

HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

July 2025



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Dates For Your Calendar

OCHMRA Dues Deadline

July 15th
Pay via Check or Online

Coastal Hospice 45th Celebration

July 17th - 6pm to 10pm
Salisbury, MD

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](#)

MEMBER MESSAGE

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

Hello Summer! We asked for heat and sunshine—and we got it! Now, we're asking for your help in sharing our **Miles of Smiles Service Promise** with your team. Each of us plays a key role in setting the tone. When we lead by example and extend a warm welcome to our staff, they'll pass that same spirit on to our visitors. If everyone across the city embraces this mindset, Miles of Smiles becomes more than a promise—it becomes what **sets us apart and keeps people coming back.**

Our team of two is working hard behind the scenes to keep delivering a membership experience that helps you thrive. We're making a few tweaks to stay fresh and relevant in the OC tourism space—and we're excited about where things are headed!

Check out our new **Allied Partner Perks**—we'd love to hear what you think. (You know we're always listening—that's how we've kept things solid over the years!) There's lots to look forward to in the near future as we **focus on what matters most for us: Advocacy, Education, and Networking.** Membership dues were recently mailed out, and we truly hope you'll stick with us and continue to be part of our nonprofit Association. Have a happy 4th! 😊



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 **Spiro Buas** of **OC Rooms** on the recent purchase of **The Spinnaker**! **Katie Pastusak** is making waves as the newest mermaid for **Boardwalk Hotel Group** and **Jolly Roger Amusement Park**. A warm welcome back to **Karen and Pino Tomasello** on returning to **Sello's Italian Oven & Bar**. **Jeff Ackeroyd** has been named the new President of **Sysco**—congratulations! The **Restaurant Association of Maryland** has a new Marketing & Communications Manager, **Rebecca Suraci**. Kudos to **Becker Morgan Group** for being named Best Architecture Firm in Metropolitan Magazine's 2025 Best of the Eastern Shore Awards—plus a special shoutout to **Jack Mumford III**, recognized as Best Architect!

Parking Management Company has teamed up with the **Hilton Garden Inn** to provide a convenient self-park service for hotel guests! We love seeing our members collaborate and support one another!

Our First Smile Spotlight nomination - Meet **Carol Anne** from the **Residence Inn by Marriott Ocean City**!

At the first Welcome Event for Exchange Visitors, we brought The Dough Roller Restaurants' pizza—but before we could even begin serving, Carol Anne jumped right in with a warm, welcoming smile and took the lead in serving guests without hesitation.

Carol Anne was also mentoring Maria, a newly arrived Exchange Visitor from Colombia, showing her the ropes with kindness and care. She truly embodies what the **Miles of Smiles Service Promise** is all about!

Had a 5-star experience? Let us know so we can keep shining a light on the amazing hospitality workers in our community!

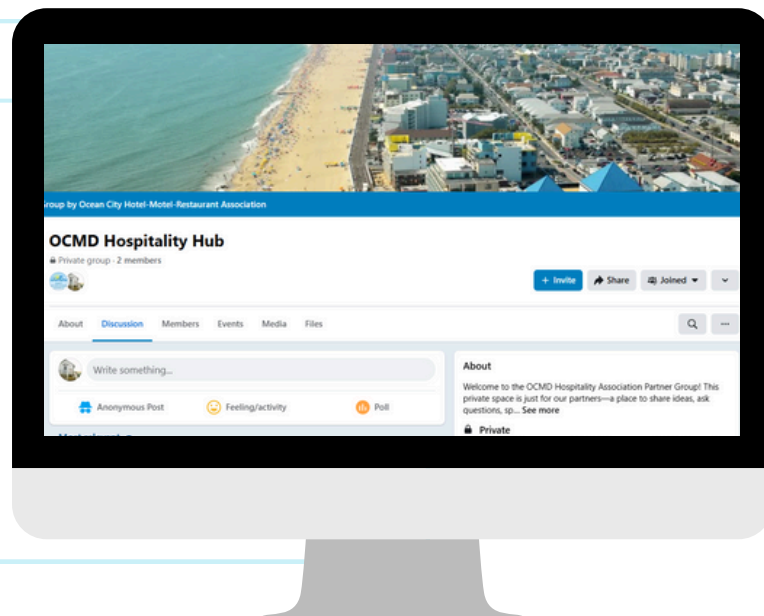


NEW PARTNER PERK - OCMD Hospitality Hub

We're excited to roll out a new perk just for our partners — the **OCMD Hospitality Hub**, a private Facebook group made exclusively for you!

