

HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

April 2025



Susan Jones
Executive Director



Kaylee Payne
Business Development &
Marketing Associate

What's in this issue?

SWT Conference & Info. - pg. 3

AED Access in Ocean City - pg. 4

Short-Term Rental Facts - pg. 4

FAMLI Update - pg. 4

Trade Expo US Travel Recap - pg. 5

Business Resource Links - pg. 5

Stop Offshore Wind Info. - pg. 5

Dates For Your Calendar

Summer Work Travel Conference

Holiday Inn
April 15 - 8am to 1pm

Ocean City Restaurant Week

April 27 - May 11

Nat'l Travel & Tourism Week

MTC 150th Anniv. Tour

OC Life-Saving Station Museum
May 8 - 2pm to 4pm

OCHMRA Networking Event

5:30pm to 8pm

April 10

OCHMRA Installation of Officers & United
Way Awards at **Secrets**

[Click here](#) to RSVP!

Member Message

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

Before diving into the season, I want to take a moment to thank everyone for their support during our 51st Annual Trade Expo! Whether you exhibited, attended, or volunteered, it truly takes a village to make it a success—**thank you!** A special shoutout to KRR Photography and Shore Craft Media for doing an incredible job capturing the event.

Spring brings **Ocean City Restaurant Week** so make sure you mark your calendars to dine out and support our local economy! Restaurant Members --- now is the time to sign up --- this is a FREE benefit!

Join us on **April 10th** at Secrets for the **Installation of Officers and Directors**, alongside the United Way of Lower Eastern Shore DINE STAY PLAY Awards and scholarship presentations. This is a nibble and network event - and it is sure to tantalize your taste buds! 😊



Hospitality Highlights

Whats new in the industry?

WARM WELCOMES & CELEBRATIONS

Welcome **Greg Rhoad** as **Harrison Group's** newest Corporate Director of Food & Beverage. Congratulations to **Matt James, James Hospitality**, on the arrival of his little baby girl Lennon! Congrats to **Jeb Vetock** as he joins the **US Foods** Management team.

A big congratulations to **The Holiday Inn Suites** on winning the prestigious 2024 Torchbearer Award, one that only nine full-service Holiday Inns have earned! **Becker Morgan Group** is proud to announce its recognition in Building Design+Construction's 2024 Giants 400 Report. These annual rankings highlight the nation's top architecture/engineering firms, with a record-breaking 602 firms participating this year. Becker Morgan Group ranked #75 overall and was recognized in multiple categories, underscoring the firm's expertise and dedication across various markets.

The **OCHMRA** partnered with **Jason E. Brooks**, keynote speaker at the Spring Trade Expo, to support the **NC Hospitality Workers Relief Fund**, assisting hospitality workers affected by Hurricane Helene. By promoting Jason's book, Every Leader Needs Followers, with 50% of proceeds benefiting the fund, we raised \$250 in donations.

SAD GOODBYES

Our sincerest condolences to **Mark Leiner, Bonfire Restaurant**, on the loss of his wife, **Donna**. Condolences to our **Kaylee Payne** on the loss of her grandfather.



National Travel & Tourism Week Historic Walking Tour

Join **MTC, OC Tourism & HMRA** to celebrate Ocean City's rich history in tourism and hospitality, beginning with the "Petticoat Regime." On **May 8th**, from 2 - 4 pm, starting at the OC Life-Saving Station Museum, this historic walking tour will honor the individuals whose innovation and vision built Ocean City into the thriving resort it is today. By focusing on 150 years of tourism, the event will shine a light on the pioneering spirit, determination, and resilience of those who shaped the town's identity. Finish with Happy Hour 4-6pm.

[Click here for details.](#)



FEATURED PARTNERS:



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

ACTIVE

Sophia's Italian Restaurant
sophiasitalianrestaurantoceancity.com

ALLIED

Delmarva Linen Service
yourlinenservice.com



UPDATED Ocean City Video Tour

Maryland's Coast has just updated its [Video Tour of Ocean City!](#) This refreshed introduction video is a great way to help familiarize your workforce with our destination and surrounding communities.





