

NOVEMBER 2020

# HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

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

## Member Message

FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUSAN L. JONES

It's hard to believe it has been 8 months since we last gathered at our Annual Trade Expo! As a very social person, I must admit, these days are really starting to get long and tiring. Or, at least I thought that, until I opened the mail and saw a letter from Ron Pilling at Jesse's Paddle. He reminded me that there is always someone close by to talk to. If you need to chat, there are plenty of free counseling sessions for HMRA members at Worcester Youth and Family Services - just call 410-641-4598 to talk, no strings attached - details on page 4. Or, if you don't want to pick up the phone, create your own de-stressing plans - for me, that is morning yoga/stretching, evening walks, and reading daily devotions and inspirational messages. 😊

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!** State of the State of Tourism - MD Tourism Coalition is hosting this during their annual meeting - details on the right!



**November 19 - January 2**

## Welcome New Member

ACTIVE

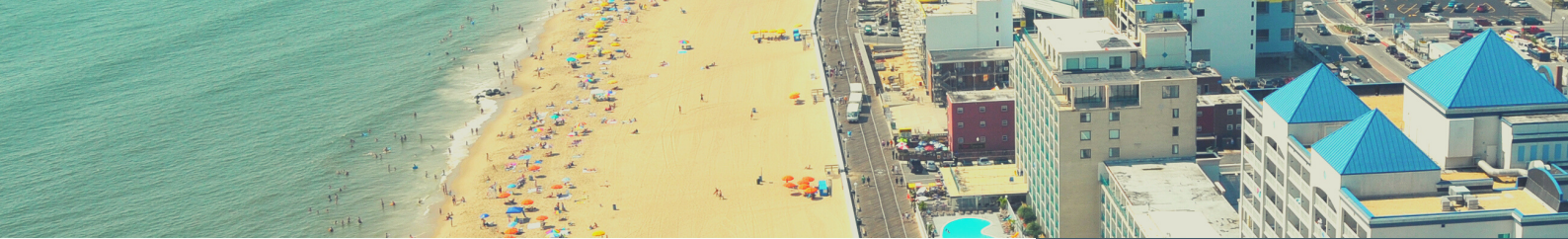
Mother's Cantina  
28th St & 78th St



**MARYLAND  
TOURISM  
COALITION**

Please join MTC for our Annual Meeting to be held on November 17, 2020 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. The MTC Executive Committee will give you updates on MTC. Liz Fitzsimmons will also provide the State of the State of Maryland Office of Tourism. (typically, you all see this at our November dinner) Registration is FREE for this event.

[Click here to register](#)



## Business Briefs

Unemployment Insurance: Those of you who are seasonal employers may have experienced issues when filling out Separation Request Forms on the new BEACON portal. Basically, when arriving at the place to enter total number of hours worked since January, the computer only allowed a two digit answer. The MD Department of Labor is aware of the issue and recommends entering "99" at that prompt. Additionally, if you'd like to reach them directly to report the issue, you may email: DLUISIDES-labor@maryland.gov.

Seasonal Workforce: We continue to work with the Greater OC Chamber Seasonal Workforce Committee to fight for the return of the J1 Summer Work Travel program for the summer of 2021. Information about the court order regarding the Presidential Proclamation can be found at this link: [Department of State update link](#). Please also continue to stay in contact with the sponsor you work with for updates concerning the program.

Casino Overlay District: The text amendment to allow a new overlay district within A-2 zoning at Ocean Downs Casino passed the County Commissioners 5-2, with Mitrecic and Bunting opposed. They did offer an amendment to the original language which will limit the property to only one 150 room hotel. General Manager Bobbi Sample stated the goal is not to compete with Ocean City, however, to be able to provide VIP guests access to rooms attached to the Casino.

Pop Up Rally: The new laws allowed Police to impound a large number of cars during the recent non-sanctioned event. Delegate Hartman plans to introduce legislation to allow law enforcement officers and first responders to be part of a protected class under a hate crime bill. We will keep you abreast as ideas to protect our town continue to arise.

