



August 2019

Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

News from... THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

New Allied Member DH Companies

Wrecktangle OCHMRA Discount
OC's newest attraction located at 3rd Street, the Woodward Wrecktangle, is extending a discount to OCHMRA members and to your guests! The customer code to use is "OC HMRA" at checkout which will provide a 15% discount. Information can be found on <https://www.woodwardoceancity.com/> Additionally, feel free to add a sticker promoting the "OC HMRA" code to the posters which have recently been distributed and also communicate to your guests!

Best Wishes to Liz

Six years ago, Liz Walk joined the office at the OCHMRA and we are sad to report that she will be leaving us in a week or so. Her happy demeanor and the endless conversations amongst the three generations in the office will surely be missed! She'll still be in the area and has landed a marketing position with the team at Salisbury University. Best wishes to Liz Walk!

Bikefest Volunteers

OC BikeFest rolls into town soon ~ this year it is slated for September 12-14 and once again, our Association will be financially sponsoring the wonderful event! We also oversee 2 bars at the inlet. Volunteers are needed to perform bar-back duty, (lifting & restocking – muscles needed). Call us if you are interested.....if you volunteer, you'll receive a weekend wristband which entitles you to live entertainment all weekend!

Remembering Steel Magnolia Kathleen Harman

In 1958, Bill & Kathleen Harman bought a half-block on 23rd Street and the ocean and built the Ocean Mecca Motel. The Harman's were keenly aware that Ocean City was an amazing place. Kathleen frequently gathered other business owners to discuss issues and advocate for their rights and in 1960 they formed the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association (OCHMRA). It was later officially reorganized and she became the first President of the OCHMRA in 1971. She also served as President of the Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce in 1973. She was the second recipient of the OCHMRA's Paul Hazard Award in 1976, in honor of her dedication to hospitality. In 1996, Kathleen was one of the six female pioneers of the industry that OCHMRA named as "Steel Magnolias." In 2017, Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan declared June 30th as Kathleen Harman Day. Additionally, she was an early member of the Junior Board at Peninsula Regional Medical Center, on the original board of the Ocean City Paramedic Foundation and an original member of ECHO which eventually led to Atlantic General Hospital's



Cont'd. ->

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Award ribbons: Coastal Style BEST WINNER 2017, Coastal Style BEST WINNER 2018, BEST OF COASTAL 2019



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construction.

In reviewing the minutes book from those early days of OCHMRA, the goals were as follows: to work with local Health Department to understand lodging & restaurant operations, to work with local and state officials to determine laws governing accommodations and restaurants, study methods for issuing liquor permits, to discuss room rates, create a publicity program to bring visitors to OC, to seek equitable taxation and benefits of such and to bring attention to the state on the economic value of OC. Kathleen's tenacity and spunkiness, coupled with her eagerness to foster tourism truly benefitted our Association, and so many in Ocean City.

Also from the minutes were these words from the inaugural meeting, where Kathleen stated "I believe much can be done to benefit our town and business through the strength generated by such a group." This statement is really the foundation of our Association. Her son, Shawn continues to play an integral role in our Board of



Welcome to **Kevin O'Dell**, the New General Manager of the **Richard Henson Hotel & Conference Center at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore**. Congrats to **BJ's** on the **Water** for their 40th Anniversary!



Condolences

Condolences to the **Kate Bunting Family Partnership** and the **Rothermel family** on the loss of **Susan Wheeler Brasher Davis**. Condolences to the team at **The Dispatch** on the loss of **Cindy Ward**.

Talking Points for Business Community Vibrio Bacteria News Coverage

IMPORTANT NOTE: The messages below are only for use with customers who directly ask questions (in-person, via email and on social media) about water safety concerns, due to recent coverage in People Magazine about incidents of the "flesh-eating bacteria" vibrio.



This coverage briefly mentioned Ocean City, but it used a crowded beach photo to accompany the story. Unfortunately, this poorly written report is unnecessarily inflammatory and paints a picture of our local waterways that is entirely inaccurate.

All questions from media should be directed to the town's communications manager, Jessica Waters, at 410-289-8967.

