

HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

March 2026



Susan Jones
Executive Director



Kaylee Lathroum
Business Development &
Marketing Associate

Member Message

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

It's finally here — Expo week! This is truly our favorite time of year as months of planning come together. From selling exhibit space and coordinating nearly **60 volunteers** to developing marketing materials and managing the ever-growing to-do list, it takes a village to make this event a success. This year, we've eliminated Dockside Hall, added the Bayfront Ballroom, and expanded booth space in just the past few weeks, making this the **largest Expo in our Association's history!** Be sure to read through this newsletter for details on our Industry Insight sessions, keynote presentation, interactive activities, and Spotlight Stage lineup. There's something for everyone.

With our rebrand comes a renewed focus on education. Our next **Hospitality Huddle**, focused entirely on **workforce**, will take place **March 24** (see page 7 for details). We're also partnering with Wor-Wic Continuing Education to launch our first course, **From Chaos to Calm: Leading Through Hospitality Challenges**, on **April 8**. Designed for owners, managers, and supervisors, the program will offer both morning and afternoon sessions. Interested in a ServSafe class? Call or email us as we're scheduling those now as well.

Hope to see you at the 52nd Annual Trade Expo! 😊

OCMD SPRING TRADE EXPO



SPRINGTRADEXPO

Sunday, 3/8 - 11am to 5pm
Monday, 3/9 - 11am to 4pm

Keynote "Winning Conflict" at 10am Monday
REGISTER BY MARCH 4th OceanCityTradeExpo.com

FEATURED PARTNERS



Your single source for exterior building maintenance. Our comprehensive commercial service offerings include window cleaning, facade restoration, waterproofing services, safety systems, and more.



Leading high-performance commercial coatings contractor specializing in seamless resinous (epoxy, polyaspartic, MMA, urethane) polished/stained concrete, and commercial painting service - serving the mid-Atlantic.



[Member Directory](#)

Hospitality Highlights

Whats new in the industry?

WARM WELCOMES & CELEBRATIONS

Princess Royale Oceanfront Resort promoted **Gaya Inting** to Sales Manager. Congrats Gaya! **Todd Wampler** was promoted to District Sales Manager at **US Foods**. **RevRoc** welcomes 2 new faces, **Maria Matias** and **Zachary Howard**. **Becker Morgan Group** welcomes **Austin Oakes** to the team as their newest Architectural Designer. The **Town of Ocean City** recently announced **Brenda Moore** was promoted to the Special Events Director! Congrats to all!

Originally founded in 1945, the restaurant long known as **The Embers** will relaunch as **1945 Steak & Seafood**, a refined dining destination rooted in classic American chophouse and inspired by flavors of Italy, Spain, and France. **Pizza Mambo** recently added a 3rd location at 71st Street.

Sprucing up your place or have changes you'd like announced, just let us know!

SAD GOODBYES

Condolences to **Pat Harman**, **Joslyn Harman** with OCDC and **Taylor Harman Albert** with Harrison Group on the loss of beloved, mom and grandmother Miss Betty Rose who recently turned 101! Sincere condolences also to **Will & Mandy Lynch**, **Commander Hotel** on the loss of father **John Lynch**, Past President HMRA.

Welcome New Members

ASSOCIATE

Downtown Bridal
downtownbridalmid.com

ALLIED

BarCups LLC
barcups.com

Critical Peake Electrical Service
CriticalPeake.com

CHUTES International
chutes.com

Performance Foodservice MD
performancefoodservice.com/maryland

Zucchetti North America
zucchettinorthamerica.com

Unlock the Power of Conflict with Dr. Bryan Deptula

We're excited to announce our keynote speaker, Dr. Bryan Deptula, author and TEDx presenter of "Leaders Are Born to Be Made." His session, Winning Conflict: Finding the "Win" in Every Conflict, will change the way you think about conflict in hospitality.

