



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Cape May – Lewes Ferry to Host Iconic Smokey Bear Artwork *Partnership with N.J. Forest Fire Service to Promote Fire Safety and Wildfire Prevention*

CAPE MAY, NJ – Today, Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) officials announced a new partnership with the New Jersey Forest Fire Service to temporarily display a collection of Smokey Bear artwork by Rudy Wendelin inside the Cape May terminal. With the goal of heightening public awareness and wildfire prevention messages to Jersey Cape visitors, this collection will be on display inside the passenger terminal skywalk for seven days beginning on July 1, 2023.

The New Jersey display collection is comprised of some of Wendelin’s post-retirement images and features 19 oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings of various sizes. The Cape May Ferry terminal is one of six tour locations to host the mobile exhibit this summer. Following its appearance at the Cape May Ferry Terminal, the Smokey Bear collection will transfer to the Batsto Village Visitor Center in Wharton State Forest.

Rudolph Wendelin (1910-2000) was a sculptor, painter, and illustrator who worked for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) from 1933 until his retirement in 1973. Although Wendelin was not the creator of Smokey Bear, he spent his career making Smokey into the cultural icon he is today by humanizing his design, creating the first animated drawings of Smokey, and continuing to produce images of Smokey following his retirement.

To date in 2023, the Forest Fire Service has responded to 904 wildfires which have burned 16,448.5 acres across New Jersey. Twelve of these fires were considered to be major wildfires burning in excess of 100 acres. In response to this difficult wildfire season, New Jersey officials are determined to educate people on wildfire prevention because most wildfires in New Jersey are caused by humans. On loan to the State of New Jersey from the National Agricultural Library, the Wendelin collection will be on display throughout NJ from July 1, 2023, through Smokey’s Birthday on August 9, 2023.

About the Cape May—Lewes Ferry

Owned and operated by the Delaware River and Bay Authority, the Cape May – Lewes Ferry is open year-round and has carried almost 50 million passengers since its inception on July 1,

1964. As an integral transportation system connecting the communities and economies on both sides of the Delaware Bay, the Ferry service is a significant catalyst for economic growth and regional tourism activity in New Jersey and Delaware. Its operations sustain over 4,000 jobs while generating tens of millions of dollars in local taxes and hundreds of millions in regional economic activity. For schedules and rates, please visit www.CMLF.com or call 800-643-3779.

About the New Jersey Forest Fire Service

Since 1906 the New Jersey Forest Fire Service has been the agency responsible for protecting life, property, and the state's natural resources from wildfire. The New Jersey Forest Fire Service is a part of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and serves the state through responding to wildfires, conducting prescribed burns, and educating the public. For more information, visit the New Jersey Forest Fire Service Website or call 609-292-2977