KEY MESSAGES FOR CUSTOMERS

- Vibrio is a type of bacteria that people are more likely to encounter in warmer brackish coastal bay waters, where fresh and salt water mix. It is not commonly contracted from the Ocean.
- There was a single case of suspected vibrio infection reported on social media earlier this year, involving someone who entered the waters of a coastal bay near Ocean City. However, to our knowledge, this case was not confirmed by the Health Department.
- There have been no reported cases of vibrio that occurred from entering the ocean in Ocean City as of 7/29/19.
- For the average person the risk of exposure to vibrio is low. Medical experts encourage anyone with an open wound or a compromised immune system to exhibit extra caution and to cover wounds with a waterproof bandage, shower after swimming in the bay or ocean and to seek medical care for any signs of illness or infection.
- To be clear, our beach and bays are safe, clean and excellent recreational areas for residents and visitors of Ocean City.



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THE DISH: Restaurant industry trends

By: Jay Baer

DON'T BE SCARED, BE PREPARED: HOW TO MANAGE A SOCIAL MEDIA CRISIS

The worst time to start planning for a crisis is when you're in the middle of one. Pre-crisis planning is key to successful social media crisis mitigation. This is lifeguard mode, and there are three elements to it.

1. Buy Some Binoculars — Set Up a Listening Program

It's hard to deal with a social media crisis you can't find. You can most effectively monitor conversations and stay aware of crises with a social media listening tool, but you can also monitor chatter by setting up keyword searches and Google Alerts. Technology is only good as its operators. You must have a listening protocol in your organization. Who is listening to social? When are they listening? For what are they listening? Who is covering nights and weekends?

2. Know What Is and Is Not a Crisis

Somebody sending a mean tweet or two about your company doesn't constitute a crisis. When the volume of public outcry starts gaining speed like a boulder down a mountain before your company has a chance to gather its druthers, then it's time to activate crisis mode. When identifying a crisis, here are three things to watch for:

A social media crisis is a decisive change from the norm.
A social media crisis has a potentially material impact on the company overall.
A social media crisis can indirectly impact more than one company.

3. Use an Internal Alert and Response Flowchart

Not all crises have the same response teams. The more acute the issue, the more senior the responder. Create a crisis flowchart that specifies who in your organization should be contacted in different scenarios. Make certain that your front line social media and customer service personnel keep detailed, up-to-date, contact information (including home phones) for all executives.

This is also where – depending on the size and complexity of your organization – you may want to work with legal to map out some processes and pre-approved messaging. Crisis role-playing and fire drills are exceptionally useful too.

You've completed your lifeguard training. Now, what happens when a crisis occurs?

Here are the 9 steps to successfully managing a social media crisis.

1. Pause All Outbound Messages

If there's even a hint of a crisis or public storm building, immediately pause all scheduled content queued to post to your social media channels. Notify any social care representatives to shift to monitor-only mode. This can prevent their innocent attempts to respond before the company is ready to make a statement.

2. Acknowledge An Issue

Your first response should always be "yes, we realize something has happened" even if you have ZERO answers. This will stem the tide

of "hey company, did you know?" messages, and give the response team a chance to activate and gather information. Respond in the place where the crisis first occurs. If it starts on Facebook, post your first response to Facebook. Then determine where to go next.

3. Create a Crisis FAQ Page

Determine where the focal point will be for all communications about the crisis. Create a landing page or microsite on the website, or designate a single social media channel and put all the information about the crisis in one place. This allows you to respond to questions with a link instead of an answer. This saves time and prevents misinterpretation of your responses (especially on Twitter). Update all bio links to point to the crisis FAQ.

This Crisis FAQ should include:

- Acknowledgment of the crisis
- Details about the occurrence
- Photos and/or videos, if available
- How the company found out
- Who was alerted when and how
- Specific actions taken in response
- Real or potential effects
- Steps taken to prevent future occurrence
- Contact information for real people at the company

It probably goes without saying, but speed matters. What we ask our clients here at Convince & Convert is simple yet difficult. "Can you get a video online from your CEO within 4 hours, any time of the day or night, from anywhere in the world?" If the answer is no, you aren't fully prepared.

