

HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

August 2025

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Member Message

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

Can anyone tell me where July went?! While you've all been busy welcoming visitors, Kaylee and I have been hard at work steering the future of OCHMRA. This year marks the Association's 54th anniversary, and with that milestone, we're fine-tuning the next chapter.

As mentioned last month, we're sharpening our focus on advocacy, networking, and education. You spoke, and we listened—no more formal plated dinners! Instead, our **Nibble & Network** events will offer a more relaxed and engaging way to connect. And we're in the final planning stages for our **Hospitality Huddles & OC Connect!**

We're also amid an exciting rebrand. Soon you will say hello to the **OCMD Hospitality Association**, complete with a fresh new logo and website. But don't worry—nothing's changing when it comes to our team. You'll still have Kaylee and me as your go-to resources for all things hospitality.

And if you haven't yet checked out our **Miles of Smiles** Spotlight on Facebook, you're missing out! We've been featuring some incredible frontline folks who go above and beyond every day. Enjoy August! 😊



Susan Jones
Executive Director



Kaylee Payne
Business Development & Marketing Associate

Dates For Your Calendar

Marlin Fest

August 4th to 8th - 11am to 9pm
On the beach at the Inlet

9th Annual MTC Summer Soiree

August 13th - 5pm to 7pm
Holiday Inn Ocean City - 66th St.
[Register here](#)

MD Restaurant Week

September 12th to 21st
Statewide

Harbor Day at The Docks

October 11th - 10am to 3pm
West OC Commercial Harbor

Nibble & Network Events

November 13th - BLU Crabhouse
December 18th - TBD
January 15th - Aloft Hotel
February 19th - Vista Rooftop
April 9th - Seacrets



FEATURED PARTNERS



Your singles source for exterior building maintenance. Our comprehensive commercial service offerings include window cleaning, facade restoration, waterproofing services, safety systems, and more.



Leading high-performance commercial coatings contractor specializing in seamless resinous (epoxy, polyaspartic, MMA, urethane) polished/stained concrete, and commercial painting service - serving the mid-Atlantic.



Partner Directory

Hospitality Highlights

Whats new in the industry?

WARM WELCOMES & CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to the **Holiday Inn & Suites** on 17th St. for winning the 2024 IHG® Torchbearer Award, it is the highest honor from IHG Hotels & Resorts! **Courtney Blackford, Residence Inn by Marriott**, has been voted Best Event Planner in Worcester County, while **Becker Morgan Group** earned the title of Best Architecture Firm 2025 in Wicomico County—both honors awarded by readers of Coastal Style Magazine. Congrats to **Nancy Schwendeman, Maryland's Coast Worcester County**, on earning her Certified Workforce Development Professional (CWDP). Residence Inn by Marriott also welcomed a new sales coordinator to the team, **Madison Lawrence. Liz Whaley**, currently with the **Princess Royale**, is stepping into the role of Director of Sales at the **Princess Bayside** as **Danielle Rickett** moves on to begin a new career at Ocean City Elementary. Best wishes to Danielle on this exciting next chapter!

The hospitality industry is always evolving, and we love sharing the latest updates! **Belair Road Supply** has been acquired by **Fortiline Waterworks and Masonry**. And the **Eden Roc** has a new owner—a big welcome to **Burga Kucuk**!

The **Hyatt Place Ocean City Oceanfront** is offering a self-guided scavenger hunt with fun clues and a treasure chest full of treats - a great way to give parents and kids something fun to do during their stay. **It's the little things that make a big impact!** A hearty cheers to **Dick Carey** on 50 years of **Carey Distributors**!

SAD GOODBYES

Our sincerest condolences to **Phil Cropper, Worcester Technical High School**, on the loss of his mom **Janice Cropper**. We also want to give our condolences to **Tara Nunan, Ashore Resort & Beach Club**, on the passing of **David Nunan**, father of their son, Daniel.

52nd Annual Spring Trade Expo - Booth Sales Open

Secure your space today—last year's Expo sold out quickly!

Our mission is to bring hospitality industry buyers and sellers together by providing an affordable opportunity to showcase your business.

This year's Expo will be the largest yet, featuring over 500 exhibit booths, reaffirming our status as the Mid-Atlantic's premier hospitality trade show.

NEW for 2025: The show floor will expand across two levels, Hall ABC on the 1st floor and the Bayfront Ballroom on the 2nd.

