

An aerial photograph of the Oak Island coastline. The left side shows the ocean with white-capped waves. The beach is sandy and curves along the coast. A road runs parallel to the beach, with several houses and buildings built on the dunes. The town extends into the distance, with more houses and greenery. The sky is clear and blue.

# THE CURRENT

Your guide to current news & events from the Town of Oak Island, NC

May 2021

IN THIS ISSUE: Welcome / Monthly Review (April, 2021) / News & Notices / Coming Events / Department Feature / Photo Review

## Welcome to May

**WELCOME** to the **SIXTH** edition of **THE CURRENT**. **FUN FACT:** in the modern calendar, the month of May is named after Maia, the Roman goddess of growing plants. It is also NOT named after the auxiliary verb meaning "perhaps" or "possibly" - as in, "*we may have the best summer ever!*" There's good reason for that. This is not the time for indecision, or questioning whether your day will require sandals or snow boots. There's no cute rhymes about "showers bringing flowers" and certainly no superstitions about forecasts from groundhog shadows. Because May doesn't need any of that; it's the business end of spring, where you know what you're getting. The course is set, the cruise control is on, and just over the horizon lies warm days filled with concerts, crashing waves, and charcoal-fired cookouts. So wash the pollen off the boat, grab the PFD's, check the flags, and get ready for a ride through the **May 2021** edition of **THE CURRENT**.



MONTHLY REVIEW

## MONTHLY REVIEW: April 2021

REMINDER: Information on all news items can be found on the Town Website at: [www.OakIslandNC.com/NEWS](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/NEWS).



## Beach Nourishment: Extension Granted

*\*EDITOR'S NOTE: This information may have changed since the original publish date, including progress updates and completion times. For the latest updates, visit the Information Page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/SAND](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/SAND).\**

On **Friday, April 30, 2021** the Town of Oak Island was notified of a 15-day extension, which had been granted for sand distribution operations in the **2020 / 2021 Nourishment Project** currently underway.

The Project, which was initially scheduled to run from late February to early April, experienced several delays prior to the start of sand distribution operations, which resulted in on-beach activity not starting until April 8. With active operations scheduled to end at the start of Sea Turtle Nesting Season on May 1, the NC Division of Coastal Management and the US Army Corps of Engineers, were asked for an extension, allowing for operations to continue for a brief period into Nesting Season.

At the request of the contractor, Great Lakes Dredging, the extension request was filed in mid-April the Town, with assistance from Moffatt & Nichol, the engineering firm overseeing the project. Approval was given on Friday, April 30, allowing for **sand distribution to continue until May 15**, and **demobilization of equipment until May 26**. Completion of the project is seen as a vital step towards providing the much-needed protection the sand berms will offer during the upcoming hurricane season.

**MOVING FORWARD** a second dredge has been brought in to assist with the operations of the dredge ship OHIO, currently working on the project. The hopper dredge ship DODGE ISLAND will be serviced by a second pipeline, which will come ashore just west of **11th Place East**. The two dredges will work in tandem from different ends of the project area, to distribute sand and build berms until completion.

**SAFETY** remains a top concern for both the public and onsite contractors. All beachgoers are strongly encouraged to stay out of marked areas. DO NOT interact or try to converse with contractor staff in these work areas. Additionally, DO NOT walk on, play, or cross over any of the dunes and berms, unless in a designated, marked pathway. All publicly available information on the current or future status of the project will be posted on the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/SAND](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/SAND).

**WILDLIFE** protection has an increased presence in the continued operations, as it is understood the project is now entering an active time for local marine life. Observation and safety protocols already in place have been increased, to include dedicated observers, and assistance from the Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program. Strict operational guidelines are in place and will be observed, to ensure the safety of the local marine populations, with minimal impacts to their natural routines.

**PROJECT UPDATES** including an interactive map showing operations progress and all impacted beach access locations, can be found on the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/SAND](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/SAND), or by clicking the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

## COVID-19 Response Updates

On Wednesday, April 28, 2021, Governor Roy Cooper issued [Executive Order 209](#), which relaxed the State's Outdoor Mask Mandate and eased the limits on mass gatherings.

