

SAVVY CONSUMERS...

Students from four Ocean County high schools demonstrated their knowledge of consumer issues during the “Consumer Bowl” held at Brick Township High School. The event, hosted by Brick Township High School is sponsored by the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs and the New Jersey Department of Consumer Affairs.

“This event allows our high school students to gain a better knowledge of consumer affairs issues,” said Freeholder Director Joseph H. Vicari, who serves as Chairman of the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs. “We are all consumers, what’s important is that we are educated consumers.”



Pictured from left to right are: Kathleen D’Andrea, teacher advisor, Daniel DeTorro, Catherine Moresco, Freeholder Director Joseph H. Vicari, Chairman of the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs, Richard Roberts, Martin Russo, and Alyssa Hollingsworth.

High school students from Brick Township High School, Central Regional High School, New Egypt High School and Monsignor Donovan High School, Toms River, participated in the competition. The winning team was from Monsignor Donovan High School and included students Alyssa Hollingsworth, team captain, Martin Russo, Richard Roberts, Catherine Moresco and Daniel DeTorro as the alternate.

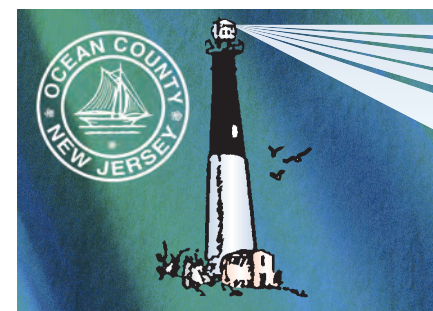
Each team has four students who study issues relating to consumer law and regulations. A moderator then poses questions to the students. The answers are judged for accuracy by members of the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs. Winning teams move forward in single elimination.

SHIP VOLUNTEER COUNSELORS NEEDED

The Office of Senior Services will be hosting a new counselor training for individuals interested in assisting Medicare enrollees with questions on Medicare, Medicare Supplemental Insurance, Medicare HMO’s or Prescription Drug Assistance. The SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) training will be held at the Ocean County Fire and First Aid Training Center, which is located at 200 Volunteer Way, Waretown, NJ 08758. The training is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 29, July 6, 13, 20, and Tuesday, July 26 from 9am to 4pm.** Trainees must attend all five days of training to be certified as a SHIP volunteer counselor. For further information and to register, please call the Office of Senior Services, **732-929-2091 or 1-800-668-4899.**



Greg Stratton, Laborer, Ocean County Division of Weights and Measures, was named the Sub Novice 201 Pound Champion during the first Eleat Heat Boxing Tournament, which took place in Newark. Stratton, of Toms River, beat out three contenders for the championship belt. The tournament is a fundraiser for the Junior Olympics Golden Glove.



Summer 2011 Update

**Freeholder Director
JOSEPH H. VICARI
Chairman**

**STEPHEN SCATURRO
Director**



**1027 Hooper Avenue,
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**732-929-2105
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COUNTY OF OCEAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS DIVISION OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

“We’re Watching Over You”



A Message From Joe Vicari: Freeholder Chairman

Consumers Warned to be Wary of the Grandparent Scam

It’s a scam that’s designed to play on grandparent’s heartstrings. The Grandparent Scam begins with an urgent phone call to an unsuspecting senior citizen. The caller may claim to be the victim’s grandchild or a police officer informing you that they have been hurt, are in jail, or otherwise in trouble. They are in need of money and don’t

want you to reach out to their parents. Those who fall victim later learn their grandchild was never in trouble. Instead, their money was wired to a criminal and will probably never be seen again.

You might not think this could happen to you, but thousands of seniors have fallen victim to this scam – mostly because the scammers are good at what they do. They choose their targets carefully, tug on their heartstrings, and keep other family members "out of the loop" until it's too late. In New Jersey, the average victim lost \$3,500.

According to Stephen Scaturro, Director of the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs, the Grandparent scam usually goes along the lines of the following. Your "grandchild" claims he's gotten into some kind of trouble -- auto accident, overdue rent, minor brush with the law -- and needs money to fix the situation. "Can you please help? But don't tell mom. She'd kill me if she found out!"

Or you receive a phone call from someone who greets you with;
"Hi Grandma."

"Hi."

"Do you know who this is?"

"Jeremy?"

"Yeah!"

Without realizing it, you just supplied the scammer with the name of your grandchild. He then proceeds to impersonate that grandchild.

Freeholder Director Joseph H. Vicari, Chairman of the Department of Consumer Affairs offers the following steps to protect yourself: Double check with a family member to assure your loved one really does need help. Consider creating a code word or phrase – one that only the family would know – in case of a real emergency. And finally, never wire money without being absolutely sure the story is true.