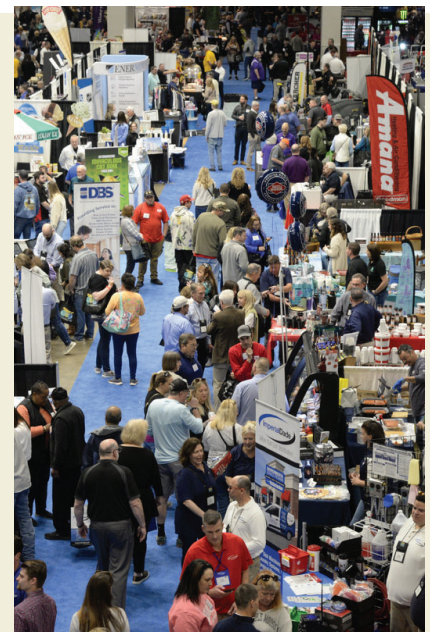
- *Hotel & Restaurant members:* please encourage your vendors to exhibit.
- *Allied members:* we'd love to discuss how you can be a part of this fantastic event!

Exhibit contracts are available [here](#).

Welcome New Members

ACTIVE
Treehouse Bar
[Facebook Page](#)

ALLIED
**First Financial Federal
Credit Union**
[firstfinancial.org](#)





Partners In Focus



Nibble & Network Sponsorship Opportunities

We're gearing up for our upcoming Nibble & Network events, and we're looking for Allied Member sponsors to help make them even better!

If you'd like to sponsor one of our networking events, email us at kaylee@ocvisitor.com or call us at (410) 289-6733.

For \$150, event sponsors receive:

- Your logo featured on the emailed event invitation, in the program, welcome sign, & table tents.
- The opportunity to leave promotional items and/or set up a display table at registration

**Only 4 non-competing sponsors per event.*

Save the Dates:

- November 13 - BLU Crabhouse
- December 18 - TBD
- January 15 - Aloft Hotel
- February 19 - Vista Rooftop
- April 9 - Seacrets

PARTY OF THE YEAR

The **Art League of Ocean City** is selling raffle tickets where the winner receives \$5,000 towards travel or cash. The raffle ticket proceeds help keep the doors of the Art League open/free to all & support outreach programs.

They are \$100 each or six for \$500, and only 350 tickets will be sold. The winner will be announced at their annual **"pARTy of the Year"** on **Oct. 9, 2025** - you do not need to be present to win.

Raffle tickets available at OCart.org, by phone (410-524-9433), or at the Ocean City Center for the Arts front desk.



MTC Summer Soiree

The Maryland Tourism Coalition is hosting its 9th Annual Summer Soiree at the Holiday Inn 67th St. Pool Bar on **August 13th from 5-7pm!**

It will be an evening of networking with industry peers and elected officials. The event is **FREE** to attend, but **registration is required and closes on August 1st.**

[Register Here](#)

Business Briefs

TAM Classes

The Worcester County Health Department has organized TAM trainings for the upcoming months.

The cost is \$55 per person, with discounts available for groups of ten or more.

All Scheduled Classes are at the Berlin Library at 1pm:

- August 19th
- September 6th
- November 18th
- December 16th

If you have any questions or would like to **register**, please contact **Lynn Suarez at (410) 632-1100 ext.1109 or lynn.suarezapecheche@maryland.gov**.

View the flyer on page 7 for more information.



RESOURCES

Top Ways to Maximize Your Partnership

8 simple ways to stay engaged and make the most of your partnership—so you never miss a valuable opportunity!

OCHMRA Member Portal Guide

Update your listing on OCVisitor.com, pay dues, update contacts, & register for events.

Use this [step-by-step guide](#) to get started!

Miles of Smiles Service Promise

Service Promise Flyers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Download and hang in your break room or by the time clock!

June OC Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Catch up on the latest OC Tourism Department News

Federal One Big Beautiful Bill Signed into Law

Brought to you by RAM

The **One Big Beautiful Bill** that was recently signed into law includes No Tax on Tips and No Tax on Overtime, which will provide additional tax deductions for tipped servers and bartenders, and hourly employees who earn overtime premium pay. Additional information for employers and employees will be provided after the Department of the Treasury and IRS release related regulations and guidance (*expected in early October*).

Tax provisions in the bill critical to restaurant operators include:

- Full expensing for capital equipment purchases
- 20% qualified business income (QBI) deduction
- Business interest expense deduction
- Permanent family and medical leave tax credits
- Estate tax relief
- No Taxes on Tips and No Taxes on Overtime for servers/bartenders earning tips and overtime premium pay for hourly earners.

Jackson Lewis attorneys dive into details of the new law, sharing key information about the bill's impact on taxes, immigration, benefits, and more. See this article: [One Big Beautiful Round-Up: What Employers Need to Know About the Federal OBBBA](#).

Community Connections

Lower Shore Workforce Alliance Career Carnival Invite!

You're invited to be a vendor at the upcoming Career Carnival — a high-energy, hands-on career exploration event for local students and community members!

Event Highlights:

- Location: Perdue Henson Junior Achievement Center
 - 301 Tilghman Road, Suite 101, Salisbury, MD
- Date: Friday, September 26, 2025
- Vendor Set-Up: 8:00 AM
- High School Seniors: 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
 - (students from Somerset, Wicomico & Worcester counties)
- Community Session: 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
- Free Lunch & Refreshments for all vendors!

