



July 2018

# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

## News from... THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Minimum Wage Increase

As a reminder, the MD minimum wage increases on July 1st to \$10.10/hr. If you have not made adjustments, keep in mind there are law firms who actively seek disgruntled employees via social media. From the MD DLLR website: Most employees must be paid the Maryland State Minimum Wage Rate. Tipped Employees (earning more than \$30 per month in tips): must earn the State Minimum Wage Rate per hour. Employers must pay at least \$3.63 per hour. This amount plus tips must equal at least the State Minimum Wage Rate. Amusement and Recreational Establishments (who meet certain requirements): must pay employees at least 85% of the State Minimum Wage Rate or \$8.59 (for new \$10.10min wage), whichever is higher. Employees under 20 years of age: must earn at least 85% of the State Minimum Wage Rate for the first 6 months of employment. Additionally, employers are required to have the Minimum Wage Poster; free posters are at this link: <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/wages/minimumwagelaw.pdf> Complete information, including the exceptions, can be found on the MD DLLR site: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/wages/wagehrfacts.shtml>

### Support Allied Members!

Founded in 1971, our local non-profit trade Association has been in existence for 46 years! The original founders, many of whom are still in operation, have always made it a point to support our "Allied" members. These Allied members are businesses who sell and service the hospitality industry. Given today's climate, it is critically important that we maintain our local connections and support our Allied Members who help to support our Association. The Guide features businesses by category – check it out here.



## HOTEL WEEK IS COMING UP!

Capture the end of season business by participating in Hotel Week! This promotion is targeted to reach visitors who do not return to school until after Labor Day. Running August 26 through September 9 (excluding Labor Day weekend), this promotion features Beach Bargains & Free Nights. Beach Bargains are 15% off 3-nt, 20% off 4-nt

or 25% off 5-nt stays and Free Nights are stay 3, get 4th free, stay 4, get 5th free or stay 5, and get the 6th. You can choose to offer one option or as many as you would like. And, if you would like to exclude Friday/Saturday, feel free to do so! This is a great way to generate mid-week business as the Town of OC tourism department helps us push this out to thousands of potential visitors. Be sure to sign up to participate! If you'd like to take part in this free, member only promotion, email us today – [inquire@ocvisitor.com](mailto:inquire@ocvisitor.com) or call 410.289.6733.

**DINE UNITED OC**  
UNITED WAY OF THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE  
JUNE 1 - SEPT 15

WE'RE BACK!!  
This summer, give back to your community by doing what you love! Dine at restaurants in OC supporting United Way and help local residents in need.

PRESENTED BY

## PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY MINDED RESTAURANTS

ONE TOWN. ONE SUMMER. THOUSANDS OF LIVES CHANGED.  
Visit our website for restaurant special details. [www.unitedway4us.org](http://www.unitedway4us.org)  
#DINEUNITEDOC



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## OCHMRA SPOTLIGHT: GARVEY HEIDERMAN



Growing up polishing silverware at the age of 6 truly means you are immersed in a family business. That's how our newest Board member, Garvey Heiderman, got his start in the restaurant industry. Back in the late 70's, Garvey's father Tom, came to the beach from Baltimore, along with his mother Mary, (originally from Wisconsin) and opened The Hobbit Restaurant. There was no turning back for the Heiderman family in their quest to create a fine dining spot enjoyed by both locals and visitors alike.

After graduating from Worcester Prep, Garvey attended University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia where he majored in Sociology and played lacrosse. The art of customer service, combined with Garvey's goal oriented mentality, led Garvey to become the Managing Partner for The Hobbit. While his parents have retired to Florida, his mom's homemade crushed walnut, chocolate pudding and cream cheese dessert remains a staple on the menu. In his

rare spare time, you'll find Garvey traveling, biking around OC, doing puzzles and spending time with friends.