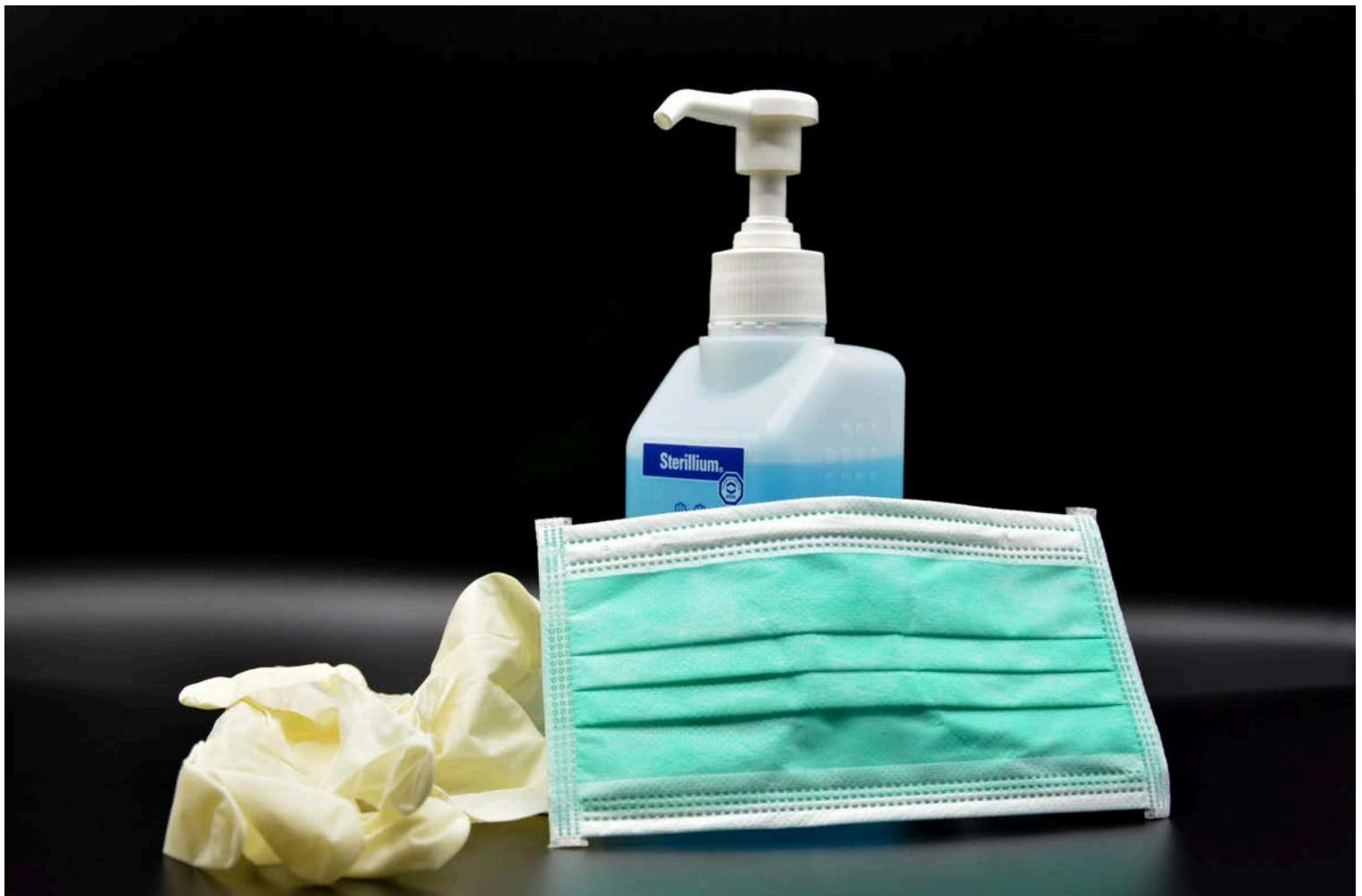
According to a release published by the Governor's Office, the new Executive Order still requires mask use indoors, but no longer requires them for outdoor use. The release did still strongly recommended outdoor use of masks in crowded areas and higher risk settings, where social distancing is difficult.