This partner-only space is your go-to spot to share ideas, ask questions, spotlight your business, and connect with other local hospitality pros—whether you're looking for inspiration, support, or just want to stay in the loop, the Hospitality Hub is here for you.

We'd love for you to join in and be part of the conversation — [click here to get started!](#)



NEW Partner Perk Rollout

IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL SEASON

We've recently sent out partnership renewal notices, and we just want to say a big thank you to everyone who's already renewed—we truly appreciate your continued support! Your partnership allows us to keep doing what we do best: **advocating, educating, connecting,** and **supporting** our local hospitality community.

We're also excited to share our **BRAND NEW Partner Perks**—created with **YOU** in mind! These perks are all about helping you get more value from your partnership and boosting your visibility in the hospitality community.

If you haven't renewed yet, now's the time—we'd love to have you with us for another great year!

Check out the new perks below!

- **Active & Associate Perks**
- **Allied Perks**

NEW A LA CARTE PERKS

Email Banner Ad - \$100 per ad

- Want extra exposure? We'll feature your ad in one of our regular communication email blasts for added visibility.

**Ad to be provided by partner or OCHMRA can design for FREE.*

Partner Directory Featured Ad - \$150 per year

- Opportunity to showcase your business with an eighth-page ad in our downloadable PDF Partner Directory—excellent way to put a spotlight on your business.

Partner Insight Article - \$125 per article

- Our website is a central hub for resources & insights tailored to the hospitality industry. As a valued partner, you're invited to contribute a featured article that highlights your expertise and shares meaningful knowledge. Your content will be showcased in the Members 'Newsroom' page on our website, in the *Hospitality Hotline* newsletter, and in our social posts, offering increased exposure, enhanced credibility, & the opportunity to connect with potential Hospitality businesses.

**Should not be a sales pitch*

Hospitality Huddle Sponsor - \$150

- Be 1 of 4 featured sponsors at one of our Hospitality Huddles—private roundtable discussions where hotel and restaurant owners and general managers discuss industry trends and topics. Sponsors receive recognition on the email invitation and printed agenda, a display table at the event, and the opportunity to place your information at each Attendee's seat.

**These meetings are closed to Allied Members—unless you're a sponsor. Only 4 non-competing sponsors per meeting.*





Miles of Smiles Kicks Off with a Big Impact – and a Bright Spotlight!

On June 3rd, we proudly launched the Miles of Smiles Hospitality Training — an educational workshop designed to elevate the guest experience and foster a culture of kindness throughout our hospitality industry.

Led by nationally recognized speaker John Kennedy, the training provided both managers and front-line staff with practical tools to consistently deliver exceptional service at every stage of the guest visit. The training included a deep dive into the 5 key components of the **Miles of Smiles Service Promise**—from boosting team morale and creating welcoming environments to shifting toward experience-first customer service.

But the real highlight? The Smile Spotlight.

To celebrate the everyday champions of hospitality, we introduced the **Smile Spotlight program** — a fun and meaningful way to honor those who go above and beyond to create unforgettable guest experiences. Whether it's a kind gesture, a warm welcome, or an act of exceptional service, team members who shine can now be nominated by their managers for a **weekly feature on the OCHMRA Facebook page**.

Owners and managers can **nominate team members** who embody the spirit of hospitality, and each week, one standout will be featured on the OCHMRA Facebook page as our official Smile Spotlight. All nominees will also be entered for a chance to win a \$500 cash prize at the end of the summer!

Check out these helpful materials from the training:

- Hospitality Training [PowerPoint](#)
- Service Promise Flyer - [English](#) and/or [Spanish](#) version
- Video [Presentation](#)

Join us in spreading **Miles of Smiles** to everyone who works for and with you and everyone who visits!



Ocean City's EPIC Discount Deck

Inside Ocean City has 1,000 new Epic Discount Decks available for promotion, offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Hoteliers in nearby Chincoteague have successfully utilized these decks as a simple welcome gift for guests, expressing gratitude for their stay. Others have featured them on their booking pages with promotions such as "Book 2-3 nights & receive a complimentary Epic Discount Deck!" All decks will be delivered by July 4th!

To reserve your deck, please email Sandy at sandy@grandlivingmag.com.