## BEWARE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE SYNDROME

By: Dr. George Ojje-Ahamiojie

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



The busy season has started, customers are frequenting your establishments and operations, employees are working long hours, and business is booming. Should you be worried about anything? The answer is yes. Be worried about customer service syndrome. Customer service syndrome is a wide variety of negative behaviors that customers can exhibit voluntarily outside of purchasing, that may result in financial loss for you and lowering employees' self-esteem. The negative behaviors are disrespect, disobedience, dishonesty, destruction, and disengagement.

### Disrespect

This is where some customers have little regards or respect for employees or other customers. They believe that they can criticize any service if they feel it is below their expectations without regards to who is the service provider. Some snap their fingers to get attention because they think they have the right to do so. What empowers these customers? The term "the customer is always right," or "the customer pays our salaries." Well, I believe that you can do without these type of customers and keep your employees and other good customers happy.

### Disobedience

This is when customers feel the power to do anything they want and would not listen to any manager's explanation. These type of customers would not move their vehicles forward in the drive through until they get their order correct. This may even happen after telling the customer that an employee will bring the order to them outside. Be calm and handle these customers with care; the hassle is not worth it.

### Dishonesty

This refers to lying and deceitful about service and even the product. These customers will lie about their wait time in order to be seated on time. Some may eat much of their meal before complaining about the quality of the food. Some may complain about their room to get a free room, discount or an upgrade. Train your service employees to be on the lookout and use specific tools to track these service touches.

### Destruction

This is when customers write false comments on social media and damage the reputation of your organization. Some may even damage hotel rooms, write graffiti or smear the walls, dump food or beverage on the floor, or soil the bedsheets. You should not allow these customers to trash your property or operations with their acts; these acts cost money. Whenever you respond to the customers, do so diplomatically, and be firm at the same time.

### Disengagement

This is when customers do not honor their part of the bargain. This includes not showing up for restaurant reservation because they may have booked at two or three restaurants because they cannot determine what they would like to eat and where. Develop and implement a method that works for your establishment to prevent any loss of revenue due to no-shows.

While you are in the hospitality and service business, you should also remember that you have other stakeholders who are loyal to your brand and respectful of your employees. Identify and take care of these loyal customers, while properly handling those with customer service syndrome. Until next time, the muzik play.....



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**Paul Kahn** has joined the team at **Princess Bayside** with **Real Hospitality Group**. Congrats to **Liv Momme**, who has joined the team as Marketing Director at **Taustin Properties**. Welcome to **Taryn Bradley**, who is joining **Worcester County Tourism**. Welcome to **Samantha Shenton**, Director of Sales, and **Patti Shea**, Senior Sales Manager, **Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott**. Welcome to **Kathy Enste**, Director of Sales, **Comfort Inn Gold Coast**. Welcome **Stacey McMichael**, who joins the United Way of the Eastern Shore.

## Condolences

Condolences to the **Wilde Family, Best Motels**, on loss of patriarch, Hugh Wilde. Condolences to **Marie Hopper**, on the passing of her mother. Condolences to **Nornie Bunting, Admiral Motel**, on the loss of grandfather, who was owner of legendary English Diner.



## OCEAN CITY NATURAL GAS: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?

By Alex Paciga,  
Communication Specialist

Natural gas is now available in the town of Ocean City from the inlet to 42nd Street bayside and oceanside. The utility is currently in the process of converting oil and propane customers to natural gas. The process to convert the entirety of Ocean City from propane and oil to natural gas is ongoing, and will take a few years. However, Ocean City businesses in the conversion area have the immediate opportunity to save significantly, perhaps up to 80% on the natural gas commodity.

APPI Energy, an Allied Member of OCHMRA, worked with one member restaurant to reduce their natural gas expenses, saving them \$27,000 annually. The process is simple, requiring as little as three easy steps, and involves no upfront cost or capital from you. APPI Energy will guide you through this process, ensuring you find the best available prices from multiple suppliers, and presenting these options in a concise proposal for your final review.