Member Mentions

Summer Work Travel Conference & Information

The OC Chamber of Commerce Community Support Group is hosting its annual **Summer Work Travel Conference** on **April 15th** from 8:00am - 1:00pm at the Holiday Inn on 66th Street. This is your chance to hear from the U.S. Department of State, connect with area employers and U.S. Visa Sponsors, and learn best practices for a successful Work Travel program. [Click here](#) to RSVP.

There will be two **J1-SWT Welcome Events** to allow students to meet our community. Events will be held at the Residence Inn on **Wed., June 18** from 12:00–2:00pm & **June 25** from 4:00–6:00pm

Social Security Office Update:

The Social Security office in Salisbury, MD, is expected to continue using an appointment system. They will be available on a first-come, first-served basis at 9:30am, 11:00am, 1:30pm, and 2:30pm.

- Groups of up to 15 people can call 866-273-4874 ext 26141 or email Robert.Gibson@ssa.gov to schedule an appointment.
- Transport companies arriving without an appointment will likely be turned away and asked to return at a later time.

JA Volunteers Needed

Junior Achievement of the Eastern Shore is looking for bright lights in our community who are interested in making an impact for students across the Eastern Shore! They provide volunteers with training that is simple and relatable; programs that are engaging and fun; and a classroom full of eager kids ready to learn from you!

As a JA volunteer, you will inspire kids to achieve a more fulfilling career and life by contributing your professional insights and personal experiences! The OCHMRA Travel Storefront needs you!



Check out the calendar and [sign up today!](#)

MD Tourism Coalition Membership Survey



MTC is trying to get data to help better understand members, their value to members, and what businesses may want from membership in the Maryland Tourism Coalition. There is both a members section and a section for non-members. Your participation helps shape the future! [Click here](#) to fill out the survey!



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Town of Ocean City Future Visioning Workshop: 2025 Audience Response Report

If you missed this fantastic exchange of ideas, [check out the audience report](#) from Rachel Druckenmiller's Charting the Course Workshop, held earlier in March. Town officials, residents, and businesses collaborated to shape a shared vision for Ocean City's future.

Business Briefs

ResortPass Reminder: *Lifeguard Requirement for Compliance*

Many hotels use ResortPass to generate additional revenue during the off-season, allowing locals and outside guests to purchase passes for amenities like the gym and pool.

If your hotel participates in this program, please ensure a lifeguard is on duty. The Health Department has been conducting checks at local hotels, and non-compliance may result in a warning or violation.

Help Us Improve AED Access in Ocean City – Register Your AED Today!

In response to Maryland's new state mandate requiring Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in certain businesses and public spaces, we are working to ensure that all AEDs in our community are registered in the [PulsePoint AED database](#).

Why Register?

- Improves Emergency Response – Helps 911 dispatchers direct bystanders to nearby AEDs during a cardiac emergency
- Quick & Free Process – It takes just a few minutes: <http://AED.new>
- Helps AED Owners Stay Compliant – Assists in tracking pad and battery expiration dates

If your business or restaurant has recently installed an AED, we encourage you to register it today.

You can view the current AED locations in Ocean City here: [Ocean City AED Location Map](#)

For more details on how the system works, please visit: [PulsePoint AED Information](#). Please contact FF/EMT Mick Chester @ MChester@OceanCityMD.gov with any questions.

If you need a refresher on CPR/AED training, check out these quick videos from the [American Heart Association](#) and from [Zoll AED Plus](#) covering hands-only CPR and AED use.

Short-Term Rental Facts

The Ocean City Mayor and Council voted 4-3 to introduce ordinances that will **impact ONLY** single-family residential (**R-1**) and mobile home (**MH**) neighborhoods. Despite petitions, media coverage, and stories, *the ordinance affects ONLY 377 of the town's 8,926 total rental units.*

The goal is to address concerns about how rentals affect the character of residential communities. Under the new rules, in 2025 & 2026, rentals in these designated districts will require a 5-nt minimum stay. The town plans to extend the restrictions on Jan. 1, 2027, when visitors will only be able to book these homes for at least a 31-night stay. [Click here](#) to view the Town's Division of Rental Housing.

