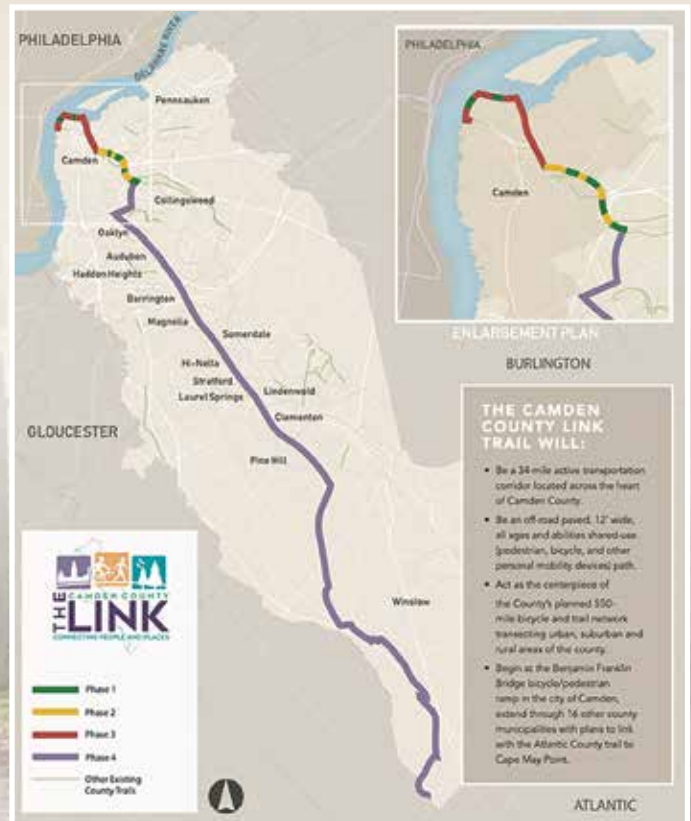
“Much more than transportation and recreation, [the LINK] is an economic development project,” Sworaski emphasized.

The LINK will also enhance social equity by improving access between Camden City residential neighborhoods. Historically, highways have cut Camden City’s neighborhoods off from one another. But the LINK will bring back inter-neighborhood connections. For example, Camden County and its consultant partner NV5 are currently designing a bicycle/pedestrian bridge over Admiral Wilson Boulevard. This bridge is part of the LINK Trail.

To date, Camden County has secured over \$12.5 million in grant funding for designing and building LINK Trail segments. This will help fund a bicycle/pedestrian bridge over Route 130, adjacent to Cooper River Park.

Camden County views its LINK Trail corridor from a regional perspective. Sworaski notes that once complete, the LINK Trail could potentially connect with existing and proposed trails in Atlantic County. Through the existing Benjamin Franklin Bridge sidepath, the LINK would also provide access to the Circuit Trails network in Philadelphia.

(continued on page 18)





NEW JERSEY - FROM SUNNY SHORES TO SNOWY SLOPES

Escape to NJ in every season. Camp under the stars. Stroll historic nature trails and iconic boardwalks. Go snow tubing and soar at thrilling theme parks. Stay at cozy B&Bs. Take family journeys, like our American Revolution and Black Heritage Itineraries. And enjoy 130 miles of stunning Jersey Shore.

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Greater Wildwoods Tourism Improvement and Development Authority Wins Prestigious Award for Branded Content

The Greater Wildwoods Tourism Improvement and Development Authority’s (GWTIDA) Wildwoods, NJ 2023 tourism video has won a prestigious Telly Award.

The tourism video, created by Forge Apollo for the Wildwoods, has been named a bronze award winner in the category of Branded Content. The Telly Awards honor excellence in video and television across all screens that are judged by leaders from video platforms, television, streaming networks, and production companies.

“We are thrilled to receive this industry accolade honoring all the hard work that was put forth in creating a high-voltage promotional video that will entice visitors to vacation in the Wildwoods,” explained Ben Rose, GWTIDA Marketing and Public Relations Director.

