



April 2019

Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

News from...

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Welcome New Allied Members
Common Sense Solutions
US Fitness

Room Tax Update

The Mayor and Council voted 5 to 2 to move forward with an increase in the room tax from 4.5% to 5% beginning January 1, 2020. In order for the increase to take place, there must be unanimous County Commissioner approval, so most likely, there will be public hearings scheduled in May. Our Board has generally been supportive of the measure provided the increase is used to foster tourism. Fortunately, at recent City Council work sessions there has been much discussion and support for growing sports tourism.

Tourism Commission Goals

Hotelier Matt James is the new chair of the Town's Tourism Commission and recently, we defined 4 goals. They include: Stay Centered- Protect and Preserve OC's Core Values; Become Maryland's Amateur Sports Destination; Enhance the Ocean City Experience; Expand Tourism. The last goal of expanding tourism is our main concern as there is a lot of new inventory to fill. The objectives are to give visitors NEW reasons to come to OC, provide visitors with new "experience" and activities, increase occupancy for all seasons, increase mid-week summer visitors, and increase number of early bookings. To view the objectives and challenges of each goal, click here to see the plan. Additionally, feel free to share your ideas and thoughts with SusanJones@ocvisitor.com or 410.289.6733.



How to compete? Service!

CLARION RESORT FONTAINEBLEAU
APRIL 4TH, 3PM - 9PM OR APRIL 15TH, 9AM-3PM

Attention managers and leaders in the Hospitality Industry - We have an outstanding opportunity for you! With the influx of new inventory in our market, your team needs to step up and create the ultimate guest experience! Our speaker, Dr. Ojie-Ahamiojie, has conducted many seminars and trainings in customer service, employee motivation and stress & time management. He is also the author of "essential Leadership Skills for Hospitality Supervisors: An Experiential Approach" & "Upward Mobility: Interviewing and Career Management."

Our goals are to:

- Create an Ocean City Culture of Kindness
- Provide Exceptional Service to all of our Guests

You will walk away with:

- Tools to build and maintain a strong, service oriented front line workforce
- The ability to ensure excellent customer service skills for your entire staff
- The necessary skills to ensure a memorable guest experience
- A certificate of completion from Wor-Wic Community College

To secure your spot & pay online - click here. Deadline is April 1

THE LEADER IN FOOD SERVICE BEVERAGE!



Upgrade your Program & your Profits!

- Coca-Cola/Soda & Fountain Systems
- Frozen Beverage - Blender/Smoothie Mixes
- Draft Beer Systems
- "5 Star" Quality Service Department
- 7 Days a Week Service

Now Offering... Slush Puppie!

- Well-known and trusted national brand
- Provides strong marketing & promotional material
- Non-fat, non-carbonated & caffeine-free!





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Welcome to **Andrew Friedman**, the new General Manager at **Hyatt Place**. Welcome **Emily Martin**, the new marketing manager at **EMR**. Congrats to **Regina Brittingham**, **OC Convention Center**, on being inducted to the CSPI Board of Directors. Welcome to **Destiny Davis**, who joins the team at **Princess Bayside** as their new Sales Manager. Welcome to **Bobbi Jones**, the new marketing director at **Ocean Downs Casino**. Welcome to **Carissa Scaniffe**, who joined the team at the **Fairfield Inn & Home2Suites**. Congrats to **United Way** on raising over \$50,000 through the **OC Dine United & OC Stay United** Programs. Congrats to **Jim Mathias**, who is the new government relations director for the **University of Maryland Eastern Shore**.

Condolences

Condolences to the **Maryland State Firemans Association Family & Tom Collins** for loss of wife, **Flo Collins**.



Spring Restaurant Week April 28-May 11

Restaurant Week returns April 28-May 11 and is sure to please your palate! In addition to their regular menu, participating Restaurant Week establishments offer special

choose. The price points are \$10, \$15, \$20, \$25, \$30, \$35, \$40. All menus are posted on the website.

Give us a call at 410-289-6733 and we'll add you to the site, OceanCityRestaurantWeek.com. Lots of free exposure and promotion surrounds the event! Mark your calendars!!

Restaurant Week fixed price menu options. Dining options range from the clean and simple to fine dining.