Paid Family & Medical Leave is Potentially Postponed

Maryland's launch of the paid family and medical leave system, allowing workers to take up to 12 weeks off while receiving up to \$1,000 per week is being updated.

The Department of Labor has proposed extending the FMLI program timeline:

- Payroll deductions start January 1, 2027
- Benefits begin January 1, 2028

Final legislative approval is needed, pausing regulatory timelines, including private plan applications set for May 2025.

For updates, sign up for their [email list](#) or read the [latest release](#).

Trade Expo - US Travel Association Recap

US Travel spoke at the Expo and provided the following updates:

- “Junk Fee Bill” authorizing all charges to be transparent on all lodging bookings had passed the Senate and was now in the House.
- Trump reauthorized funding for Brand USA, the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the USA. He wants to showcase America and create media moments stating the US is in a “Golden Age of Travel.”
- US Travel met with the Department of State & Secretary of Transportation, reiterating tourism's reliance on an immigrant workforce. They noted 13% of the hospitality workforce is here illegally. 250,000 hotel construction jobs were currently open.
- Trump is supporting not counting returning H2B workers in the caps, and he is well aware of the importance of the Summer Work Travel program.

Resources

[Hospitality Hiring Resources](#)

Are you in need of hiring resource that are either FREE or LOW-COST? These resources may be able to guide you or provide the support you need.

[The Trends Shaping Travel in 2025](#)

With over 4,000 completed surveys, explore the travel insights shaping people's 2025 getaway decisions.

[Maryland's Best](#)

Missed the HMRA dinner presentation? [Click here](#) to learn about Maryland's Best, including their offerings, programs, and events.

[Ocean City Parking Information](#)

The Town is upgrading its parking system by removing parking kiosks and implementing payment via ParkMobile.

[Ocean City Tourism Newsletter](#)

Town of Ocean City's Quarterly Tourism Newsletter - Spring 2025

Stop Offshore Wind Coalition

Many visitors do not even know that the wind farm projects are a threat to our coastal communities and the deep and widespread impact that they will have from the environmental concerns, misrepresentation of being green energy, commercial fishing decimation, and overall industrialization of our precious ocean, which is the primary asset our tourism industry relies on!

Here's a link to graphics and documents for websites, marquees, and digital boards to help protect Ocean City/Maryland's Coast. The campaign asks, "At What Cost?" and includes social media posts. Please share with members, merchants, and neighbors. The "Sticker" image works best for large highway signs.

[Media Toolkit](#) | [Stop Offshore Wind](#)

The donation link for SOW is now live. Please note that donations are not tax-deductible since SOW is a C4, but they remain completely anonymous for individuals and businesses. [Support The Effort! Stop Offshore Wind, Inc.](#) - all donations will go toward the opposition campaign to educate residents, visitors and businesses about the impact of these projects.

For a C3 tax-deductible donation, the Save Ocean City option through OCDC is still available. [Donate](#) | [Save Ocean City](#)





THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who volunteered – **we couldn't have done it without you!**