The MD Office of Tourism is seeking partners for a new campaign: "Open for the Holidays"

Holiday packages will be a prominent feature on the VisitMaryland.org home page from early November through December. Consumers will click to the deals and the links will take them to your site for purchase. The cost to participate is FREE!

Hotels can submit Deals at this link: [MD TOURISM DEALS](#)

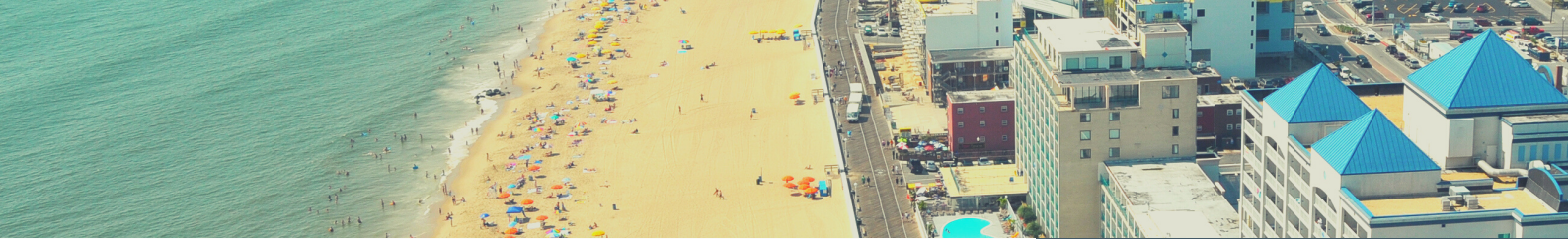
Submissions are requested by November 3, 2020

If you have questions, email [Rich Gilbert](mailto:rgilbert@visitmaryland.org) [rgilbert@visitmaryland.org](mailto:rgilbert@visitmaryland.org).

## RESTAURANT RELIEF FUNDING

Governor Hogan's newest initiative will provide direct grant relief to qualifying restaurants across the state. Eligible uses of funds include: Working capital, such as rent and purchase of equipment and services to expand outdoor dining through physical improvements including tents, heaters, warmers, and carts; Sanitization services; Purchase of PPE; Technology to support carryout and delivery; Infrastructure improvements, including HVAC system upgrades. The funding will be allocated through local jurisdictions and must be distributed no later than December 31, 2020. **We will send out the County instructions for applications upon receipt.**





# Hospitality Highlights

## WARM WELCOMES & SAD GOODBYES

While these are not new hospitality faces, Harrison Group has announced lots of transitions to their leadership. Happy retirement to Jim Luff and kudos to Jason Gulshen who will head up the HG Hotel Division. Herman Smithheisler is retiring from the Hilton and Andrew Geiger will now be the GM there - (PS congrats to Andy and Liz Walk who got married recently!). Vlad Paic will take on the role of GM at the Holiday Inn Oceanfront and OC native Tara Nunan is now the GM at the DoubleTree. Jason Barrett moves over to become GM at Harrison Hall. Also retiring are long-time HG employees Connie Williams and Ren Wisneiski. Best wishes to all!

King Charles Hotel owner, Marie-Noelle Sayan, has purchased the property next door; the Mayflower Apartments are now the King Charles Apartments. Congrats to Marie-Noells and well wishes to Patti Hopkins from the Mayflower. Welcome to Johanna Sisson who takes the helm at Surf Inn Suites and congrats to Spiro Buas on the opening of the new Fenwick Shores where Dante locona is the GM. Welcome to Ed Townsend with Bank of Delmarva.

Condolences to Hugh and Susan Cropper on the loss of his sister. Also our condolences to Skye Bar's Roger Cebula on the loss of his mother and Bill Furher, WOCM on the loss of his father.

## NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COACHES ASSOCIATION

If you are still open, please post WELCOME Fall National Duels on your marquee for the weekend of November 6 - 8. This group chose OC over VA Beach - let's make them feel welcome as they have lots of sporting tournaments!