Remember, once you’ve wire money, it probably won’t be able to be retrieved. If you believe you have fallen victim of a scam, contact the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs at **732-929-2105.**

DEALING WITH HIGH GAS PRICES

Gasoline prices in New Jersey have fluctuated greatly over the last year, making it difficult for consumers to budget for transportation costs.

While market conditions cannot be regulated, the Ocean County Division of Weights and Measures is closely monitoring gas station pumps and business practices to ensure that consumers get exactly what they pay for.

All gas station pumps must be registered with the state annually. Weights and Measures inspectors check to assure that the gas indicators on the pump match the price on the street signs. They also check the accuracy of the octane levels and the dispensing of the gas as well as making sure that there is no water in the tanks and that all pumps and hoses are intact.

A blue and white decal is visibly placed on every tank indicating that it has been inspected.

“Taking little steps to help save gas when driving can amount to several dollars being saved,” noted Freeholder Director Joseph H. Vicari, Chairman of the Division of Weights and Measures. “They can include such things as not idling, or driving aggressively, unloading your vehicle before driving around, and not driving faster than the speed limit. Each five miles per hour over 60 cost you an additional 10 cents a gallon.”

Other steps to take to conserve fuel include making sure your tires are properly inflated, maintaining your car with regular tune ups, purchasing vehicles with excellent gas mileage, and following the manufacturer’s recommendations for preventive maintenance.

“It’s important to pay attention when buying gas,” said Stephen Scaturro, Superintendent of Weights and Measures. “Make sure your receipt is for the correct number of gallons you received and that you are not paying for more than you got.”

Some tips to keep in mind when buying gasoline include checking to assure that there is a Weights and Measures decal indicating it has been inspected and making sure the attendant has reset the pump to zero before filling your tank.

If you feel you have been cheated, call the Ocean County Division of Weights and Measures at **732-929-2166** to file a complaint. Complaints are usually handled within a 24 hour period.

“DO NOT CALL”

The New Jersey “Do Not Call” law is now in effect, maximizing the protection available to residents from unsolicited telemarketing phone calls.

This law requires that any telemarketer making calls to New Jersey residents register with the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs. It further requires telemarketers to maintain an in-house “Do Not Call” list of “existing customers” who have indicated they do not want to receive calls from them.

The New Jersey “Do Not Call” law also prohibits telemarketers from calling any New Jersey resident who has placed their residential or cell phone number on the national “Do Not Call” list as well as bars the intentional blocking of caller identification.

Telemarketers are also limited to calling between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. in accordance with the law.

Consumers who have already placed their phone numbers on the national registry don’t have to do a thing,” said Freeholder Director Joseph H. Vicari, Chairman of the

Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs. “You do not have to register separately. This new law provides an additional layer of protection for New Jersey residents.”

All telemarketers making calls to a New Jersey customer must provide their name, name of the company or person they represent and the purpose of their call within the first 30 seconds of the call.

The law goes into effect three months after a consumer places their number on the “Do Not Call” list.

There are exemptions to this law, which include charities, political organizations and pollsters.

In order to register for the national “Do Not Call” list, call the Federal Trade Commission at **1-888-382-1222**. You must call from the telephone number you want to register. Registration is free.

HOW TO PREVENT A DREAM WEDDING FROM BECOMING A NIGHTMARE

Planning a wedding can be fun and exciting, but it can also be a monumental task. Hiring a photographer, booking a reception hall, arranging for entertainment, making hotel arrangements for overnight guests – these may all be elements in making the day a success.

With wedding season approaching, the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs is offering tips on how to avoid wedding day scams.

“Couples put a lot of time and effort into planning the perfect wedding,” said Freeholder Joseph H. Vicari, who serves as Chairman of the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs. “We are constantly trying to empower county residents to help prevent them from getting scammed. The following tips can help to ensure that the happy couple get what they paid for.”

First contact the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs to find out if any potential vendor, such as a photographer, videographer, DJ, band, or caterer, has a history of consumer complaints, or has been cited for violating any consumer protection laws. Always make sure to take the time to review every contract before signing, noting the terms of cancellation. Before buying engagement or wedding rings, conduct your own research to learn about precious gem quality and ring settings. Before buying a wedding gown, learn whether the seller is following the Federal Trade Commission requirements on providing information about the garment’s fiber content and country of origin.

“Beware of wedding scams, such as phony exhibitions. Before paying to attend a bridal show, try to verify that the event is real by checking the organizer’s credentials or checking with the owners of the venue,” encourages Stephen Scaturro, Director, Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs.

“Remember that paying by credit card, as opposed to cash, can generally help you resolve any future disputes,” Scaturro added.

If you believe you might have been scammed or cheated by a business, contact the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs at **732-929-2105** to file a complaint.