


# Carteret Press

## Happy New Year, Carteret!

A Publication Presented by Carteret Business Partnership



See what new restaurants  
have and will be coming  
to Carteret, including  
Oula, pictured,  
on pages 16 & 17





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**January 2025**  
**Volume 23, No. 1**  
**Contents**

3 Mayor's Letter/Table of Contents  
5 Carteret Wins \$1.5M NJEDA Property Grant  
7 Carteret Wins \$3.28M DOT Grant for Carteret Ave.  
9 Gov. Murphy Awards \$5.85M to Columbus School  
10 State Suggests Sustainable New Year's Resolutions  
12 Photo Gallery: Borough Reorganization Meeting  
13 Judge Approves FieldTurf USA Settlement  
14 Chief McFadden, Chief Hruska Retire  
15 Ted Nycz, Eric Wahl New Police, Fire Chiefs  
16 New & Forthcoming Restaurants in Carteret  
23 CPAC Spotlight: The Weeklings  
24 Events Calendar  
27 Carteret Teens Again Compete in Junk Couture  
29 Biz Profile: Jones' Martial Arts

*Carteret Business Partnership is a nonprofit corporation that promotes economic development, business retention and recruitment through a variety of programs and incentives.*

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Dear Friends,

The New Year will bring an opportunity to celebrate all the new improvements and even the restaurants that will be opening soon in Carteret. Take a look at a roundup of new and forthcoming eateries in the Borough that's in the Center of It All in this month's Carteret Press centerpiece on pages 16 and 17.

Also in this issue:

- Coverage of three important grants that the Borough has been awarded: a \$3.28 million NJDOT Local Transportation Project Grant, a \$1.5 million NJEDA Property Acquisition Grant to purchase vacant land on Roosevelt Avenue in West Carteret, and a \$5.85 million NJDOE grant to expand the preschool at Columbus School

- Photos from the Borough's Jan. 3 reorganization meeting in which re-elected councilmen Ajmar Johal and Dennis DiMascio and new Council President Susan Naples were sworn in

- A look at the transition from retiring Police Chief Dennis McFadden and Fire Chief Mark Hruska to newly announced Police Chief Ted Nycz and Fire Chief Eric Wahl

- A CPAC Spotlight on the popular Asbury Park-based band The Weeklings, who will bring A Beatles Bash with orchestra to the arts center on Feb. 8

- A business profile of Jones' Martial Arts, whose demonstrations in conjunction with Carteret Public Library are growing in appeal with the community

- An Events Calendar
- A report on the return of Carteret teens to the international sustainable fashion show Junk Couture for the second year in a row

- Notices about proposed improvements to Carteret Park, forthcoming Community Development Block Grant projects, our free Recycling Coach app, the county's Home Hazardous Waste drop-off schedule, dog and cat license applications that are due by Feb. 28, opportunities to train and volunteer with the Borough's Office of Emergency Management, an NJEDA Business Luncheon and grant program presentation on Feb. 26 at Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center, and Carteret PAC's schedule.

A reminder to promote your business or event to all Carteret residents and businesses by advertising in Carteret Press or at least submitting to the Events Calendar. Each issue is delivered to every home and business. For more about advertising and/or a calendar listing, contact the Public Information Office at 732-541-3835 or [makinb@carteret.net](mailto:makinb@carteret.net).

Sincerely,

Mayor Daniel J. Reiman



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# ***NJEDA Awards Carteret \$1.5M Local Property Acquisition Grant***



**The Borough has been awarded a \$1.5 million competitive Local Property Acquisition Grant to purchase vacant properties on Roosevelt Avenue in West Carteret.**

**T**he New Jersey Economic Development Authority recently approved a \$1.5 million competitive Local Property Acquisition Grant to purchase several vacant properties at 1179 and 1235-1239 Roosevelt Ave. in the West Carteret Redevelopment Zone, Mayor Daniel J. Reiman announced.

The funds will enable The Carteret Redevelopment Agency (CARA) to acquire the adjacent properties. Vacant and abandoned since 2018, the properties were at one time approved for a hotel that the owner subsequently was unable to construct. The hotel approvals all now have expired, the Mayor said.

“We are extremely grateful to Gov. Murphy, the NJEDA and its executive team led by Tim Sullivan, for this vital financial support in redeveloping West Carteret,” Mayor Reiman said. “The acquisition of the site and future development will have a significant impact on the community and the local economy. In addition to the creation of local jobs, the project will benefit the community by providing easier access to goods and services.”

In an NJEDA news release, CEO Tim Sullivan said, “Since taking office, Governor Murphy has been dedicated to boosting the economic prospects of New Jersey’s communities, creating jobs for local residents, and generating vital tax revenue for municipalities. The projects supported through the Local Property Acquisition Grant Program will help advance local economic development initiatives throughout the state

by transforming unused real estate into vibrant commercial spaces and community hubs.”

The proposed redevelopment is in line with the Middlesex County initiative to revitalize walkable town centers, downtowns and commercial corridors. The project is part of the West Carteret Minue Street Retail Redevelopment Plan, which was enacted in 2005 and includes the 30,000-square-foot P.C. Richard & Son superstore and adjacent state corporate headquarters. Formerly a two-story retail structure and a single-story restaurant, the adjacent properties at 1179 and 1235-1239 Roosevelt Ave. were demolished by Ria Hospitality to make way for the hotel that never came to fruition, said Eric Chubenko, CARA’s executive director since its founding in 2000.

“These properties are long overdue for redevelopment,” Chubenko said. “We look forward to helping to reshape Carteret with this project with more commercial and residential opportunities.”

CARA has invested in hundreds of redeveloped properties throughout the Borough, including Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center, the successful multi-use properties The Botanic, 29 Washington Avenue, and The Gateway, and the forthcoming 21 Washington Avenue multi-use.

The Local Property Acquisition Grant Program is a competitive grant program that deploys \$24 million by providing funding to eligible applicants for the acquisition of a vacant site, building, facility or a collection of properties in order to facilitate and enable future redevelopment.



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# **Carteret Wins \$2.38M Competitive NJDOT Grant to Continue Carteret Avenue Safety & Infrastructure Improvements**



**The Borough of Carteret has won a \$2.38 million competitive grant from the state Department of Transportation’s Local Transportation Project Fund to improve roadway, curb and intersections throughout Carteret Avenue, pictured at left. Grant funding for multi-year improvements of Carteret Avenue total \$4.16 million. Improvements also will bike lanes, pictured at right.**

Mayor Daniel J. Reiman has announced that the Borough has won a \$2.38 million competitive grant from the state Department of Transportation through the Local Transportation Projects Fund.