The award-winning video is a part of the 2023 Wildwoods advertising campaign, ‘Get Lost In The Woods’, which highlights that the Wildwoods help you lose yourself in the best possible way, with everything vacationers could ever want in a safe, fun vacation experience – all on one 5-mile island.

From relaxing on the Wildwoods’ spacious, clean, and FREE white-sandy beaches, to exploring the 38-block, world-famous boardwalk with three action-packed amusement piers featuring over 100 rides and attractions, three beachfront waterparks, great shopping, fun carnival games and flashing arcades, plus unique dining and nightlife experiences, watersports, fishing, boating, and more, the Wildwoods is the ultimate Jersey Shore getaway destination.

The campaign also offers a call to action by giving away two, 4-day, 3-night vacation getaways for a family of four with the ‘Win A Family Vacation in the Wildwoods!’ online contest, to help drive visitors to the www.wildwoodsnj.com website.


The announcement of the Wildwoods’ award caps The Telly Awards’ year-long celebration of creators and talent who truly stand out during a time when the ubiquity of screens brings more clutter than quality into our lives. These are the creators and innovators who spotlight diverse voices, who are building a more sustainable industry, and who break through the static with their creativity.





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Ric & Jean Edelman Fossil Park at Rowan University: A World Class Museum Comes to South Jersey

Rowan University's fast-growing campus continues to undergo rapid renovation and expansion. Since 2010, development spurred by the nation's third fastest-growing public research university has included \$1.7 billion in construction and design projects, transforming Glassboro's downtown and leading to growth on its other campuses.

And at least one project is capturing national headlines before it even opens.

Rising within a 65-acre quarry in Mantua Township, the Ric & Jean Edelman Fossil Park & Museum is one of America's most anticipated museums, according to Smithsonian Magazine. Opening in early 2024, the fossil-rich site is expected to draw tens of thousands of visitors annually.

Set into a 65-acre landscape, the museum will perch above the quarry where, within its muddy depths, 66-million-year-old marine and terrestrial fossils record the last moments of the dinosaur world.

Modern design meets ancient past

Research at the site, led by Fossil Park Director and Founding Dean of Rowan's School of Earth & Environment Dr. Kenneth Lacovara, is shedding light on ancient events that led to the world's 5th mass extinction, during which the dinosaurs (except for birds) and 75% of species went extinct—a pivotal, calamitous moment that paved the way for the modern world.

The museum will feature immersive exhibits galleries, full-scale reconstructions of extinct creatures, hands-on learning experiences, live animal attractions, virtual reality, connections to the natural world, and gathering spaces to build community around the themes of exploration, discovery, and responsible stewardship of our planet.

Sustainable and eco-friendly

The project embraces sustainability, preservation and site-specific design with high-tech, interactive galleries and exhibits.

Featuring geothermal, water-source heat pump heating and cooling systems, as well as a photovoltaic solar field, the museum will be New Jersey's largest public net zero facility. This means that 100% of the energy used by the museum will come from a combination of green energy available in New Jersey's power grid and renewable energy produced on-site.

No fossil fuels will be combusted for museum operations and no greenhouse gasses will be released into the atmosphere. In addition, the surrounding grounds will restore plant and animal habitat and other key landscape features.

To learn more about Rowan's Ric & Jean Edelman Fossil Park & Museum please visit: <https://www.rowan.edu/fossils/>



Live to Meet in Atlantic City, New Jersey

By Jessica Kasunich, Director of Communications, Visit Atlantic City



Photo credits: Visit Atlantic City

Atlantic City welcomes one and all to our destination, where meaningful meetings and conventions are cultivated, local spirits are connected, and the celebrations are unforgettable.

Nestled between the land and sea, and located within driving distance of many metro cities, Atlantic City is an exceptional place to meet with 17,500 first-class hotel rooms and 1.8 million square feet of meeting space citywide. Leading the way with sustainable and energy-efficient efforts, meet at the LEED Gold and GBAC STAR-certified Atlantic City Convention Center. The Center offers 486,600 contiguous square-feet of meeting and convention space, 45 meeting rooms, and occupies nearly 31 acres, making it one of the East Coast's largest Convention Centers.