4. Start Responding in Social Media

Once the information is collected and a central FAQ hub is designated, it's time to roll up the sleeves and let people know you're in for the long haul. Publish to all active social media accounts a post that identifies:

- A summary of the situation
- An immediate call to action
- Link to FAQ hub for further updates
- Relevant hashtags to help disseminate info
- Safety tips or checklists, if applicable
- Estimated time of interruption or event

Use boosted posts or paid amplification if it's necessary for the post to reach specific audiences ASAP. Choose a limited duration ad or boost to reach the maximum amount of people in as little time as possible.

As the crisis continues, keep updated posts together in social media.

Use Twitter threads to connect new posts to old posts and use hashtags consistently to spread the messages broadly. Update existing posts (from the top down) rather than create new posts on Facebook. Use Instagram Stories rather than the main feed to show

[Read More ...](#)



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REST EASY: Lodging industry trends

MORE THAN HALF OF AMERICANS OPT FOR VACATIONS SHORTER THAN FOUR DAYS

Sharing economy services are cooling off with Millennial travelers, just when they're heating up for Baby Boomers. As the 2019 summer vacation season kicks off, trust and likelihood to use these services have changed significantly since 2017, according to the fifth annual Allianz Travel Insurance Sharing Economy Index released by Allianz Global Assistance.

Overall, the likelihood to use sharing economy services is down. About four out of ten (41 percent) of Americans responded they are either "very" or "somewhat" likely to use them during their 2019 summer travels, compared to 47 percent in 2018 and 50 percent in 2017.

Gen Xers are driving the largest downward trend in usage, with 41 percent saying they will use sharing economy services this summer (down from 60 percent two years ago). Although fewer Millennials—63 percent—say they will use sharing economy services this summer (down from 77 percent two years ago), they still make up the largest generation of users. Meanwhile, Baby Boomers are on the upward trend, with 24 percent saying they will use these services, climbing from 19 percent two years ago.

Despite demographic shifts, the market still remains strong for its core customers. Travelers who are younger (i.e. Millennials), male, and higher income earners (above \$50,000) are significantly more likely than their counterparts to use sharing economy services. One reason for lower usage may be the overall decline in levels of trust: the survey found that while Millennials are the most likely to trust sharing economy services (71 percent) that figure is down from 76 percent last year and 83 percent two years ago. Fifty-five percent of Gen X'ers (down from 68 percent last year and 69 percent two years ago) consider sharing economy services trustworthy, while 44 percent of Baby Boomers (down from 46 percent last year and 47 percent two years ago) are likely to trust them.

More established travel and hospitality companies are entering the sharing economy market, promising higher quality, more consistent experiences—often by providing new or differentiated products. For

instance, Marriott recently announced a six-month trial with Hostmaker, a London-based homestay property management company. Other major hotel brand names like Hilton, Hyatt and Wyndham are also considering investments in similar home sharing businesses. These kinds of partnerships have the potential to convert customers seeking the authenticity and privacy of a home rental with assurances of the quality of experience, backed by a trusted brand name.

"When we created this index five years ago, we knew that trust would be crucial to the health of the sharing economy. The simultaneous drops in trust and usage highlight the main challenge that players providing sharing economy services will need to address," said Daniel Durazo, director of marketing & communications at Allianz Global Assistance. "As travelers seek more consistent, reliable travel experiences with high quality customer service, travel insurance delivers by providing peace of mind and 24/7 global assistance when unexpected events derail their travel plans."

2019 VACATION CONFIDENCE INDEX: SHARING ECONOMY

To what extent do you trust "sharing economy" services such as Airbnb, HomeAway, Uber, Lyft, etc? Would you say you find them...

	2019	2018	2017
Very trustworthy	12%	12%	17%
Somewhat trustworthy	44%	50%	48%
Not very trustworthy	18%	15%	13%
Not at all trustworthy	11%	5%	5%
Don't know	16%	18%	17%
How likely are you to use a "sharing economy" service like Airbnb, HomeAway, Uber, Lyft, etc., during your summer vacation this year?			
Very likely	19%	19%	26%
Somewhat likely	23%	28%	25%
Not very likely	25%	25%	23%
Not at all likely	34%	28%	27%

The Sharing Economy Index has been conducted each summer since 2015 by national polling firm Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Allianz Global Assistance.