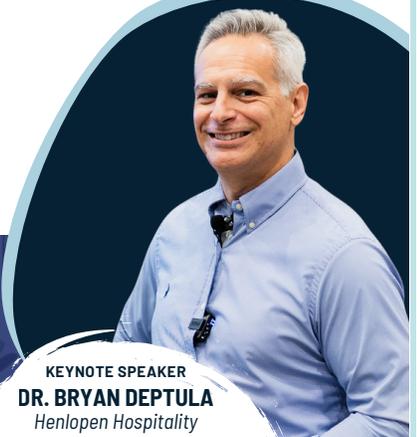
Conflict is unavoidable in our industry, from guest interactions and vendor negotiations to employee-manager friction that drives turnover. But when handled well, conflict becomes a powerful source of growth, innovation, and stronger teams. In this keynote, Dr. Deptula reframes conflict as a necessary engine for organizational health and teaches leaders how to Invite Good Conflict instead of simply managing it.

What you will learn:

- Turn conflict into growth instead of something to avoid
- Stop the cycle of defensiveness that damages teamwork & performance
- Retain top talent by leading through tension with confidence
- Use conflict to drive innovation and stronger team synergy

WINNING CONFLICT
Finding the win in every conflict

MONDAY, MARCH 9
10:00AM
2ND FLOOR
ROOM 209



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
DR. BRYAN DEPTULA
Henlopen Hospitality

ALL THINGS EXPO

Sunday, March 8: Exhibit Halls open 11:00am – 5:00pm

Monday, March 9: Keynote at 10:00am; Exhibit Halls open 11:00am – 4:00pm

[Register Here](#)

[2026 Exhibitors](#)

[Daily Schedule](#)



The Art of Hospitality

2nd Floor, Room 210

Join T.C. Studios for a lively paint-and-sip experience. Relax, unwind, and create your own masterpiece while you're here.

Bayfront Ballroom

2nd Floor

The Bayfront Ballroom is BACK! Because of so much exhibitor interest, we expanded to bring you even more services and products to check out. Avoid the crowd and start upstairs!



Interactive Activities

The Maryland Department of Transportation is bringing hands-on fun with a purpose! Try the simulation goggles, play cornhole, and hop on a bicycle that mimics the effects of impairment during everyday activities.



Meet Up Lounges

1st and 2nd Floor

Two Meet Up Lounges, One great experience. Take a break, hang out, & network in one of our two dedicated lounges.

1st Floor, sponsored by Good Boy Vodka | 2nd Floor, sponsored by Red Bull



Spotlight Stage

2nd Floor, Bayfront Ballroom

The Spotlight Stage features industry leaders with product demonstrations and discussions. Seize the opportunity to learn from those who have mastered their craft.

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

11:30am - Culinary Creativity in Action: Touch of Italy chefs create signature dishes with flair!

1:00pm - From Pour to Profit: Join the **Maverick Mixologist**, Dean Serneels, on-stage session to explore the newest cocktail trends and discover practical, ready-to-implement concepts designed to elevate your beverage offerings and maximize profitability.

2:30pm - Beyond Booze - Zero Proof Tasting: Zero-proof is more than a trend—it's an invitation to rethink your beverage strategy. Learn how thoughtfully designed zero-proof offerings can elevate flavor, improve guest experience, and expand your reach by creating a more inclusive and welcoming menu for every customer. Mocktails make money!
Come to the Spotlight Stage for a taste of zero proof!

3:30pm - Innovtion Feature, RobotLAB: Meet RobotLAB - from food delivery to cleaning and guest service, our robot servers & solutions help improve speed, efficiency, and hygiene. Implementing automation cuts labor costs, boosts server tips, and provides a modern, high-tech experience that attracts customers and increases satisfaction.
Check out their demo on the Spotlight Stage or visit them in Ballroom Booth #2002.