Atlantic City's wave of destination developments and new food and beverage offerings are one of the many reasons Atlantic City is one of the best places to visit.

Among the \$600 million in destination developments, new dining establishments are now available at Caesars Atlantic City with the opening of Nobu Atlantic City and Gordon Ramsay's Hell's Kitchen. Additionally, local eateries Cardinal and Good Dog Bar have joined the food scene.

Debuting this summer is Showboat Atlantic City's Island Waterpark, a \$100 million indoor/outdoor beachfront waterpark. New entertainment options continue to emerge this summer with Spiegelworld's The Hook, a permanent live entertainment production in Atlantic City.



**Our vibrant city awaits your arrival as we live to lead,
live to connect, and live to meet in Atlantic City.**

Exploring Salem County, New Jersey

A Gem of Local Tourism

By Amy Peterson,
Director of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Salem County

Salem County, located in the southwestern part of the state, is a hidden gem for those seeking an authentic and enriching travel experience. With its charming small businesses, captivating local attractions, sprawling farms, and rich cultural heritage, Salem County offers a unique blend of history, agriculture, and community.

One of the hallmarks of Salem County's tourism appeal is its vibrant small business scene. From quaint boutiques to cozy cafes, the county is brimming with locally-owned establishments that offer personalized service and a warm sense of community. Exploring the charming streets of towns like Salem and Woodstown will lead you to delightful antique shops, art galleries, and specialty stores.

Salem County boasts a plethora of attractions that cater to a wide range of interests. History buffs will find themselves immersed in the county's rich historical legacy. Don't miss the opportunity to visit the Salem County Historical Society and Museum, which offers fascinating exhibits and guided tours that delve into the area's colonial and maritime history. For a taste of the Victorian era, take a trip to charming Woodstown, known for its well-preserved architecture.

The introduction of the new passenger rail line, the Woodstown Central Railroad, in Salem County, NJ, marks an exciting development in local tourism. The railroad offers a scenic tour along the countryside or enjoy the brew to brew tour, which connects local breweries by train.

A generational tradition that may surprise some is our very own Cowtown Rodeo; the longest running weekly rodeo in the entire country. Engulf yourself in cowboy culture with western apparel shops and authentic experiences.

Nature enthusiasts will be enthralled by the beauty of Salem County. Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, where you can observe a diverse array of bird species and experience scenic hiking trails, is just an example of the natural beauty that awaits you. Take a leisurely stroll along the Delaware River and savor breathtaking views or embark on a kayak adventure to experience the serenity of Mannington Meadows up close.





Salem County is home to numerous farms that contribute to its thriving agricultural industry. In fact, the county takes great pride in its commitment to preserving farmland, with over 60% of its land designated as agricultural space. This dedication has not only helped maintain the rural charm but has also created a vibrant agritourism scene.

Agritourism allows visitors to engage in farm-related activities, offering an educational and immersive experience. Salem County’s farms open their doors to the public, inviting them to participate in seasonal events such as apple and pumpkin picking, hayrides, and corn mazes. Visitors can explore working dairy farms, learn about sustainable farming practices, and even indulge in farm-to-table culinary experiences. This unique combination of agriculture and tourism provides a hands-on experience that reconnects people with the land and highlights the importance of supporting local farmers.

Salem County is renowned for its vibrant specialty farming scene that caters to a wide range of agricultural enthusiasts. Nestled in this picturesque county, lavender farms are a captivating sight, filling the air with a delightful aroma. The county’s fertile soil and favorable climate also make it an ideal location for

vineyards, where dedicated vintners produce award-winning wines. Visitors can partake in wine tastings, scenic vineyard tours, and even participate in the grape harvest. Visit a local farm distillery for a tried and true Salem County experience. With the opening of Salem County’s first-ever brewery, and now our second brewery with more in the works, these gathering spaces have enhanced and amplified the culture of our county.

