

HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

February 2026



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Member Message

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

Thanks to everyone who helped us celebrate the launch of the OCMD Hospitality Association, what a fun night! We still have a few things rolling out over the next couple of months, including our new website (ocmduhospitallity.com) and updated email addresses. Thanks for your patience as we put those final touches on the back burner and turn our full attention to the 52nd Annual Trade Expo!

This year's Expo will be our biggest EVER, with 509 exhibit booths, interactive activities, live demos, insightful sessions, and nonstop networking. Maverick Mixologist Dean Serneels takes the Spotlight Stage on Sunday, and Monday kicks off with the keynote "Winning Conflict" before the Expo floor opens. Be sure to check the Daily Schedule on the Expo website so you don't miss a thing. If you'd like to volunteer at Expo, we'd appreciate help!

We're also finalizing details for our next **Hospitality Huddle** on **March 24**, focused on workforce topics. Plus, with education a key focus, we're planning a ServSafe course for mid-March and a **Supervisory Conflict course** on **April 8**. More details coming soon, stay tuned! Happy February! ☺

Dates For Your Calendar

Like Water for Chocolate - Scavenger Hunt

February 7th

Various OC Businesses

MTC Tourism Day

February 13th
Annapolis, MD

OCHMRA Spring Trade Expo

March 8th & 9th
40th St. Convention Center

Nibble & Network Events

5:30pm to 8:30pm

February 19th - Aloft Hotel
April 16th - Oyster & Scales
May 14th - Vista Rooftop

HOSPITALITY SPRING TRADE EXPO

March 8 & 9, 2026

Ocean City, MD Convention Center

Sunday 11am - 5pm | Monday 11am - 4pm

Register for **FREE** at OceanCityTradeExpo.com | **EXCLUSIVELY** for the trade, No one under 21 admitted

FEATURED PARTNERS



Your single 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.



Member Directory

Hospitality Highlights

What's new in the industry?

WARM WELCOMES & CELEBRATIONS

The Princess Bayside Beach Hotel welcomed **Chris Phanousith** as their new General Manager. We also welcome back a familiar face, **Ronnie Lombardi**, who has accepted a new role as Area Director with **Stonebridge** for **Tru by Hilton** and **Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott**. The **Ashore** welcomed **Angelique Litherland** to the team as Director of Catering and **Christopher Salyer** as the new Director of Sales. **Spain Wine Bar** named **Alex Rivkind** as its new Assistant General Manager. **Blue Water** welcomed **Brian Atkins** as Regional Manager for its Hotel Division. **Martesha Spencer** is now serving as Front Desk Supervisor at the **Hyatt Place Oceanfront**.

Congratulations to **Nellie Shaffer** of the **Comfort Inn Gold Coast** on the birth of her second grandson.

SAD GOODBYES

With a heavy heart, we are saddened to announce the passing of **Susan Shockley**, wife of Ray Shockley, mother to **Greg Shockley (Shenanigans)**, Brian Shockley, & **Stephanie Shockley (Ocean City Museum Society** - Board of Directors), and her grandchildren, Noah Shockley, Brody Shockley, Emmi Shockley, Tate Shockley, Tad DeMallie, and **Clare DeMallie (Cambria Ocean City Bayfront)**. Condolences to the **Fager's Island family** on the passing of longtime manager, **Charlie Smith**. We also want to express our condolences to the **United Shellfish family** on the sudden loss of **Pat Redmond** who was with them for 30 years.

Welcome New Members

ALLIED

Clemens Food Group
clemensfoodgroup.com

E.K. Lay
eklay.com

Equipment Share
equipmentshare.com

Fresh Point Produce
freshpoint.com

Ocean Pines Handyman
oceanpineshandyman.com

Unlock the Power of Conflict with Dr. Bryan Deptula

We're excited to announce our keynote speaker, Dr. Bryan Deptula, author and TEDx presenter of "Leaders Are Born to Be Made." His session, Winning Conflict: Finding the "Win" in Every Conflict, will change the way you think about conflict in hospitality.

Conflict is unavoidable in our industry, from guest interactions and vendor negotiations to employee-manager friction that drives turnover. But when handled well, conflict becomes a powerful source of growth, innovation, and stronger teams. In this keynote, Dr. Deptula reframes conflict as a necessary engine for organizational health and teaches leaders how to Invite Good Conflict instead of simply managing it.

