



A spring reality check

Are you healthy enough to garden? **1B**

Courier News

Tips from a medical expert: How to survive the pollen explosion this spring. **6B**

GUARDIANS, NOT WARRIORS

Community policing focus of Obama report



CHRIS LACHALL/COURIER-POST

President Barack Obama gestures toward the crowd prior to speaking at the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Camden on Monday.

JIM WALSH @JIMWALSH_CP

CAMDEN — A presidential task force, charged with finding better ways to police America's cities, on Monday released recommendations that will be familiar to Camden residents.

The 120-page report, unveiled hours before President Barack Obama visited Camden, calls for an emphasis on community policing and outreach efforts to residents of high-crime communities.

It includes comments from Camden County Police Chief Scott Thomson, who has stressed that approach for officers patrolling the city's streets.

Thomson has said creation of the county police force in May 2013 allowed him to instill a culture of "service before self" among all officers. The county department replaced a more expensive city police force that had been hit hard by cost-cutting layoffs.

Advocates note the level of violent crime has dropped sharply under the new department. But turnover also has been high for the force, which stresses a cost-efficient approach.

Obama stopped at the downtown police station and the Kroc Center in Cramer Hill during his visit.

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CHRIS LACHALL/COURIER-POST

Obama tours the Camden County Police Administration Building with Camden County Police Chief Scott Thomson.



For more on President Barack Obama's visit to New Jersey, see page 7A or visit our website at MyCentralJersey.com.

Taste of Somerset event raises money



JASON TOWLEN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Attendees sample food from 337 Grill in Manville at the 23rd annual Taste of Somerset on Monday evening.

STAFF REPORT

Food, fun and community concern were on the menu Monday night when about 600 community members and foodies – the largest turnout ever – descended upon The Palace at Somerset Park to continue a Central Jersey tradition of the 23rd annual Taste of Somerset, one of Central Jersey's largest tasting events.

With proceeds to benefit the PeopleCare Center, a 31-year-old Bridgewater-based nonprofit organization that provides a building to house nonprofit agencies and organizations at below-market cost, attendees found creative cuisine from nearly 40 different Som-

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To see a photo gallery, visit MyCentralJersey.com

Arsonist attacks the Tewksbury police HQ

SERGIO BICHAO @SBICHAO

TEWKSBURY — Earlier this year, Mayor Bill Voyce celebrated when his rustic town of about 5,800 was named by a data company as the state's third-safest community.

But on Monday, after somebody apparently had tried to burn down the municipal building and police headquarters, Voyce was reminded that even a quiet town in Hunterdon County can be "vulnerable."

"It's a little unsettling. It goes to show no place is truly safe anymore if that kind of thing can go on," he said Monday afternoon. "These kind of surprises aren't welcomed."

The arsonist managed to light a blaze, but fire alarms alerted police about 5:38 a.m. The Fairmount and Oldwick fire departments were dispatched to the scene and firefighters put out the flames.

Hunterdon County Prosecutor Anthony P. Kearns III said Monday afternoon that township police and the Morris County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit were investigating the scene.

Kearns said investigators believe it was an intentional act and "the potential for death or serious injury was averted."

"The police department could be occupied at any given time by the officers that were on-duty," Kearns said in a statement. "This appears to be an intentional act that could have had the potential to engulf the entire structure and trap occupants. The prompt re-

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Buckle up! Cops crack down on seat belt usage

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Better buckle up.

That's the message police throughout Central Jersey are sharing with drivers as part of the Click it or Ticket national seat belt enforcement campaign running through May 31. The program is geared at keeping drivers and their passengers safe through Memorial Day weekend, one of the busiest travel times of the year.

The campaign includes law-enforcement seat belt checkpoints and increased patrols, as well as publicity that reinforces the lifesaving value of seat belts.

North Plainfield Police Chief William Parenti, president of the Somerset County Association of Chiefs of Police, said this year's campaign also will focus on rear seat passengers and nighttime enforcement.

Despite laws requiring adult rear seat passengers to buckle up, adult back seat belt use stands at about 44 percent.

"During the evening hours, seat belt usage is traditionally lower and the percentage of unbelted fatalities is higher," said Parenti.

Each year in New Jersey, an average of 150 unrestrained motor vehicle drivers and passengers are killed in crashes. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 9,580 passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2013 were not wearing their seat belts at the

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"If you ask the family members of those unrestrained people who were killed ... they'll tell you they wish their loved ones had buckled up."

DUNELLEN SGT. JEFFREY DELBUONO

ADVICE	5B
CLASSIFIED	5C
COMICS	4B
OBITUARIES	6A
OPINION	4A
SPORTS	1C

