

HOSPITALITY HOTLINE



Official Newsletter of the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association

5700 Coastal Hwy. #302 Ocean City, MD 21842 • (410) 289-6733 • OCVisitor.com • Inquire@ocvisitor.com



Susan Jones
Executive Director



Kaylee Payne
Business Development &
Marketing Associate

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Dates for your Calendar

- Small Business Summit**
Dec. 3 | 8:30am to 1:30pm
The Grand Hotel - *More details on page. 3*
- Coastal Delmarva Winter Mixer**
Jan. 22 | 5 to 7pm
Ocean Downs Casino

OCHMRA Networking Dinners

6pm to 9pm

December 12
Captain's Table

January 16
Carousel Resort Hotel

February 13
Princess Royale Oceanfront Resort

April 10
Seacrets

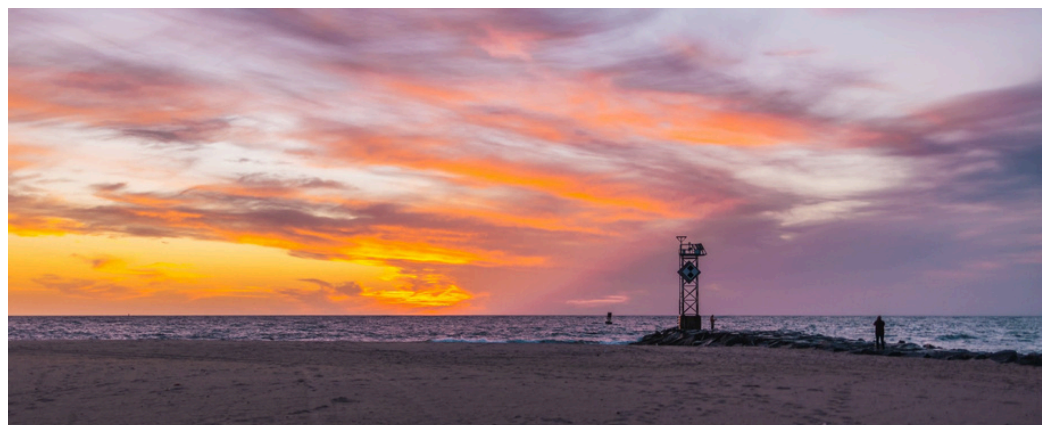
Member Message

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

As 2024 draws to a close and I reflect, I am filled with deep gratitude. Your continued support and engagement are the driving forces behind the success of our association. We are always eager to hear your thoughts on your experience with OCHMRA and any suggestions you may have for improving our services. Your involvement is what fuels our group, and I encourage you to stay engaged, participate, and make the most of your membership.

Hospitality is at the heart of our vibrant community, and together, we can make OCHMRA an even stronger network for collaboration and growth. As we head into 2025, our association will continue to focus on connecting, communicating, and leading the way forward. With the diverse perspectives, skills, and expertise of our Board of Directors and members, we are poised to make a meaningful impact in 2025!

As always, we are especially excited for our annual Trade Expo, which has grown into the largest hospitality gathering in the mid-Atlantic. Whether you exhibit, attend, purchase from exhibitors, or volunteer, each role plays a vital part in making the Expo a success - save the date - March 2 & 3, 2025. Let's continue to work together—collaborating rather than acting individually—to elevate the hospitality industry! 😊



Hospitality Highlights

Whats new in the industry?

WARM WELCOMES & CELEBRATIONS

A few congratulations are in order - during the MD Travel & Tourism Summit **Mother's Cantina** won small business of the year, and the **Harrison Group** won the Best Website Award for OCMDHotels.com, **Delegate Wayne Hartman** won the Tourism Advocate Award, and **Beach to Bay Heritage Area** won the Best Product/Event Award. In addition to the awards ceremony at MTTTS, the MD Office Tourism Awards presented **MD's Coast Worcester County** the Market Expansion Award for their Let's Go Marketing Campaign.

Jeremy Brink, Ocean 13 Seafood and Steakhouse, won the MD Capital Enterprises 2024 Workforce Development Award **Harpoon Hanna's** was ranked among the Top 100 independent Restaurants in the U.S. in 2024.