The funds will be used to complete roadway, curb, and intersection improvements along Carteret Avenue from Carteret Park to Locust Street. The project will focus on curb-to-curb road resurfacing, striping and raised crosswalks and boulevard island enhancements, such as irrigation, landscaping, wayfinding signage, and lighting upgrades. The funds will allow improvements to pedestrian and motorist safety by resurfacing the roadway, replacing damaged and deteriorated curbing, enhancing street lighting, and installing improved, raised crosswalks and traffic-calming measures at five major intersections along Carteret Avenue.

“We are very grateful to Gov. Phil Murphy and Transportation Commissioner Francis O’Connor for these incredibly valuable funds,” Mayor Reiman said. “The proposed improvements would tie into multiple active projects in the Borough, including the Middlesex County-funded intersection improvements along Roosevelt Avenue, NJDOT Safe Routes to School-funded curb ramp improvements along the length of Carteret Avenue, and NJDOT-funded bikeway improvements awarded for the length of the roadway. Given the condition of the existing roadway and curbs – in conjunction with the four concurrent projects

focusing on various aspects of pedestrian and motorist improvements – the only aspect of Carteret Avenue that remains to be addressed is the road itself. LTPF funding will ensure the Borough is able to elevate the thoroughfare to its full potential for pedestrians and cyclists alike.”

Carteret Avenue has more than 20 residential cross streets that convey traffic to Roosevelt Avenue and points beyond. The Borough’s largest pedestrian boulevard at 1.24 miles, Carteret Avenue also connects to many important public facilities in the heart of the Borough, including Columbus Elementary School, St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Blazing Star Cultural Arts Center, First Presbyterian Church of Carteret, Carteret Park, Sullivan Athletic Fields, Tomczuk Memorial Tennis and Basketball Courts, Carteret Middle School and Waterfront Park.

The LTPF grant funding is part of the multi-year four-phase Carteret Avenue Roadway, Pedestrian, Cyclist and Beautification Improvements Project, which also includes the following grants:

- \$400,000 NJDOT Bike Lane Grant
- \$702,000 NJDOT Routes to Schools Grant
- \$678,000 NJDOT Local Aid Grant.

The LTPF grant brings total NJDOT funding for Carteret Avenue to \$4.56 million.

In August, the Borough also won a \$5.4 competitive LTPF grant from NJDOT to extend critical roadway infrastructure in two areas of the waterfront: Waterfront Boulevard Extension and Lighthouse Way Extension. The latter is underway, while improvements to Lighthouse Way Extension will start soon, Mayor Reiman said.



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# Gov. Murphy Announces \$5.85M Grant to Expand Preschool at Columbus School



Columbus School has received a \$5.85 million grant from the state Department of Education to launch a free full-day preschool program.

The Carteret School District has been awarded \$5.85 million from the state Department of Education to construct an addition for 3- and 4-year-old preschool students at Columbus Elementary School.

According to the school district, the total cost to launch the program will be \$10.6 million with the grant covering a significant portion of the expenses. The addition will enhance the district's ability to accommodate preschool education, benefiting families across the Carteret community.

"We are grateful to Gov. Phil Murphy and Acting Commissioner of Education Kevin Dehmer for these crucial funds to help our young families," Mayor Daniel J. Reiman. "The project will benefit our community, providing more families with access to high-quality preschool education and laying a strong foundation for the future success of our youngest residents."

Carteret Superintendent Rosa Diaz added, "A high-quality preschool program is not just about what children learn – it's also about where they learn. The right infrastructure, including modern classrooms and spaces for physical development, creates an environment where children can thrive. These early years are critical for building essential skills in language, literacy and social-emotional growth. By investing in both our programs and our facilities,

we're ensuring that every child in Carteret, regardless of their background, has the strong foundation they need for lifelong success."

In a previous statement, Dehmer said, "Families and educators in many school districts have been eager to establish new, high-quality preschool programs in their community. However, we've also heard from many school leaders that the biggest obstacle they face has been the lack of adequate facilities needed to house those programs. This initiative marks a significant step towards universal access to high-quality preschool as it makes funding widely available to help school districts build, expand, or renovate school facilities specifically for preschool students."

The new addition will include eight classrooms, a large gross motor skills room, nine bathrooms and two office spaces, creating a dedicated space for up to 120 preschool students. The inclusion of a gross motor skills room highlights the district's commitment to a holistic approach to early childhood development, recognizing that physical activity is a vital part of the learning process for young.

Carteret offers 16 preschool classrooms across three elementary schools – Columbus, Nathan Hale and Private Nicholas Minue – serving 240 students. The expansion will redistribute students to better meet community needs while increasing accessibility for Borough families.

*continued on page 30*



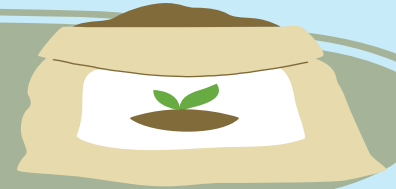


# CHECKLIST FOR A SUSTAINABLE 2024

## 6 GREEN NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

### START COMPOSTING

Composting food scraps saves items from landfills and creates compost that can be used to nourish gardens.

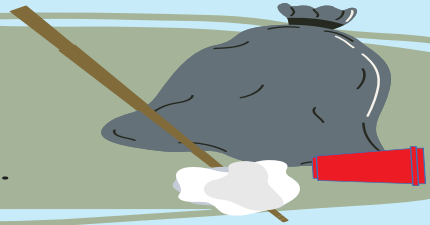


### MEND OR DONATE WORN CLOTHES

Don't toss what you can fix! By mending worn out clothing you can reduce waste and extend the life of your favorite items.

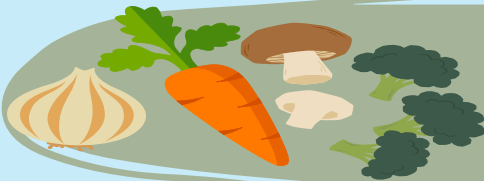
### VOLUNTEER FOR CLEANUPS

Participate in litter cleanup events and pick up litter in your neighborhood throughout the year.



### EMBRACE PLANT-BASED MEALS

Incorporating meatless options into your meal plan elevates your culinary experience while reducing your carbon footprint!



