

HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

July 2026



Susan Jones
CEO



Kaylee Lathroum
Director of Sales & Marketing

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Dates For Your Calendar

OCMDHA Dues Deadline

July 15th

Pay via check or [online](#)

Marlin Fest

August 3rd to 8th - 11am to 9pm
On the beach at the Inlet

10th Annual MTC Summer Soiree

August 12th - 5pm to 7pm
Holiday Inn Ocean City - 66th St.
[Register here](#)

Hospitality Huddle

October 13th

Learning Lobby

October 27th

Ocean City Spring Trade Expo

March 7th & 8th

oceancitytradeexpo.com

Member Message

From CEO, Susan L. Jones

Happy 250th America! As the summer sun graces our beautiful resort, our team of 2 continues to work diligently to ensure we serve our members to the best of our ability. We remain committed to bringing you the most **up-to-date information** and will strive to be your **go-to resource**. Membership Renewals were recently sent out and to those of you who have already renewed, thank you!

Things are starting to pick up as the sunshine makes more consistent appearances! As a drive-to destination, we tend to stay resilient even during uncertain economic times. **Stay positive**, business is on its way. As we move into our busiest season, don't forget to recognize and **thank your staff**. Support and encouragement are what drive excellence, and every team member helps shape the overall experience. When we **lead by example** and *create a welcoming environment for staff, that same positive energy naturally carries through to our visitors.*

If we all embrace this mindset across OCMD, "**Miles of Smiles**" becomes more than a slogan, it becomes what truly **sets us apart and keeps guests returning** year after year. Thank you for being such an important part of our hospitality family. 😊

WE GOT NEW EMAILS!



Kaylee Lathroum

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Susan Jones

susan@ocmdhospitality.com

Featured Partners



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



GoGlass is the premier source for commercial, residential, and auto glass repair and replacement in Berlin and Ocean City, MD.



[Member Directory](#)

Hospitality Highlights

Whats new in the industry?

WARM WELCOMES & CELEBRATIONS

The **Junior Achievement of the Eastern Shore** has welcomed **JJ Skylar** as their new President. The **Hilton Garden Inn** welcomed **Lee Callicutt** as their newest Sales Manager. **Cassandra Vanhooser** is the new Director of Tourism for **Maryland**. We wish **Neil Brown** all the best in his retirement and extend a warm welcome to **Brittany Proctor**, who has joined the **Vista Digital Agency** team. Congratulations to Past President and owner of **The Tides Inn**, **Cindi Wilde**, on the arrival of her new granddaughter, Kendall Hue Wilde. **Jessica Worman** is the new Director of Sales & Marketing for the **Grand Hotel**.

We want to take a moment to thank all the employers who have submitted nominations for our **Miles of Smiles Spotlight**. It's a great way to highlight the positive impact of hospitality professionals and showcase the outstanding service your team delivers every day.

Congratulations to our winners so far: **Jacob Overstreet** at **Ocean 13**, **Ray Zalewski** at **SeaLoft Oceanfront Hotel**, **Megan Collins** at **Fish Tales**, and **Andy Diaz** at **Hampton Inn & Suites Ocean City Bayfront Convention Center**.

Know someone who deserves to be recognized? [Click here to nominate](#) an employee!



Welcome New Members

ALLIED

G&G Outfitters
ggoutfitters.com

SAD GOODBYES

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire **Longboard family** on the passing of **Tommy Vach**. As Longboard stated, "Tommy was a truly special man whose impact on so many lives will never be forgotten. His dedication to the community, especially through his work with the Surf Club, was extraordinary and touched countless people over the years." We also want to express our condolences to the Paulman family on the passing of **Kendra Paulman**, who worked with the OCMDHA for a decade.

Go the Extra Mile — Be Our Next Featured Smile!

We're honoring the hospitality heroes who make every visit memorable with our Miles of Smiles Service Promise! **Nominate an employee** who goes above and beyond with a kind gesture, a warm welcome, or provides outstanding service!

What's in it for them?

- ★ Every Wednesday, one Miles of Smiles Spotlight winner will be featured on our [Facebook Page](#) AND will receive a \$100 cash prize.
- ★ At the end of the summer, all weekly winners will be entered into a drawing for a \$500 grand prize!

This is a great opportunity to recognize your staff who help make OCMD a desirable destination. We are eager to spotlight the incredible people behind our industry's success!

[Submit your nominations here](#)



Business Briefs

The latest news impacting hospitality.

Take Action: Strengthen the Restaurant Workforce

From the National Restaurant Association

Restaurant operators know this better than anyone: immigration is not an abstract policy debate. It's the person prepping your line at 6am, the manager who's been with you for fifteen years, the entrepreneur who opened their first location after decades building toward that dream.

More than one in five people working in our industry today are immigrants. And with 1.6 million jobs projected to be added by 2036 – against a U.S. labor force expected to grow by less than 4% – we cannot afford an immigration system that doesn't work.

The National Restaurant Association has endorsed the "[Dignity Act of 2025](#)." It's a serious, bipartisan step forward. It protects Dreamers with a pathway to permanent residency. It gives long-term workers on TPS and other temporary programs a route to legal status. And it modernizes E-Verify with common-sense safe harbor protections for employers who play by the rules.