Spain Wine Bar welcomed **Alex Rivkind** to their Management Team and **Alexandra Grier** as their new Event Manager. **Wor-Wic Community College** welcomed **Steven Skinner** as their Culinary Instructor for the culinary program. **Ben Seidel** is now the Chair of MD Tourism's Development Board for the office of Tourism. **Susan Jones** is the incoming chair for the **Maryland Tourism Coalition**.

Thank you to the **Sodexo Crew** for volunteering at the **Junior Achievement Center** and we encourage your workplace to get involved and volunteer as well! You can have employees sign up for specific dates/schools or you can get together and volunteer as a team-building activity!

[VOLUNTEER HUB](#) – choose a date or school!

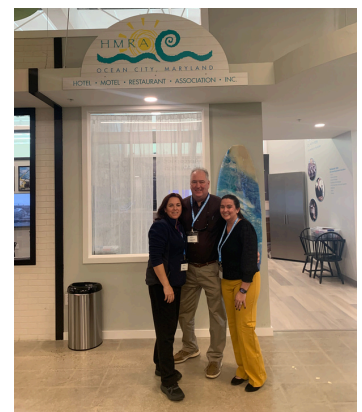
ALLIED

Clear Channel Outdoor
clearchanneloutdoor.com

Craft Cottage LLC
craftcottage LLC.com

Pineapple Hospitality Inc.
pineapplehospitality.net

Smart Valve
thesmartvalve.com



Sodexo Crew at HMRA's Storefront at JA Center

Ocean City's 150th Anniversary Campaign

Ocean City Tourism is exploring creative ways to commemorate the city's 150th anniversary. They would love to launch a Citywide Early Booking Promotion for January to create immediate buzz. Hotels could offer a 150th Anniversary Early Booking Special running through January. Restaurants/Attractions see below for ideas!

Some simple ideas could be:

- Book 4 nights and get a \$150 credit towards your stay
- Book 3 nights and get a \$150 food and beverage credit.

Restaurants

1. Signature Dishes: Develop a signature dish or cocktail named after the 150th anniversary, promoting it throughout the year.
2. Discounts and Promotions: Offer discounts or special promotions tied to the anniversary, such as "150 cents off" certain items or special prix fixe menus.

Activity and Entertainment Businesses:

1. Anniversary-themed Tours: Offer special anniversary-themed boat tours, walking tours, or bus tours highlighting the history and development of Ocean City.
2. Partnerships and Collaborations: Partner with other local businesses to create package deals or joint events, such as a historical scavenger hunt that involves multiple locations or a "Taste of Ocean City" food tour.

[Click here](#) to view their idea deck



Member Mentions & Industry Insights

Give the Easy and Convenient Gift of Dining!

RAM's Dine out, Maryland! gift certificates are ideal gifts for friends and family, coworkers, and colleagues. Maybe you'd prefer to treat yourself while supporting the local restaurant industry—the choice is yours!

Their gift certificates are redeemable at hundreds of restaurants, so there's no need to choose a restaurant yourself. [Click here](#) to buy a gift card or view the participating restaurants!

Small Business Summit

The Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Small Business Summit on December 3rd from 8:30am to 1:30pm at The Grand Hotel at 2100 N. Baltimore Ave.

The summit is designed to connect members who serve small businesses with those looking to start, grow, or expand their existing business.

The cost to attend is \$25 for Chamber members and \$30 for non-members. Continental breakfast is included.

[Click here](#) to learn more and to register.



Ocean City, Maryland
Chamber of Commerce



Art League of OC Film Festival: Sponsorships Available

Art League of Ocean City is gearing up for the 9th season of the [Ocean City Film Festival](#), happening March 6-9, 2025.

They are currently seeking sponsors for the event, it is a great way for businesses to connect with the audience while giving back to the community during the off-season.

Click [here](#) to view their sponsorship opportunities!

What's Hot 2025

By: National Restaurant Association

In 2025...Personal and planetary well-being, coupled with a deeper exploration of Southeast Asian cuisines, are the leading trends in the 2025 What's Hot Culinary Forecast.

This year's What's Hot Culinary Forecast draws on the expertise of industry professionals who were asked to rank 71 items in 7 categories:

- Dishes
- Beverages
- Ingredients
- Alcohol beverages
- Flavors
- Macro Trends
- Condiments

Click [here](#) to download and view the full report!



Business Briefs

51st Annual Trade Expo

Attention all **ALLIED MEMBERS**, booth exhibit space for the 2025 Spring Trade Expo is selling fast - we have less than 30 booths left!