### SHOP SECONDHAND

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**TIMES: 8 am - 2 pm (Rain or Shine)**

DATE	LOCATION	TOWN	ADDRESS	ZIP
Sun, March 16	Middlesex College	Edison	2600 Woodbridge Avenue	08837
Sat, May 17	Middlesex County Public Works	North Brunswick	97 Apple Orchard Lane	08902
Sun, June 22	Old Bridge Recycling Center	Old Bridge	1 Old Bridge Plaza	08857
Sat, Sept 20	Middlesex County Public Works	Sayreville	750 Jernee Mill Road	08872
Sun, Nov 16	Middlesex College	Edison	2600 Woodbridge Avenue	08837

## WHAT TO BRING:

Adhesives	Drain Cleaners	Kerosene	Pesticides/Herbicides
Aerosol Cans	Fire Extinguishers	Lighter Fluid	Photographic Chemicals
Antifreeze	Flares (Road Only)	Mercury	Pool Chemicals
Brake Fluid	Fluorescent Bulbs	Motor Oil/Filters	Propane Tanks
Car Batteries	Gasoline	Paints (Latex/Oil)	Stains/Varnishes
Cleaners	Gas/Oil Mix	Paint Thinner	Thermometers/Thermostats

Rechargeable & Button Cell Batteries (individually bag each battery or tape each terminal end prior to transport)  
Alkaline batteries can be disposed of in regular trash.

**Asbestos containing materials: call to pre-register, must be double bagged.**

## WHAT NOT TO BRING:

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Furniture	Empty Containers	Infectious/Medical Waste	Tires

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# ***PHOTO GALLERY: Mayor Reiman Swears in Re-elected Council Members, New Council President at Reorganization***



**Mayor Daniel J. Reiman swears in Councilman Ajmar Johal, who recently was re-elected to his second full term. Johal's wife, Jasleen, also is pictured.**



**Mayor Daniel J. Reiman swears in Councilman Dennis DiMascio. Also pictured are Councilman DiMascio's daughters, Michelle, left, and Lisa, right.**

**M**ayor Daniel J. Reiman swore in re-elected Borough Councilmen Ajmar Johal and Dennis DiMascio on Jan. 3 at the Borough's annual reorganization meeting.

Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin was among the dignitaries who attended the event in Council Chambers, and he swore in newly appointed Council President Susan R. Naples, a council member for more than 20 years.

"Congratulations to Councilman Dennis DiMascio and Councilman Ajmar Johal on their re-election and Councilwoman Susan Naples on being named

Council President," Mayor Reiman said. "I also would like to acknowledge our guests Speaker Craig Coughlin, Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ron Rios, County Commissioners Charlie Tomaro and Charlie Kenny, and County Clerk Nancy Pinkin. Thank you for coming out today."

Council President Naples, Carteret's Civilian Police Commissioner, added, "I would like to thank my department, the Police Department. I see my Chief Dennis McFadden, who just recently retired. I thank you for your dedicated service and leadership. Our leadership is right behind you with Chief Ted Nycz and Deputy Chief John Kelly." (see related stories on page 14, 15 and 30).



**Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin swears in Council President Susan Naples. They are pictured with Mayor Daniel J. Reiman.**



**Mayor and Council are pictured with dignitaries at the Borough's 2025 reorganization meeting on Jan. 3. Pictured from left to right is Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios, Councilman Jorge Diaz, Council President Susan R. Naples, Councilman Vincent Bellino, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, Mayor Daniel J. Reiman, and Councilmen Ajmar Johal, Randy Krum and Dennis DiMascio.**



# ***NJ federal judge approves settlement to lawsuit against FieldTurf USA***

The Borough's involvement in a class action lawsuit against FieldTurf USA regarding the Georgia-based manufacturer's allegedly defective Duraspine synthetic field turf has been given final settlement approval by a federal court judge, according to court documents.

Trenton-based U.S. District Judge Michael A. Shipp recently granted the final approval to the proposed \$57 million nationwide class settlement, which also involves school districts and local governments throughout New Jersey, as well as New York, Pennsylvania and California.

Mayor Daniel J. Reiman said he was glad to hear of the decision.

"Carteret is one of the lead plaintiffs in the case," Mayor Reiman said. "FieldTurf USA appears to have known that its artificial turf was defective but sold it to us and the other plaintiffs anyway. Judge Shipp's decision bodes well for Carteret residents whose taxes paid for a large portion of the fields."

The total settlement value for more than 1,200 class action members nationwide exceeds \$50 million, according to court documents. Plaintiffs each can collect \$7,500 in cash from the settlement or claim \$50,000 in credits to have FieldTurf install new artificial turf. Shipp also approved \$7 million in legal fees and other costs, according to court documents.

According to municipal records, Carteret purchased six fields: four contracted for Civic Center Park in September 2006 and installed in 2008; one contracted for John Street Park in January 2007 and installed in May 2007; and one contracted for Sullivan Field in Carteret Park in 2010 and installed in 2011. The three contracts totaled more than \$2 million, according to municipal records.

According to court records, Carteret reached out to FieldTurf in April 2013 about premature wear and spoke to two FieldTurf representatives, Perry DiPiazza and Andrew Schwartz, to report a warranty claim. The two stated that they need to conduct an inspection, which was performed five months later. More than a year passed before Carteret received additional information. Almost two years after Carteret's first call to FieldTurf, DiPiazza e-mailed Carteret apologizing and promising to ease concerns; however, Carteret subsequently sent FieldTurf three letters between October 2015 and May 2016 and no further inspection was conducted.

In June 2016, FieldTurf finally expressed "personal apologies" to the Borough of Carteret through its representative. FieldTurf's delay tactic appeared to be an effort to allow the



**A New Jersey federal judge has given final settlement approval to a proposed class action multi-district lawsuit that includes the Borough of Carteret as one of the lead plaintiffs against FieldTurf USA. The case claims that FieldTurf USA knowingly sold defective artificial turf. Six Borough fields involved in the case include Carteret Park's Sullivan Park, pictured.**

warranty period to expire. Several months after FieldTurf's apology, FieldTurf e-mailed Carteret three proposals that would require it to pay thousands of dollars in repair and replacement costs.

Other plaintiffs in the case include Hudson County, Newark School District, Levittown Union Free School District in New York, Neshannock Township School District in Pennsylvania, the City of Fremont in California, and the Santa Ynez Valley Union High School District also in California.

According to the suit, the plaintiffs' claims are distilled down to two questions: "Whether all Duraspine fields sold by FieldTurf to the class share a common inherent defect" and "whether FieldTurf knowingly omitted the facts of this common defect from the proposed class in its marketing and sales presentations."

The plaintiffs allege that the primary reason the Duraspine turf was defective was due to the materials that Dutch supplier TenCate supplied FieldTurf, which sued TenCate, claiming the supplier misrepresented the quality of the goods, selling cheap materials fabricated in a poor manufacturing process, according to that lawsuit. The plaintiffs claim that despite FieldTurf's lawsuit, it still sold them turf made from the defective product.