It's not too late to sign up to participate (no charge to be involved) ~ Restaurants can choose any price-point putting together multiple course options. This allows smaller restaurants as well as more expensive restaurants to participate. You may offer multiple price-points if you



OCHMRA & APPI Energy, paired to create a webinar on Energy and reducing expenses. In this 45 minute webinar, members learned how energy procurement will help to reduce expenses and create budget certainty, as well as about energy efficiency measures. Introducing the APPI Energy Intelligence Suite that includes all things energy for your business. This member benefit is designed to have an expert negotiate your next energy contract and investigate solutions that will reduce your energy demand and cost for years to come. [Click here to view the webinar.](#)

WARD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Wildfowl Carving Competition and Art Festival

April 26-28, 2019

Roland E. Powell Convention Center
40th & Coastal Hwy., Ocean City, Maryland

Where Nature Inspires Art

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

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REST EASY: *Lodging industry trends*

Tambourine Hotel Marketing

STILL SELLING ROOMS? HERE'S HOW TO START SELLING AN EXPERIENCE

One of the most frequently uttered hotel marketing catchphrases of recent years has been “selling experiences,” but while many marketers talk the talk, more than a few are a long way from truly walking the walk. After decades of touting their vast array of in-room amenities, fitness centers, pools and large-screen TVs, many hotel marketers are still too self-indulgent and product-focused to recognize that it's what happens outside of the property that really matters these days. Now more than ever, it's imperative that hotel marketers dig deep, review all their hotel digital marketing touchpoints and set a course of action for turning their property's messaging from being product-focused, to experience-focused.

Ready to make the selling shift? Here are some key suggestions for hotel marketers operating in the “age of experience”:

1. Position your hotel as the epicenter of the destination.

Modern travelers are increasingly basing their trip planning, research and booking activities around the destination in question, rather than searching for any specific hotel brands in a given area. According to Google's 2015 “The Traveler's Road to Decision” report, destination-related keywords are the primary search terms consumers use when planning trips. (51% of the time when planning, compared to 31% usage of brand or specific website names.) That means your hotel's location is your most appealing asset to new-era travelers.

2. Your advertising and website messaging should promise a unique experience.

Building upon suggestion #1, be sure all messaging — website, banner ads, social — focuses on the unique experience your hotel provides. Play up the reasons why it's best to stay at your hotel to experience the location, aside from saving \$15 per night compared to your competitor next door.

One very useful means of achieving this goal is to create a special page/section within your hotel's website that's devoted entirely to tips, itineraries and “insider” information regarding the local area, as well as any special corresponding experiences offered through the hotel. Include invaluable tidbits like where to park for free, hole-in-the-wall spots the locals love, best hours for visiting popular attractions and ways to save money on admission fees. You can also make this information downloadable/printable in PDF format, so guests can take it with them when they explore.

3. Create unique packages that simplify guests' ability to experience the destination.

Remember that even though your guests are now paying more attention to what's outside your doors than what's within, they still want your help and guidance with the best ways of enjoying

everything your location has to offer. That goes far beyond just offering standard concierge services; try creating special themed destination packages that incorporate stays at the property with deals, tours and excursions to local points of interest, from museums and historical sites to artisanal shops and iconic eateries.

4. Showcase user-generated content (UGC) and review testimonials of past guests' experiences.

Social media has made UGC even more impactful than your own content, since viewers are more likely to trust the opinions and perspectives of fellow travelers than any corporate material they see on a branded website. So, by showcasing your guests' UGC, you're tapping into the underlying craving for authenticity and the all-powerful fear of missing out (FOMO), while also promoting your property more effectively than you could ever do on your own. But don't just spend your time looking through past guest Instagram posts; it's also useful to keep abreast of what your guests are saying on testimonial sites like TripAdvisor and Yelp. Beyond just viewing the feedback on your actual property, you can learn valuable information about what guests like best about your location and neighborhood, as well as the useful travel tips guests have gathered on your locale. Repackage and integrate those insights into your own marketing materials and messaging.

5. Change hotel imagery to focus on experiences, rather than amenities.

No one wants to look at pictures of your pool or fitness room. Instead, show them images of the ideal experience you are selling them, whether it's families frolicking along your hotel's amazing oceanfront real estate, spa-goers enjoying unique, signature treatments only available at your property, and/or compelling snapshots of the street-front outside the building, so guests can sense the excitement they'll feel when emerging from the front lobby.