If you haven't signed up yet, don't miss your chance, click [here](#) for the Booth Reservation Form.



Upcoming Webinar PJM Capacity Price Spike Explained

Hosted By Environ Energy

If you operate a business in these markets – register for this webinar: MD, PA, DE, NJ, IL, OH, DC. The webinar is an online event from 2 - 2:40pm EST on December 12.

PJM Interconnection, which oversees the largest electricity power market in the U.S., announced a record-high 9x increase in capacity prices beginning June 2025. This translates to a 20% or more rise in your electricity costs next year. Learn the impact on your business and what actions you can take to offset margin loss next year.

The next PJM capacity auction set for December has been delayed, but it's not going away, and neither is the uncertainty. [Click here to register](#)

MD Hotel & Lodging Assn - Hotel Compliance with Maryland's Food Residual Diversion Law

Hotels are among the entities subject to **Maryland's Food Residual Diversion Law & Regulation** which requires a regular assessment of food residual waste for compliance.

If you are a General Manager or a Manager who oversees the food residual disposal process on the property [click here](#) to view the presentation deck and/or view the [recorded webinar](#) to learn more.

For questions, please reach out to Shannon McDonald at shannon.mcdonald@maryland.gov.

Maryland Saves: Savings for Emergencies and Retirement Just Got Easier

Under Maryland law, most Maryland employers are **now required** to offer their employees access to retirement savings.

Employers who already offer a qualified retirement plan or register and submit payroll contributions before December 31 will earn a [\\$300 SDAT annual report filing fee waiver](#) starting the next year.

Participating in MarylandSaves is one way for your company to qualify for the Maryland State Department of Assessments & Taxation (SDAT) Filing Fee Waiver offered by the state. If your business is registered with MarylandSaves and you are making payroll contributions for your employees, **DO NOT COMPLETE THE FORM** as you already qualify for the fee waiver. The MarylandSaves team will supply SDAT with your qualification information.

[Click here](#) to claim your 2025 SDAT Annual Report Filing Fee Waiver

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Human Trafficking Hotel Staff Trainings – Annual Certification due October 1

[Section 15-210 of the Business Regulation Article](#) requires innkeepers to provide training and guidance to their employees to accurately and promptly identify and report suspected human trafficking to the proper authorities.

Click the following link to view [training protocols](#) approved by the State to satisfy this requirement. This [certification form](#) must be submitted annually by **October 1** to the Maryland Department of Labor.

Maryland Heat Stress Regulation

The Maryland Department of Labor has adopted a new [Heat Illness Prevention Standard](#) effective as of **September 30, 2024**, establishing minimum requirements for employers to protect employees from heat-related illnesses caused by heat stress in the workplace.

New heat stress educational materials have been uploaded to the website and are available for review on this [MOSH Heat Stress Regulation and Guidance Documents](#) webpage. We encourage you to take a moment to review the updated content, as it contains important information that may be relevant to your work.

MOSH will continue to update and add new resources and guidance documents. To stay informed and receive notifications when new content is available, simply enter your email address on the [MOSH Subscription Form](#) on our homepage.

For additional information, contact Maryland Occupational Safety and Health at mosh.outreach@maryland.gov or call (410) 527-4499.

NEWS FROM RAM: Court Strikes Down DOL Overtime Rule - Salary Threshold Increases for EAP Exemptions

What happened: On November 15, a U.S. District Court overturned the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) 2024 changes to Overtime Regulations, handing a win to a coalition of business groups challenging the rule, which included the National Restaurant Association's (NRA) Restaurant Law Center.

RAM previously shared compliance information with their members about the DOL's 2024 overtime rule that increased the salary threshold used as part of the criteria that must be met to exempt Executive, Administrative or Professional (EAP) employees from overtime pay. That rule increased the salary threshold from \$35,568 to \$43,888 on July 1, 2024, and was scheduled to increase to \$58,656 on January 1, 2025.

What it means: The court's decision means that the increase to the overtime salary threshold that already went into effect this year will be reversed, and the future increase will not happen. This decision applies to restaurant and business owners nationally.

NOTE: Employers who increased salaries to comply with the July 1, 2024, threshold should consult with legal counsel before deciding whether to reverse those increases.

NEWS FROM RAM: 2024 Maryland Pay Statement & Job Posting Transparency Laws

Following their well-attended September webinar providing guidance on the new Pay Statement and Job Posting Transparency Laws (which were effective October 1), they have reviewed the many questions that have been submitted and, in an effort to provide further guidance, have added to FAQs.

