



December 2016

# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

## News from... THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Welcome New Members

**Active**  
Real Hospitality Group

**Allied**  
Delaware Mattress  
Maryland Plastics

### Holiday Dinner

Clarion's Crystal Ballroom will be the place to be on December 15th as our members gather to celebrate the Holiday season and enjoy one another's company. Lots of holiday cheer will be in the room as anyone who brings a toy is given a chance to win a door prize! Stocking stuffer and small toys are being collected for the N.O.E.L. (Nothing Other than Eating & Loving) dinner at St. Paul's by the Sea on Christmas. Hope you can join us!

### Legionella Seminar

Anyone who missed the Legionella seminar missed a plethora of information. If you'd like to have the handouts emailed to you, let us know!

### Trade Expo

Mark your calendars for our 43rd Annual Expo, March 5 & 6. We are currently working on a terrific line-up of educational sessions for our Trade Expo, stay tuned!

## UPDATE ON OVERTIME RULES

*A message from Doug Desmarais, Smith & Downey, P.A.*

Although I trust that you have already been made aware of last week's hold on the DOL's implementation of the enhanced "salary basis test", I wanted to alert you to the following:

As we previously reported, the DOL recently effectively doubled (to \$47,476) the minimum annual salary needed for an employee to qualify as exempt from the FLSA's overtime requirements under the "white collar exemptions."

Yesterday, a federal judge stayed the implementation of those changes. Unfortunately, there have been suggestions, in some quarters, that this judicial stay reduces the pressure on employers to ensure that they are properly determining which employees are eligible and not eligible for overtime pay.

The challenging element of the white collar exemptions to the overtime rules – and the one that is the subject of considerable and growing litigation against employers – is not the application of the dollar limit for the salary basis exemption but the often difficult determination of whether a particular employee is performing the kind of high-end duties that are necessary in order to be exempt.

(Continued next page)

DELMARVA POWER COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAM

## CASH INCENTIVES ON MANY ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

Whether your business is large or small, we can help you reduce energy and save money through our energy savings program for businesses.

- **GENEROUS CASH INCENTIVES THAT COVER UP TO 80%** of the cost for many installed energy efficiency improvements including lighting, heating and cooling systems, commercial refrigeration, kitchen equipment and more
- **MULTI-DWELLING QUICK ENERGY CHECK-UP** offers an energy assessment for dwelling units in hotels and motels. Also, we will include the installation of recommended low-cost energy efficiency measures like LEDs, low-flow showerheads and smart strips – all at no charge.

Start saving money and energy to make your business more profitable. **Call 866-353-5799** or visit [Delmarva.com/Business](http://Delmarva.com/Business).



An Exelon Company

This program supports the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act. Delmarva Power C&I Energy Savings Program is available to Delmarva Power commercial customers in Maryland only.



# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

Therefore, employers should not let up on their continuing efforts to ensure that they have correctly determined whether their employees do or do not pass the duties test, and their efforts to document fully the basis for those determinations.

*Please contact Doug Desmarais ([ddesmarais@smithdowney.com](mailto:ddesmarais@smithdowney.com), 410-321-9348) if we can be of any assistance.*

Welcome to **Deb Brune**, who has joined the team at **State Ventures, OceanCity.com/ShoreCraftbeer.com**. Congrats to **Annette Selzer**, who has been promoted to Ocean City District Sales Manager for **US Foods**. Also, a very happy retirement to **Drew Blagus, US Foods**. **Applied Bank** recently completed the closing of \$21 million construction and permanent mortgage transaction for the new **Hyatt Place Hotel** in Ocean City, MD. Best Wishes to **Brian and Josephine McCarthy** as they have sold the **Atlantic House B & B** to spend more time with their grandchildren. Welcome to **Josh Knupp**, who is signing on with the **Delmarva Shorebirds** as their new group sales manager. The principals of **Inns of Ocean City, LLC**, owner of the **Residence Inn by Marriott** project at 300 Seabay Lane, have announced that construction is resuming on the 150 room hotel and will be open for the 2017 season.



## The Millennial Brief on Travel & Lodging

We know that millennials are highly experiential consumers, placing a higher value on experiences than products. In fact, one out of four millennials would rather spend money on a desirable experience or event instead of buying a product or service, according to Eventbrite. These experiences range in magnitude and price but all have one thing in common: the experience

Millennials are looking for is not a commodity product. It is not something that can be packaged and sold on a store shelf or purchased in an online checkout cart. We've found that millennials over index when it comes to a desire for acquiring experiential capital and collecting memories worth sharing with their networks.

When it comes to travel planning, this group is largely motivated by the collective experiential value of the trip. However, they see decisions related to destinations, accommodations and excursions as individual pieces to a much larger puzzle.