6. Train guest-service personnel (and call center teams) to know local unique experiences.

It's tough for hotel staff to advise customers on how to best experience a destination if the staff doesn't know this themselves, which can be challenging to overcome if employees don't live near your hotel. The situation is even more problematic for call center teams, which may be located offsite, potentially very far away from the hotel they are selling. To solve this dilemma, you'll need to get a little creative. You can “gamify” the effort, rewarding the employees who visit the most locations, then post Instagram selfies and/or Facebook check-ins from these local hot spots.



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THE DISH: Restaurant industry trends

By: Larry Mogelonsky, Hotel Mogel Consulting

5 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR WAITSTAFF AT PEAK PERFORMANCE

Having just having completed yet another one-week business trip to Las Vegas, I am continually reminded about how proper guest service leads to feelings of wonder and admiration.

During the span of four full days on The Strip, I enjoyed over a dozen different eating occasions, all in hotel-based establishments. When you think of all the planning, costing, supply chain requirements and delivery that could have come up short, it boggles the mind.

But what struck me the most this time is the value-add brought about by the servers. In most every dining experience, the server was an integral part of the overall impression. From welcoming and assisting with menu selection to serving dishes and invoice delivery for a total of six or seven guest interactions by the end of the meal, he or she was there with pure attentiveness.

Professional waitstaff is often taken for granted, yet even the most successful executive chefs rely upon an effective delivery system. A great server team advises the chefs on each meal's progress, ensuring that the tempo of the meal is perfected for each guest.

Being a server is not an easy task in the slightest. On a typical shift, one might be on his or her feet for seven hours or more, throughout which this person needs to be in top form. Many restaurants, especially those in Las Vegas, might turn their table three or four times each evening, requiring even longer stretches of hustling about.

Particularly in the labor shortage situation, what can you do to protect your servers from leaving and to ensure that your restaurants have the frontline experience necessary to service delivery at its peak?

SHOW RESPECT. Recognize the importance of servers in your organization. Make sure that you treat them as professionals. They are the closest guest-facing staff members that you have on your team, and they can make a serious impact towards leaving a lasting positive impression with hotel guests.

COMMUNICATE. Be open and listen. Accept and act upon your servers' recommendations. Give feedback on the success of your property – not just the restaurant but your overall facility as well. This helps break down the silos such as rooms division versus F&B so that you can all push the needle forward together.

EMPATHIZE. Servers have a life outside of your restaurant. Show some flexibility when scheduling. Think about the school year and associated events.

PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE. Servers need knowledge about your dishes, wine list and cocktails if they are to have the passion necessary to sell these items to patrons. Hence, ensure that servers are part of your education plan with tastings and samplings as part of the weekly ritual with your beverage vendors involved, too.

REWARD. This goes beyond salary and tips. Offer opportunities for servers' families to participate in their success. Overnight stays are a great recognition tool that can be delivered at a nominal cost. Above all, express your gratitude in person and individually, making them fully aware of their integral role in the property's success.



Grammy Award Winner and Country Music Legend **Joe Diffie** is coming to the Ocean City Maryland Performing Arts Center **Thursday May 16, 2019**. With 12 #1 hits including "Home," "Pick-up Man," "Third Rock from the Sun" and "John Deere Green" this is a show you won't want to miss! The beauty of country music is its ability to reflect the lives of its listeners, and few artists have celebrated life's challenges and triumphs with more heartfelt eloquence than Joe Diffie. Whether singing about untarnished love in the enduring hit "John Deere Green," the perennial appeal of "Pickup Man" or the heartbreak of dreams unrealized in "Ships That Don't Come In," Diffie's songs have continually painted a portrait of real life with all its joy and angst. Tickets are on sale and can be purchased online at Ticketmaster, by calling 1-800-551-SEAT or by visiting the OC Box Office.



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On behalf of the Board of Directors and Past Presidents, THANK YOU to the Allied Members who purchased exhibit booths, Active & Associate Members who attended the Expo and to the many volunteers who helped make the Expo a true success. With 414 exhibit booths, this was a great Expo! **Your support is sincerely appreciated!**