What you will learn:

- Turn conflict into growth instead of something to avoid
- Stop the cycle of defensiveness that damages teamwork & performance
- Retain top talent by leading through tension with confidence
- Use conflict to drive innovation and stronger team synergy

WINNING CONFLICT

Finding the 'win' in every conflict

MONDAY, MARCH 9
10:00AM
2ND FLOOR
ROOM 209



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
DR. BRYAN DEPTULA
Henlof



Business Briefs

Call for America's 250th Events and Activities

The Maryland Office of Tourism invites you to share your plans so they can help promote your efforts on the [America's 250th in Maryland](#) landing page on [VisitMaryland.org](#) and on our other communication channels. Please complete this [Google Form](#) with information about your 250th initiatives so we can begin promoting your activities and events.

Please contact Maryland 250 Commissioner Cynthia Miller, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Public Relations for the Maryland Offices of Tourism and Film at cynthiad.miller@maryland.gov if you have any questions. Visit the [Maryland 250 Website](#) for general information about the work of the Maryland 250 Commission.

RESOURCES

Top Ways to Maximize Your Membership

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!

November OC Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Catch up on the latest Tourism Dept. News

52nd Annual Spring Trade Expo

Come out of winter hibernation - join us for our annual gathering of the hospitality industry, where you'll discover leading hospitality services and the newest products on the market!

This is your chance to:

- **Sip, Sample, & Shop** - Touch and taste the newest, most innovative products on the market! Connect with the company reps to get the best deals!
- **Industry Experts** - Relaxed atmosphere of learning during the Solutions Showcase Workshops brought to you by the Maryland Tourism Coalition & OCHMRA.
- **Network** - Largest hospitality gathering in the Mid-Atlantic. Meet the industry suppliers face-to-face!

[Register Here](#)[2026 Exhibitors](#)[Daily Schedule](#)

Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) Tourism Day

Friday, February 13th | Annapolis

Maryland Tourism Day is the industry's advocacy day when we celebrate the impact of tourism on Maryland's economy. There are a lot of new faces in the Maryland General Assembly, and we continue the need to educate on why tourism is important and that it needs to be funded, not cut.

Registration is \$75 Members, \$100 Non-Members, & \$30 Students (*Registration closes Feb. 4, 2026*)

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

Community Connections

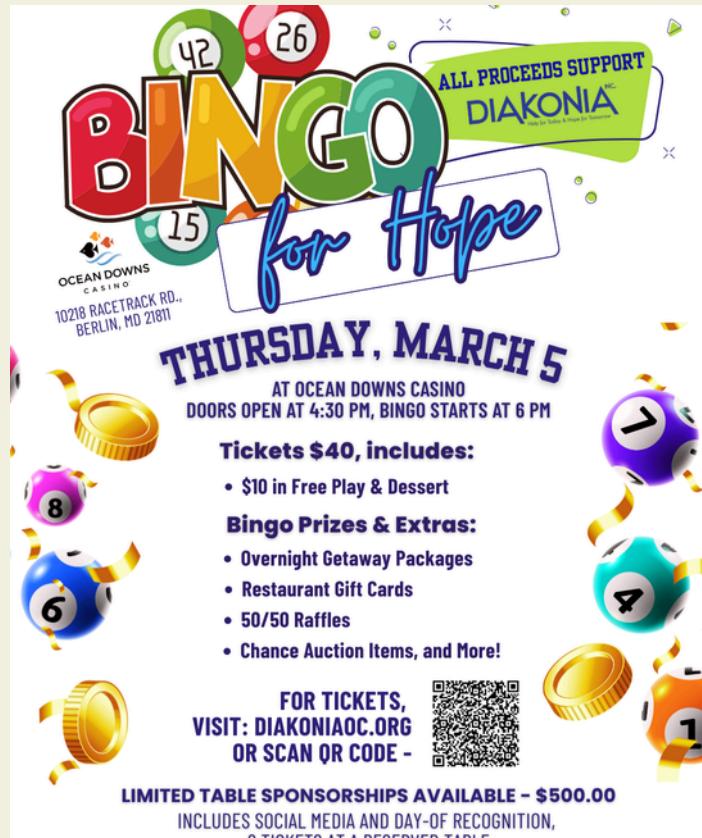
Support Diakonia at Bingo for Hope

Hope is calling – and it sounds a lot like BINGO. Support Diakonia's Bingo for Hope, a joyful night of fun, laughter, and community, all in support of Diakonia, Inc. and the neighbors we serve across Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore.