Additionally, Executive Order 209 also increased mass gathering capacity limits. The number of people now allowed to gather indoors increased from 50 to 100, and the limit for outdoor gatherings increase from 100 to 200. Occupancy limits currently in place will remain the same.

As of the timing of this release, North Carolina had administered over 7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Partial vaccination rates of those 18 and up reached 48.7% percent, and 39.2% percent of those 18 and up have been fully vaccinated. Locally, COVID-19 vaccinations are being provided through the **Brunswick County Health Services COVID Vaccination Registration Portal**.

Links to the County's **Vaccination Registration Portal**, as well as information on all Town, County, and State response to COVID-19 can be found on the **Coronavirus Response Information** page of the Town Website. To view this page, visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/COVID](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/COVID) or click the link below.

[\*\*CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE\*\*](#)





## Parking, Paddling, & Pedestrian Pathways

As Sand Distribution and Beach Nourishment projects were winding down, the Public Works Department quickly moved to capitalize on the available working spaces these projects freed up.

Repairs and maintenance to beach & water access locations, parking lots, and other Town facilities have been allowing these features to reopen on an almost daily basis. On Thursday, April 28, the **Tidalwaves Kayak & Canoe Launch** on SE 31st Street (behind the Recreation Center) reopened with a newly built floating dock. Shortly after, work began on the floating dock and water access at SW 5th Street.

Direct Beach Access Locations have been cleaned, and in some cases resurfaced with fresh gravel, or even had new infrastructure such as walkways or railings constructed.

Shared Access Pathways, provided for direct beach access to properties EAST of Middleton Avenue, have been constructed using post & rope, as the 2020 / 2021 Nourishment Project passed each access location.  
*(NOTE: Pathways are still being added daily)*

The parking lot at "The Point" on the end of W Beach Drive has received a final layer of gravel, and is only waiting the addition of new parking bumpers, which should arrive within the first week of May. The lot will officially open immediately once bumpers have been installed.

*\*\* EDITOR'S NOTE: This information may have changed since the original publish date, including progress updates and estimated completion times. For the latest updates, visit the **PROJECTS** page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/PROJECTS](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/PROJECTS).* \*\* Repairs to the **Davis Canal Pedestrian Walkway** at **SE 9th Street** (pictured) were nearly complete by the end of April. A final walkthrough inspection is planned for the first week in May, with immediate opening upon passing inspection. Work on the Walkover at **SE 20th Street** will immediately begin with completion of the SE 9th Street Walkover. With the shorter repair area needed, that project is still on schedule for completion by late May or early June.

As a reminder, updates on all repairs to Town facilities and infrastructure can be found on the **PROJECTS** page of the Town Website. To view this page, visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/PROJECTS](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/PROJECTS) or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

## Direct Access Updates

In late March, the Town received final directives from the [North Carolina Division of Coastal Management](#), regarding available options for direct beach access. This information was immediately published on the Town Website, and in the April edition of **THE CURRENT**. A little over a week later, this information was further clarified by the State. Updated revisions were made to the Town Website along with an *EDITORS NOTE* correction in the **THE CURRENT**.

Direct Access Options for the Town are divided into two (2) areas: **EAST** and **WEST**, separated by Middleton Avenue. **To review these new directives:**

**WEST** of Middleton Ave, beach access will be permitted through **Direct Access Pathways** over the sand berm for each property. The pathways can have a maximum width of six feet (6') across; as permitted by CAMA regulations, and must be identified by individual property owners through installation of either markers, flags, "post & rope," **OR** the optional use of non-permanent, slatted wooden or composite roll-out matting.

