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STEVE ADUBATO, host:

Red Bank and the challenges facing New Jersey's cities, next on CAUCUS: NEW JERSEY.

Announcer: Funding for this edition of CAUCUS: NEW JERSEY has been provided by PSE&G; Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, making health care work; and by New Jersey Natural Gas, proud to support education in our communities.

ADUBATO: Welcome to this very special edition of CAUCUS: NEW JERSEY, I'm Steve Adubato. Joining me here in the studio to talk about not only New Jersey's cities and their future, but also the future of Red Bank are our good friend Red Bank Mayor Pasquale Menna; we also have Sean Byrnes, board member of the Parker Family Health Center, which provides health care to the uninsured; Rusty Young is CEO of the Count Basie Theatre Foundation; and finally, Nancy Adams, executive director of the Red Bank RiverCenter, which manages downtown revitalization efforts.

I want to thank all of you for talking to us about Red Bank.

Mayor, how great is Red Bank for those who have not been there and don't know?

Mayor PASQUALE MENNA (Red Bank, New Jersey): Red Bank is the hottest place in New Jersey, with all due respect to all of our sister cities. But we are especially...

ADUBATO: By the way, we are in Newark, and Mayor Cory Booker would debate you on that in terms of what's hot in Newark. But go ahead, make the case for how hot Red Bank is.

Mayor MENNA: Red Bank is the living room of all of New Jersey. We are the downtown for the rest of New Jersey. We are the cultural center. We are also, in many different ways, on the cutting edge of changes in our planning directives, as well as maintenance of a very stable and very healthy retail base.

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ADUBATO: OK. Who goes to Red Bank?

Mr. SEAN F. BYRNES, Esquire (Board Member, Parker Family Health Center): Well, you've got a big community, obviously, that lives there. But you have such a vital economic base there. You have people coming into the town from all of the neighboring communities taking advantage of that downtown feel that they've been able to develop in Red Bank, through RiverCenter and their efforts with putting down the beautiful brick sidewalks that they have. And it's just a great feel and a vibe to go there on a weekend, on a Saturday afternoon.

Ms. NANCY ADAMS (Executive Director, Red Bank RiverCenter): Well...

Mr. BYRNES: So they draw from the whole area.

ADUBATO: Jump in.

Ms. ADAMS: And it's really unique because it's what Red Bank's downtown has that so many people don't get on a regular basis if they go to a mall. You have historic buildings that date to the mid-1800s that are still in beautiful shape and have been revitalized and redone, their facades all restored and beautiful stores opening in them. And then, not only that, but you have the Navesink River, on top of that you have the Count Basie Theatre and the Two River Theater and the Galleria, which is just a historic building in itself.

ADUBATO: Hm.

Ms. ADAMS: It used to be a factory. It now has shops and offices in there. And you have K. Hovnanian Headquarters, you have Riverview Hospital, part of Meridian Group. So you have so much going on there that the population during the day is about 14,000--and I mean, regularly, the population residentially is 14,000, and it grows to about 50,000 55,000 during the day. And then at nights...

ADUBATO: How about on the weekends?

Ms. ADAMS: On the weekends...

ADUBATO: Does it grow?

Ms. ADAMS: It definitely grows.

Mr. RUSTY YOUNG (CEO, The Count Basie Theatre Foundation): Exponentially, of course.

Ms. ADAMS: Yes.

ADUBATO: OK. So here's the question: 14,000 during the day...

Ms. ADAMS: Residentially.

ADUBATO: Residentially. I understand.

Ms. ADAMS: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: Nighttime, weekends, jumps up.

Ms. ADAMS: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: Who's coming at night? Who's going on the weekends?

Mr. YOUNG: Well, good question. I mean, we've got 200,000 people a year that come to the Basie to see our shows, and 75 percent of those people are coming from either Monmouth, Ocean or Middlesex County, but the rest are coming from the other counties throughout the state, 5 percent of our audience comes from New York, 3 percent comes from Philadelphia. So the Basie, and, I think, and Red Bank, Monmouth County is--has become a destination. Well, it has been for some time.

ADUBATO: Describe the Count Basie Theatre for those you don't know it.