On Thursday, March 5, 2026, they will gather at Ocean Downs Casino for an evening where every game played helps provide food, shelter, and hope to individuals, families, and Veterans in the community. Doors open at 4:30 PM, with Bingo beginning at 6:00 PM.

Tickets are \$40 (sold online only) and include \$10 in free play and dessert – because hope is always sweeter when shared.

Throughout the night, enjoy exciting prizes, raffles, and auctions – all while knowing that 100% of proceeds benefit Diakonia's life-saving programs.



Winter Green Up

JOIN US TO BEAUTIFY OC!

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 7TH

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

OC Green Team

Get out of the house and join the community for a fun, festive clean-up at Northside Park on Saturday, February 7th from 10am to 12pm. The event is open to all ages, and hot chocolate will be provided.

Bring the whole family. Students can earn Learning Service hours, and all supplies including bags, buckets, and gloves are provided.

The trash weigh in and celebration will take place at 11:45am at the check in tents.



Contractors For A Cause - Spring Social

Join Contractors for a Cause for the 2026 Spring Social on March 21 from 6 to 11 pm at Vista Rooftop. This annual fundraiser brings together local businesses and community members for an evening of connection and purpose, all in support of neighbors in need.

Proceeds benefit our three core charitable programs and Diakonia's Capital Campaign. Your participation helps strengthen the community and support projects that make a real difference.

[Click here for more info!](#)



Join us for our

February Nibble & Network

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH, 2026

ALOFT OCEAN CITY - 45TH ST.



MENU OVERVIEW

Hot Appetizers & Cold Appetizers

Carving Station

Pasta Station

Dessert station

Full Menu On The Back



Networking & Food from 5:30pm • \$55pp inclusive

Please RSVP by Monday, February 16th to susanjones@ocvisitor.com,
scan the QR code or visit the link below.

<https://oceancitymdassoc.weblinkconnect.com/events/February-2026-OCHMRA-Nibble-Network-199/details>

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



SPONSORED BY:



MENU

HOT APPETIZERS

Mini Crab Cakes (Featuring Shirley Phillips' Original Recipe)

Sesame Encrusted Tuna with Seaweed Salad, Wasabi, & Ginger on a Crispy Wonton

Spinach & Artichoke Dip - blend of Cheddar & Parmesan Cheeses, & Premium Phillips Crab Meat

Smoked Pork BBQ Sliders topped with Cirtus Slaw

Button Mushroom Caps with Crab Imperial

COLD APPETIZERS

Housemade Crab Bruschetta served on Crostinis

Mini Charcuterie Cups

Chilled Jumbo Shrimp with Traditional Cocktail Sauce

Fresh Shucked Local Oysters with Horseradish, Cocktail Sauce, & Lemons

CARVING STATION

Carved-To-Order Prime Rib served with Au Jus, Caramelized Onions, Horseradish Cream, & Brioche Buns

PASTA STATION

Gnocchi & Cavatelli Pasta choose from Phillips Jumbo Lump Crab Meat, Vodka Sauce, Marinara, & Alfredo Sauce, served with Garlic Knots.

DESSERT STATION

Fresh Fruit Custard Trifles

Cheesecake Bites

Fresh Baked Cookies



Town of Ocean City



2026 LIGHTS ON BIKES & SCOOTERS CAMPAIGN

Help keep our students safe on the road. Ocean City's J-1 and seasonal workers depend on bikes to get to work, often in low-light conditions. Your contribution to the BPAC Lights on Bikes program provides the safety lights they need. Donate now to support a safer commute for all. Thank you in advance for your generous contribution, the BPAC Committee.

**Send Contributions to: Town of Ocean City, BPAC
(c/o Alicia Greenhalgh)
PO Box 158, Ocean City, MD 21843**

Payable to: Town of Ocean City



Contact: agreenhalgh@oceancitymd.gov or 410.289.8845