**EAST** of Middleton Ave, beach access will be provided through either **Shared Access Pathways** over the berms (which the Town will install at intervals of approximately 180 feet), or one of the many public [Beach Access Locations](#) the Town provides at most street ends. The Shared Access Pathways will utilize "post & rope" markings, to note the designated areas to cross over the sand berms. *NOTE: The use of shared access pathways in areas East of Middleton, is largely due to their location within the Sea Turtle Protection Program area.*

As the Town continues to work with the State and Federal Agencies on beach nourishment, the use of "post & rope" pathway marking (*pictured*) has been approved for both **Shared Access** and **Direct Access** pathways.

**NOTE:** Walking in undesignated areas, playing, digging, cutting, or other disruptive modifications to the berm **are not allowed**. Access for properties not on the beachfront will be through designated Beach Access Locations.

Full details (along with helpful graphics and visualizations) for these new regulations have been provided on the ***Direct Beach Access Information*** page of the Town Website. To access this page, visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/DirectAccess](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/DirectAccess) or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)





## Festival Fun in the Future!

For over 220 years Southport has celebrated our nation's independence in full fare. The history of North Carolina's Fourth of July Festival celebration was first recorded in a newspaper in 1795. Now the event has grown to attract over 60,000 visitors each year. In light of the pandemic, some events will be relocated to sites that allow social distancing, other events revised to reduce crowd sizes and some events postponed until 2022.

For the first time, the Town of Oak Island will serve as host to the majority of events included in this festival. Activities and events will include the Oak Island Beach Day celebration on July 1, the Annual Shag Contest, live bands, fireworks, food and games, and so MUCH MORE!

The decision to take on hosting duties for the 2021 Festival, was officially approved by the Town Council during their Budget Workshop on Tuesday, April 27. Regarding the Town's increased involvement, Mayor Ken Thomas was quoted as saying *"We're glad to be able to offer more support this year and host a few of the events for this year's July 4th celebration. We're looking forward to gathering with friends and family, with health and safety in mind, to celebrate Independence Day."*

Additional details on the festival, as well as direct links to the Festival Website, can be found on the **EVENTS** page of the Town Website. To view this page, simply visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/EVENTS](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/EVENTS) or click the link below.

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## NEWS & NOTICES



# NEWS & NOTICES: MAY

## Council & Board Meetings

**REMINDER:** All public meetings listed below will be broadcast live on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8), as well as livestreamed on the Town Website. Meeting agendas, minutes, and livestream or on-demand video playback can be found on the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/MEETINGS](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/MEETINGS).

**TOWN COUNCIL** will hold Budget Workshop on **Thursday May 6, 2021** at **10:00 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall, at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

**TOWN COUNCIL** will hold a regular meeting on **Tuesday, May 11, 2021** beginning at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of the Town Hall, at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

**PLANNING BOARD** will hold a regular meeting on **Thursday, May 20, 2021** beginning at **10:30 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of the Town Hall, at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

## Closures & Holidays

Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be **CLOSED** on **Monday, May 31, 2021** in observance of **Memorial Day**. As always, Police, Fire, and other emergency services will be available by calling 911. Announcements on further schedule modifications to Town departments and services will be made on the Town Website prior to the closure.

REMINDER: the full *Holiday Calendar* can be found on the Town Website at: [www.OakIslandNC.com/HOLIDAY](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/HOLIDAY).



## Splashpads & Playground Pirates

Mark your calendars, and grab your towels! The Oak Island **Splashpad** is scheduled to open for the 2021 season on **Monday, May 17**. Hours of operation will be from **10:00 AM - 6:00 PM** daily, with hourly rentals available from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM for \$100 / per hour.

*Admission during regular hours is FREE!*

If you've never been, the Oak Island Splashpad is a water activity, featuring spraying water and water features, located behind Town Hall on SE 46th Street, near the corner of E Dolphin Drive. Since its opening in 2019, the Splashpad has undeniably been one of the biggest attractions of Middleton Park, if not the whole Town! For 2021, the Splashpad returns with the "parent-friendly" addition of a 12ft. x 24ft. shade structure, provided through a \$20,000 donation from the Oak Island Friends of Parks Foundation. It's sure to provide onlooking parents and family members some much needed comfort as they watch their little ones enjoy the cooling sprays!