Mr. YOUNG: Count Basie Theatre, 83 years old, 1600-seat venue, originally a film and vaudeville house, 200 shows a year, bringing major acts in from all over the world, really.

ADUBATO: What's the connection between Red Bank and Count Basie?

Mr. YOUNG: Basie was born in Red Bank.

ADUBATO: So a whole history there.

Mr. YOUNG: A huge history and--well, I say huge history, I think he sort of--he was born there and wasn't really well known there, but he became quite known.

Mayor MENNA: As the kid from Red Bank.

Mr. YOUNG: Yeah, as the kid from Red Bank, and so when he died in '84, we renamed the theater in his honor.

ADUBATO: You know, it's interesting. And I came down to Red Bank, Mayor, like I saw you down there, it was during the summer of 2009, correct?

Mayor MENNA: That's correct.

ADUBATO: It was WOR Radio, our good friends over there in New York, Joan Hamburg does a terrific daily show, and I happened to be asked to be a guest on her show, and I said, 'OK, I'll come into New York.' She said, 'No, I'm in Red Bank.' I said, 'What are you doing in Red Bank?' She said, 'Well, we like to go on the road.' And we go down there, and there are hundreds of people who came to this radio show, and they weren't just loyal to her and the station, but loyal to Red Bank, and it was all about Red Bank. Who were those people, Mayor?

Mayor MENNA: Those people were our neighbors from New York, especially. From Bergen County, from Essex County, and they were just a number of people from our adjacent municipalities. I think one of the reasons why we are successful is precisely because we're not just a museum town. We are a full-fledged living, thriving metropolis. We have tremendous diversity. So the people who come into town come not just to experience our cultural diversity, as well as architecture and river, but they come to shop, they come to mingle. In essence, we are, as I said before, New Jersey's living room. People like to walk and enjoy what we have to offer.

ADUBATO: But you know what's interesting, this series that we're doing on New Jersey cities, American cities, isn't just to celebrate cities, but it's also to look at the challenges that cities face. Let's talk about the biggest challenges that Red Bank thinks it faces. Because you cannot be an urban area without having struggled and continuing to struggle in some ways. Are there poor people who still live in Red Bank? And where do they live?

Mr. BYRNES: There's certainly still poor people that live in Red Bank. I, myself, grew up in Red Bank; and it's changed demographically a little bit in the nature of the population, but you have always had a less-affluent population, predominantly, I would say, on the west side of Red Bank. It's changed a bit from, I think, what used to be predominantly African-American community to now more of an Hispanic community. But the needs that they have, I don't think have changed that much.

ADUBATO: Such as?

Mr. BYRNES: And that's--well, I'm here as a representative of the Parker Clinic, and there's a large segment of that community that either has no health insurance, has no access to Medicaid or is--has a job, but can't afford to pay for medical coverage or medical care, and the Parker Clinic is the family doctor. It's named after James Parker Sr. There was a James Parker Sr., James Parker Jr. These were men who came from the west side of Red Bank, dedicated their lives to the community and to serving those who didn't have insurance; and we are the continuation of those two individuals.

ADUBATO: The folks you're talking about who are poor...

Mr. BYRNES: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: ...who are struggling, who don't have health care, who have a whole range of issues that some others might not have, how do they benefit? How do they participate in the kind of, you know, very special place that you describe that Red Bank is? I mean, how can they afford it?

Mr. BYRNES: Well...

Mr. YOUNG: I can answer part of that question.

ADUBATO: Jump in.

Mr. YOUNG: I mean, part of the Basie's mission is to make sure that that--that that audience is served.

ADUBATO: How do you do that?

Mr. YOUNG: Well, we underwrite shows. I mean, we raise money and we have sponsors and underwriters fund performances to that people who can't afford them can go to them. We do the same through our children's educational programs. We get sponsors and underwriters, donors who make it possible for the children that Sean just mentioned to be educated in arts, and they do it through our partnership with the Red Bank School System.

Mayor MENNA: What Rusty has said is so very true. As a matter of fact, he spoke about the Basie, but we also have another world-class theater in town, Two Rivers Theater Company; and, at each performance, they set aside a certain number of tickets that are given out to people in the community through the churches, through Lunch Break...

ADUBATO: Hm.