**OCHMRA TRADE EXPO** - We are still in a holding pattern for the 48th Annual Expo. Exhibitors were 50/50 on whether or not to purchase booths and we are awaiting Health Department Guidance.

## US Travel Association

Help save travel with the #letsgothere

## National Restaurant Association

ServSafe training with free descalation videos

## American Hotel & Lodging Association State of the Industry

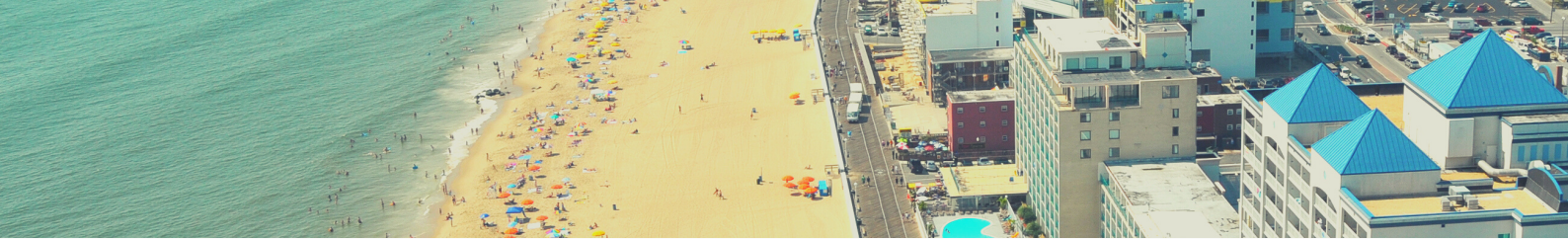
Ocean City Hotel Week  
At the recent HSMP meeting, we discussed bringing back Hotel Week. We'll target January as a great month to start the new year with a new view - salt water heals everything!  
More details to come!

## OCMD 2020 Hotel Performance Analysis and 2021 Outlook

Local revenue management experts at RevROC have shared their 2020 hotel revenue analysis and market projections for 2021. See their summary below and [full report click here.](#)

2020 started with double-digit occupancy and RevPAR growth in Jan-Feb, but as the coronavirus impact hit in mid-March, we witnessed a -60.8% average loss in RevPAR Mar – May. The summer season saw a strong result vs. the national average, as the town lost only -18.9% RevPAR Jun to Sep. Q4 will experience similar monthly losses and OCMD is expected to finish 2020 at -26% RevPAR YoY. The town will continue to recover faster than most US markets in 2021 due to our drive-in leisure market positioning and slow return of group/corporate demand nationally. RevPAR is projected to increase by 21% over 2020, primarily driven by occupancy gains, but 2021 will finish -10.5% below 2019 RevPAR. 2021 forecast: 50.6% occupancy, \$155.08 ADR, and \$78.51 RevPAR.

RevROC was developed to create a superior, customized Revenue Management program that fits any situational need to deliver top-line achievement at an affordable price and savings to direct labor. Local offices are on 57th Street.



# Community Connections

## UNITED WAY OF THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE

While COVID continues to cancel many events, one important event to not cancel is the UWLES Holiday Ball. United Way's goal is to create long-lasting changes by addressing the underlying causes of problems within our community. Living United means being a part of the change. It takes everyone in the community working together to create a brighter future. This year's event will be a bit different as it will be virtual. Holiday Ball Chairs, Jim and Kim List, invite you to join them on December 5th for "Home for the Holidays" - [click here](#).

# Essential Skills for Success

**WOR-WIC**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Classes begin Nov 30 & Jan 11**

**More classes will be scheduled for Spring 2021**

### Course Description:

Examine critical concepts crucial to effective management and interaction with customers, including customer service, customer empathy, handling difficult people, conflict management, conflict resolution and upselling. Participants will share their knowledge and experiences in a discussion forum with other participants in the course.

This is a 6-week online course can be completed at your own pace provided the deadlines are met. Each week, participants will be required to participate in a discussion topic. All discussions and due dates are listed in the course syllabus.