Sadie Concierge

Your AI Concierge that books more rooms, **24/7**

Sadie Concierge, answers calls, handles bookings, and boosts revenue—so you never miss a guest or a chance to convert.



Never Miss a Call

Every guest call answered - day or night in any language

Increase Revenue

Kill OTAs by driving more direct bookings and never missing a call

Seamless PMS or Channel Manager Integration

Our connections include : Roommaster, Siteminder, Travelclick, Mews, and many others

Reduce Front-Desk Load

Free up staff from repetitive calls and FAQs

Human-like Conversations

Natural voice interactions that feel like real hospitality

Actionable Insights

Review call data to improve service and drive more bookings

How it Works

Tailored Setup

Custom-fit to your hotel's rooms, policies and brand



24/7 Setup

Always pickup, day or night, in any language



Smart Insights

Track calls, spot trends, and optimize service

Testimonial

" When we began with Sadie Concierge we were a little hesitant if our guests would still book with us. Since Sadie began taking reservations we have seen an increase in direct bookings and our guests love her. We get compliments about the nice lady that booked their room for them. She is helpful and never an issue directing calls to our front desk when necessary. The front desk does not have to worry now about missing phone calls because they know Sadie has got it covered. It has been a complete game changer for us and our guests whether they are on the phone or right in front of us. "

Your Guests Deserve Better Than Voicemail

Hotels using voiceAI like Sadie Concierge have seen increased booking conversions by turning missed calls into revenue!

(606) 249-9245

Try Me! I never miss a call!

Business Briefs



Summer Soiree



9th Annual Summer Soiree

Member Appreciation & Elected Officials Reception
Hosted by Maryland Tourism Coalition

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!

May OC Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Catch up on the latest OC Tourism Department News

2026 Destination Maryland Magazine - Ad Reservations Reminder

Production for the 2026 Destination Maryland Magazine is underway! This key visitor guide reaches hundreds of thousands of travelers annually, with 200,000 printed copies and a year-round online version at [VisitMaryland.org](https://www.visitmaryland.org).

Advertising: Reserve your paid ad space by August 20th. Details and rates are in the [2026 Media Kit](#). Contact Carly Stedman Norosky at Miles Partnership: 202-681-8169.

Business Listings: Basic listings are free! Submit by July 25th via this [Google Form](#).

Questions? Email brandon.chan@maryland.gov or Florence Brant at the Maryland Office of Tourism.

Don't miss this chance to showcase your business and support Maryland tourism!



**2026 DESTINATION MARYLAND:
THE OFFICIAL MARYLAND TRAVEL
MAGAZINE MEDIA KIT**



Summer's Here - But So Is the Fight to Stop Offshore Wind

As we welcome the summer season, we also face new developments in the ongoing battle to protect our waters, wildlife, and coastal communities.

US Wind has just signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, establishing a so-called "resiliency fund" to compensate watermen.

Compensate them for what, exactly?

According to the developers, there will be no disruption—the 900-foot turbines will supposedly go unnoticed. If that's true, why the hush-hush deal? Why offer payouts unless damage is expected?

This backdoor agreement raises serious concerns—and our leaders are taking notice.

- [Read Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan's response](#)
- [Read our official statement from Stop Offshore Wind](#)
- [See the full Memorandum between US Wind and the State of Maryland](#)
- [Read The Watermen's Association of Worcester County Response](#)

The fight is far from over. While you enjoy the beauty of our coastline this summer, stay informed—and stay active. Together, we can Stop Offshore Wind. Here's how you can help:

- **Donate:** Help us spread the word and keep our effort going against the deep pockets of our foreign corporate opponents.
- **Raise Public Awareness:** Inform and mobilize our communities about the detrimental impacts of offshore wind farms.
- **Engage in Legal Advocacy:** Support legal actions to preserve our coastlines' integrity.
- **Influence Policy:** Advocate for legislative measures that prioritize our environment's and local economies' well-being.

Stand with us in protecting our shores, economy, and way of life - [click here to donate](#)



Service Animal or Pet? *Know the Difference*

It's important for staff to know the difference between service animals and pets — and what questions you're legally allowed to ask.

Need a quick cheat sheet? Postcards are available to keep at the front desk or in staff areas to help everyone stay informed.

Reach out to Sandy Phillips at sandy@grandlivingmag.com to request a stack!