Mayor MENNA: ...through the Parker Clinic. And we actually believe, through our public school system, that our arts initiative is very much a civilizing influence on all of us, irrespective of age. In addition to which, I think that our studies have shown that if you basically imbue a lot of people with the arts, they're educational performance improves. It gives them an incentive to do better in school.

ADUBATO: No, I appreciate that, Mayor, but I also want to talk about education now because, when I grew up in the city of Newark, where we're taping this program, and there's a revitalization going on in Newark, particularly where we are downtown, the performing arts center is here, there's the Prudential Arena, which is around the corner, a lot of good things

happening here. But the Newark public schools continue to struggle. What about the Red Bank public schools that you've been referring to? What kind of shape are they in?

Mayor MENNA: We are a Blue Ribbon public school district, which means we are at the top 5 percent of all public schools in the state of New Jersey.

ADUBATO: Why is that?

Mayor MENNA: We are not--we are not an ABBOTT district, by the way.

ADUBATO: You're not.

Mayor MENNA: But we have the same...

ADUBATO: You're not one of the 31 districts that the state provides...

Mayor MENNA: No, we are not.

ADUBATO: ...additional state aid because the Supreme Court has declared that it's a poorer school district and the children are disadvantaged?

Mayor MENNA: That is correct, Steve. We are not an ABBOTT district.

ADUBATO: But Asbury Park is.

Mayor MENNA: Asbury Park and Long Branch are.

ADUBATO: Is Long Branch? So the two neighboring urban towns, Asbury Park, Long Branch, they are ABBOTT districts. Red Bank is not because?

Mayor MENNA: We are not an ABBOTT district because our median income is slightly higher than the average would be for an ABBOTT school district. However...

ADUBATO: How could you have--what I'm trying to understand is what kind of challenges do the kids face in Red Bank in the public schools? I understand the Blue Ribbon part of it, but explain to me the challenges they face. And is it any different from any other urban area? Or is Red Bank really not as urban as I'm thinking that it is?

Mayor MENNA: No, no, no, no, no. We face the same challenges as every other urban district because our public school population comprises of approximately 40 percent to 45 percent Hispanic-speaking natives.

ADUBATO: Forty to 45 percent is Hispanic.

Mayor MENNA: Right, of the public school population.

ADUBATO: So you've got language issues.

Mayor MENNA: We have very strong language issues; however, we've been able to surmount them. And as a matter of fact, one of our initiatives, which is unusual for a public school system, is that we've actually been able to create a Chinese immersion program for our public schools at the youngest levels of our population base.

ADUBATO: Hm.

Mayor MENNA: Not because we have any Chinese speakers, but because we want to prepare our kids for the global economy. And the kids have accepted this challenge willingly.

ADUBATO: Do the kids in Red Bank score disproportionately higher on standardized tests?

Mayor MENNA: I think that they were in the past; however, they have met the challenge and we're doing better.

ADUBATO: OK. Let's talk about revitalization efforts because this prolonged recession hurts everyone. I mean, it hurts our production company because we're comparable to Count Basie folks, comparable to those who are out there getting grants and seeking grants and sponsorship. We're a nonprofit. We struggle, we're challenged, the economy affects us. How has it affected revitalization efforts?

Ms. ADAMS: Well, at our--at--my organization is also a nonprofit, the easiest way to explain the--what RiverCenter does for Red Bank is--and for the business district is basically we run the day-to-day operations of the business district. Much like the management at Short Hills Mall or Monmouth Mall manages everything from maintenance to marketing to advertising to running events, to trying to increase foot traffic, to signage, to facade improvements.

ADUBATO: Where does the money come from?

Ms. ADAMS: The money comes from a special assessment on the commercial properties in the designated district.

ADUBATO: OK. So...

Ms. ADAMS: So the municipality collects the money with the tax revenue and passes it on to our organization to manage the funds, and the board that runs our organization determines how those funds are spent.

ADUBATO: OK.

Ms. ADAMS: And that board is comprised of the highest-assessed property owners and--as well as business owners.

ADUBATO: OK. So tell us about the action going on in terms of economic development. What new building's going on? What's not going on? What's hot? What's not?