To get more support for this vital measure, [contact your members of Congress](#) today and urge them to support the Dignity Act. Tell them the restaurant industry in their district depends on a workforce solution that works in the real world – not just on paper.

RESOURCES

OCMDHA 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 Flyer

Post in employee break rooms - [English](#) and/or [Spanish](#) Version

Miles of Smiles Spotlight Nomination

Nominate an employee who goes above and beyond with a kind gesture, a warm welcome, or provides outstanding service!

[Click here to nominate them!](#)

Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

View May's Meetings - [Click here](#)

Ocean City Police Department Video Community Outreach Program

The Ocean City Police Department's Forensic Services Unit is inviting local businesses to participate in its **Video Community Outreach Program**, a voluntary initiative designed to improve communication and speed up the collection of surveillance video when it is needed for investigations.

Participating businesses will provide annual contact information and basic details about their surveillance camera systems. This allows the Forensic Services Unit to quickly coordinate with business owners/managers when video evidence may be needed, particularly during the busy season.

If you're interested in participating, [click here to complete the form](#) and return it by email to fsuvideo@oceancitymd.gov or mail it to:

Ocean City Police Department
Attn: Forensic Services Unit
6501 Coastal Highway
Ocean City, MD 21842

Please email the Forensic Services Unit with any questions at fsuvideo@oceancitymd.gov. Please note it may take a few business days before your question is answered.

Participation in this program is completely voluntary.

It's Membership Renewal Season

We've recently sent out membership 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 OCMD hospitality community.

As a reminder, your membership includes a variety of valuable Member Perks designed to help you maximize your membership and increase your visibility within the local hospitality industry. We encourage you to take full advantage of everything that's available to you!

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

Check out our à la carte member perks below, and if you're interested in taking advantage of any of these opportunities, email Kaylee at kaylee@ocmdhospitality.com!

1. 'Partners In Focus' Feature - \$75 (quarter page), \$100 (half page), or \$150 (full page)

Get featured in the 'Partners In Focus' section of our monthly Hospitality Hotline newsletter with a quarter, half-page, or full-page spotlight, including your choice of ad/flyer & a link to your website.

**2 slots available each month—no competing businesses in the same newsletter, & you can be featured up to 3 times in a row*

2. Nibble & Networking Sponsor - \$150

Gain visibility by sponsoring one of our popular networking events. Sponsors are featured on the emailed event invitation, in the program, on the welcome sign & table tents, and have the opportunity to leave promotional items and/or set up a display table at registration.

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

3. 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.

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

Additional resources:

- Need to pay your membership dues online? [Click here](#) to log in to the Member Portal.
- Want to make the most of your membership? [Click here](#) to explore your member benefits.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

American Travelers Are Still Prioritizing Travel

State of the American Traveler

Despite ongoing economic uncertainty, Americans continue to make travel a priority.

Key takeaways from the June 2026 report include:

- **Travel remains resilient.** While concerns about the economy persist, travelers are continuing to plan and book vacations rather than cutting travel from their budgets.
- **Value matters more than ever.** Travelers are actively looking for deals, loyalty rewards, and experiences that offer the best value for their money.
- **AI is changing trip planning.** More travelers are using AI-powered tools alongside search engines and social media to research destinations, compare options, and build itineraries.
- **Safety and clear communication influence decisions.** Travelers appreciate destinations and businesses that provide transparent information and make them feel confident about their plans.
- **Major events are driving travel.** The 2026 FIFA World Cup, Route 66 Centennial, and America's 250th anniversary are expected to generate increased travel demand across the country.

What this means for hospitality

businesses: Continue highlighting your value, keep your online information current and easy to find, encourage guest reviews, and communicate clearly about what guests can expect. Travelers are still eager to explore—they're simply being more intentional about where they spend their time and money.

[Click here](#) to view the full slide deck or [watch the recorded presentation!](#)



Action Alert: Register for the Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind Webinar on July 1st

The University of Delaware and Delaware Sea Grant are hosting a live webinar to share the results of their study on community perceptions of offshore wind energy in coastal and near-coastal towns across Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey.

We need to make sure our voices are heard, our concerns are represented, and our message to **Stop Offshore Wind** is loud and clear during the Q&A session.

Event Details:

What: What Do Communities in the Mid-Atlantic Think of Offshore Wind?

When: Wednesday, July 1st from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM EDT

Where: Online via Zoom (Free & open to all)

Let's show up in full force and continue our fight to Stop Offshore Wind! → [Register Today](#)

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.

Under the ADA, a service animal is a dog trained to perform specific tasks for a person with a disability. If it's not obvious the dog is a service animal, staff may ask only 2 questions:

- Is the dog required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Staff may not request documentation, ask about the person's disability, or require the dog to demonstrate its task.

For additional guidance and resources on service animals, visit the [ADA's Service Animals FAQ page](#).



Credit Card Surcharges

By: The Restaurant Association of Maryland

The Restaurant Association of Maryland recently confirmed that businesses in Maryland may legally impose a surcharge on credit card transactions—but not on debit or prepaid card purchases.