Updated guidance documents can be found by accessing the link below. The webinar and presentation materials, along with other compliance assistance materials such as optional templates and instructions, may also be [found on the website](#).

43rd Annual Maryland Tourism & Travel Summit Recap



State of the State

The Maryland Office of Tourism and the Maryland Tourism Development Board are tremendous supporters and partners of MTC and the Summit. Each year, one of the most widely anticipated sessions is the one in which we hear news and updates from Liz Fitzsimmons, Department of Commerce, Managing Director of the Division of Tourism Film and the Arts.

[Click here](#) to view their findings

Leadership.....It's Not Just a Fancy Title

It's been said that we follow people we feel comfortable with, and I couldn't agree more! Titles like "manager" and "supervisor" are nice, but they do not necessarily guarantee people will follow.

This session reminded us to take the driver's seat and to know our limits and as a leader, to set the pace. Attitudes are contagious and you must ensure your attitude is worth catching. Of course, it is easier to ride shotgun, but taking the driver's seat allows you to control the destiny and the pace.

When you embrace assertiveness over aggression, you enhance both your leadership skills and the well-being of those around you. Strive to be the leader people *want* to follow, not the one they feel they must follow. Cultivate happiness in your heart and uplift others through kindness. Lead by offering support, guiding with clear communication, and showing the way—rather than pushing others forward. The choices you make today shape the character you build for tomorrow. Create an environment rooted in trust, rapport, and credibility.

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Has the Federal Reserve successfully engineered a soft landing? Or, is the confluence of geopolitical conflict, the presidential election, rising consumer debt levels, and still high interest rates conspiring to produce economic downturn in 2024? It is difficult to know whether 2025 will be a good year – but one thing is clear – it will be a very interesting one.

This presentation supplied an in-depth analysis of major factors shaping economic outcomes, including interest rates, global conflict, wage dynamics, business confidence, and demographics. Basu shared the forecast for the coming year, highlighting the major risks that economic stakeholders will likely encounter.



[Economic Forecast](#)

SUSTAINING SUCCESS Managing Burnout and Building Fulfillment in the Fast-Paced Industry

In the demanding, dynamic, and customer-centric world of travel and tourism, professionals often find themselves running on empty. Burnout isn't just a buzzword—it's a real threat that can undermine both personal well-being and career success.

Dr. Jenn Staples, Clinical Psychologist and founder of Work Wiser, presented an interactive session where we learned to recognize the early warning signs of burnout, how to develop strategies to reduce our vulnerability, and discovered a powerful framework for reconnecting with our personal values.

[Click here](#) to view the presentation

[Year in Review - Watch Now](#)

FEATURED PARTNER:



(410) 543-0693

please join us for the
OCHMRA
December Dinner Meeting

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024

THE CAPTAIN'S TABLE - 15TH ST.

STATIONS

Roasted Beef Tenderloin Station
Roasted Atlantic Salmon Carving Station
Domestic & Imported Cheese Display
Antipasto Display
Seafood Display
Passed & Stationary Hors D'oeuvres

Full Menu On The Back

Cocktail Hour, Networking, & Food from 6 - 8pm • \$55pp inclusive
Gather around the Piano for Christmas carols & door prizes from 8 - 8:30pm
Music by Phil Perdue & Son

Please RSVP by Friday, December 6th to (410) 289-6733 or susanjones@ocvisitor.com

You can book & pay online at: <https://oceancitymdassoc.weblinkconnect.com/atlas/events/december-2024-ochmra-networking-dinner-187/register>

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



To be entered for door prizes, bring dry & pre-packaged goods - help stock the food pantry at Diakonia!

Ready-to-eat items, pop-top cans, fruit cups, juice boxes, plastic silverware, etc.