Ms. ADAMS: Well, we've got a lot of revitalization going.

ADUBATO: For example?

Ms. ADAMS: We don't have a lot of room to build new, but--because this town is so old and it's already built up. So what we do--what we do, as many cities, as Newark is doing with their new facade work, we just had one building on the corner of Front and Broad that was in very bad disrepair for years and years, that just got completely, I think the owner spent about \$5 million in restoration to that building, and it's now home--restoring the brick facade is like an 1840s building--that was just redone and is beautiful.

ADUBATO: Hm.

Ms. ADAMS: And is now home to a 10,000 square-foot Urban Outfitters store.

Mr. YOUNG: I think you have to look...

Ms. ADAMS: So...

ADUBATO: OK. But as--talk about this...

Mr. YOUNG: Yeah, we just spent 10 million bucks at the Basie.

Ms. ADAMS: Yeah.

Mr. YOUNG: Renovating the Basie.

ADUBATO: Say that again?

Ms. ADAMS: Yeah, they just had a renovation there.

Mr. YOUNG: We just spent \$10 million at the Basie.

ADUBATO: Where'd you get access to that money?

Mr. YOUNG: Well...

ADUBATO: Did you raise it?

Mr. YOUNG: We raised it.

ADUBATO: Did you borrow it? What did you do?

Mr. YOUNG: Both.

ADUBATO: Both.

Mr. YOUNG: We raised it and borrowed it.

ADUBATO: Let me say this and this is not unique to Red Bank, but I just want to make one thing clear. Some of our producers were just down in Red Bank recently and they were walking downtown and there's tremendous activity and just it looked great and felt great, which is why a lot of us go down there. But there are some empty stores.

Ms. ADAMS: Absolutely.

Mayor MENNA: There are, Steve.

ADUBATO: And let's talk about that.

Mayor MENNA: Last year, if I'm not mistaken, we had, I think 44 closings; 44 stores closed. However, during that same period, we had 32 new stores open.

Ms. ADAMS: Right.

Mayor MENNA: So we do have a little bit of a deficit. Some of the stores that are, in fact, closed are in the process of renovation at the present time. One of the things we've done is we're sort of cut the red tape on a lot of our planning process.

ADUBATO: What does that mean? Break it--give me an example of that. Cutting

red tape.

Mayor MENNA: Cutting--well, for example, we looked at our ordinances, and we made it easier for somebody to open up a business, instead of having to go through the entire planning and zoning process. And we've streamlined the process so that somebody has to spend moneys on renovations for building, instead of spending 20, \$30,000 for architects...

ADUBATO: Hm.

Mayor MENNA: ...and for attorneys, they can spend it on the building and hire people.

ADUBATO: OK, so...

Mayor MENNA: So that's been favorable.

ADUBATO: So as--listen, I'm in the town of Montclair, and we have a great town with a lot of culture, a lot of arts and a lot of money in town, but there are also a large number of empty storefronts. So my point is, that's not unique to any community, even the ones that are thriving.

Ms. ADAMS: And actually, Red bank has managed to--efforts of my organization and of everyone, including the mayor himself going out and trying to actively recruit. I spend about 20 percent of my time actively recruiting, whether it's dealing with commercial brokers or going to other towns to visit other stores to see what kind of businesses might like to open a second or third location where we are, and to deal with the national trends, see what national retailers are growing, which ones are opening, which ones are closing.

ADUBATO: Hm.

Ms. ADAMS: So...

ADUBATO: Interesting. So, Sean, let me ask you a question. As you listen to the discussion about arts, culture, economic development, education, the economy, etc., etc., is health care a piece? Where does it fit?

Mr. BYRNES: Well, it's, you know, it doesn't get enough credit in terms of the money that it saves. What we do is so much preventative health care. We're treating people who have hypertension, diabetes. We're doing preventative well checks for kids and dentistry checks for kids. And when you do a good job, these kids don't have problems that manifest themselves down the road. So a place like Riverview, where you would have people go in with sudden emergency...

ADUBATO: Riverview Hospital.