Carteret is represented in the case by Lawrence Bathgate of Bathgate Wegener & Wolf in Lakewood.



# ***Police Chief Dennis McFadden & Fire Chief Mark Hruska Retire***



**After a respective 41 and 46 years of service, Carteret Police Chief Dennis McFadden and Fire Chief Mark Hruska and retired on Dec. 31. They are pictured at Chief McFadden's retirement ceremony on Dec. 30 at police headquarters.**

**T**wo long-serving public safety directors retired from the Borough on Dec. 31: Fire Chief Mark Hruska and Police Chief Dennis McFadden. They respectively served for 46 and 41 years.

Earlier in the year, they both were presented with Career Service Awards at Mayor Daniel J. Reiman's Charity Ball.

"I wish both these fine gentlemen a very happy retirement and thank them for their long and invaluable service," Mayor Reiman said.

Chief Hruska has dedicated his life to serving the Borough of Carteret and its community in both business and public service. His career in public service began in 1979 with the Carteret Fire Department. He made history as the first individual appointed to the department under the age of 21. His 46 years of service included 12 as chief.

Born in Newark and raised in Carteret since 1972, Chief Hruska and his wife, Linda, owned and operated Mark's Auto Repair for many years until 2010. His entrepreneurial spirit and community focus extended to leadership in the Carteret Business Partnership, where he has been involved since its inception in 2002 and has served as executive director since 2016.

Chief McFadden began his distinguished career with the Carteret Police Department in November of 1983 when he was hired as a patrol officer. Over the years, his dedication and leadership saw him rise through the ranks. He was promoted to sergeant in 1997, lieutenant in 2003, captain in 2006, deputy chief in 2013, and chief in 2019.

Throughout his exceptional career, Chief McFadden served in various pivotal roles, including general detective, narcotics detective, DARE officer, bicycle officer, fatal accident investigator, traffic sergeant, patrol sergeant, detective sergeant, and head of the narcotics unit. His involvement in DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) was particularly impactful, working closely with schools and youth, teaching children the dangers of drug abuse and empowering them with skills and knowledge to make safe, responsible life choices.

Chief Hruska enjoyed a surprise retirement party on Dec. 19 at the Carteret Elks with dozens of family, friends and colleagues. Chief McFadden enjoyed a walkout ceremony on Dec. 30 at police headquarters followed by a party at the Elks with dozens of family, friends and colleagues.

On Jan. 1, Carteret firefighter Eric Wahl was promoted from lieutenant to Fire Chief and Deputy Police Chief Ted Nycz was promoted to Police Chief.



# **Ted Nycz, Eric Wahl Promoted to Police & Fire Chiefs**



**Recently promoted Carteret Police Chief Ted Nycz, far left, and recently promoted Fire Chief Eric Wahl, far right, are pictured with Mayor Daniel J. Reiman and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin.**

**O**n Jan. 1, the Borough's new police chief and fire chief took office, Mayor Daniel J. Reiman announced.

Deputy Police Chief Ted Nycz was promoted to Chief of Police and Lt. Eric Wahl was promoted to Fire Chief.

"They have some big shoes to fill, but I know that Police Chief Ted Nycz and Fire Chief Eric Wahl will do a great job for the community of Carteret," Mayor Reiman said. "I look forward to all they accomplish to keep Carteret safe and secure."

Chief Nycz has served the Borough of Carteret for 15 years. Prior to that, he was a patrolman in his hometown of South Amboy for three years.

He was named Deputy Chief of the Carteret Police Department on Oct. 16, 2023, rising from the ranks of patrolman, detective, Provisional Sergeant Patrol Division, Detective Sergeant, and Detective Lieutenant.

"Pursuing a career in public safety was always a dream of mine," Chief Nycz said. "I come from a family with a strong military/law enforcement background and wanted to continue the trend. Embracing a career in law enforcement comes with countless benefits. The

Public Safety Sector is a highly exciting job and is different day-by-day and even hour-by-hour. The ability to effect positive change, assist those in distress, and guarantee the security of citizens is tremendously gratifying. You get to help victims of crimes, as well as the potential to save lives. The excitement of the job came from always wanting to help people in need and make them feel safe by going after the 'bad guy.' Moreover, the satisfaction derived from solving crimes, bringing wrongdoers to justice, and preserving public order is highly gratifying."

Chief Nycz holds a master's degree in Police Graduate Studies from Seton Hall University in South Orange. He received his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Monmouth University, where also played football, having lettered in football, track and baseball at Saint John Vianney High School in Holmdel and had been named to the All-Shore Conference Team in his senior year.

The Chief's many other accomplishments include letters of recommendation from the South Amboy Police Department and several commendations and awards from the Carteret Police Department.

*continued on page 30*



# New and Forthcoming

***Oula is set to open at 29 Washington as the latest Borough e***



**Offering a Caribbean-American fusion, Oula is the latest restaurant to open in Carteret in the corner spot of 29 Washington at High Street. Acclaimed Chef Duke Estime is offering a symphony of flavors right across the street from Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center.**

**W**ith Oula expected to open on Jan. 15, and Ultimate Grill and Roosevelt Bagel Factory recently opened, here's a look at all the eateries that launched within the past year in Carteret. And on the next page is a look at what's coming in 2025.

## **New Carteret restaurants**

**China Wok, 764B Roosevelt Ave. 732-352-0533/0539, ChinaWokCarteret.com**  
Longtime Carteret restaurant family returns to Carteret Shopping Center with new spot that specializes in Chinese takeout. Dine in also available.

**Frozen Flamingo Ice Cream Parlor, 835 Roosevelt Ave., 732-366-2474, instagram.com/frozenflamingonj**  
Inventive menu includes favorite flavors Brownie S'mores, Power Play Fudge, I Scream for Cake, Churro Chata, Maine Black Bear, plus vegan and no-sugar-added ice cream

**Oula, 29 Washington Ave., 908-477-3230, instagram.com/oularestaurant**  
This essence of culinary excellence is coming soon to Downtown Carteret, where the vibrant spirit of a Caribbean-American fusion will come alive in a symphony of flavors by renowned Chef Duke Estime.

**Punjabi Dhaba, 1293 Roosevelt Ave., 732-352-0628**  
Vegetarian food & Indian sweets. Catering.

**Roosevelt Bagel Factory, 695 Roosevelt Ave., 732-366-2808, instagram.com/rooseveltsbagelfactory**  
Carteret's long-awaited bagel shop offers breakfast, brunch and lots of fresh coffee to rev up your day. Deliveries available at 8 a.m.

**Sanja Chula, 735 Roosevelt Ave., 732-953-5004, instagram.com/sanjachulanj**  
Authentic Northern Indian cuisine that specializes in curries and Indian-style dumplings.