**For info and to register, have your employer email  
Kerry Cleaver, [kecleaver@worwic.edu](mailto:kecleaver@worwic.edu)**

Dr. Ojje-Ahamiojie, *Department Head and Professor of Business and Hospitality Management at Wor-Wic Community College*, has conducted many seminars and trainings in customer service, employee motivation, stress and time management.

Dr. Ojje-Ahamiojie has vast experience in the hospitality industry. He started as a busboy/dishwasher, worked his way through the ranks to Outlet Supervisor, and finally to Guest Services Manager for Walt Disney World.



Dr. Ojje-Ahamiojie has also presented and spoken at conferences on diversity and inclusive communication, the use of appreciative language in communication and feedback, issues of disability, stereotype and biases and generational issues, along with group and individual differences.


He is the author of "Essential Leadership Skills for Hospitality Supervisors: An Experiential Approach" and "Upward Mobility: Interviewing and Career Management."

*This course is offered at no cost due to funding provided by the EARN Maryland Grant Program, which is administered by the Maryland Department of Labor.*

**Thanks to our partners:**



**HOW YOU FEELING?**  
Stressed? Depressed? Anxious? Suicidal?



**You Aren't Alone & Don't Have To Feel This Way!**  
**There's Help... And It's FREE!**

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**Worcester Youth & Family Counseling Services Is Offering FREE Phone Counseling To Anyone In The Restaurant Business... NO STRINGS ATTACHED!**

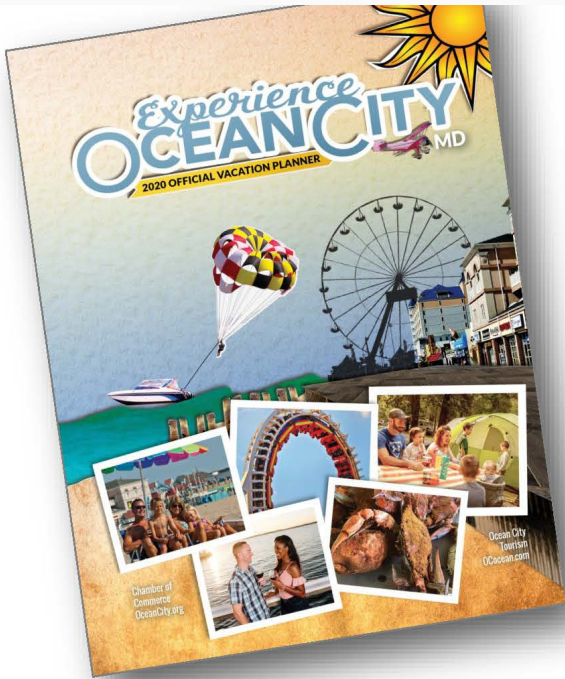
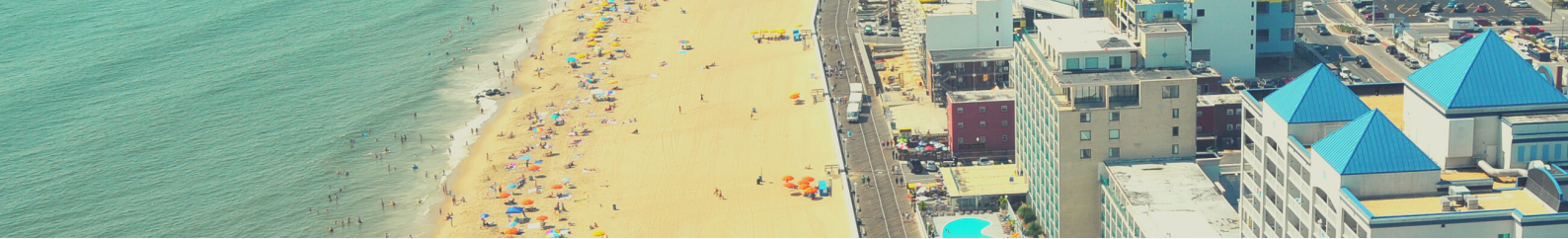
**Call 410.641.4598 To Talk To Someone Today**

