

Lower Welcomes New Hotel to Diamond Beach

DIAMOND BEACH- A ribbon cutting celebration Aug 23 for the opening of Hotel Icona Diamond Beach brought Lt. Gov Kim Guadagno here as well as Lower Township and county officials and a large crowd of well-wishers.

Eustace Mita, CEO of Icona Investment Group and Achristavest, said the former Pier 6600 Hotel was gutted and reconstructed in a record 180 days. Mita also developed the neighboring \$250 million Grand at Diamond Beach.

He thanked Lower Township officials and Sen. Jeff Van Drew for their support.

Mita said the name of the hotel comes from the word “icon,” a sacred place, a place of peace and rest. He said he wanted a name that could be used nationwide such as Hotel Icona Diamond Beach and Hotel Icona Avalon.

“Everything we do is on the water, beach and bay,” said Mita.

Lower Township Mayor Michael Beck said it took Mita much courage to undertake such a large project.

“I think of you whenever we’re balancing our budget,” Beck quipped.

The mayor thanked Mita for the jobs he created. He said he hoped Lower Township government did not get in the way of new business creation but cleared the road for such development.

“I want to congratulate you for having faith in New Jersey because that’s what today represents,” said Guadagno.

She noted some did not want to see changes made to the Jersey shore but they needed to make new memories at places such as the Hotel Icona. Guadagno noted tourism was a \$40 billion industry in the state.

She said she traveled to Montreal last January with county Tourism Director Diane Wieland to let Canadians know Cape May County was open for business following Hurricane Sandy.

“The largest number of overnight stays in Cape May County are from Canada,” she said. “We want to thank them for coming down here and having faith in New Jersey.”

The hotel was reduced from its original 120 rooms to 108 suites which include full kitchens and sitting rooms. The hotel is the unique in that it is the only one in the state on its own 425-foot private beach.

Officials cut a large blue ribbon at street side.

Guests enjoyed food and beverages on the hotel’s third floor sunset deck. A tent on the beach offered more food and live music.

(Photo caption:

Icona 55, from left: Mita, Van Drew, Beck

Icona 57, from left Guadagno, Freeholder Kristine Gabor

Icona 80, ribbon cutting.)