MONDAY, MARCH 9

11:00am - RAM World Food Championship Qualifier: Watch as culinary contestants compete for a Golden Ticket during the Restaurant Association of Maryland's World Food Championship qualifier event - in partnership with the MD Department of Agriculture & Seafood.

1:30pm - The New Wave of Cocktails - An Interactive Demo: Join the **Maverick Mixologist**, Dean Serneels, on-stage session to explore the newest cocktail trends and discover practical, ready-to-implement concepts designed to elevate your beverage offerings and maximize profitability.

2:30pm - Allergen-Safe Cooking: From Kitchen to Customer: Experience a live gluten-free culinary demonstration paired with expert guidance on allergen management. Learn how to protect diners from food allergens, prevent cross-contact, and reduce the risk of allergic reactions through proper kitchen practices and communication. A must-see session for operators focused on food safety and guest trust. *Hosted by Tony Hlligoss, The Serve Safe Dude*

Industry Insights

2nd Floor, Room 209

Our workshops are designed for industry go-getters. Explore groundbreaking strategies, emerging trends, & actionable "how-to" knowledge that will redefine your approach.

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

12:00pm – Hospitality Reimagined by Intelligence, Interactive Panel

Join industry leaders from the Delaware Restaurant Association, Henlopen Hospitality, Stonebridge Companies, Atlas Restaurant Group, and the University of Delaware's Hospitality Department for a forward-looking discussion on the future of hospitality. This high-impact panel will examine emerging trends, the growing role of AI and data intelligence, and evolving workforce dynamics, offering actionable insights to help leaders stay competitive in a rapidly changing industry.

Moderated by Keynote Speaker, Dr. Bryan Deptula



MEGHAN GARDNER
Delaware Restaurant Foundation



BENJAMIN GRAY
Henlopen Hospitality



DAN JASINSKI
Stonebridge Companies



SHERYL F. KLINE
University of Delaware



CHERYL BUYNAK
Atlas Restaurant Group

3:00pm – Be Found First: 12 Media Tactics to Win in an AI Era

Search has changed. The rules are different. And if you're not showing up in AI answers, you're already irrelevant. Spark Hudson Co-Founder Will Perry delivers a wake-up call for businesses navigating AI-powered discovery, breaking down the AI Visibility Playbook and the exact actions required to be found, trusted, and chosen.

MONDAY, MARCH 9

12:00pm – Profit with Purpose - Unlocking the Boom in the NA Beverage Market

Today's guests are asking for more choice, and non-alcoholic beverages are no longer optional! Restaurants that embrace this shift gain happier guests, new revenue streams, & reduced liability. In this session, discover the data, strategies, & real-world tactics to build a high-impact non-alcoholic beverage program that delivers profitability while keeping your guest-first.

Hosted by Beth Harbinson, Sobar

2:00pm – Margin by Design - Strategy Behind Profitable Menus

Discover how restaurants unlock lasting menu profit using our framework for smarter pricing, intentional design, and data-driven menu engineering you can apply immediately.

Led by Solutions Coach Ryan James, David Scott Peters Restaurant Prosperity.

The AI Challenge by MAM

Got an AI idea that actually works in hospitality? Show us.

Win \$5,000 in cash and visibility!

CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO
SUBMIT YOUR VIDEO

theaichallenge.my.canva.site

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES
MARCH 10TH 2026!