**The World Is A Better Place With You In It!**

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
**800-273-TALK (8255)**



**United Way Campaign Kick Off  
Susan Jones & Jim List**



# Be a Part of 2021 Vacation Plans!

Advertise in the 2021  
Experience Ocean City  
Vacation Planner  
to take advantage of all this  
publication has to offer and  
***drive guests to your business.***

## About the 2021 Experience Ocean City Vacation Planner...

- 175,000 copies
- Full-size, full-color perfect bound publication
- ONLY fulfillment magazine for Ocean City
- Direct mailed to about 50,000 inquiries in the U.S. and Canada
- An essential planning tool for vacationers
  - ⇒ Includes an informative Calendar of Events
  - ⇒ Identifies pet-friendly businesses
  - ⇒ Integrates a user-friendly Hotel/Motel Chart
  - ⇒ Contains a regional Restaurant Chart
  - ⇒ Showcases the best that the area has to offer
- Interactive mobile and online version of the publication
  - ⇒ Searchable content
  - ⇒ Table of Contents links
  - ⇒ Ad Index links
  - ⇒ Embedded video
  - ⇒ Website hyperlink
- Advertised on Facebook and Instagram to drive more readers/views
- Distributed regionally in AAA Offices and Information & Visitor Centers across MD, DE, VA, PA, NY, NJ & OH, as well as at Trade & Travel Shows
- Distributed locally via places to stay, restaurants, attractions and more
- Promoted through our partner organizations — Ocean City Tourism and Worcester County Tourism

*YOU Benefit With:*

- ◆ Increased Visibility & Credibility
- ◆ Regional & Local Coverage
- ◆ Tremendous Value
- ◆ Stronger Brand Identity
- ◆ Effective Advertising
- ◆ Driving Guests to Your Business

**Space Reservation Deadline: November 20, 2020**

### Contact Nancy Today!

Nancy Schwendeman, Publications Manager  
Office: (410) 213-0144, ext. 106 • Cell: (443) 783-5742 • Email: [nancy@oceancity.org](mailto:nancy@oceancity.org)





2021  
Southern Delmarva  
**ECONOMIC  
FORECAST**

"BOOM OR BUST: How Should We Read the Economic Tea Leaves in 2021?"

Friday, December 4, 2020  
Roland E. Powell  
Convention Center  
Ocean City, MD.

7:30 am  
2021 Economic Forecast

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm  
Eastern Shore Delegation  
Luncheon

Full Event  
Members  
\$75  
Full Event  
Non-Members  
\$100

## The Southern Delmarva Economy

Featuring Economic  
Development Directors from

Sussex County, Delaware

Accomack County, Virginia

Somerset County, Maryland

Worcester County, Maryland

Dorchester County, Maryland

Wicomico County, Maryland



## 2021 Economic Forecast Topics

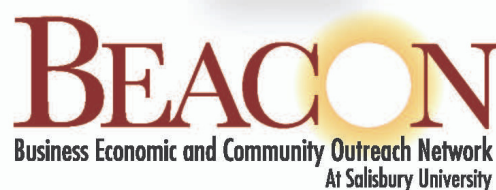
National Economic Outlook 2021

Lower Shore Economic Update

Rural Broadband and Regional Connectivity

The Future of Agriculture, Healthcare  
and Hospitality Industries

Presented by



Media Partner



## The Eastern Shore Delegation Luncheon

Eastern Shore Delegation Preview of the 2021 General Assembly Session  
Annual ShoreTRENDS Survey Results, Dr. Memo Diriker, BEACON at SU

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Melanie Pursel, (410) 632-3110

[mpursel@marylandscoast.org](mailto:mpursel@marylandscoast.org)

**Worcester County is Maryland's Coast**

County Launches New Place Brand to Promote Business, Recreation and Tourism Growth

**Snow Hill, Maryland, October 21, 2020** – Worcester County today unveiled a new place brand – *Maryland's Coast* – designed to strengthen its reputation as a vibrant destination for new businesses, families, amateur sports events and vacationers. The simple, yet powerful, description differentiates Worcester from other regions in the state.