Mr. BYRNES: Riverview Hospital, which is in town. Doesn't have to treat the emergency situation that would've occurred but for the preventative care that the Parker Clinic is doing in town. And we're treating, you know, almost 10,000 visits a year and giving consistent care to kids, consistent care to people with these chronic diseases. And that's where a lot of that cost comes, the hypertension, the diabetes. We're there for them, we're the local doctor's office that they wouldn't otherwise have. As a result, they're not ending up in Riverview's emergency room and costing all of us tax dollars because, you know, they will be cared for if they go in there.

ADUBATO: Where does the money come from?

Mr. BYRNES: Well, we've been very fortunate. We have a great leader in Gene Cheslock...

ADUBATO: He's great.

Mr. BYRNES: ...who I think has been on this show before.

ADUBATO: We've had him on.

Mr. BYRNES: He was a driving force behind the whole thing, and he's a great, great energy in terms of raising funds. Bon Jovi has been an incredible benefactor.

ADUBATO: Jon Bon Jovi has been helpful to you guys?

Mr. BYRNES: Absolutely.

Mayor MENNA: Very much so.

Mr. BYRNES: He is an essential--we would not be in existence but for him. His fundraising allowed us to build the building we're in, essentially. Paddock Construction, locally...

ADUBATO: Whoa, but before you go any further, why does Bon Jovi--Jon Bon Jovi, who is a terrific Jersey guy and he's been involved in a lot of charities, what's his particular connection to Red Bank?

Mayor MENNA: Well, he has a Red Bank mailing address, even though he lives in Middletown, but we take credit for him and his beautiful wife.

ADUBATO: Is that the hook?

Mr. YOUNG: He's...

Mayor MENNA: Yeah.

ADUBATO: Did you bring him in?

Mr. YOUNG: I think he's...

ADUBATO: Did you say, 'Listen, Jon, you need to do this?'

Mayor MENNA: They are very interested, without speaking on behalf of the foundation, they're very interested in Red Bank. They appreciate our diversity, they appreciate what the Parker Clinic has been able to do, as well as the Count Basie Theatre. Most importantly, they have a deep concern for those who are on the fringes of society...

ADUBATO: Right.

Mayor MENNA: ...that do need our help. One of the things that Sean didn't mention is the fact that the Parker Clinic is really a great example of government, the private sector, the medical profession and also the neighborhoods working together because the borough gave the Parker Clinic a building for nothing.

ADUBATO: OK.

Mayor MENNA: The medical community has bonded together, and they all volunteer their services, either through Riverview Medical Center or individually. And the business community is very, very helpful and supportive, financially, of them.

ADUBATO: So there's a commitment to the Parker Center.

Mr. BYRNES: Yes.

ADUBATO: There's a commitment to those who do not have health care.

Mr. BYRNES: There is--we would not exist but for the work of the volunteers, the people who got us started. Jon Bon Jovi, again, all these folks--the volunteer hours. I mean, the doctors who serve there are volunteers. The people who are on the board are volunteers. A lot of volunteer work and time went into that, so.

ADUBATO: Let's stay on this in the time we have left. By the way, log on to our Web site to find out more about Red Bank and the other cities that we've been featuring in this ongoing series on New Jersey and American cities. Let me ask you something, there feels like, there sounds like there's a genuine community, a real community. And I know that sounds like a cliché, I know it sounds corny to some people, everyone's in a community. What is it about Red Bank that makes it the community that it is?

Mr. YOUNG: Well, it's a tough question, I mean, I grew up in Red Bank as well.

ADUBATO: You did.

Mr. YOUNG: I've been around for almost 60 years, and it's a community, I think, that has continually reinvented itself and redefined itself and yet kept attracting a certain type of individual and family to it that's just...

ADUBATO: Back up. You grew up there.

Mr. YOUNG: Yeah.

ADUBATO: What was it like when you were a kid and how different is it from today?

Mr. YOUNG: Well, you know, it's a lot bigger.

Ms. ADAMS: (Unintelligible).

Mr. YOUNG: No, right. No, it's still the same community.

ADUBATO: Is it?

Mr. YOUNG: I guess that's your question. I mean, it's still the same...

ADUBATO: What about all these new people coming in?

Mr. YOUNG: Yeah...

ADUBATO: With the...