Right next to the Splashpad, is the newly opened **Pirate Ship** playground feature. Thanks to a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant, the new ADA-compliant Pirate Ship will offer adventure and pirate play for kids of all abilities. The wide, wheelchair friendly "gangway" offers spacious access for every child to help "sail the ship" this summer!

Information on new recreation features can be found on the NEWS & Notices page of the Town Website. To view this page, simply visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/NEWS](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/NEWS) or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

## Sea Turtles Saviors

Whether resident or visitor, true fans of Oak Island know that May heralds the arrival of one of nature's most magnificent movements: **TURTLES**.

Recently, the **Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program** (OISTPP) offered some refresher information on how they (*and YOU!*) can help this protected population.

The Program is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) environmental and conservation organization, whose mission is to monitor and protect the sea turtle population that visits the Oak Island beach strand, and to foster community-based conservation, education, and preservation. OISTPP was founded in 1989 and is authorized by the **North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission** (NCWRC) to conduct its activities to monitor and protect sea turtles. The coordinators work closely with biologists from the NCWRC to ensure that the Commission's guidelines and regulations are followed.

Volunteer activity occurs from May through October during the nesting and hatching season. Daily monitoring of the nesting beach within the town limits occurs during this nesting season. The Program uses over 170 volunteers, who dedicate their time and effort to the program, and especially the sea turtles!

To help ensure the safety of the turtles, volunteers, and visitors, nest locations are not shared publicly. However, if you see a "runway" headed from the nest to the ocean, **that nest is ready to hatch!** Although an exact day or time is never known, all are invited to join program volunteers to hopefully witness the hatchlings emerge. Viewers are asked to please follow the directives of the volunteers (Nest Parents) who sit at the nests nightly. Their job is to protect all hatchlings and help them make it to the ocean, so following the rules of care for the sea turtles is appreciated!

For nesting sea turtles on the beach, be sure to keep a good distance of at least 20 feet! **DO NOT** shine lights, use flash photography, or disturb them in any way. Remaining still and watching from a distance, could hopefully bring the reward of seeing them lay their nest. Additionally, make sure to fill in any holes made on the beach, and remove all beach gear at the end of the day. Picking up trash, respecting the environment, and turning off all oceanfront lights aren't just ways to be a good neighbor, they help preserve wildlife as well!

Please contact the program if you have general questions, or witness any sea turtle activity, either by phone at **910-945-8888**, or through email at [okiseaturtleprotection@gmail.com](mailto:okiseaturtleprotection@gmail.com). To learn more about the Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program, visit their website at [okiseaturtle.org](http://okiseaturtle.org), or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)





## Flood Insurance Risk Rating 2.0

Whether it's planning a funeral, discussing salaries, or debating whether or not cereal is *technically* a soup, there are just some topics that are uncomfortable to talk about. Although uncomfortable, these discussions are needed, as they help us understand more about ourselves, and plan for the changing world around us.

If you live near the water (as do most people who live ***on an island***), flood insurance is one of those uncomfortable, but needed discussions.

If flood insurance is something you are interested in, or is required due to your zoning, it's important to note that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has changed the way it views risk and pricing for flood insurance. The **National Flood Insurance Program** has recently launched the new rating methodology, **Risk Rating 2.0**.

The previous rating methodology used had not changed since it was first developed in the 1970s. Risk Rating 2.0 will fundamentally change the way FEMA rates a property's flood risk and prices insurance.

The new rating structure delivers rates that are easier to understand, and better reflect a property's unique flood risk. Rates will now be developed on a **structure-by-structure** basis, offering users a more individualized picture of their risk. With Risk Rating 2.0, individuals will no longer pay more than their share in flood insurance premiums based on the value of their homes.