Industry Insights

A Glimpse Into the Future of Hotel Technology

Here are several pivotal findings that are reshaping the landscape of modern hotel operations:

- 70% of Guests **Find Chatbots Helpful** for Simple Inquiries - Chatbots are becoming essential for automating routine tasks like Wi-Fi requests and room service orders, allowing hotel staff to focus on more complex guest needs.
- Millennials Are 57% More Likely to Be **Influenced by Hotel Technology** - Tech-savvy millennials expect features like mobile check-ins, digital room keys, and personalized in-app experiences, making them a crucial demographic for hotels to engage.
- 48% of Guests **Consider Online Reviews** the Main Factor in Choosing a Hotel - Reputation management is more critical than ever, with online feedback heavily influencing booking decisions.
- Almost Half of Guests Prefer to **Check Out Using Their Smartphone** - Mobile checkout solutions are becoming a key convenience feature, reducing wait times and enhancing guest satisfaction.
- **43% of Luxury Guests Expect Not to Wait in Lines** - Contactless check-in solutions are essential for meeting the expectations of high-end travelers.

Read the full report [here!](#)



The Line Between Digital & Physical Travel Experiences Is Blurring

Technology is transforming how travelers plan, book, and experience trips. Currently, **65% of companies are trialing generative AI to personalize experiences, optimize operations, and create content.** As AI adoption grows, the divide between digital interactions and real-world travel will continue to shrink.

However, while travelers appreciate efficiency, they still crave personal connections. According to Hotel Tech Report, **70% of guests prefer chatbots for simple questions but want human interaction for more complex needs.** Travel brands must strike the right balance—using AI for speed and automation while maintaining authentic, high-touch customer service.

How to Repurpose Space to Generate Revenue

While room bookings remain a primary revenue source, but with rising costs and changing guest expectations, smart hoteliers are finding new ways to make the most of every inch of their property.

That means **turning unused or awkward spaces into something useful—like cozy coffee spots, pop-up bars, or flexible meeting areas.** Not only can these changes bring in extra income, but they also create more inviting, social, and memorable experiences for guests. It's all about getting creative, staying relevant, and making those underused spaces work harder.

Check out the [full article](#) to see how other hotels are making it work!



During the design of Motto by Hilton in Bentonville, Ark., the owners constructed a 14-by-14 Listening Room in the lobby, a space that was initially thought would be a valet storage area.

Community Connections

OC Rock & Ride: The East Coast's Premier Motorcycle Rally Rolls into New Era

A bold new era begins this fall in Ocean City, Maryland, with **OC Rock & Ride** — the official next chapter of the iconic OC BikeFest, taking place September 10–14, 2025.

This new rally will honor time-honored traditions—thousands of riders cruising Route 50 and Coastal Highway, iconic concerts, and legendary vendor villages—while introducing fresh experiences designed to elevate the rally for riders of all generations.

Led by Ocean City locals and longtime rally sponsors Matthew and Tyler Odachowski, OC Rock & Ride embraces the spirit of the past while steering the event into a vibrant future.

Join us and help save BikeFest — **tickets just went on sale!** For sponsorship info, email info@ocrideandrock.com.



Ocean City Museum Society's Beach Bash Fundraiser

The Ocean City Museum Society is hosting an exciting new fundraiser, the Next Wave Beach Bash, at the Performing Arts Center on July 31st at 7pm. The evening's headliner is Shaun Tomson — World Champion Surfer, best-selling author, motivational speaker, entrepreneur, and environmentalist.

For more info, visit ocmuseum.org for updates



Coastal Hospice 45th Anniversary Celebration

Celebrate with us on **July 17, 2025**, in honor of our 45th anniversary.

Our community is invited to gather for an elegant evening at the Fountains Wedding & Conference Center, to commemorate more than 4 decades of dedicated service on Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore.

This year's theme, **"A Legacy of Care, Built on 45 Years of Experience,"** reflects the profound impact Coastal Hospice has made since its founding, and the enduring commitment to compassionate end-of-life care across Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available, offering individuals and businesses a chance to show their support while enjoying a night to remember.

Keurigs For Sale

The **Residence Inn by Marriott** has about 130 Keurig machines available for sale — some are even fairly new! They're priced at \$50–\$75 each and would be a great fit for hotel rooms, offices, or break rooms.

Interested? Reach out to Keith Whisenant at kwhisenant@palmergosnell.com.