Here's how it works:

**Step 1:** Obtain and forward a full bill copy from your utility for all service locations that are currently active for natural gas, oil, or propane. Invoices will be reviewed to determine eligibility and volume requirements. A minimum annual usage of 1500 dekatherms (Dth) of natural gas is required to secure pricing from a third-party supplier.

**Step 2:** Sign a letter of authorization (LOA) on your company's letterhead. APPI Energy can provide you with a template LOA.

**Step 3:** Provide these two items to the experts at APPI Energy, who will navigate the lengthy pricing process on your behalf.

For more information about this opportunity, please call APPI Energy at 410-749-5507 or 1-800-520-6685. APPI Energy will help determine your business's eligibility for shopping the natural gas commodity, and provide competitive supplier pricing. We can also be reached via our contact us page.

For more information on APPI Energy, please visit our website at [www.appienergy.com](http://www.appienergy.com)



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## REST EASY: *Lodging industry trends*

By: Daniel Cline

### CAPTURING REAL-TIME GUEST FEEDBACK AND SERVICE RECOVERY

Most hotel managers look at post-stay reviews and survey feedback as a source of truth on how frontline teams are performing. Whether it's positive or negative, most hotels are now savvy enough to monitor feedback from post-stay review sites like TripAdvisor and Google. This feedback is critical and can help hotels identify important trends, instances around service issues, punch-list items for property improvement, and more.

Regarding service issues, how are hotels looking at capturing feedback in real time—while the guest is still on property? How can managers measure overall sentiment in real time and action negative feedback immediately? Whether it's during-stay or post-stay feedback, hotels must have a plan to address issues immediately. If acquiring feedback during a guest's stay, make sure there is case management to resolve the issue in a timely fashion. If looking at post stay reviews, make sure to give individualized and sincere responses online.

#### Why capture feedback?

- Improve customer service
- Reward excellent service
- Turn a detractor into a promoter

From a personnel and training standpoint, measuring feedback will help identify won and missed opportunities. Hoteliers can train staff better and reward staff for their service recovery efforts while elevating overall net promoter scores.

For the potential detractors of a hotel and brand, the ideal situation is that an unhappy guest is identified early in their stay and service recovery is executed before they leave. Generally, travelers who write reviews will reward hotels with positive post stay remarks when there is a quick and easy resolution to their issue.

#### How to capture feedback?

- Omnichannel and frictionless
- Without being obtrusive
- Keep it simple

The method for capturing real time feedback varies.

It can be long-form post stay surveys, phone calls to the room, SMS communications, via social, via email, QR codes, WiFi, and good ol' paper comment cards. Depending on what a hotel deploys, it's important to ensure that these methods are omnichannel, unobtrusive, and integrated. With an omnichannel feedback strategy, guests have various ways to connect. It's important not to limit the hotel's communication channels and to select the ones that make sense for the property, location, and what geographies guests come from.

Software should help with the management of communication, but from a consumer standpoint, the less friction, the more likely they will give feedback. The platform that is utilized should be unobtrusive to the guest as well. Simplicity is important because people have limited attention spans. Long-form surveys lead to survey fatigue which is not a good place to be in when trying to build a program that relies on actionable and immediate feedback. Keep it short and simple.

#### What to do with feedback?

- React immediately
- Build customer insights
- React immediately and measure response time.

With a low response rate or even no response at all, the guest's problem could become a reputation problem for the hotel later on. Feedback during the guest's stay must be addressed immediately, tracked through case management, and integrated with the hotel's other systems. Having a system that is simple and made accessible for frontline team members will help automate and scale service recovery quickly.

With digital feedback, marketers can analyze past complaints and positive sentiment which can shed light on customer preferences, likes and dislikes, and more. Feedback can be used to build deeper customer insights and can open a new way of personalizing the guest experience. Personalizing a hotel's guest experience will help address another key focus at hotels—building and maintaining guest loyalty.