Millennials are less interested in packaged travel reminiscent of yesteryear's family vacation to the beach and instead desire to engage in immersive, interactive and hands-on opportunities. After all, millennials view traveling as vital to the development of their personal narrative and identity, so it makes sense that they want more out of a trip than a great tan. They are also reintroducing the trend of food tourism by planning trips with local cultural cuisine in mind. Nearly three-fourths of millennials seek unique restaurants and dining experiences when deciding where to travel. **To read the entire, informative brief, click here.**

## 2016 Economic Development Summit



Worcester County Economic Development proudly presents the 2016 Economic Development Summit, in conjunction with the Ocean City Economic Development Committee. Save the date for this premier event at the Ocean City Performing Arts Center, December 14. Registration with light refreshments begins at 8:30am, program 9am-Noon. This Summit will feature economist Anirban Basu with an economic update for Worcester County and the Lower Eastern Shore, plus an update on the status of Natural Gas Extension in Worcester County. To register for this free event, contact John Azzolini at [JAzzolini@co.worcester.md.us](mailto:JAzzolini@co.worcester.md.us).



## OCHMRA SPOTLIGHT: WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO



HOTEL • MOTEL • RESTAURANT • ASSOCIATION • INC.

As we reflect back on 2016, we thought we'd remind everyone of the purpose of our Association. Initially created in 1960, and later re-organized officially in 1971, our Association was formed when a small group of business people felt the need to form an organization in which they could exchange ideas and information, discuss and solve legislative issues and be a central source for all things hospitality. The OCHMRA is non-profit trade group and is not subsidized by any state, county, or city grants. We support ourselves through annual membership dues, brochure and banner ads and profits from our annual Trade Expo.

Three levels of membership are within the OCHMRA: **Active** - hotels, motels, or apartments with more than 25 rooms and restaurants with more than 50 seats; **Associate** - motels, beds & breakfasts, or apartments with between 10 and 25 rooms and restaurants with less than 50 seats; **Allied** - trade related businesses that supply products and services to the foodservice and lodging industry. Our office considers it's most important task to be that of "people-connectors" as our goal is to connect our members and foster their support of one another.

Currently, we produce five brochures; an Accommodations guide, a Dining guide, a Spring, Summer and a Fall/Winter Calendar of Events brochure. As a benefit of membership, hotels, motels, and apartments, receive a complimentary listing in the Accommodations Guide. Likewise, the restaurant members receive a complimentary listing in the Dining Guide. Members may purchase advertising blocks in the Spring, Summer and Fall/Winter brochures.

Our office has a unique relationship with the Town of Ocean City and the Department of Tourism. While the Town advertises the tourism hotline, 1-800-OC-OCEAN, our office answers the Lodging extension 2 to assist visitors with travel planning. Additionally, we also staff the Lodging & Restaurant Help Desk in the Visitor Center during the summer. This is done at no cost to the visitor and with no commission kickback to our office; simply our way of connecting our members to visitors.

Each year our Association holds its annual Spring Trade Expo in March where we bring together hospitality buyers and sellers from around the region. This year we celebrated our 42nd Annual Expo. We had 404 booths and over 5,000 attendees. Members of our Association are invited to attend five dinner meetings (in the off season) where they will be enlightened by a variety of different speakers. Finally, our Association provides the legislative and educational opportunities for our members to remain informed on current news and events.

Governing our Association is our Board of Directors, and leading our Association is the Executive Director joined by a full-time Event Manager and 3-part-time Tourism Coordinators. Without the volunteer efforts of our Board, we would not be a success. Their time, dedication, and knowledge of the industry is unsurpassed.





# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

## CUSTOMER SERVICE



By: Dr. George Ojie-Ahamiojie

Department Head and Associate Professor, Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Management, Wor-Wic Community College

### Customer service or customer experience?

Every business says it provides customer or good customer service. Well, I will agree with all the businesses that they provide customer service. However, what you want to provide is not customer service, but “customer experience”. I will define customer experience as “the customer’s total interaction with the hospitality company’s employees, services and products, and purchases”. To be able to provide “customer experience”, the company will need to know what the customer needs, and what the customer expects the company to know.

### What do the customers need?

Every hospitality company must anticipate customer needs and be able to deliver at an immediate moment. One thing the customer wants is for the company to be active listener. Listening is a key component of communication, yet the most underrated. It is important to listen to the customers when they speak. Acknowledge the request or complaint of the customer. Do not only listen when the feedback is good; listen when it is bad. A bad feedback is a free gift from the customer. It tells the company what it is not doing well, and allowing the opportunity to fix the issue before it becomes a problem. Another customers’ need is to be treated special. What does it take to make a customer feel special? NOTHING! If the customer is a regular and you know the customer’s name, use as often as possible. If you know their usual orders (food and drinks), ask if they want the usual. Or even better, start by saying “I know that you like your usual special, but let me tell you about what we have as specials today...” This makes the customer feel good and wants to follow your lead and try your recommendations.