Volunteers - **Vicki Shrier**, JDog Junk Removal; **Chad Olenchick**, Cabanas Beach Bar & Grill; **Patricia & Dan Shaffer**, Bold Moves; **Ruth Waters & Renee Seiden**, Harrison Group; **Joslyn Harman**, OC Development Corp; **Nicole Burrell & Jennifer Krumpholz**, Sun Outdoors Frontier Town; **Annemarie Wolfsheimer**, Town of Ocean City; **Nancy Howard**, Henry Hotel Foundation; **Angelique Litherland**, Hyatt Place; **Ronni Lombardi**, Stonebridge Companies; **Patricia Smith**, Castle in the Sand; **Meg Alvarado**, Happy jacl Pancake House; **Keith Whisenant & Courtney Blackford**, Residence Inn; **Meghan Odegaard**, Boardwalk Hotel Group Sales; **Danelle Amos**; **Deb Carven**, Apollo Edison; **Fred Thompson**, Hampton Inn; **Harry & Madalaine How**, **Jennifer How** HBH3RD Consulting LLC; **Marie Hopper**, Holiday Inn Express North; **Jackie Berger**, Grand Hotel; **Suzanne Jackson & Leslie Coney**, Jolly Roger Amusement Parks; **Chuck Scott**, TD Digital; **Suzie & Craig McElroy**, **Pat Harman**, **Teri DiPerna**, **Robert Dixon**, **Helen Arthur**.

Thank you to all of the allied members who exhibited this year

51st Annual Trade Expo Pics - [click here](#)

2025 Exhibitor Info - [click here](#)



Congrats to MD World Food Championship Qualifier Winner
Harrison Groups **Captain's Table** Chef **Joshua Phillips**

RAM GALA

2025 Stars of the Industry Award Winners



2025 Heart of the Industry
Gina Day, Secrets



2025 Server of the Year
Frank Cascio, Fager's Island



2025 Bartender of the Year
Michael Gray, Secrets



**The Brice & Shirley Phillips
Lifetime Achievement Award:**
John Fager, Fager's Island



**2025 Maryland ProStart
Student & Teacher of the Year:**
Nick Zlotorzynski & Phillip
Cropper, Worcester Technical HS

Maryland Hospitality Hall of Honor 2025 Inductees



Fish Tales Bar & Grill



Buxy's Salty Dog Saloon



Sunset Grille



Brew River



Harborside Bar & Grill



Coconuts Beach Bar &
Grill / Castle in the Sand

Community Connections

2025 Lights on Bikes Campaign

Every year, the Town of OC invites thousands of J1 Visa students and seasonal workers to help supplement the summer workforce. These students and seasonal workers often purchase and ride bikes to and from work. The Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) began the Lights on Bikes Program in 2018 as a safety measure for the students and seasonal workers.

The BPAC needs your support in purchasing bike lights to continue our mission. Please donate to help equip the J1 students and seasonal workers with safety bike lights.

Please make your donation payable to The Town of Ocean City and send your gift to:

Annamarie Rohrer
c/o Town of Ocean City
214 65th St. Room B
Ocean City, MD 21842

Please contact Annamarie at arohrer@OceanCityMD.gov or (410) 289-8845 if you have any questions!

For more info, please contact
Travis Jones at 410-310-8308 or
Wil Handel at 316-737-4769

Scan the QR code for early
online registration



Registration Fee - \$20
per card, buy as many
cards as you like.

★ Cash prizes for highest
and lowest roll. Raffles ★
at the final stop.

DICE RUN



Start place- Delmar VFW
200 W. State St, Delmar
MD 21875.

Last Stop- Oasis
Bar & Grill 7539 Old
Ocean City Rd.
Whaleville, MD
21872



The MD5 Chapter of USMVMC is proud to host a Dice Run for local homeless shelter **Diakonia Inc.** All proceeds will be donated to **Diakonia Inc.** All vehicle types are welcome to participate.

DIAKONIA INC.
Help For Today & Hope for Tomorrow
<https://diakoniaoc.org>



May 17th 2025

REGISTRATION STARTS AT 8:30AM ON THE MORNING OF, LAST CARD IN AT 4:00PM

Flyer printed and provided by Minuteman Press (Salisbury)



Please join us for the
OCHMRA

April Dinner Meeting

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025

SEACRETS - 49TH ST.