**Ultimate Grill, 60 Cooke Ave. 347-824-8846, ultimategrillnj.com**  
Amazing Mediterranean, Latin, Americana fusion menu with wide variety of menu options. Talented chefs will customize menu to make your event a success.

**Yum Yum Gyro & Grill, 1293 Roosevelt Ave., 551-277-8851, instagram.com/yum\_yum\_gyro/**  
100 percent Halal food with emphasis on Middle Eastern cuisine.



# Restaurants in Carteret

*tery, but there's a few that came before and will come after*



Happy Fusion is a fun mix of Mongolian BBQ, sushi and other Asian delights coming soon to Carteret Shopping Center, a couple of doors down from the ShopRite anchor store. The all-you-can-eat spot grills up the Mongolian BBQ right among diners, much like hibachi but in one central cooking location.

## Coming soon to Carteret

### **Kelly's Pub (under new management), 247 Washington Ave.**

A new and improved Kelly's Pub is coming in 2025 from the family that used to own Famous Dhaba in West Carteret and still owns Famous Bartending School in Edison. Formerly a bar owned by the father of Smithereens guitarist Jim Babjak, Kelly's won't change the interior much, but plans are for the exterior to be quite the destination with big screen TVs, fire pits and couches. Those plans haven't been submitted yet, so they're subject to change, but the owner is making a serious commitment to Carteret.

### **Happy Fusion, 795 Roosevelt Ave., 917-590-0800**

Mongolian BBQ, sushi, all-you-can-eat buffet and other Asian delights at Carteret Shopping Center. The Mongolian BBQ puts on quite a show cooked right among diners in a lively group hibachi-like setting.

### **LVLZ, 36 Washington Ave., [xperiencej.com](http://xperiencej.com)**

From the team that brought Xperience Kitchen &

Cocktails to Woobridge, comes LVLZ in and on top of The Botanic. Expert chefs are expected to combine global flavors and techniques to create a unique fusion dishes that will tantalize the taste buds. The VIP Lounge will be a perfect place to relax and indulge in signature cocktails, while a live DJ sets the mood for an unforgettable night. And a rooftop bar right across from the hopping Rooftop at Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center will add to the Borough's burgeoning nightlife.

### **Pier Pavilion, Veterans Pier, 200 Middlesex Ave., 732-541-3835, [carteret.net/parks/](http://carteret.net/parks/)**

Currently under construction, this three-season concession stand will allow visitors to Veterans Pier, as well as Waterfront Park, to get snacks and beverages, which really will come in handy for such popular events as the Independence Day and Latin Festivals and the Music on the Bay concert series.

Also, the multi-use property under construction at 21 Washington Ave. next door to 29 Washington and across the street from The Botanic and Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center, likely will have a restaurant or two among its commercial properties when it opens this spring.

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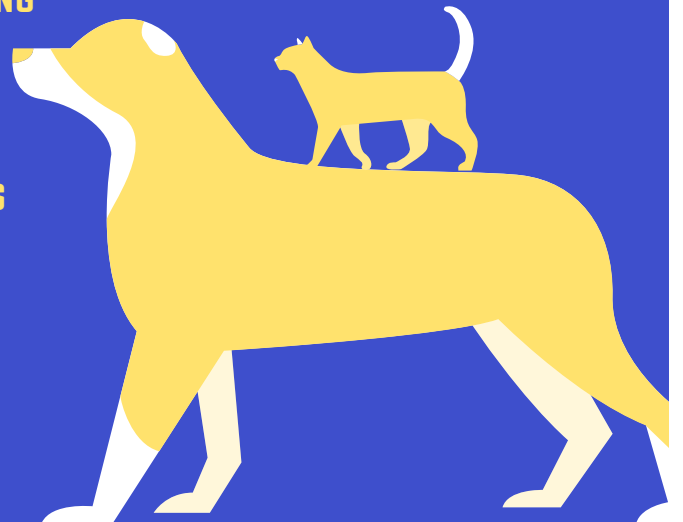
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# UPCOMING SHOWS



**JANUARY 11**  
**HOLLYWOOD NIGHTS**  
**BOB SEGER**  
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**JANUARY 17**  
**THE WILD WORLD**  
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**JAN 18**  
**JANUARY 18**  
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**CACTUS**



**FEBRUARY 8**  
**THE WEEKLINGS**  
**BEATLES BASH**



**FEBRUARY 14**  
**FERNANDO**  
**VILLALONA**  
**& MORE**



**FEBRUARY 15**  
**DESTINATION SOULTOWN**  
**SENSATIONAL SOUL**  
**CRUISERS**



**FEBRUARY 16**  
**THE MARSHALL**  
**TUCKER BAND**  
**W/ THE OUTLAWS**



**FEB 22**  
**FEBRUARY 22**  
**FOREIGNERS JOURNEY**  
**FEATURING**  
**CONSTANTINE MAROULIS**



**MARCH 6**  
**AN EVENING WITH**  
**EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER**



**MARCH 8**  
**TUSK**  
**TRIBUTE TO**  
**FLEETWOOD MAC**



**MARCH 15**  
**GLORIA GAYNOR**



**MARCH 20**  
**LEE BRICE:**  
**YOU, ME & MY GUITAR**



**MARCH 22**  
**UNCORK SPRING!**  
**WINE EXPO**



**APRIL 10 8PM**  
**THE PHIL COLLINS**  
**EXPERIENCE**



**APRIL 25**  
**JOSH TURNER:**  
**THIS COUNTRY MUSIC**  
**THING TOUR**



**APRIL 26**  
**CROSSING OVER WITH**  
**PSYCHIC MEDIUM**  
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**MAY 10**  
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# CPAC Spotlight: The Weeklings

**H**aving backed E Street Band drummer Max Weinberg for Max Weinberg's Jukebox at one of the earliest shows at Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center, The Weeklings are returning on Feb. 8 with a Beatles Bash. The fabulous four-piece band will be joined by a 10-piece orchestra and two keyboardists. Tickets to the 8 p.m. show are \$39.50-\$59.50.

On behalf of band mates Glen Burtnik, vocals/bass; John Merjave, lead guitar/vocals) add Joe Bellia, drums/vocals, vocalist-guitarist Bob Berger chatted about the band and the upcoming performance, more about which can be found at [carteretpac.com/events/the-weeklings-beatles-bash/](http://carteretpac.com/events/the-weeklings-beatles-bash/). For more about The Weeklings, visit [weeklings.com/](http://weeklings.com/).