### What does the customer expect the company to know?

The customers expect a lot from the company, but not a lot that the company cannot provide or produce. The customers expect this to be as simple as having the interest of the customers. This means that the company should know what the customer needs and be able to provide. Simple things such as room change request, seat change in the restaurant, and special orders and food allergies. Customers want the employees to be confident and competent. Learn and know the product and services provided by the company, and sell them with poise and proficiency. Customers want the company to be honest and truthful in their promises advertising and statements. Simply put, customers want the company to stand by their words. Finally, everybody likes surprise. Finds ways to surprise the guests/customers. Surprise customers/guests with a free appetizers, drinks, or desserts, when celebrating a special occasion. The guests/customers will appreciate these little gestures.

At Wor-Wic Community College, Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Management Program, we teach our students to provide customer/guest experience. Our hospitality students go through series of tests, skills, competencies, roleplays, and presentations which give them the ability to provide clearly outstanding customer/guest experiences. These assessments also enhance the students chances of success in the industry. **We need employers: For any openings in your company, please email it to [lbragg@worwic.edu](mailto:lbragg@worwic.edu), and copy me at [gojie-ahamiojie@worwic.edu](mailto:gojie-ahamiojie@worwic.edu).**

Until next time, let the muzik play.....



# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

## AGH'S 23RD ANNUAL PENGUIN SWIM NEW YEARS DAY PRINCESS ROYALE - 91ST ST.



The Penguin Swim is one of AGH's largest fundraisers in support of the hospital's mission to create a coordinated care delivery system that will provide access to quality care, personalized service, and education to improve individual and community health. Each year, hundreds of Penguins raise funds to help the hospital provide the excellent quality care our community depends on. Individual and Team fundraising efforts by Penguin Swim participants enable Atlantic General to continue to provide that care, but they can't do it alone!

We invite you to become a sponsor of the 23rd Annual Penguin Swim! Our sponsors contribute greatly to the event's success! All sponsors are listed on our event website and AGH Facebook pages, as well as on a sponsor board at the event, and mentioned in all press and social media up to and following the event. All sponsorships include ads in our Event Program that will be distributed to all participants. With your support, this year's Penguin Swim will be the most successful yet!

If you would like to be a sponsor, please contact us at 410-641-9671 or [penguinswim@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:penguinswim@atlanticgeneral.org).



## OC Wins Sustainable Maryland Award for 1st time

The Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland announced that The Town of Ocean City was one of 14 Maryland municipalities honored at the Sustainable Maryland

Awards Ceremony at the Maryland Municipal League's annual Fall Conference in Solomons, Maryland.

Highlights of Ocean City's accomplishments include:

- As part of the Shore Power Project, completed a Municipal Carbon Footprint for the Town in 2015.
- Designated a 2015 Tree City USA, which recognized the Town for meeting the program's four requirements of having: a tree board, a tree care ordinance and an annual community forest budget of at least \$2. Per-capita, and an Arbor Day observation and proclamation.
- Developed a Homeowner's Guide to the Coastal Bays, including topics such as Green Gardening and Native Planting, recycling rules, and healthy housekeeping practices.
- Conducted energy audits on a dozen town buildings in 2015.
- Established a volunteer-based Dune Patrol, where residents

clean and inspect their local dunes year-round and are part of bi-annual beach clean ups.

According to Ocean City Mayor Richard Meehan, "We are surrounded by natural beauty in Ocean City, with pristine beaches and our breathtaking ocean and bay. Our community, and specifically the town's Green Team, has remained committed to preserving the natural beauty that exists in Ocean City by taking steps to be a more sustainable community. Receiving the Sustainable Maryland Certified Award was a team effort and an accomplishment that we are very proud of. As a town, and a community, we will remain committed to meeting our resort town needs, while also refusing to compromise the integrity of our community for future generations."

"Every year, the Environmental Finance Center is proud to welcome more municipalities to the Sustainable Maryland community," said Dan Nees, director of the Environmental Finance Center. "The incredible growth of this program demonstrates that so many communities across the state are dedicated to healthier, more sustainable futures. The shared commitment of local elected officials, municipal staff and Green Team volunteers, in these diverse towns and cities, are a testament to Maryland's vision of resilience."



# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

## NOVEMBER DINNER MEETING 2016

Photos by KRR Photography

[Click here for all the photos!](#)



Earl Conley, Bank of Ocean City, Ashley Lang, Bank of OC Tres Lynch Scholarship Recipient, Susan Jones, OCHMRA, John Lynch, Commander Hotel



Mayor Meehan & Liz Fitzsimmons, Maryland Director of Tourism, Film & Arts



Hope Thomas, Kasi Queen & Melissa Esham, Atlantic/Smith Cropper & Deeley



Jaimie Albright, Planet Maze, Paul Kahn & Felecia Benzakan, Beach Plaza Hotel, Renee Seiden, Clarion Fontainebleau



Carolyn Kennington & Laurie Wendler, Senior Cigars, Lauren Taylor, Captain's Table, Patti Miller, Peck Miller Group

PO Box 340 • Ocean City, MD 21843 • 410-289-6733 • [www.ocvisitor.com](http://www.ocvisitor.com)