Local flower farms cultivate an array of colorful blooms, offering fresh-cut flowers, arrangements, and a picturesque backdrop for visitors to capture memorable moments. Together, these specialty farms and unique agricultural producers create a diverse agricultural tapestry, making the area a haven for those seeking unique and enriching farming experiences.

Steeped in cultural heritage, Salem County is a testament to the beauty of local tourism, offering a delightful blend of small businesses, local attractions, farms, and cultural experiences.



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**SOUTH JERSEY
BY THE ROUTE**

VisitSouthJersey.com/ByTheRoute



Visit South Jersey: Marketing South Jersey to Visitors & Residents

By Megan York Parker, Visit South Jersey

Visit South Jersey is the tourism marketing and promotion nonprofit agency designated to serve the South Jersey region, including Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Salem counties and the Outer Coastal Plain Wine Region along South Jersey's coast. Visit South Jersey works to create awareness of South Jersey tourism assets, convert that awareness into visits, and convert those visits into tourism revenue. Visit South Jersey speaks to residents and visitors to our region, both driving distance and beyond.

We have quite a bit to wrap our arms around; the region between Philadelphia and the Jersey Shore boasts agriculture, forests, history, Main Streets, universities, art, sports, significant paleontological sites, culture and cuisine - not to mention our booming wine and craft beverage industry.

Visit South Jersey is a labor of love to the small staff that manages its affairs under the oversight of a board of directors. Working on a state grant and with county partnership, working smart is a priority to represent

the region effectively to a broad audience that includes current residents and out of state travelers alike. To do this, Visit South Jersey deploys traditional advertising such as print and a visitor's guide, a robust website, plus strategic public relations and content partnerships, as well as social media marketing. Visit South Jersey also attends national and international consumer shows, representing our assets to travelers and travel planners looking for their next adventure.

In this post COVID-era, Visit South Jersey's social media presence has been reconsidered and expanded in an effort to reach interested audiences in a direct way that is scalable to available operating budget. Viral components like our "Must Do" blog plus highly visual posts representing the beauty of the region simultaneously brand Visit South Jersey and further the organizational goal to be an established content leader in South Jersey. In concert with SEO configuration, the campaign drives brand recognition, engagement and positioning, website visits and of course, overall regional awareness of South Jersey tourism assets.

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Download the 2023 NY & NJ Food Manufacturers Survey Report Now

grassicpas.com/2023FoodSurveyReport

STRENGTH IN CERTAINTY

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GRASSI
ADVISORS & ACCOUNTANTS

Escape the Everyday Year Round on the Jersey Cape

(continued from page 2)

There is so much to discover about Cape May County, NJ. Add to your birding life list in Cape May considered one of the top three birding “hot spots” in North America. Sip a glass of award-winning wine in one of six wineries, sample a homemade IPA from one of twelve breweries or raise a handmade cocktail in three distilleries, all located minutes from our seaside resorts. Go for the ooohs and ahhs of your animal loving crew with a stop at the Cape May County Zoo - best of all, it’s free. Or simply chill on more than thirty miles of pristine beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and still more untouched Bayshore beachfront on the Delaware Bay and know that no visitor leaves without sand in their shoes.



If you find that spending a weekend or week on the Jersey Cape just isn’t enough, consider becoming part of the “Coastal_Shift” and relocating or starting a business amidst the coastal lifestyle. For more information, contact Cape May County Economic Development at (609) 465-1085.



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Behind the Numbers: Key Takeaways from Grassi's 2023 Food Manufacturers Survey

Robert E. Grote, CPA

Partner, Manufacturing & Distribution Leader, Grassi Advisors & Accountants

Early in 2023, the Manufacturing & Distribution team from Grassi Advisors & Accountants set out to assess the state of the food manufacturing industry in New Jersey and New York in an annual survey of industry leaders, conducted in partnership with the NJ Food Processors Association.