## **When and how did you meet Glen Burtnik, and how long have you been writing songs with him?**

I met Glen in 1987. We started writing songs at that time on his 'Heroes and Zeroes' album. I had a band, Blonde Obsession, and my drummer, Danny Colangelo, was friends with him. He introduced us at the Brighton Bar (in Long Branch). I was playing the Brighton, and Glen came down. And he also came to The Bitter End. Danny invited him to check out the band. He wanted him to hear the original songwriting. They knew each other from The Stone Pony.

## **What are some of the pre-Weeklings songs you wrote with and without Glen?**

So many in both categories. We wrote several songs for Styx together. We did songs on 'Heroes and Zeros,' like 'Spinning My Wheels,' and on 'Palookaville,' we did three cuts. On 'Welcome to Hollywood,' we did six or seven.

I also have five solo albums out. On those, I do a few other songs Glen and I wrote together.

Over the years, I also written with Marc Swersky, Lisa Bouchelle, Bobby Bandiera and others.

## **How did The Weeklings get together and why?**

The first part of my relationship with Glen was writing songs, mainly for his solo efforts or Styx. In early '00s, Glen asked me to join him with some Beatles Bash shows he was doing at The State Theater once or twice a year. So I started working with him on live performances, a perspective we had not done before. We did a bunch of those shows. The last one we did was The Birth of The Beatles. The first two Beatles albums were recorded live in the studio with four guys singing and playing instruments. Basically, anybody could reproduce the sound of the early Beatles. We did and were kind of excited by the results. So we were like, 'Let's do gigs with the four of us.' So we did Beatles tribute gigs. Then we were like, 'Let's do a record,' then, 'let's add original songs to the record,' and it snowballed from there. We had not intended to start a band. The band started us actually.

John was also part of The Birth of Beatles show and other Beatles Bash shows. Glen knew him from The Fest for Beatles Fans. Originally, Dave Anthony was on drums, but he couldn't make gigs, so we started using Joe and asked him to join the band.

## **The Weeklings played one of the first shows at Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center backing Max Weinberg in 2021. What did you like most about the venue, and what are you looking forward to most returning there with a headlining show for The Weeklings?**

It's a really nice venue, all new and well laid out. It's a well thought-out modern venue. We look forward playing on that stage in that room. We're going to have orchestra instruments with five strings and five horns. It's a big sound.



**The Weeklings will perform a Beatles Bash with orchestra on Feb. 8 at Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center.**

## **What else can folks expect from the Beatles Bash with orchestra at CPAC?**

We're also adding a second keyboard player to double up the orchestra sounds, make them fatter. It's quite an undertaking. You have to have the right charts, make sure they're right. That's a whole exercise in itself.

## **Why do The Weeklings and your fans enjoy The Beatles so much?**

Most of our fans are in our age group. Any (Baby) Boomer has to be affected by The Beatles. I don't know too many people in my age group who don't love The Beatles. It was such a huge seismic impact in 1964 when they arrived in America. I was mesmerized when I saw them on 'The Ed Sullivan Show.' It changed the course of my life.

I grew up in a musical family. My dad was a music teacher so I had a lot of exposure to music by age 10. But my dad was into classical, more traditional music, whereas I was knocked out by rock 'n' roll music. That's where my dad and I parted ways.

## **Do The Weeklings expect to be working with Max Weinberg's Jukebox again?**

Absolutely! The E Street Band starts dates up again in the spring. We have a bunch of dates booked with Max. The most exciting is The Cavern Club in Liverpool when Bruce plays over there in early June. We're doing three shows at The Cavern. Two already are sold out.

About a month ago, we played Toronto with the same deal. Bruce played up there, and Max booked a club. We did two sold-out shows.

## **Have you started working on another solo album yet?**

My most recent solo LP was in 2022. Am I thinking about my next album? Yes. I have some songs written, some demos, some stuff in my head. But I'll be pretty busy this year. And I just put out two albums by The Weeklings in 2024, 'Raspberry Park' and a 'Christmas' album. I'm not planning on putting a new album out right away.

## **When will The Weeklings start working on their next album and/or single?**

A single certainly would be sooner. We just finished this 'Christmas' project and haven't thought about the next one yet. But something will be happening as soon as we figure out what that is.

# CARTERET EVENTS CALENDAR

**Submit items to Carteret Events Calendar by the 1st of each month to [makinb@carteret.net](mailto:makinb@carteret.net).  
For more info call 732-541-3835.**

## JANUARY

**3**  
**Bingo School Fundraiser**, 7 p.m., Saint Joseph School (doors at 6 p.m. every Friday for ages 18+)

**6**  
**Monthly Coloring Contest for Children and Adults**, Carteret Public Library (ends Jan. 20)

**16**  
**Dibble & Dabble Storytime**, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 5:30- 6:30 p.m. (registration required)

**17**  
**The Wild World of Animals**, 7:30 p.m., Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center

**18**  
**Foghat/Cactus**, 8 p.m., Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center

**I Love R&B Party**, 10 p.m., The Underground at Carteret PAC

**23**  
**Storytime with Ann**, 10-10:45 a.m., Carteret Public Library (also Jan. 30)

## FEBRUARY

**8**  
**The Weeklings Beatles Bash with orchestra**, 8 p.m., Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center

**14**  
**Tres grandes le cantan al Amor w/Fernando Villalona, El Chaval de la Bachata & Alex Bueno**, 8 p.m., Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center

**15**  
**Destination Soutown feat. The Sensational Soul Cruisers**, 8 p.m., Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center

**16**  
**Marshall Tucker Band/The Outlaws**, 8 p.m., Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center

**20**  
**Dibble & Dabble Storytime**, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 5:30- 6:30 p.m. (registration required)

**22**  
**Foreigners Journey feat. Constantine Maroulis**, 8 p.m., Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center

**26**  
**New Jersey Economic Development Authority Business Luncheon & Grant Discussio w/ Kathy Guzman**, 1-3 p.m., The Underground at Carteret PAC

**24**



# Proposed Improvements to Carteret Park & Inclusive Playground Project Announcement & Survey

The Borough of Carteret is seeking funding through the state Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program, Urban Parks Program, and Jake's Law initiative funding program for improvements at Carteret Park. The Borough proposes to make the following improvements at Carteret Park: reconstruction of the two natural grass ball fields; rurfing of the multipurpose Walter J. Sullivan field; the reconstruction of a 9/11 remembrance memorial, and construction of a completely inclusive playground, and an ADA-accessible restroom building. The public is encouraged to complete this survey online and to relay any questions, comments, and/or concerns to [info@carteret.net](mailto:info@carteret.net). Additionally, a public hearing regarding the proposal will be held in person as part of the regularly scheduled Council meetings on Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025. A concept plan showing the proposed changes, a preliminary cost estimate, and an environmental impact assessment are attached at [carteret.net/greenacres](http://carteret.net/greenacres) for the public to view. Use the QR Code on this page to access