SPONSORED BY:



The Captain's Table Full Menu

Roasted Beef Tenderloin Station

- Chef Carved
- Crusty French Rolls
- Horseradish
- Caramelized Onions
- Bacon-Onion Jam
- Horseradish Cream
- Whole Grain Mustard

Roasted Salmon Carving Station

- Cucumber-Dill Yogurt
- Shaved Radish
- Oversized Buttered Crostini
- Grilled Soft Pita Wedges
- Caper Berries
- Garlic & Herb Whipped Feta
- Salt Cured Cucumber

Seafood Display

- Jumbo Shrimp Cocktail
- Mexican Shrimp Cocktail Cups
- Local Oysters on the ½ Shell
 - Red Wine Mignonette
 - Green Apple Mignonette
 - House Cocktail Sauce
 - Horseradish
 - Pickled Vegetables
- Smoked Salmon Mirror
 - Hard Boiled Egg
 - Pickled Red Onion
 - Raw red Onion
 - Capers
 - Crostini
 - Horseradish Cream

Antipasto Display

- Pepperoni, Salami, & Prosciutto
- Marinated Artichoke Hearts
- Marinated Mozzarella
- Roasted Red Peppers
- Pepperoncini
- Balsamic Grape Tomatoes
- Crackers and Crostini
- Mixed Olives

Domestic & Imported Cheese Display

- Manchego, Swiss Emmentaler, Baby Gouda, Sharp Cheddar, Brie, & Pepperjack
- Spiced Honey
- Fig Jam & Bacon-Onion Jam
- Bell Pepper Jelly
- Assorted Crackers

Passed Hors D'oeuvres

- Mini Crab Balls
 - Cocktail / Tartar
- Grilled Cheese & Tomato Soup Shooters
- Garlic Hummus Pita Chip
 - Whipped Feta, Crispy Chickpeas, Salted Cucumber
- Braised Short-rib Crostini
 - Caramelized Onion, Boursin Cream Cheese
- Blue Crab Crostini
 - Old Bay Cream Cheese, Jumbo Lump Crab Chunks, Micro Chive
- Tuna Tataki Wonton
 - Wasabi-Sweet Pea puree, Sweet Tamari, Micro Cilantro
- Lobster Deviled Eggs

Stationary Hot Hors D'oeuvres

- Smoked Andouille Wrapped Scallops
 - Honey-Chipotle Glaze
- Braised Beef and Cheddar Mini-Quesadillas
- Hummus & Quinoa Tabbouleh Dip
 - Pita Chips, Pickled Onion, Whipped Feta, Red Onion Wedges
- Truffle-Parmesan Fried Mac-n-Cheese
- Vegetable Potstickers
 - Sesame-Soy Dipping Sauce

Liquid Libations

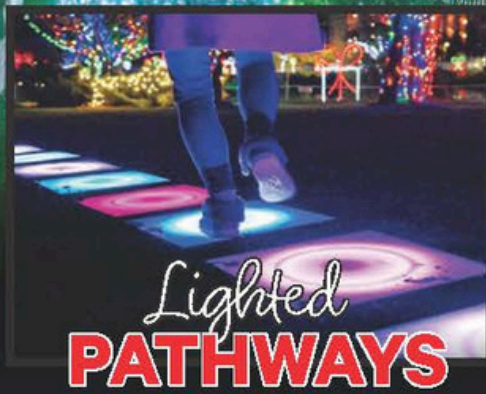
- **Apple Cider Bar**
 - Hot Mulled Apple Cider, Sparkling Cider, Chilled Apple Cider, Dehydrated Apple Slices, Candied Apple Wedges, Cinnamon Sticks, Candy Cane Stirrers, Caramel Sauce, & Mandarin Orange Segments
- **Egg Nog Bar**
 - Crushed Graham Crackers, Crushed Candy Cane, Sprinkles, Holiday Sprinkles, Whipped Cream, Ginger Snap Cookies, & White Chocolate Chips

Winterfest of Lights

Nov 21 - Dec 22
Wednesday - Sunday

5:30 - 9:30 PM
\$6/Guest (12 Years & Older)
FREE for guests 11 & Under

Dec 23 - 31
Every Night

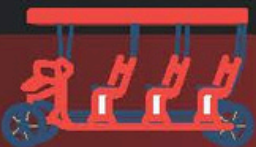


NORTHSIDE PARK, 125TH ST.
ocean.com/winterfest



NEW Surrey Rides

Mondays & Tuesdays • 5:30 - 9:30 pm
November 25th - December 17th



Winter Holiday Safety

Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.

HOLIDAY DECORATING

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.



Before Heading Out or to Bed

Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

FACTS

- ! More than **one-third** of home decoration fires are started by candles.
- ! More than **two of every five** decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.



**NATIONAL FIRE
PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**

The leading information and knowledge resource
on fire, electrical and related hazards