Additionally, the previous rating methodology was heavily dependent on the "1-percent-annual-chance" event, while Risk Rating 2.0 will incorporate a broader range of flood frequencies. FEMA will be pairing state-of-the-art industry technology with the National Flood Insurance Program's mapping data, to establish a new risk-informed rating plan.

This subject is certainly more than can be summarized in this brief article, but full information is available on the **Flood Information** page of the Town Website. To view this page, visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/FloodInfo](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/FloodInfo) or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

## Garbage & Recycling: Summer Collection Schedule

As May brings the warmer months, it also brings more residents and visitors back to Town. To help the additional waste generated by this influx of people, the Town will shift to the ***Summer Garbage & Recycling Collection Schedule*** on **Saturday, May 15**, and will run through September 25, 2021.

The Summer Schedule will now provide **garbage collection** twice per week on Wednesdays & Saturdays; with recycling collection every Saturday.

This schedule change will only affect **Collection Zones 6, 7, & 8**, which are the beach areas of Ocean Drive, Beach Drive, Dolphin Drive, Pelican Drive, and Kings Lynn Drive. All other areas will remain on their regular collection schedule.

Full information on garbage & recycling collection, including an interactive map of all Collection Zones, and collection schedules, can be found on dedicated page of the Town Website. To view this page, visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/COLLECTION](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/COLLECTION), or click the link below.

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NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

MAY 16-22, 2021

**Stronger  
Together**



## National Public Works Week

National Public Works Weeks (NPWW) for 2021 is scheduled for May 16-22. This is a time dedicated to honoring those who provide the services, and maintain the infrastructure which supports the daily functions of the Town. Originally created as a public education campaign by the American Public Works Association (APWA) in 1960, NPWW brings attention to the important efforts of public works employees throughout the nation; by showcasing not only the services they provided to their communities, but also the dedication, training, and skillset through which they provided those services.

The theme for the 2021 National Public Works Week is "***Stronger Together***." As reflected in the Week's official artwork by New York City based illustrator and designer, Kirsten Ulve (*pictured*) the 2021 poster challenges viewers to think about the many different roles public works plays in creating functional, beautiful, and livable. Through strong community support and understanding, residents and employees can work together to accomplish goals once thought unattainable.

National Public Works Week is regularly observed on the third full week of May each year. Oak Island's own Public Works Department was recently featured in the inaugural edition of ***THE CURRENT***, back in **December 2020**. To read this episode, learn more about the department and what they do for you, visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/CURRENT](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/CURRENT), or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

## COMING EVENTS



## COMING EVENTS

*REMINDER:* Information on all special events, recreation programs, and educational activities can be found on the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/EVENTS](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/EVENTS).

**SAFETY NOTICE:** COVID response protocols will be in place for all listed activities, including but not limited to: hand sanitizing stations, one-way traffic at the market, one person per vendor booth, social distancing marking and signage, with mask wearing encouraged by all.



Town of Oak Island



# Summer Concert

*"Bands by the Beach!"*

SERIES • 2021



**21**  
MAY

**JukeBox Rehab**

(GENRE: Country)

**28**  
MAY

**The British Invaders**

(GENRE: 60's & 70's)

**4**  
JUN

**Chairman of the Board**

w/ **Ken Knox** (SPONSOR: Oak Island Accommodations)

**11**  
JUN

**The Main Event Band**

(GENRE: Beach)

**18**  
JUN

**The Entertainers**

(GENRE: Beach) (SPONSOR: Palm Realty)

**25**

**Tim Clark Band**



## Summer Concert Series

**WHEN:** Fridays 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM • May 21 - September 2

**WHERE:** Middleton Park Amphitheater (Behind Town Hall) • 4610 E  
Dolphin Drive

**WHO:** Open to all

**COST:** FREE to attend

**ABOUT:** The sun is out, the fun is back, and the “Bands by the Beach” are once again ready to rock, groove, swing, and swoon their way through the soundtrack of your perfect summer! For 16 weeks, from May to September, we turn the amps up to “11” and come together for the annual Town of Oak Island Summer Concert Series.