Once again, this year's survey aimed to identify the latest trends, gauge industry outlooks, and provide critical benchmarking data. The survey findings paint a clear picture of improved conditions amid ongoing challenges and opportunities.

Impact of Inflation

While the impact of inflation was an obvious hurdle this year, survey results indicate it was one that most companies were able to clear. Revenues increased for two-thirds of those surveyed (compared to just over half in the 2022 survey), and a mere seven percent saw revenues decline. At the same time, profits stayed strong, with a majority of respondents increasing their profits over the previous year at an average increase of 22 percent.

Even though it was a necessary and effective strategy last year, respondents said that passing price increases along to customers is not a sustainable one. On average, three-quarters of clients accepted price increases last year, but those increases averaged six percent – far less than the rate at which costs have spiked.

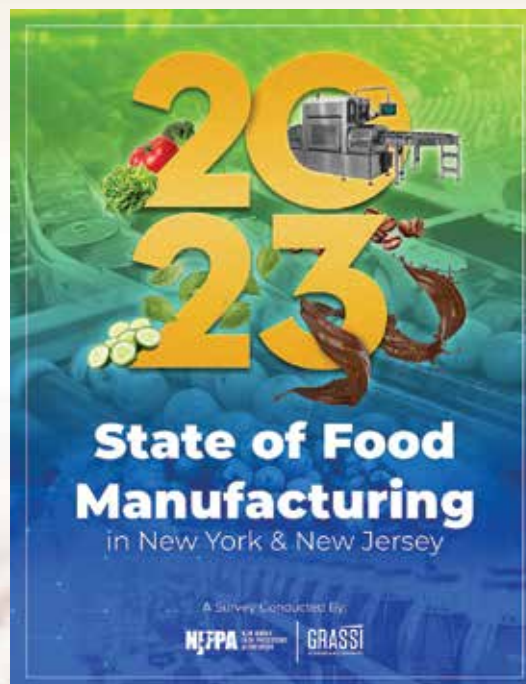
State of the Supply Chain

The supply chain was most commonly reported as a top challenge by respondents (47%) – outranking inflation-related challenges (46%) and high labor costs (44%).

Technology is increasingly becoming the weapon of choice in the fight against supply chain disruption, particularly its impact on inventory. Half of respondents reported utilizing automation tools through supply chain management software to assist with tracking and managing inventory.

Other effective strategies being employed are: purchasing inventory in bulk (47%), diversifying product sourcing from geographic locations (42%) and maintaining inventory based on just-in-time methodology (42%).

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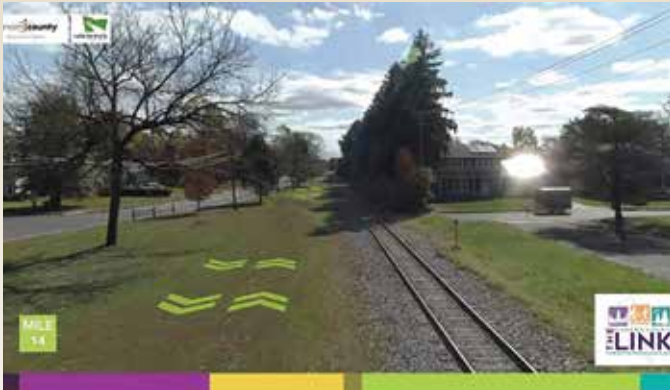


Connecting South Jersey by Trail – the LINK!

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Approximately two thirds of the 34 miles are either currently built or under design. Small trail segments already exist, and construction of a segment between Audubon and Haddon Heights will likely happen in 2024. Challenges include obtaining funds and building political support.

Overall, it is important to emphasize that the public has been incredibly supportive of the Camden County LINK Trail. This support has enabled Camden County to be successful in obtaining grants for trail segment design. Sworaski encourages Camden County residents and businesses to contact local elected officials and express support for the LINK. Through such engagement, Camden County residents and the business community can move the LINK Trail closer to completion.