## 2025-26 Community Development Block Grant Proposals

Learn more about the three projects proposed for the 2025-26 Community Development Block Grant

Improvements to Aquatics Center  
at RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center at Carteret

ADA-compliant elevator and other improvements  
to Blazing Star Cultural Arts Center

Jake's Law-compliant all-inclusive Carteret Park playground  
that will provide boundless play to all Carteret children  
regardless of physical ability

Use this QR to learn more



Or visit [carteret.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/25-26-Community-Block-Grant-Plan.pdf](http://carteret.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/25-26-Community-Block-Grant-Plan.pdf)

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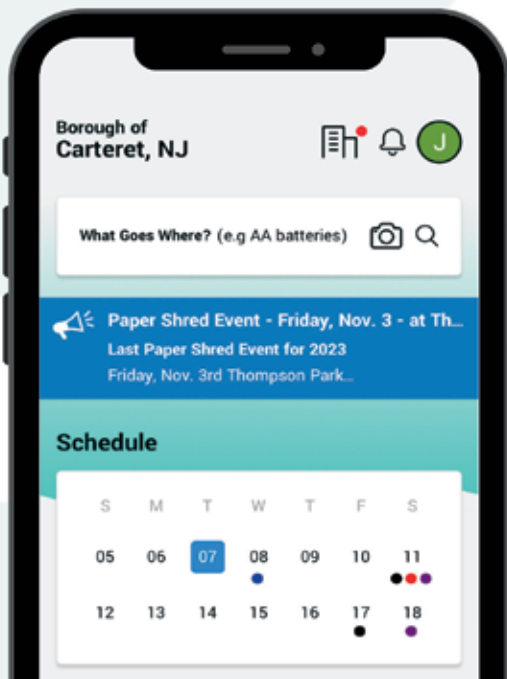


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# ***Carteret Students Advance to Junk Kouture Final for Second Year***



Carteret High School students once again have won a spot in the world finals of Junk Kouture, a sustainable fashion show in which competitors design dresses made out of recycled material. Recent CHS graduates, pictured above from left to right, Rachael Saini, Meryum Sohail and Radha Singh, follow last year's Carteret representative Savnoor Kaur. The creative trio's design, "Hope among the Ashes," is pictured at left modeled by Singh. The Junk Kouture finals will be March 3 and 4 at The Helix at Dublin City University in Ireland.

**F**or the second year in a row, Carteret High School students have made it to the world finals for Junk Kouture, a global scholastic competition in which recycled material is crafted into fashion. The finals will be held March 3 and 4 in Dublin.

In April, a couple of months before they graduated from CHS, Rachael Saini, Meryum Sohail and Radha Singh placed in the New York Finals for their dress, which they call "Hope Among the Ashes." Their work was chosen from more than 1,600 entries from students in 20 nations on six continents.

"We are extremely proud of Rachael, Meryum and Radha and their amazing accomplishment representing Carteret at such a prestigious event," Mayor Daniel J. Reiman said.

"Their design addresses the environmental and social devastation caused by war," added Susan Catrone, their high school art teacher and Junk

Kouture advisor.

Now in their freshman year at Rutgers University, the creative trio is looking forward to competing at The Helix on the campus of Dublin City University among 60 finalist teams from the U.S., Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, the USA, and United Arab Emirates. Tickets to Junk Kouture are available at [helix.com](http://helix.com).

Last year's world finals in Monaco featured then Carteret High School junior Savnoor Kaur, one of 10 U.S. high school students chosen to compete.

Junk Kouture challenges ages 13 to 19 worldwide to create an original couture made entirely from recyclable waste. One notable success story is Mariusz Malon, a former champion who has designed for Eurovision 2024, "RuPaul's Drag Race UK," and showcased their own collection at London Fashion Week.

For more info, visit [junkkouture.com/](http://junkkouture.com/).



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**Mayor Daniel J. Reiman  
Carteret Borough Council  
& Carteret Business Partnership  
Present A Business Lunch with  
NJ Economic Development Authority**

**1-3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26  
at The Underground at Carteret PAC,  
46 Washington Avenue**



# NJEDA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

## TOPICS

**New Main Street  
Acquisition Support Grant**

**Small Business Lease Grant**

**Small Business  
Improvement  
Reimbursement Grant**

**Small Business  
E-Commerce  
Support Program**

**NJEDA Small Business  
Loan Products**

**High level overview  
of additional  
NJEDA products**

**Q&A**

**Presenter Kathy Guzman,  
Small Business Team at NJEDA**



# ***Biz Profile: Jones' Martial Arts***



**Jones Martial Arts demonstrates karate on a regular basis at the Carteret Community Center in association with the public library.**

**F**or more than 50 years, karate training for youth, adults and senior citizens has been a staple of the Carteret community.

That impactful local tradition started with Grandmaster Ralph Chirico, who studied under Soke Tatsuo Shimabuku, the founder of Isshin Ryu karate; Grandmaster Don Nagle, the pioneer of Isshin Ryu karate in the U.S., and Grandmaster Robert Murphy, founder of Isshin Shorin Ji Ryu Okinawa Ta. Chirico passed his 50 years of experience and knowledge onto Sensei Anthony Netta. The legacy of Chirico and Netta continues with their student, Steven Jones, who teaches Isshin Shorin Ji Ryu Okinawa Ta at Jones' Martial Arts at 45 Washington Ave.

"They paved the way for growth and development," Jones said.

As a lad, Jones often enjoyed watching karate and kung fu movies on Saturday afternoons.

Intrigued by what he saw, he tried to mimic the moves of Bruce Lee, Chuck Norris, Kariem Abdallah and Jackie Chan.

"I wanted to learn more," he said. "My black belt was awarded by Mr. Ralph Chirico, my first instructor. I was promoted to a sixth degree black belt by Mr. Anthony Netta."

Now in its fifth year of operation, Jones' Martial

Arts also incorporates the ground techniques of jiu-jitsu, as well as some Chinese martial arts, collectively known as a kung fu.

Jones frequently presents karate demonstrations in association with the Carteret Public Library at the Carteret Community Center. For his next scheduled appearance, contact the library at 732-541-3830 or [info@carteretlibrary.org](mailto:info@carteretlibrary.org).

"People should attend because our youth and adults need to remain health conscious and community oriented," Jones said. "The impact JMA has is to promote a platform for our youth to guide them and grow them, make them productive individuals, and to promote health, family and a great environment for our seniors as well. Besides self-defense, the reason you should practice martial arts is for your overall health. The body that is maintained serves the individual's needs better and helps promote longevity."