**NOTE:** All vendor spaces for the Market **have been filled**, so this is sure to be a busy and exciting event, with lots to see, hear, and enjoy!

## Spring Golf Clinic 2021

**WHEN:** Each Wednesday in May • 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**WHERE:** Oak Island Par Three Golf Course, 4166 Vanessa Dr., Southport, NC 28465

**WHO:** All Ages

**COST:** \$80.00 per person, 4 week session (no refunds): Limited to 10 participants

**ABOUT:** John Winebar will teach various golf tips and techniques to improve the participant's golf game.





## Spring Fling Movies in the Park

**WHEN:** Friday, May 14 (starting at Dusk)

**WHERE:** Middleton Park

**WHO:** All Ages

**COST:** Free

**ABOUT:** Gather the family and bring a favorite beach chair or blanket, to watch a family friendly movie under the stars! Movies begin at dusk, and concessions will be available.

Be sure to follow the Recreation Department Facebook page for further announcements on movie titles at

[www.Facebook.com/OakIslandRecreation](http://www.Facebook.com/OakIslandRecreation) or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

## Oak Island Farmers' & Artisans' Market

**WHEN:** Mondays • 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM • May 24 - September 6

**WHERE:** Middleton Park (Behind Town Hall) • 4610 E Dolphin Drive

**WHO:** All Ages

**COST:** FREE to attend or shop / Vendor Fees of \$15 Daily or \$200 Seasonal (\$40 savings!)

**ABOUT:** The Market is great opportunity to see, and financially support the very best of Oak Island's local farmer and artisan community. Baked goods, produce, handmade crafts, and artistic masterpieces are just a few of the many treasures waiting to be uncovered at the popular annual tradition, which runs throughout the summer season.

For more information on the Market itself or to become a vendor, visit [www.OakIslandNC.com/MARKET](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/MARKET) or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



## DEPARTMENT FEATURE



# DIVISION FEATURE: UAS SERVICES

It's been speculated that the concept of unmanned aerial vehicles, or "drones" can be dated back to 1849, when Venice was attacked by Austria, who used nearly 200 unmanned balloons stuffed with explosives. Even in modern times, the development and use of drones has been primarily for military purposes. However, much like ballistic missiles repurposed for space exploration, or digital photography repurposed for selfies, eventually even drone technology found its uses on the civilian market. As the novelty aspect for hobbyists settled in, it quickly became apparent the practical benefits an **Unmanned Aerial System (UAV)** could hold public information, service, and safety.

Since becoming commercially available only a decade ago, the technological capabilities, and the laws surrounding drone operations, have grown exponentially in their scope and detail. These days, most municipalities (*and their attorneys*) agree, the need for a dedicated, professionally trained and certified operators (pilots) is essential when employing this technology.

The absolute newest addition to the Oak Island workforce, **Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Services** was launched in March, 2021, and employs a dedicated drone pilot, certified through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT). In less than two months on the job, UAS Services has already found its place as a vital support to nearly every Town Department or service provided.

**PROFILE:** UAS Pilot: Shawn Barry didn't originally set out to fly drones along the North Carolina coastline; but then again, in an industry that didn't even exist until a decade ago, no one else did either! More than just a casual hobbyist, nearly everything Barry does is somehow connected to serving his community.

The son of a career firefighter, almost every other family member is linked in the fire response, law enforcement, or other first responder fields. You could say the upstate New York native has public service "hard-wired" into his DNA. After a successful career in law enforcement (with a healthy dose of firefighting for good measure), Shawn Barry had intended to settle down to a quiet life in Oak Island. He didn't make it far, as barely a year into his time here, he found a call to help his community. Using his 8 years of UAS piloting experience, he helped neighbors identify property damage, following the devastating impacts of Hurricane Isaias in August, 2020.

**"It's just inherent to want to help people"** Barry said, of his many volunteer flight hours **"When I see something that I know can help others, or even other first responders, I have to do it."**

In addition to a wealth of knowledge and skills obtained in several first responder fields, Barry also brings considerable confidence to the UAS Services for Oak Island, through his current holding of an **FAA Part 107 Drone Pilot License**, **NCDOT Drone Operators Permit**, and completed **FAA Recurrent Training**.