For more information on the Camden County LINK Trail, including a map and drone videos of each segment, visit

<https://www.camdencounty.com/service/parks/cross-county-trail/>

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Year-Round Jersey Getaways

By NJ Division of Travel & Tourism

Count on New Jersey to have amazing escapes that keep families smiling from ear to ear. Whether it's a sunny weekend at the beach or a week-long snowy winter retreat, the Garden State delivers.

Adore the Jersey Shore's 130-mile stretch of glistening sands from Victorian Cape May straight up to historic Sandy Hook. Other must-visit beach towns include Lucy the Elephant's hometown of Margate, artsy Asbury Park, fun-loving Point Pleasant, relaxing Long Branch and The Wildwoods – known for expansive shores and retro Doo-Wop vibes.

Where there's spectacular NJ beaches, there's iconic boardwalks too. Stroll these thrilling wooden walkways with coastal boutiques, games of chance, amusements, water parks and boardwalk treats – saltwater taffy, anyone? Walk the world's longest boardwalk in Atlantic City, strut the family-friendly boards in Ocean City or soar high on the rides in Seaside Heights and more.

In New Jersey, places to hike, bike, kayak, surf, snow tube and ride horses are endless. Explore scenic East Coast parks – like Liberty State Park, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area including a portion of the Appalachian Mountains, Paterson Great Falls National Historic Park and High Point State Park, home to the highest elevation in New Jersey.

New Jersey is just as exciting on the inside too. Ski indoors and enjoy the nation's largest indoor amusement park at American Dream in East Rutherford. Marvel at more than 15,000 aquatic animals at Adventure Aquarium. Experience art, history and culture at museums and galleries that span the state including the Newark Museum of Art and the Liberty Science Center.

The Jersey adventures continue with three-day road trips that highlight all the best places to stop, dine, play and stay in the Garden State. American Revolution, Scenic Byways and Black Heritage Itineraries and the Anthony Bourdain Food Trail are a few you won't want to miss.



Go to VisitNJ.org for more great Garden State escapes and a free travel guide. Sign up for the e-newsletter too.

Behind the Numbers: Key Takeaways from Grassi's 2023 Food Manufacturers Survey

(continued from page 17)

The Latest on Labor

While COVID outbreaks and related staffing challenges decreased significantly in 2022, staffing remains a concern for 59 percent of those surveyed.

Respondents reported using a variety of strategies to address these concerns, including: flexible schedules, financial incentives, increased line automation, and temporary/contingent workers.

Optimism driven by Opportunity

Optimism was a key takeaway throughout the findings. A strong majority (82 percent) are confident that revenues will continue to climb in 2023, and this confidence is shown in their proactive pursuit of innovation and investment.

The majority of respondents (69 percent) are increasing capital spending this year, and most of those will be investing in IT/technology (65 percent), expanding production lines (56 percent) and enhancing facilities/buildings (48 percent).



Want to learn more?

Visit grassicpas.com/2023FoodSurveyReport to download a free copy of the full report and discover more data and outlooks to help guide your business forward.

For more information, please contact Robert Grote, Manufacturing & Distribution Practice Leader, at rgrote@grassicpas.com or Chris Fifis, Business Development Director, at 201.808.9746.

Visit South Jersey: Marketing South Jersey to Visitors & Residents

(continued from page 13)

This has been designed and activated in concert with a digital advertising campaign “Get Away, Close To Home” that touts the assets in South Jersey that visitors most come into market to experience, such as outdoor adventures, South Jersey wineries or breweries or family friendly attractions that cannot miss.

Making the most of what we have has given us the opportunity to organically grow a loyal following and become a first stop for trip planners considering visiting our region.

About Visit South Jersey:

Visit South Jersey is a non-profit organization supported in part by a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism. Visit South Jersey is a member-based organization open to all businesses in its territory. For more information about travel to South Jersey, or for a copy of the Visitor's Guide, go to visitsouthjersey.com. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram, @Visit_South_Jersey for news and events.





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