The cost of enrollment at Jones' Martial Arts is \$250, which covers the first month and the uniform. After that, group training is \$100 per month.

Classes are offered 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays for senior level students, 4:30 to 6 p.m. Thursdays and 10 to 11:30 a.m. Saturdays for junior level students, 12 to 1:30 p.m. for junior and beginner levels, and 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. for all levels. Private training is \$60 per hour.

For more information, call 732-969-3533 or click [JMAkarate.com](http://JMAkarate.com).

# Grant to Expand Columbus Preschool

*continued from page 9*

"This grant gives us the monies to allow 120 additional students into our pre-K program, which gives them the much-needed head start in the education process," Carteret School Board President Martin Murray said. "Thank you to both Gov. Murphy and Acting Commissioner Dehmer for helping us help our students."

Gov. Phil Murphy has set ambitious goals for expanding early childhood education in New Jersey, including providing every school district access to free full-day preschool. In December 2023, the Murphy administration allocated an additional \$42 million to continue expanding all-day preschool across the state.

The \$5.85 million grant received by Carteret is part of a larger initiative funded through the federal American Rescue Plan and is a part of the second round of the Universal Preschool Facilities Expansion Grant. This initiative is aimed at improving preschool infrastructure statewide, helping to build or renovate facilities to accommodate the growing need for preschool programs.

"High-quality preschool can positively impact

the trajectory of a child's life," Gov. Murphy has stated. "This is building upon our work to make New Jersey the best place to raise a family and educate a child. During our administration, we've seen remarkable success in bringing high-quality, state-funded preschool to hundreds of New Jersey communities. These grant awards to support preschool construction and expansion projects represent an investment in our children's futures and will help bring us closer to our goal of realizing universal preschool in New Jersey."

Superintendent Diaz added, "We look forward to breaking ground on this project and welcoming our youngest learners into classrooms designed to inspire and nurture their educational journeys."

The funding is part of a broader state effort to make preschool education more accessible with \$120 million allocated for preschool facility expansions.

Carteret is proud to be part of this transformative effort that supports the development of New Jersey's children and families, Diaz said.

---

## New Police, Fire Chiefs

*continued from page 15*

"The police chief should be a visible and accessible leader who thoughtfully strives to improve the effectiveness of police services," he said. "Becoming the Chief of the Carteret Police Department provides you with the unique opportunity to actively shape your community according to your vision. You get to be a beacon of inspiration, exemplifying the qualities of an ideal law enforcement officer. Every day, you have the chance to make a positive impact on people's lives, including the ones you work with."

"The first meaningful impact I can make as chief is to provide the department with direction, leadership, and personnel management," Chief Nycz continued. "I would like to set a new standard, as well as a culture change within the Police Department. Increase in training across the board for all officers and personnel and give them the tools and knowledge so that they can complete any task that is necessary. A highly knowledgeable officer is a very effective officer. I want to empower the other supervisors and instill trust in them so that they can also perform their duties at the highest level. Supervisors will perform more efficiently and productively when they feel empowered. Creating a new standard of empowering your employees from communicating your openness to new ideas, empower growth with professional development, drive behavior through recognition, create a loop of honest feedback, and setting clear expectations. Given today's climate and how the perception from the public has changed on law enforcement, I want to be one to reinforce the perception that the Carteret Police Department always has the public's best interest and is here to provide them with the best service possible."

Chief Wahl has served the Carteret Fire Department for 19 years as both a firefighter and as an emergency medical technician. He started working in emergency medical services and was certified as a firefighter in 2011. He was promoted to lieutenant in 2020.

Wahl is the first career chief in the history of the Carteret Fire Department to start out in the EMS Division.

"It feels great to be the first Chief to start out in the EMS Division," he said. "Working in the EMS field taught me so many lessons about the sanctity of life and how important it is to care for each other; an important quality that fire service leaders must have. The impact I want to make as Chief is to have the firefighters and EMTs realize their full potential. The Fire Service and the needs of our community change over time. I want us to have the training and the tools to grow and adapt with that change in order to provide the best service we can to this amazing community."

Chief Wahl has a total of 30 years' experience in emergency services starting as a volunteer cadet for the Beach Haven First Aid Squad.

Also a graduate of Monmouth University, he holds a bachelor's degree in business administration.

"Working with my father, who has been a CEO ever since I was young, was my inspiration for taking on a leadership role in my field," Chief Wahl said. "He has built an amazing team of people. Ever since I witnessed an emergency response to a surfer in distress on the beach at the age of 12, I knew I wanted to get involved in this field."

Both chiefs will be sworn in later this month on a date to be announced. Updates will be available at [Carteret.net](http://Carteret.net) or by following @MyCarteret on Facebook, Instagram, and X.



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## Your new home is waiting

New neighborhood. Bigger house. Closer commute. Whatever your reason for buying your first or next home, we're here to help.

You could be well on your way with low-down-payment options, personalized start-to-finish guidance, and a simplified online mortgage application.

**Let's connect.**



**Kamal Kumar**  
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NMLS ID 247248





The Carteret Business Partnership, Inc.  
Office of Mayor Daniel J. Reiman  
Memorial Municipal Building  
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## 2025 President's Letter

As we reflect on another remarkable year at United Roosevelt Savings Bank, I'm filled with pride in our continued partnership with this wonderful community. 2024 marked a significant milestone—our 110th year of serving Carteret and its surrounding areas. This anniversary reminds us that while banking has evolved tremendously since 1914, our commitment to personal, relationship-based service remains unchanged.

Throughout 2024, we continued to strengthen our foundation while embracing innovation. We're proud to share that we donated over \$170,000 to local nonprofits and community organizations, while also building New Jersey's largest local merchant marketplace. Through our Perks checking account, our customers now have access to exclusive discounts at 63 local businesses—and we're actively looking to welcome more merchants to this growing network. These unique initiatives and investments in our community reflect our belief that when Carteret thrives, we all thrive together.

I'm particularly proud of our team's dedication to understanding and meeting your unique financial needs. Whether you're a long-time resident, a new neighbor, or a local business owner, we're here to help you achieve your goals with solutions tailored to your specific situation.

As we move forward, the team at URSB remains committed to being more than just a bank. We're your neighbors, your partners and your advocates in building a stronger financial future. Our doors, both physical and digital, are always open to serve you.

Thank you for choosing URSB as your financial partner. Here's to another year of growing together. Feel free to call me on my cell: 732-535-8080

Respectfully,  
Kenneth R. Totten  
Chairman, President & CEO



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