Mr. YOUNG: ...it's still Broad Street, it's still Front Street, it's still the same buildings, it's still a lot of the same businesses, it's still a lot

of the same people and families that were there 50, 60 years ago.

ADUBATO: Don't you have a lot of the people who are real estate speculators, if you will? 'Hey, this is a hot place, where we want to be.'

Mr. YOUNG: Hot place.

ADUBATO: Open up a new restaurant and that's not--that's good...

Mr. YOUNG: It's...

ADUBATO: ...but do you lose the feel?

Mayor MENNA: No.

ADUBATO: No.

Mr. BYRNES: Its status as a center of commerce has escalated from 20, 30 years ago. It always had the aesthetics, the river, the beauty, the feel, the downtown that you don't have a lot of the other places, but now the commerce has come in, the brokerage houses and things like that, the banks. That's added something on top. But the--to answer your question, the community--why does it succeed? It's a good size. It's not that big.

ADUBATO: Describe how big it is.

Mr. BYRNES: Well, it used to have 10,000.

Ms. ADAMS: (Unintelligible)...square miles.

Mr. BYRNES: Now it's about 14,000.

Mayor MENNA: We're about 14, 15,000.

Mr. BYRNES: It's one square mile.

ADUBATO: One square mile.

Mr. BYRNES: One square mile. It's a very manageable group and what it enables us to do as nonprofits is you can work with government, the nonprofits can work together, the school systems. I also serve on the board of directors for the YMCA.

ADUBATO: Yeah.

Mr. BYRNES: We have relationships with the town, and they all can work together to provide a level of services that is tougher to do in a much larger atmosphere.

ADUBATO: Stay on this, though. Mayor, the politics.

Mayor MENNA: Our diversity is our strength.

ADUBATO: Politics--OK, but politics in every town, OK. I just have to understand this. Is it--does politics get in the way--or political bickering get in the way of Red Bank's success, development? Somehow it just sounds almost too good to be true, like you're all in this together.

Mayor MENNA: Not at all. I think we have been immeasurably blessed

throughout the ages of having great leaders who have been my predecessors and both political parties have worked together for the better good, and so it hasn't gotten in our way. We've all been able to work through our challenges.

ADUBATO: Is he...

Mr. YOUNG: No, I completely agree. I mean, Red Bank isn't about politics.

ADUBATO: Not.

Mr. YOUNG: It's about people. And you know, I'm the best lightning rod for that because I see 200,000 of them come through the Basie year in and year out, and they're coming there because it's just the place they want to be. Red Bank is a destination. You--have you been there at night? I mean, that place, it's alive. It's alive in a way that you just can't feel unless you're there...

Ms. ADAMS: Oh...(unintelligible).

ADUBATO: I've been there--I've been at River Bank late in the day at times because I've done a lot of work at River Bank--Riverview, I'm sorry--Riverview Hospital, and sometimes you can't get out of there.

Ms. ADAMS: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: I will admit this, that it is tough to get out of the town in terms of traffic.

Mayor MENNA: Because we want to keep you in.

ADUBATO: Is that--is traffic an issue?

Ms. ADAMS: Yes, sometimes.

ADUBATO: It's not my imagination. Because there--because you have so many people wanting to be there.

Ms. ADAMS: Parking is always an issue as...

ADUBATO: Parking is an issue.

Ms. ADAMS: ...as it is with every downtown, but especially when there's a lot of people trying to get to the same place.

ADUBATO: Nancy, what's the mass transit situation?

Ms. ADAMS: We have a New Jersey Transit Commuter Station on the--on Monmouth Street, on the west side of Monmouth Street. We have the buses that come through from New Jersey Transit, and we have mostly cars.

ADUBATO: I was there at a huge festival over the summer with some of our friends from Comcast a while back, I remember. Is there a jazz concert festival?

Ms. ADAMS: The Jazz & Blues.

Mayor MENNA: We have the Jazz & Blues Festival

ADUBATO: It's wild.

Mayor MENNA: Mm-hmm. Not only that, a lot of people don't remember or they should remember that we have the third largest fireworks display in the country.

ADUBATO: I've heard about this.

Mayor MENNA: After New York, Washington, we have our KaBoom! on July 3rd and we bring in 200,000 people into town on that day.