Before implementing a surcharge, businesses must:

- Provide clear notice to customers before the sale (such as on menus, websites, or point-of-sale signage).
- Follow the rules of their credit card networks and notify those networks in advance.
- Work with their payment processor to ensure compliance.

In Maryland, credit card surcharges cannot exceed 4%, although some card brands have stricter limits (such as 3%). Surcharges must also be listed separately on customer receipts and are subject to Maryland sales tax.

Keep in mind that some payment processors may charge higher processing fees for businesses that choose to add surcharges, and customers may react negatively if competitors are not doing the same. Before making the switch, it's worth weighing both the compliance requirements and the potential impact on customer satisfaction.

Service Dog's 101

You may only ask 2 questions of a human with a "supposed service animal."

1. Is the Service Animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or specific task has the dog been trained to do?

According to Maryland law, business owners are not required to permit "Emotional Support Animals" in their establishments — Only "Service Dogs."

Real Service Dog's Are...

Clean & Well Groomed.
Not Required to wear a "Service Dog" vest.
Service dogs are not disruptive.
Service dogs only "sniff" when on task.
Service dogs are trained to ignore food in public places.
Trained to lie under the table or out of the way.
Service Dogs are trained for "greetings," but, please ask to pet a service dog as you would any dog.
Any breed of dog can be a service dog.

Spotting The Imposter

May be untidy.
Eats from the table.
Sits in humans lap or a chair.
Faux service dogs will sniff people, animals & objects. (They are not working)
Humans with faux service dogs often will not allow you to pet them. (They don't know the real rules.)



Service animals must be harnessed, leashed or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animals work, or the individual's disability prevents their use of such devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control through voice, signal or other means of control.

Community Connections

Whats new in the industry?

Ocean City Hosts Grand 250th Anniversary Independence Day Celebration

Join Ocean City on July 4 as we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States with an expanded Independence Day celebration. Festivities will take place at North Division Street and Northside Park, featuring live entertainment, patriotic music, family-friendly activities, and spectacular fireworks displays at both locations beginning at 9:30p.m.

At North Division Street, enjoy performances by The Broken Hearts (*Tom Petty tribute*), speed painter Jessica K. Haas, and Real Diamond (*Neil Diamond tribute*). Northside Park will feature music and entertainment from DJ BK and Radio Ocean City.

Bring your beach chairs and blankets and celebrate this historic milestone with an unforgettable evening of music, community, and fireworks.

For event details, visit ococean.com/events or follow @OceanCityMaryland on social media.



MARYLAND TOURISM COALITION PRESENTS

10th Annual Summer Soiree

August 12, 2026



10th Annual Summer Soiree

Member Appreciation & Elected Officials Reception

This year, the Maryland Tourism Coalition celebrates 10 years of bringing together elected officials and industry partners to recognize and thank those who support Maryland's tourism industry. Join us for an evening of networking with the ocean as your backdrop. There will be no formal program—just a relaxed opportunity to connect and celebrate as we kick off MACo.

Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2026

Time: 5:00pm – 7:00pm

Location: Holiday Inn Ocean City – 66th St.

[Click here for more info or to register!](#)

**Registration closes Friday, July 31, 2026*



OC Rock & Ride is BACK

OC Rock & Ride returns September 10–13, 2026 for another unforgettable weekend of motorcycles, music, and Ocean City fun!

Experience scenic rides throughout Ocean City and the surrounding area, the Boardwalk Motorcycle Parade, vendors at the Inlet and Convention Center, and live music day and night from an exciting concert lineup.

From motorcycle displays and industry exhibits to great food, entertainment, and special attractions, there's something for every rider and enthusiast.

[Check out the full lineup](#) and schedule, and get your tickets today!

MILES OF SMILES

SERVICE PROMISE



Warm Welcome - A smile and eye contact go a long way—greet every guest with both!



Spirit of Service - Be a Memory Maker - *Is there anything else I can help you with today?*



Passionate & Proactive - Help guests solve needs before they become problems



Rapid Response - Fast, dependable support when it's needed most



Fond Farewells - Thank guests for staying, playing, and/or dining with you!

Go the Extra Mile – Be Our Next Featured Smile!

We're honoring the **hospitality heroes** who make every visit memorable with our Miles of Smiles Service Promise!

Get noticed by your manager and celebrated by us! You could be **featured on our Facebook page AND win a weekly \$100 prize**. Then at the end of summer (by Labor Day), one featured smile will be randomly selected to **take home a \$500 cash prize!**



BEARDED MEN SOCIETY OF OCEAN CITY PRESENTS

CORNHOLE EVENT

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

AT SINEPUXENT BREWING COMPANY
- \$40.00 PER TEAM -

REGISTRATION STARTS AT 11:00AM, GAMES START AT 12:00PM



50/50
BOARDS
BASKET
FUNDRAISER
MUSIC

CHANCE
AUCTION
ITEMS

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT
DIAKONIA INC.
SUPPORTIVE LIVING CAMPUS
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



8816 STEPHEN DECATUR HWY
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