

**NorthJersey.Com/ The Record**  
**Bringing Back Our New Jersey Beaches**  
Mary Diduch, May 24 2014

This weekend marks the unofficial start of beach season at the Jersey Shore, the second since Superstorm Sandy slammed the region. **Here's a look at what day-trippers can expect to find in some of the favorite summer hangouts closest to North Jersey, from renovated pavilions and new smoking rules, to redone boardwalks and wider beaches.** For the most part, the information comes from local officials and business leaders.

### **Getting there**

There's construction on the Garden State Parkway this summer, but for the most part it's limited to the area south of Toms River. There is a shoulder-restoration project between Mileposts 100 and 83, from Wall Township south to Toms River. But traffic lanes will not be closed, and no work has been scheduled over the holiday weekend.

Route 35, the main road connecting many of the beach communities, is still undergoing a huge reconstruction after being heavily damaged during the storm. Work continues over the Memorial Day weekend, with lane closings in the Toms River area. The project will continue for a few weeks, but it will be suspended in late June.

The highway is being completely rebuilt by the state Department of Transportation, with a new drainage system capable of handling 25-year storms. Nine pump stations and treatment facilities are being installed to filter and purify storm-water runoff before it enters Barnegat Bay.

### **Beach replenishment**

The Army Corps of Engineers has been restoring 8 million cubic yards of sand to the beaches since late last year from Sea Bright to Manasquan. Work has been completed in Belmar, Ocean Grove, Sea Bright, Asbury Park and Spring Lake. Beyond protecting the beach from erosion, the replenishment widens beaches, providing more room for beachgoers.

### **Sandy Hook**

Mobile concession stands will be in use again this summer, though there will be more menu options. The park also is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Sandy Hook Lighthouse - the oldest lighthouse still in operation in America - on Saturday, June 14, with a host of family programming.

### **Sea Bright**

For the most part, trailers will still serve as the beach's bathroom facilities, but new restrooms are under construction at one beach-access point. A large municipal parking lot is also being redone. The town was one of 20 in the country selected by Benjamin Moore to have storefronts repainted as part of the company's Main Street Matters campaign.

Plans are still in the works to rebuild the borough's library, fire department and police department, and to fix the seawall and a river bulkhead, which were damaged in the storm.

### **Asbury Park**

A portion of the boardwalk nearest to Convention Hall was rebuilt and officially opened on Friday, replacing a temporary fix done for last summer.

### **Ocean Grove**

The Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, a private non-profit that runs the boardwalk, received Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to rebuild the boardwalk in January after two initial denials. The group is rebuilding the most critical couple of hundred feet lost in the middle section of the thoroughfare, which should be completed in a few weeks; other sections have yet to be fixed.

### **Belmar**

Smoking is now banned on the borough's beaches, and there is a \$25 fine for violators. This summer, the town is also rebuilding two of its five pavilions that were destroyed in the storm.

### **Spring Lake**

The borough's smoking ban on the beach and in the pavilion area has been expanded to include the boardwalk. There's also a new bathroom and concession-stand setup and a new saline pool on the beach's north end, replacing a decades-old facility. The pool project was conceived long before Sandy, but the storm delayed the work. There currently are no plans to replace the saltwater pool on the south end of the boardwalk.

### **Point Pleasant Beach**

A representative for Jenkinson's Boardwalk, which was back in operation last summer, said that one section of the company's attraction on the boardwalk that needed to be repaired from before Sandy is ready. Town officials did not return a call for comment.

### **Bay Head**

New dune walkovers to the beach have been built, and the beach's 11 access points have been fully restored. The price of beach badges has gone up - \$80 for a season's pass, up \$10 from last year.

Twilight Lake, usually used for canoeing and crabbing, is being dredged to remove the sand from the storm. The work should be completed in a month.

### **Mantoloking**

Beach access will be restricted in some locations because of the construction of a steel sea wall from Mantoloking to Brick, a project by the state Department of Environmental Protection and the Federal Highway Administration. The work is scheduled to start the end of June and will take 180 days. The new wall will connect with a rock wall project organized by residents.

### **Brick**

Throughout the summer, the DEP will be working on the steel wall stretching from Mantoloking, closing off some portions of the beach for the project.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of Summerfest, the town's annual concert series held on Thursdays starting June 26, which this year is adding a beer-and-wine garden for the festivities.

### **Toms River**

Ortley Beach, the township's public beach, has a new boardwalk and repaved road running parallel to the shore. There will be a dedication and opening of new lifeguard and bathroom facilities on the beach's north end this week. Temporary facilities remain on the south end.

### **Lavallette**

The town is rebuilding its seven boardwalk pavilions destroyed by the storm, a project that should be completed by late June. The town also recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for its police and municipal complex. The lifeguard headquarters is also being replaced and temporary facilities will be used until next summer.

### **Seaside Heights/Seaside Park**

The Seaside Heights portion of the boardwalk that was destroyed by fire in the fall has been rebuilt, while construction is continuing on the private portion in Seaside Park. The reopened boardwalk - where utilities have been repaired and upgraded - has about 10 new businesses, and there are 25 to 30 rides open for the summer at Casino Pier. There will also be a new restroom and shower facility in Seaside Park.

### **Island Beach State Park**

Officials are catching up on some routine maintenance put off because of the storm, like new lights at the pavilion and at the parking lots. The state also will be issuing a contract soon to rebuild the popular fishermen's walkway, damaged in the storm. There also is repair work going on at the jetty located at the south end of the park.

The park also plans to launch new programming this summer, like snorkeling and stargazing with Ocean County College's astronomy organizations. The park also is awaiting final approval for a pilot program for flounder fishing that would allow anglers to keep a maximum of two 16-inch fish. State regulations now set the limit at fish that are 18 inches or longer. The pilot program would help scientists gather data and anglers take home more fish.

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