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**MARYLAND  
TOURISM  
COALITION**

## *New Executive Director of Maryland Tourism Coalition Announced*

The Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) announces that Ruth Toomey is its new executive director, effective June 1, 2018. Toomey, a longtime professional in the Greater Baltimore/Anne Arundel County hospitality

industry, has been an active member and board member of the tourism/hospitality trade organization since 2009. She most recently served as MTC's Membership chair.

"Tourism is one of Maryland's top 10 economic engines and MTC needs a strong professional to guide our members in advocacy and policy to support an industry that employs nearly 150,000 Marylanders," said Michael Haynie, MTC Board chair. "Ruth knows this community from the small business perspective, as well as the large retail perspective, and has been committed to MTC's success for nearly 10 years. She is an asset to our mission and we look forward to growing our organization under her leadership."



Ms. Toomey, who most recently served as director of Sales & Marketing for An Extraordinary Limousine in Glen Burnie, received her degree from High Point University in North Carolina. Prior to this position, she served as the Guest Services manager for one of the largest retail outlets in the region, Arundel Mills. She has more than 24 years of hospitality and customer service management experience, focused on marketing and communications.

"Serving as executive director is a tremendous opportunity to share my passion for promoting and supporting the wonderful small businesses that make up the backbone of the tourism industry in Maryland," said Ms. Toomey. "I look forward to expanding MTC's advocacy efforts across the state to help attract even more tourists to every corner of Maryland and grow this \$17 billion economy."

Ms. Toomey was raised and currently lives in Glen Burnie, Md. and is a graduate of Archbishop Spalding High School.

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**Help Us  
LIGHT UP  
DOWNTOWN  
for the Holidays!**

Sponsorships at the Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum Levels Available  
Call 410-289-1413 for details.

OCDC Ocean City

## **LIGHT UP DOWNTOWN**

As part of the Light Up OC program to bring Christmas lights back to Ocean City, the Downtown Association, in cooperation with the Town of Ocean City, has identified 125 ft. of space along the west side of the Inlet Parking Lot to be used as a sight for large holiday displays. The displays can be easily viewed by car, making it less weather dependent. The displays require 15' to 35' each, depending on design, and the estimated cost is \$10,000-\$15,000. All displays can be custom designed and should have a holiday theme, but can reflect your particular business or interest as well. Using funds previously collected through the program, the Downtown Association will provide matching funds, up to \$5,000 on approved displays on a first come, first served, basis. Please contact Kevin Gibbs, 410-430-4320.

TITLE SPONSOR



9th Annual

# DIAKONIA

## Golf Tournament

Wednesday, July 25, 2018

Ocean City Golf Club  
Seaside Course



Lunch begins at 11:30  
Shotgun Start at 1pm  
Captain's Choic Scramble  
(Mulligan's are Available)

**Includes:** Lunch, Golf, Cart, Refreshments on Course, Tee Gift, Prizes, Hors d'oeuvres during Scoring and Cash Bar.

### ENTRY FEE

\$100 Per Player | Sign Up as an Individual  
and We Will Pair You With a Team  
\$400 Per Team | Gather a Group or Sponsor a Team



### 2018 DIAKONIA PLAYER REGISTRATION ENTRY FORM

Player #1 _____	E-Mail: _____	HDCP: _____
Player #2 _____	E-Mail: _____	HDCP: _____
Player #3 _____	E-Mail: _____	HDCP: _____
Player #4 _____	E-Mail: _____	HDCP: _____

**PAYMENT INFORMATION** [ ] VISA [ ] MASTERCARD [ ] AMERICAN EXPRESS [ ] DISCOVER [ ] PAY BY CHECK

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Sec Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card Holder Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Billing Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Billing City: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing State: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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**For More Information Contact:** Marlene Lombardi  
410-641-5442 OR [oc2beachbums@aol.com](mailto:oc2beachbums@aol.com)

Make checks payment to **DIAKONIA** and mail to:  
Attn: Golf Tournament, 12747 Old Bridge Road  
Ocean City, MD 21842 (FAX: 410-213-2499)