Submit Ideas that hotel teams
can implement today to
improve



Revenue Growth



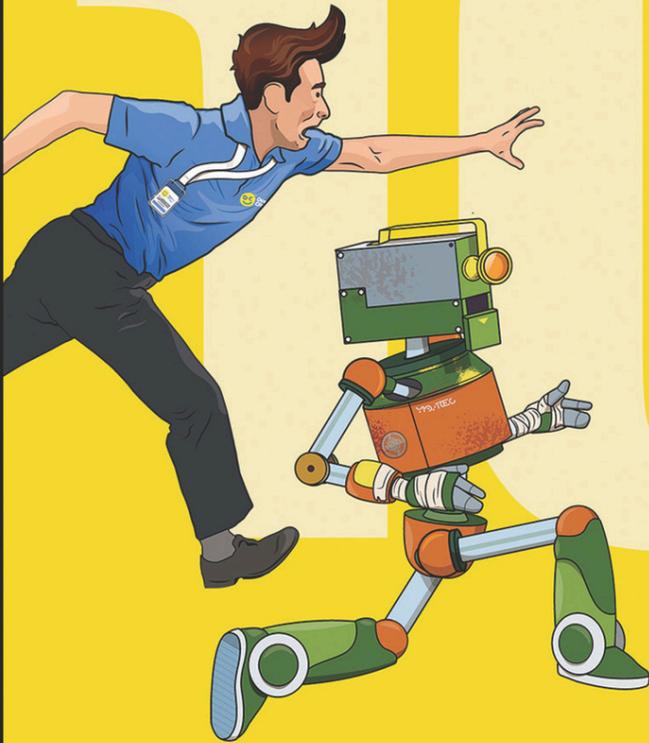
Operational Efficiency



Guest Satisfaction

OCEAN CITY FILM FESTIVAL

TEN SEASONS OF FILM



*Get on board!
Your tickets await*



MARCH 5-8, 2026

- 100+ independent films
- 4-day and daily passes
- Fun, food and films!
- * Venues in OC and West OC



OCMDFilmFestival.com



HOSPITALITY HUDDLE

TOPIC: WORKFORCE

-  Tuesday, March 24th
-  10:00am - 11:30am
-  Princess Royale 91st Street
-  Free to Attend - Please RSVP!

Workforce challenges? You're not alone
Connect with members & local and state
partners bringing real solutions for hospitality.



Wor-Wic Community College
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance
MD Department of Labor
Reentry, Veterans, & Coastal Careers
Connect, Communicate, & Collaborate

RSVP BY 3/20



Scan QR code **OR** email Susan at
susanjones@OCVisitor.com

Worcester County JOB & RESOURCE FAIR

Snow Hill Volunteer Fire Company
4718 Snow Hill Road, Snow Hill, MD 21863



Attention **employers!** Calling all business owners and hiring managers - Elevate your workforce and expand your network at the upcoming Job and Resource Fair.

Engage with top talent, forge valuable connections, and fuel your company's growth as you tap into the vibrant pool of local professionals.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

No charge to participate, but please register now (only 35 spaces available) by scanning the QR Code or visiting: <https://tinyurl.com/JobResourceFairApril> to reserve your table. Each business will get an 8ft table with 2 chairs. Please bring your own table covering and materials to showcase your business to job seekers.

Spanish and Haitian Creole Interpreters will be available.
~ Entèprèt Panyòl ak Kreyòl Ayisyen ap disponib.
~ Habrá intérpretes de español y criollo haitiano disponibles.



RSVP To Attend



Brought to you by Worcester County Economic
Development in partnership with:



QUESTIONS?

Nancy Schwendeman, Workforce Development Specialist
nschwendeman@worcestermd.gov, (410) 632-3112 ext. 2120

Save the Date!



Join us for Worcester Technical High School's
"National Signing Day" Job Fair



Preparing our students to be:
Enrolled - Enlisted - Employed

When: May 4, 2026

Where: Worcester Technical High School
6290 Worcester Highway
Newark, MD 21841

Time: 11:00 - 11:50am Table Set-Up
12:00 - 2:00pm Student Recruitment

Who are we looking for?

Local businesses looking to hire qualified and credentialed graduates.

What is "National Signing Day"?

Graduating seniors will be signing their intent for life after high school, whether that means they will be:

Employed, Enlisted, or Enrolled.

Have Questions? Contact WCPS Career Coaches:
Jodi Cloud @ jrcloud@worcesterk12.org
Josh Horsman @ jkhorsman@worcesterk12.org