Danelle Amos - Beachwalk Hotel
 Pat Ambler-Perry - Boardwalk Hotel Group
 Megan Merryman - Burgundy Inn
 Jane Regner - Burgundy Inn/By the Ocean
 Patricia Smith- Castle in the Sand
 Tom Tawney - Cayman Suites Hotel
 Suzie & Craig Mc Elroy - CG Accounting Group, LLC
 Alexis Million - CG Accounting Group, LLC
 Mark & Christy Elman - Clarion Fontainebleau
 Margaret Morris - Commander Hotel
 Pat Harman - Commander Hotel
 Suzanne Jackson - Commander Hotel
 Kathy Enste- Comfort Inn Gold Coast
 Nellie Shaffer- Comfort Inn Gold Coast
 Katie Turner- Comfort Inn Gold Coast
 Spencer Byrd - Courtyard Ocean City Ocean Front
 Hope Thomas - Deeley Insurance
 Karen Bresnahan- Delmarva Power
 Mary Ann Manganello- Downtown Association
 Debbie Ruby- Downtown Association
 Joanne & Bill Cunningham - Dunes Manor Hotel
 Dawn Nock- Grand Hotel & Spa
 Byron Green- Hampton Inn
 Megan Alvarado - Happy Jack Pancake House
 Bob Torrey - Happy Jack Pancake House
 Tara Nunan - Harrison Hall Hotel
 Marie Hopper - Holiday Inn Express and Suites

Laura Morrison - Landmark Ins. & Financial Group
 Carl Bozick - Macky's Bayside Bar & Grill
 Madalaine & Harry How - MAD Design Group
 Jennifer Hallon - MAD Design Group
 Nancy Howard - Ocean City Museum Society
 Jackie Ball- Park Place Hotel
 Bethany Cheeks - Phillips Seafood Restaurants
 Adrienne Reed - Phillips Seafood Restaurants
 Jennifer Krumpholz - Phillips Seafood Restaurants
 Alexandra Marginean - Princess Royale Ocean Front Resort
 Danielle Ricketts - Princess Royale Ocean Front Resort
 Fred Thompson - Residence Inn
 Keith Whisenant - Residence Inn
 Karen Tomasello - Sello's
 Joe White - Shrimp Boat
 Chuck Scott - TD Digital Printers
 Robert Rendel- Trimper's Rides
 Charlie Twigg- Trimper's Rides
 Helen Arthur
 Micheal Day
 Patricia Illiczuk Lavanceau
 Dave Shaffer
 Vicki Shrier
 Debby Wells

View all the photos from the trade show! Click here!



One of Women Supporting Women's signature events, Bras for a Cause, is headed back to the Centre at Salisbury for its 9th year! For nearly a decade, community members and businesses alike have been creating beautifully decorated bras to raise funds for the many services Women Supporting Women offers.

Local Services • Local Support

The themes for this year are recycling & best breast cancer message. Throughout the month, everyone is encouraged to vote in various categories by donating \$1.00 per vote. Additionally, a select panel of judges will also rate the submissions according to best recycled themed bra, best breast cancer message, and a special category that includes submissions from our DIY night at Hoppers! This event will kick off on May 1st, with our big reveal at the Centre at Salisbury, and will remain open until Tuesday, May 21st.

Submission forms and rules can be found by visiting the event page on Women Supporting Women's website at www.womensupportingwomen.org or by calling the office at 410.548.7880.

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2019

J-1 International Student Workforce Employer & Community Conference

The summer season is just around the corner - Are you prepared ??

Everything you need to know about the J-1 Visa Summer Work Travel Program from the people who know it best. Plus, you will have the chance to meet representatives from the sponsoring organizations that connect J-1 participants with employers

Join us for the International Student Workforce Conference to learn about these topics & more!

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

Owners, Managers, Human Resources & Payroll Personnel, Community Volunteers

LOCATION:

The Grand Hotel & Spa
21st St. Ocean City, MD 21842

DATE/TIME:

Thursday April 11th 2019 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Check-In 8:00
Conference Begins Promptly at 8:30

COST:

FREE! INCLUDES BREAKFAST

Topics & Discussions Regarding :

- Updates from the Department of State regarding program regulations & 2018 statistics
- Panel: Understanding Different World Views – Cultural Sensitivity – Workplace Etiquette
- 2019 Cultural Activities Schedule
- Answering Employer & Community Questions Regarding the Program

PLEASE RSVP NO LATER THAN **FRIDAY APRIL 5, 2019**

VISIT WWW.OCEANCITY.ORG (APRIL EVENTS) OR EMAIL LISA@OCEANCITY.ORG

or call the Chamber at 410-213-0144 ext. 104

**Sponsored by the Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce
Seasonal Workforce Committee**

DELMARVA POWER PRESENTS

33RD ANNUAL
GOLF
TOURNAMENT

MAY 2, 2019

REGISTRATION 12 PM
TEE 1 PM

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PLEASE VISIT THE EVENTS TAB AT
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