Who We're Looking For:

In-demand industries like:

- Healthcare
- Skilled trades
- IT & cybersecurity
- Education / Public Service
- Maritime & Hospitality
- Manufacturing

Employers, training providers, & organizations with:

- Hands-on demos
- Games or interactive tools
- Info on careers, internships, or apprenticeships
- Fun giveaways or challenges!

Why Join Us?

- Connect with your future workforce
- Inspire students and job seekers through real experiences
- Showcase what it's like to work in your industry
- Build relationships and community visibility
- Have fun while doing good!

We will have a table at the JA OCHMRA Storefront representing hospitality – join us!

[Click here](#) to sign up or learn more.



Dine, Stay & Play Program

Since 2016, this program has raised over \$345,000 for our local community—thanks to the amazing support of participants, partners, and patrons!

From Memorial Day to Labor Day, you can make a difference by visiting participating restaurants, hotels, and entertainment venues in Ocean City and Worcester County. Summer comes once a year, but your impact can last a lifetime.

100% of Dine, Stay & Play United proceeds stay local, supporting over 55 programs through United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore. These efforts improve education, health, and financial stability for more than 150,000 Lower Shore neighbors each year.

[Click here](#) to view participating businesses —and be sure to support them before Labor Day!

Questions, contact amanda@uwles.org or ryan@uwles.org

Save Food From Going To Waste

Too Good To Go is a social impact company on a mission to inspire and empower everyone to fight food waste together.

Their app is the world's largest marketplace for surplus food, helping users rescue delicious, unsold items from going to waste. It connects people with local stores, cafés, and restaurants offering great food at a fraction of the price.

With the Too Good To Go app, it's easy to discover nearby businesses where you can save perfectly good food—for half the price or less.

[Click here](#) to learn more



1st Annual Ocean City Seafood Fest

The Inaugural Ocean City Seafood Festival will feature 20+ local restaurants and food trucks serving signature seafood dishes like crab cakes, lobster rolls, grilled oysters, fish tacos—and of course, Maryland steamed crabs! Non-seafood options will also be available.

Enjoy 40+ wines, craft cocktails, and brews, plus live music, chef demos, wine pairings, mixology sessions, unique shopping, a VIP tent, and a family zone.

The HMRA has a special discount code to get \$8 off any ticket through 8/15, which is the highest discount available!

[Click here](#) to get your tickets and use code HMRA to get your discount!

Support the Stop Offshore Wind Campaign – Volunteers Needed

The Stop Offshore Wind alliance has been actively working over the past few months to raise awareness and build support—and now they're calling on dedicated individuals like you to help keep the momentum going. Two key opportunities are coming up where your support can make a real difference.

MACo Conference – August 13 & 14

OC Seafood Fest Tickets - pg. 6

- We're seeking volunteers to join us outside the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City (4001 Coastal Hwy, Ocean City, MD 21842). Volunteers will hold 18x24 yard signs displaying key messages. Please note that all participants must be at least 18 years old, remain peaceful, and stay outside the venue, as access is limited to registered conference attendees. Water will be provided for all volunteers.
 - **To sign up, visit:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0549A4AE2BA0F5C34-57590477-maco#/>
 - **Access Code:** 2025

White Marlin Open – August 2–8

- Volunteers are also needed during the White Marlin Open to help sell t-shirts to event guests and distribute large flags to anglers (small flags will already be included in their welcome buckets). Extra flags will also be available for sale. This is a great opportunity to continue spreading awareness at a time when public support is growing stronger.
 - **To sign up, visit:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0549A4AE2BA0F5C34-57478092-white#/>
 - **Access Code:** 2025

Once all volunteer slots are filled, the campaign team will follow up directly with more information. Thank you for your continued support.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Biranna Dix, MD's Coast Worcester County, at bdix@MarylandsCoast.org—and stay informed by visiting stopoffshorewind.com.

TAM (TECHNIQUES OF ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT) CLASSES

*Call us to schedule a TAM class
at your establishment or register
for one of the classes below!*



To register, contact Lynn Suarez at
410-632-1100 ext.1109 or lynn.suarezapecheche@maryland.gov

UPCOMING CLASSES

#1

August 19, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Berlin Library (13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811)

#2

September 16, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Berlin Library (13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811)

#3

November 18, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Berlin Library (13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811)

#4

December 16, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Berlin Library (13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811)

\$55/person

(Discounts available for groups of ten or more)





SUMMER WORK TRAVEL

**EXCHANGE
DAY 2025**

for exchange visitors

BONFIRE!

GAMES!

S'MORES!

MONDAY, AUGUST 4

6PM @ 30TH STREET BEACH

Small donations to benefit Diakonia are appreciated!!