MENU OVERVIEW

Raw Bar Station

Beef Carving Station

Fish Station

Grazing Table

Passed Apps

Full Menu On The Back



Cocktail Hour, Networking, & Food from 5:30 - 8:30pm • \$55pp inclusive

**Please RSVP by Friday, April 4th to (410) 289-6733 or
susanjones@ocvisitor.com**

You can book & pay online at:
<https://oceancitymdassoc.weblinkconnect.com/atlas/events-v4/register/190>

Payment is required in advance or at the door
Reservations not honored may be billed



SPONSORED BY:



Worcester County JOB FAIR



Snow Hill Volunteer Fire Company
4718 Snow Hill Road, Snow Hill, MD 21863

Attention **employers!** Calling all business owners and hiring managers - Elevate your workforce and expand your network at the upcoming Job Fair.

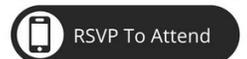
Engage with top talent, forge valuable connections, and fuel your company's growth as you tap into the vibrant pool of local professionals.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

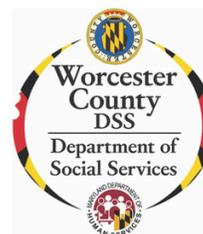
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

No charge to participate, but please register now (only 35 spaces available) by scanning the QR Code or visiting: <https://tinyurl.com/MDsCoastJobFairApril23> to reserve your table. Each business will get an 8ft table with 2 chairs. Please bring your own table covering and materials to showcase your business to job seekers.

Spanish and Haitian Creole Interpreters will be available.
~ Entèprèt Panyòl ak Kreyòl Ayisyen ap disponib.
~ Habrá intérpretes de español y criollo haitiano disponibles.



Brought to you by Worcester County Economic Development in partnership with:



QUESTIONS?

Nancy Schwendeman, Workforce Development Specialist
nschwendeman@co.worcester.md.us, (410) 632-3112 ext. 2120

27TH ANNIVERSARY



MICHAEL S. GOLDSTEIN
President & CEO



RUBY GURROLA
*Vice President of
Human Resources*



DAVID CARON
Chief Operating Officer



ALAN GASWIRTH
Chief Financial Officer



ROBIN GRAZIOSO
*Vice President of
Sales & Marketing*



BARRY GOLDBERG
*Vice President of
Food & Beverage*



ADRIAN VALENCIA
*Vice President of
Facilities & Construction*



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www.avalonhospitalitygroup.com

*Personalized Service
Delivering Creative Solutions
We Deliver More Than Expected*



**SCAN
QR CODE**

There's a WIND TAX

on the Maryland
horizon...

...and it looks like a massive windfarm off
Maryland's Coast

US Wind – a foreign owned company - wants to build a massive windfarm off Maryland's Coast...with huge wind turbines you could see by day, and the red lights atop them at night.

But they need your money to do it. So, electricity customers in Maryland will be assessed a "Wind Tax" to help pay the bill. Every Maryland ratepaying electricity consumer will pay every month when they get their electric bill.

It's not too late to stop it, and to force wind turbine companies to tell us the true cost of these projects.

But time is running out!

www.StopOffshoreWind.com

Learn more and
help stop the
wind tax!



STOP
OFFSHORE
WIND



WORCESTER COUNTY FIRST RESPONDER AWARDS & APPRECIATION DINNER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025

5:30-6:00 PM MEET & GREET | 6:00-7:00 PM DINNER
7:00 PM AWARDS PRESENTATION

AMERICAN LEGION SYNEPUXENT POST 166
2308 PHILADELPHIA AVE | OCEAN CITY, MD



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

\$1,000 Sponsorship:

- Prominent placement in program & welcome banner
- 4 tickets to the event

\$500 Sponsorship:

- Placement in program & welcome banner
- 2 tickets to the event

Questions? Contact:

- Sean O'Connor | O'Connor, Mooney & Fitzgerald Realtors | 410-218-7996
- Bob Thompson | Tier 1 Construction | 410-430-1541

**MAKE CHECKS
PAYABLE TO:**

The American Legion Post 166
P.O. Box 63
Ocean City, Md. 21842

Attn: Bob Thompson
Write in memo section:
"1st Responders Event"