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Expect major delays in both directions as project begins this fall on Westbound Bay Bridge

his fall, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) will begin a \$27 million deck rehabilitation on the westbound span of the William Preston Lane Jr. Memorial (Bay) Bridge (US 50/301). As part of the two-year project, the right lane of the westbound span will close 24/7 from October to April during fall 2019/spring 2020 and fall 2020/spring 2021.

“Even though traffic volumes are lowest at the bridge during these months, drivers should expect major delays, even during normal conditions, and especially during holidays, traffic incidents and inclement weather,” said MDTA Executive Director Jim Ports. “We’re asking our customers for their patience and understanding and to bear with us during this necessary work to preserve this critical connection between Maryland’s shores.”

Beginning after Labor Day and continuing through Sept. 30, the westbound right lane will be closed continuously during weekdays from 9 a.m. Mondays through 6 a.m. Fridays. The long-term 24/7 right lane closure will occur from Oct. 1, 2019, through April 16, 2020, but will be lifted temporarily during the Thanksgiving holiday. Then from April 16 through May 20, 2020, the westbound right lane again will be closed continuously during weekdays from 9 a.m. Mondays through 6 a.m. Fridays. All lanes will reopen during the summer travel

season when traffic volumes significantly increase. The MDTA will repeat the same schedule during fall 2020/spring 2021.



Two-way traffic operations will NOT go into effect during the 24/7 lane closures because concrete barrier will be in place with reduced lane widths. The MDTA will use two-way traffic for emergencies only. MDTA staff is coordinating with the local school systems, emergency responders and other partners. In addition, an outreach campaign with paid media ads and grassroots efforts will begin in August.

Fully funded by tolls, the MDTA's \$27 million project will replace the bridge deck surface of the westbound span right lane. Work also includes making deck repairs, sealing the bridge deck and replacing existing lane-use signal gantries and steel rail posts. Wagman Heavy Civil, Inc., of York, Pa., is performing the work. The project is expected to be complete in August 2021.



The Maryland Tourism Coalition and
Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations
Invite you to a Membership Appreciation & Legislative Reception

**Wednesday, August 14th, 4-6 p.m.
Princess Royale Resort Hotel
9100 Coastal Hwy, Ocean City, MD 21842**

Questions: Contact Executive Director Ruth Toomey at 336-254-4648.
Sponsorships available. Contact Ruth for more details.

PO Box 340 • Ocean City, MD 21843 • 410-289-6733 • www.ocvisitor.com



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*Out and About with
OCHMRA*



After months of planning and preparation, the Ocean City Green Team launched the community's first source reduction program in the town.

Ribbon Cutting for the new Omega Eats, located at 2001 Philadelphia Ave. Congrats!





BE A PART OF THE ARTS

The OC Center for the Arts is **free** and **open daily**: Mon-Fri 9am-4pm, Sat-Sun 11am-4pm. Galleries feature artwork by local artists, plus two classrooms, pottery studio, and gift shop.



FIRST FRIDAYS *opening receptions*

Every First Fri. of the month, 5-7pm. **FREE!**

Meet the artists and enjoy refreshments to celebrate the new artwork on display.



\$5 FILM NIGHT *independent films*

Third Sat. of the month, 7pm. **\$5 admission.**

Watch films by local and international filmmakers. Meet the filmmakers and stay for the after-film discussion.



ORIGINALS ONLY *live music & comedy*

Last Wed. of the month, 7pm. **FREE!**

Hear live original music and standup comedy in a coffeehouse setting. Free coffee.

PHOTO SHOW BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS #j1photoshow



Share your view of **Ocean City, MD!** Send us 1-3 photos from your summer here in OC, then attend the opening reception Fri. Sept 6th from 5-7pm to see everyone's unique perspectives.

Email jpg, your name, and country you're visiting from to gallery manager
Katie Brown: katie@artleagueofoceancity.org

Photos due by: **Friday Aug 30, 2019**
Exhibit on display: **Sept 6-8, 2019**

Located on 94th St. bayside in Ocean City, MD

For more info: www.artleagueofoceancity.org or 410-524-9433



