DRBA answers oyster call

Special to the News

NEW CASTLE, Del. — The Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) commissioners on Tuesday unanimously approved a resolution to enter into a non-binding Letter of Request with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to be a cooperating agency in the Oyster Industry Revitalization Study.

The board action took place at the bi-state agency’s monthly meeting held at the Authority’s Administrative Offices in New Castle.

“This oyster initiative has received broad-based support in both Delaware and New Jersey,” said James T. Johnson Jr., executive director of the DRBA. “If the projected growth in the oyster population in the Delaware Bay is realized, the program could ultimately expand the economic base and employment opportunities for the coastal communities in both states.”

With the implementation of their recommen-

(See DRBA, Page A-5)

hard surface to which larval oysters can attach for continued growth, called a set. The set has been minimal for the past four years, providing few small oysters to grow to harvest size.

There is concern that the oyster industry might have no harvest in 2005.

Another revitalization activity has been to do an interim transplant of seed oysters from the upper Delaware Bay beds, where they grow very slowly, to the lower beds for a quick harvest, where they grow faster but are subject to higher mortality from two parasites, Dermo and MSX.

DRBA was approached by the industry because a cooperating agency was needed which could represent both Delaware and New Jersey in dealings with the Army Corps of Engineers.

The study is a joint initiative between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the N.J. Oyster Industry, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), N.J. Department of Environmental Protection, the Delaware Estuary Program, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), and the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA).