

# HOSPITALITY HOTLINE



HOTEL • MOTEL • RESTAURANT • ASSOCIATION • INC.

Official Newsletter of the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association

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## Dates for your Calendar

### Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

Jan. 9 | 7:15 - 10:10am

Ashore Resort & Beach Club Atlantic Ballroom

### Coastal Delmarva Winter Mixer

Jan. 22 | 5 to 7pm

Ocean Downs Casino

### OCHMRA Networking Dinners

5:30pm to 9pm

### January 16

Carousel Resort Hotel

### February 13

Princess Royale Oceanfront Resort

### April 10

Seacrets

## Member Message

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

As we continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape of the hospitality industry, I want to take a moment to thank you for the incredible strength and resilience that each one of you brings to this community. This year has been a testament to the power of collaboration, innovation, and the unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional experiences to our guests.

In the face of challenges, we introduce creativity and allow perseverance to shine through, reminding us that hospitality is not just about service, but about creating connections, spreading warmth, and uplifting each other.

In 2025, let's inspire one another, learn from our experiences, and continue to push the boundaries of excellence. Together, we are stronger, and the impact we have on Ocean City's hospitality is profound.

Thank you for your passion, dedication, and the unique contributions you make to our industry. Here's to continued success and growth - Cheers! 😊

**Ocean City  
Spring Trade Expo**

**March 2 & 3, 2025**  
Roland E. Powell Convention Center

Sunday 11am - 5pm | Monday 10am - 4pm

Register for FREE at [OceanCityTradeExpo.com](http://OceanCityTradeExpo.com) | EXCLUSIVELY for the trade, No one under 21 admitted

# Hospitality Highlights

Whats new in the industry?

## WARM WELCOMES & CELEBRATIONS

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to **Kimberly Scott**, the new General Manager at the **Shore Point Cottages**! We're also excited to announce the return of **Spencer Byrd** as the General Manager at **The Courtyard Ocean City Oceanfront**. Additionally, we would like to welcome **Jill Douglas** as the newest General Manager at the **DoubleTree by Hilton**. Allied Member **Ruppert Landscape** just welcomed **Brooks Taylor** as Business Development Manager. Finally, we wish **Liz Fitzsimmons** a fond farewell as she is retiring from the MD Department of Commerce **Office of Tourism and Film** on February 1, 2025.

## NEW ALLIED MEMBERS

**Ehrlich**

[jcehrlich.com](http://jcehrlich.com)

**The Neil Jones Food Company**

[njfco.com](http://njfco.com)

## SAD GOODBYES

Our sincerest condolences to **John Dove, KRR Photography**, on the loss of his business partner **Kevin R. Reppenhagen**.

## December Dinner Meeting

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the December Dinner Meeting at **The Captain's Table** – it was a fantastic evening of delicious bites, great networking and stocking Diakonia's pantry!



*A special thank you to all who donated door prizes -*

A1 American - Sodel Concepts | Avalon Hospitality Group | Becker Morgan Group | Blue Water - Maui Jack's, Frontier Town, & Shore Point Cottages | Carousel Resort Hotel & Condos | Castle in the Sand Hotel & Coconuts Restaurant | Chesapeake Employers Insurance | Comfort Inn Gold Coast | Crab Bag & Albertino's | Eagles Landing Golf Course | Eastern Shore Coffee & Water | Eastern Shore Contractor Group - Eastern Shore Asphalt, Hawkins Electric Service, Noovis, & Ruppert Landscaping | Fairfield Inn & Suites | Fish Tales Bar & Grill | Harrison Group Restaurants | Holiday Inn Express North 126th | MD's Coast Worcester County | OC Art League Film Festival | OC Life-Saving Station Museum | Ocean Downs Casino | Ocean Pines Cafe (Worcester Tech HS) | Papi's Taco Joint | Parking Management Company | Pit & Pub | Princess Royale Oceanfront Resort | Residence Inn by Marriott & Bayview Bar & Grill | Surfin' Betty's Burger Bar | The View Cambria Restaurant & Bar | Wagner Foodservice



## Member Mentions & Industry Insights

### Coastal Delmarva Chamber Winter Mixer

Got a bit of the winter blues? Come in from the cold for the 2nd annual Coastal Delmarva Joint Chamber Winter Mixer on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, at the Ocean Downs Casino Event Room.

Members from the Berlin Chamber of Commerce, Bethany-Fenwick Chamber of Commerce, Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, OC Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association, Worcester County Chamber of Commerce, and the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce will gather for mingling and networking, light appetizers, a complimentary drink, and \$10 in casino free play!

You must pre-register - [click here to sign up!](#)



Join Diakonia for its "Night on the Town" Bingo Fundraiser on March 13, 2025!

To make the event a success, they're collecting donations to fill 15 giveaway baskets. Items like overnight hotel stays, restaurant gift cards, and other exciting prizes are greatly appreciated.

If you're interested in donating or have any questions, please contact Community Coordinator Susan Blaney at (443) 953-5039. Your generosity will help make the fundraiser a great success!

### 150th Anniversary Printing Deal

Ocean City Tourism is celebrating the city's 150th anniversary this January and kicking it off with a citywide Early Booking Promotion to spark excitement!

In support of this, [Delmarva Printing](#) is offering 20% off on prints for any Early Booking Anniversary specials.

For more information or inquiries, please contact Dawn Gallick at [dawn@delmarvaprinting.com](mailto:dawn@delmarvaprinting.com).



### Stand with Asheville

After the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, Asheville's community strength and unity have been on full display.

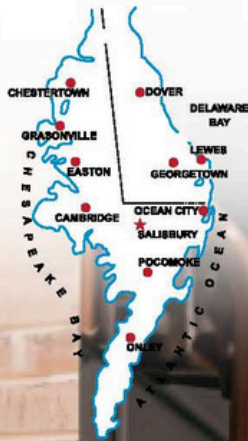
[Click here](#) to support their travel and hospitality community!

FEATURED PARTNER:



(410) 543-0693

**Mark Your Calendar!**



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**FEBRUARY**

**19th**

**COME JOIN US!**

**8am - 3:30pm**



**WICOMICO YOUTH & CIVIC CENTER**  
**500 Glen Ave. Salisbury, MD**

Register at  
**shoredist.com**



# Tips for the Trade & Industry Insights

## Top Tips for Reducing Chargebacks in Hospitality

By: Tim Tynan, Chargeback Gurus



In recent months, the hospitality industry has seen a noticeable increase in credit card chargebacks. Hotels and resorts are facing disruptions in cash flow and an increase in the workload for staff assigned to handle these disputes. To tackle this growing problem, hospitality companies need to implement effective strategies to prevent chargebacks and mitigate financial losses.

To address this, businesses can implement fraud prevention measures such as Address Verification Service and 3D Secure, shift chargeback liability with Chip & PIN, and ensure clear communication about policies. - read the full article [here](#).

## Hilton's Annual Trends Report Finds Travelers Will Want High-Impact Experiences in 2025

By: LODGING Staff

Hilton's 2025 Trends Report highlights evolving travel preferences, with travelers seeking a balance between relaxation and adventure. The findings are based on global research involving 13,000 travelers across 13 countries, feedback from over 4,100 Hilton team members, and interviews with Hilton travel experts.

Key trend highlights include:

- **Adventure-Seeking "Go Getaways" Take on Restorative Sleep Retreats and "Hurkle-Durkling":** 70% of travelers enjoy being active on vacation, while 20% embrace rest-focused activities like "Hurkle-Durkling" (lounging in bed) and sleep retreats.
- **"Time Travel" and "Slow Travel" Accelerate:** 58% of parents revisit childhood destinations with their kids, and 25% of leisure travelers are opting for "Slow Travel," immersing in a destination for longer stays.
- **"High-Tech Travel" Meets "Digital Detox":** 63% of travelers value digital room keys for convenience, yet 24% disconnect from social media more during their trips.
- **Fido and Frolleagues Take The Stage:** 25% of solo travelers bring pets, while 30% travel with "Frolleagues" (friends who are also colleagues).
- **Gen Alpha and MeMooner Travelers Surge:** 70% of parents choose vacation spots based on their kids' preferences, and 64% of solo travelers enjoy traveling with a good book.
- **Foodie Exploration and Tempo Drinking:** Nearly 20% of travelers seek out new culinary experiences, and 25% practice "Tempo Drinking," moderating their alcohol intake.
- **From Inner Discovery to Outward Cheering:** Many travelers seek self-discovery through "Soft Travel," and the youth sports tourism market has surged, driving growth in Hilton's sports-related sales.

[Click here](#) to read the full article!

## Human-Centered Growth in the Age of AI

By: Ryan Estis

AI is transforming the world, offering tools to boost efficiency, productivity, and customer experiences. However, it cannot replace the human qualities of relationships, empathy, and emotional intelligence, which are essential for meaningful collaboration and success.

[Click here](#) to discover how to thrive in this AI-driven era.

# Business Briefs

## Federal Court Blocks Beneficial Ownership Reporting Requirements

A federal court has blocked the new Beneficial Ownership reporting requirements for small businesses under the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA). The rule generally would have required businesses with under \$5 million in revenue and less than 20 full-time employees to report ownership information to the U.S. Department of Treasury by January 1, 2025.

Due to the court's decision, businesses are no longer required to file this information.

The future of these requirements and whether businesses will ever need to file remain uncertain, but RAM will keep members informed on any updates.

## National Restaurant Association Sees Victory on Junk Fees Rule

Last year, the Federal Trade Commission formally proposed that restaurants be banned from adding any surcharges to their customer checks. This would have included delivery fees, large-party fees, and credit card surcharges. The government estimated the rule would cost restaurants an additional \$3.5 billion to implement.

In a major victory for the restaurant industry, ***the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) today has excluded restaurant fees from its so-called "junk fees" ban.*** Restaurant service fees, delivery fees, credit card surcharges, and other widely accepted restaurant-related fees will not be included in the final rule – which would have cost independent restaurant operators approximately 10 percent of their total income in compliance if it had passed as written.

In their joint public comments, the Association and its Law Center pointed out that FTC lacked the legal authority to establish and implement the proposed regulations on restaurants. Because of the outpouring of public comments from 4,600 restaurant operators and direct advocacy on Capitol Hill at the 2024 Public Affairs Conference, the final rule does not include these restaurant fees.



## 2025 Legislative Priorities

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce released its 2025 Legislative Priorities and Anticipated Critical Issues for Maryland, outlining their focus for the upcoming legislative session to ensure a stronger future for the state.

[Click here](#) to view.

# Community Connections



please join us for the

OCHMRA

January Dinner Meeting

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025

CAROUSEL RESORT HOTEL & CONDOS - 117TH ST.

## FIRST COURSE

Reef 118 Salad  
mixed greens | bleu cheese | candied walnuts | raisins |  
apples | house-made balsamic vinaigrette

## SECOND COURSE

Slow Cooked Prime Rib rubbed with an Herb Seasoning served with  
Horseradish Sauce, a Seasonal Vegetable Medley, and a Baked Potato  
OR  
Baked Halibut topped with Crab Imperial served with a Seasonal Vegetable  
Medley and Roasted Fingerling Potatoes

## THIRD COURSE

Birthday Cake provided by Phil Cropper & Worcester Technical High School Culinary students

Networking **5:30 - 7pm** • Dinner at 7pm • \$55pp inclusive

Speaker: Tom Perlozzo, OC Tourism Department

Please RSVP by Friday, January 10th to (410) 289-6733 or [susanjones@ocvisitor.com](mailto:susanjones@ocvisitor.com)

You can book & pay online at: <https://oceancitymdassoc.weblinkconnect.com/atlas/events/january-2025-ochmra-networking-dinner-188/register>

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



SPONSORED BY:



# 2025 Mayor's Prayer Breakfast



Hosted by



Ocean City, Maryland  
Chamber of Commerce

## Thursday, January 9, 2025

ASHORE RESORT & BEACH CLUB

VIP check-in 7:15 - 7:30 am

General admission check-in & Breakfast 8:15 - 8:40 am

Event begins promptly at 8:45 am



**Guest  
Speaker  
Billy Blanks!**

Creator of Tae Bo Fitness®,  
world karate champion, actor, author,  
motivator, philanthropist and humanitarian

**\$35 per person**  
**\$100 VIP meet and greet**



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## Frozen Pipe Advisory

With below freezing temperatures in the forecast, the Ocean City Fire Department would like to offer property owners simple maintenance tips to ensure that fire sprinkler and domestic pipes do not freeze and break, causing thousands of dollars in water damage, as well as rendering fire sprinkler systems inoperable.

Maintaining wet pipes above freezing is a key concern. Domestic water pipes can be insulated or wrapped with an approved UL listed heat tape. In the event that a unit is unoccupied for the winter season, domestic water pipes can also be drained.

Wet sprinkler systems, however, usually cannot be wrapped with a heat tape. All sprinklered areas of a building should be checked to make sure they are above freezing. Setting a unit thermostat to keep pipes around 40 degrees Fahrenheit will help prevent these pipes from freezing.

With regard to dry sprinkler systems, auxiliary condensate drains should be drained by a licensed sprinkler company or person knowledgeable about sprinkler systems. The following pictures illustrate the auxiliary drains for dry pipe sprinkler systems:



Emergency contact numbers should be posted on the outside of the building, which can help the fire department contact responsible parties in the event of a pipe break. In addition, key lock boxes can be purchased from the Ocean City Fire Department Headquarters at 15th Street to allow access into a building in the event of an emergency. This allows firefighters to turn off water mains and minimize damage within units.

For more information on precautionary measures to take to prevent pipe breaks, contact the Ocean City Fire Department, Office of the Fire Marshal at 410-289-8780.