Ms. ADAMS: Pretty impressive.

ADUBATO: Back up. Mayor, you bring 200,000 people into Red Bank?

Mayor MENNA: Yes.

ADUBATO: For fireworks?

Mayor MENNA: July 3rd. Without a problem.

ADUBATO: Why are there--why is crime--and I've looked at the numbers--why is crime virtually nonexistent in Red Bank?

Ms. ADAMS: I think, like a lot of places, if you have a lot of people--and we do have a lot of people there, especially at night.

ADUBATO: Yeah.

Ms. ADAMS: And they're, you know, when there's people, there's more safety, contrary to what, you know--I do feel a lot safer in the middle of midtown Manhattan than...

ADUBATO: But you do have clubs. But you have clubs.

Ms. ADAMS Right.

ADUBATO: And you have bars, so why don't you have more problems? Help me on this, guys, seriously.

Mayor MENNA: No...

Ms. ADAMS: This is a police question, I'll give him that one.

Mayor MENNA: I think we have good public safety...

ADUBATO: Our camera guy, Greg, who parties in a lot of different cities across the state is laughing because he's actually had some--no, have you had? OK. Look, now you're not talking, go ahead.

Ms. ADAMS: He was the one. He was the one.

ADUBATO: He was the one. Go ahead.

Mayor MENNA: We have an incredible police department, and I tend to think that a lot of them are very diplomatic in the way they handle situations.

ADUBATO: Because stuff happens.

Mayor MENNA: I'm very proud--stuff happens everywhere.

Ms. ADAMS: Happens everywhere.

ADUBATO: You can't have all those people at night and stuff not happen.

Mayor MENNA: Things happen. However, I think we've got it under control.

Ms. ADAMS: Plus we have a lot of places for them to go. They're not all in the same place. There's a lot of clubs, there's 65 restaurants, there's...

ADUBATO: Sixty-five restaurants, how many clubs?

Ms. ADAMS: Probably about 15 of those, clubs, restaurants...

ADUBATO: Bars?

Ms. ADAMS: ...and bars.

ADUBATO: And you've got two major theaters.

Ms. ADAMS: And of course the Oyster Point and the Molly Pitcher Hotel. The Oyster Point, another one...

ADUBATO: Molly Pitcher, that's where we were for the Joan Hamburg, right?

Mayor MENNA: Joan Hamburg, yeah.

ADUBATO: I've got about a minute and a half left. The lessons of Red Bank that others--listen, every community's different. You have the Navesink River, which not everyone has.

Ms. ADAMS: Yeah.

ADUBATO: You have other assets other folks don't have. But the lessons of Red Bank that others can take. Go.

Mr. BYRNES: I think going back to what I said before, if you can--if you have a larger town, and I set on a township committee in Middletown, you--I think you need to break it up a little bit more and focus on smaller communities within your town, if you do live in a large town or city, so that you can bring to bear some of the resources that we're talking about here today.

ADUBATO: Lessons, go.

Mr. YOUNG: I just think Red Bank's done a good job of understanding who it is and what it's done to make people happy there for decades, and it just keeps doing it.

ADUBATO: Mayor?

Mayor MENNA: Remain faithful to your mission, embrace change and diversity, that becomes your strength.

Mr. YOUNG: Right.

ADUBATO: What have you got?

Ms. ADAMS: And support local businesses. The residents in the area,

residents in the area go to your downtowns because they're really the economic hub. When you're talking about the Hispanic community...

ADUBATO: Hm.

Ms. ADAMS: ...there's a lot of jobs for them in Red Bank, which is one of the reasons that they're there.

ADUBATO: You do--I love that in our town of Montclair, there's always like shop downtown.

Ms. ADAMS: Buy local.

ADUBATO: Buy local. There's something to that.

Ms. ADAMS: There's a lot to that.

ADUBATO: Yeah.

Ms. ADAMS: There's hometown pride. There's--it's good for the environment, you're not traveling all over the place. But it--but entertainmentwise, for the rest of the people...

ADUBATO: Red Bank's the place to go. We'll talk off the air.

Announcer: If you would like more information on this program or if you'd like to express an opinion, email us at info@caucusnj.org and visit us online at caucusnj.org.

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