Officials from the county's Department of Recreation and Parks, Tourism and Economic Development introduced the unified marketing identity at a launch event attended by industry partners and elected officials at the Links at Lighthouse Sound in Bishopville.

Department Director Tom Perlozzo said the new place brand is the culmination of a six-month discovery and outreach process that engaged community and business leaders from throughout the county.

"Every place, whether large or small, is challenged to answer one simple question: Why choose here?" Perlozzo said. "*Maryland's Coast* embraces Worcester's most recognized and distinguishing physical characteristic – The Atlantic – the only place in the state where ocean meets the land."

Next steps are underway, according to Melanie Pursel, county tourism director, to incorporate *Maryland's Coast* in a variety of marketing platforms, including department websites, printed materials, trade show displays, outdoor signage and county vehicles. The *Maryland's Coast* brand platform consists of a logo mark and accompanying tagline – *Naturally Cool* – that symbolize Worcester's identity as a naturally beautiful, friendly and relaxing environment inspired by water.

The discovery process was launched in late March with eight focus groups and multiple interviews conducted with 50 people representing diverse industries, interests and geographic areas from Bishopville to Pocomoke City. Due to COVID-19, plans for in-person discussions were shifted to live, video conversations. Additional insight was gained in April through a 10-question, online survey completed by 112 residents and business owners.

Perlozzo said responses from the research were analyzed to discern commonly held beliefs, aspirations, personality traits and characteristics. That was followed by a competitive analysis to understand how other locations were positioned in the region.

The outreach findings, according to Pursel, revealed several distinct and diverse characteristics about Worcester County that are valued by its residents and visitors. These included natural beauty, relaxed lifestyle, close-knit communities, and attraction to the beaches, bays and many waterways.

“We’re a place where you go from rural to resort in five minutes and farm, fish, golf and surf within a five-mile radius,” she said. “You can enjoy coastal beaches, explore cypress forests, experience beach resort nightlife or find space for quiet retreat. Our citizens live, work and play in a vacation area with a small town feel and big town resources.”

Four stakeholders spoke at the launch: Jere Johnson, media, marketing and promotions coordinator for Snow Hill; Scott Lenox, operator of Fish in OC and host of Hooked on OC television show; Kate Patton, executive director of the Lower Shore Land Trust; and Diana Purnell, Worcester County Commissioner and co-owner of Purnell Enterprises in Berlin.

“The contributions and valuable insight gained from our stakeholders has led to early brand adoption as we work to generate awareness, interest and pride in *Maryland’s Coast* among all county residents and businesses,” Perlozzo said.

The department worked with the Eastern Shore’s Choptank Communications, which led the discovery process and created and designed the *Maryland’s Coast* place brand.

###

#### ***Maryland’s Coast Logo Description***

The logo incorporates five shades of blue with the word Coast in a sweeping font. The tops of each letter appear as waves rolling toward land – a bold, flowing curve that extends from the coast to the state. The words Maryland and Worcester County are shown above and below the mark, anchoring Coast solidly between the two.

#### ***Maryland’s Coast Tagline***

An accompanying tagline – “Naturally Cool” – celebrates Worcester’s casual side, hip beach vibe and the location of America’s ‘coolest small town’ (Berlin). Stakeholders participating in the research conducted to determine the place brand platform consistently used the words “nature” and “natural”.



There's only one place in Maryland where the ocean meets the land...

# Maryland's Coast

Be invigorated by salt air, endless waterways, and spectacular scenery! Maryland's Coast is the ultimate year-round destination boasting miles of pristine beaches, an award-winning boardwalk, 17 championship golf courses, vibrant small towns, outstanding fishing, and unlimited outdoor adventures. Plan your visit today.

MARYLAND'S  
*Coast*  
Naturally *Cool*

[www.VisitMarylandsCoast.org](http://www.VisitMarylandsCoast.org)