**EQUIPMENT PROFILE:** *Mavic II Enterprise Advanced: (pictured left)* is the pinnacle of lightweight performance, packed with extreme capability. Manufactured by DJI, the industry standard in commercial drones, the Mavic II joined as the flagship of the Oak Island fleet at the end of April.

Available in several configurations, the "**DUAL**" model owned by the Town provides both **visual and thermal** imaging cameras. The visual camera offers stunning images and video, for uses such as infrastructure inspections, project monitoring, and marketing materials. As anyone even remotely familiar with firefighting or search and rescue needs can confirm, the thermal imaging camera is invaluable as a first response, and even life-saving tool.

With **48 Megapixels** of high-quality imaging resolution available, clear and detailed information is always assured, no matter from what height.

Since first taking flight in March, UAS Services has flown more than **41 individual missions**, with each mission including multiple flights. That accounts for **741 different photos and video clips**. Categorized as Administrative Support, Shawn Barry and UAS Services has already provided content for the Communications Office, Public Works, Development Services, Public Utilities, and more. Future uses for Fire and Police assistance are possible, following upcoming departmental trainings.



*The Landing Zone for a UAS may look small, but it provides a BIG service for the Town*

Tasks such as Inspecting a damaged bulkhead from the water, used to be a time-consuming, and labor intensive process. Within minutes, a drone flight gave the Public Works Director a real-time, up-close view of the damaged areas, saving the significant time and effort a manual inspection normally would have taken. Jobs like this, one of many already completed by UAS Services, are prime examples of how the Town is working to leverage new technologies, to provide services more efficiently for residents and visitors alike.



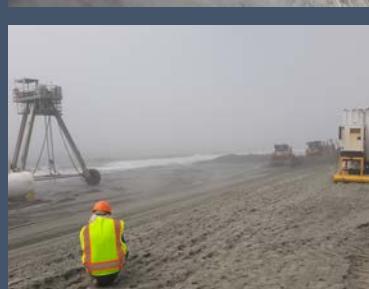
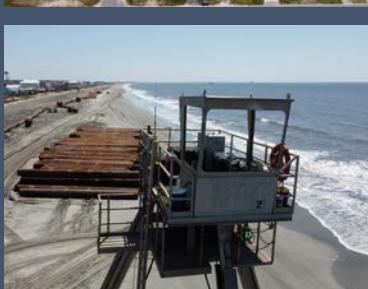
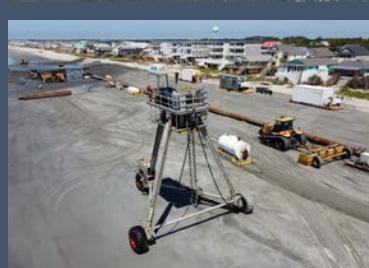
UAS Services Pilot, Shawn Barry setting up and operating from a landing zone near the Town Hall

In such a short amount of time, the content provided by UAS Services has already proven a worthwhile endeavor for the Town. However, as new technology increases the capability and affordability of these micro machines, even more potential awaits. It's entirely possible, that in the near future, lost or injured swimmers could have life rings delivered via drone while awaiting a rescue boat. Or someone suffering from cardiac arrest could have an AED delivered to their location, while an ambulance is being dispatched. As with most advances, they all have a beginning; thankfully the Town of Oak Island can say that its beginning started in March of 2021. If you have questions or concerns regarding UAS Systems for Oak Island, or the services they provide, contact the **Oak Island Communications Office** at **910-201-8067**, or use the contact form on the **CONTACT US** page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/CONTACT](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/CONTACT).

## MONTH IN PHOTOS



# PHOTO REVIEW: APRIL 2021





PHOTOS CREDITS: Oak Island Communications Office (Mike Emory) / Oak Island UAS Services (Shawn Barry)

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