

OCTOBER 2024

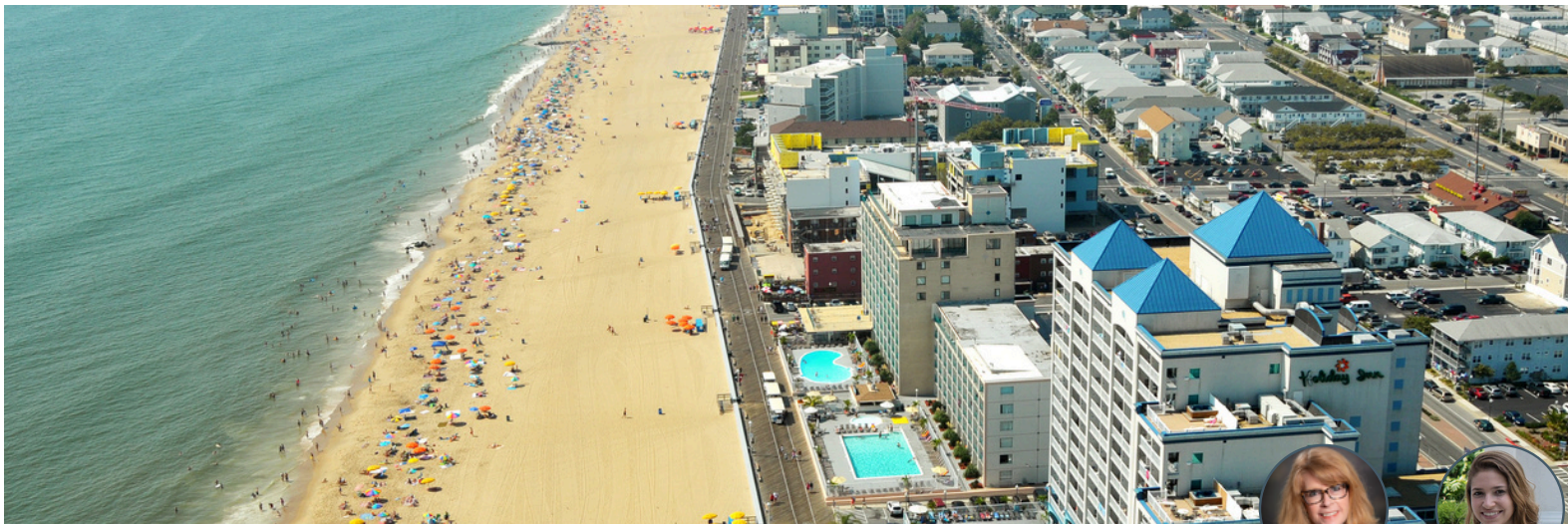
HOSPITALITY HOTLINE



HOTEL • MOTEL • RESTAURANT • ASSOCIATION • INC.

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

5700 Coastal Hwy. #302 Ocean City, MD 21842 • (410) 289-6733 • OCVisitor.com • Inquire@ocvisitor.com



Susan Jones
Executive Director



Kaylee Payne
Business Development & Marketing Associate

What's in this issue?

MD Travel & Tourism Summit Registration Info - pg. 2

Maryland's Coast FREE Marketing Workshops - pg. 3

ServSafe FPM Class - pg. 5

Acts, Bills, & Laws To Stay On Top Of - pg. 6

MD Labor Laws Effective 10/1/2024 - pg. 7

Dates for your Calendar

ServSafe FPM Class

October 8 - 7:30am to 3:30pm
The Grand Hotel and Spa

Hope Palmer Pink Party

October 19 - 12 to 5pm
Sunset Grille

MD Travel & Tourism Summit

Nov. 6 - 8
Owings Mill, MD

Storm Warriors 5K

Nov. 9 - 9am
Ocean City Life-Saving-Station Museum

OCHMRA Networking Dinners

6pm to 9pm

November 14

Convention Center Ballroom

December 12

TBD

January 16

Carousel Resort Hotel

February 13

Princess Royale Oceanfront Resort

April 10

Seacrets

Member Message

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

For so many, our favorite time of year is here! The second season brings new opportunities to connect, collaborate, and celebrate all we do to make our community and industry thrive. It's a time to share insights and enhance our collective knowledge. Whether it's workshops, seminars, or social gatherings, we encourage you to participate and make the most of these opportunities! With so many new faces and businesses in town, we encourage you to get involved and meet fellow members!

Our networking dinners are a proven way to meet a few new folks and enjoy a delicious meal! Check out the dates and places on the left and be sure to mark your calendars!

Hope to see you at the first dinner on November 14th
Convention Center Chef Gary Leach is ready to wow you!

Wishing you a productive and prosperous fall! 😊



Hospitality Highlights

Whats new in the industry?

WARM WELCOMES & CELEBRATIONS

The **Beach Bum West-O** has officially launched their latest venture, [Herring Creek Venue](#). This charming location is ideal for gatherings, offering a spacious tented reception area that can host up to 150 guests. Along with the event space, the venue includes overnight accommodations for up to 33 guests, with additional rooms available for up to 300 more. It's the perfect setting for a memorable wedding with bookings available for Fall 2024 and 2025!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

ALLIED

Avalon Hospitality Group
avalonhospitalitygroup.com

The Furnishings Resource Group LLC
jwateska24@gmail.com

SAD GOODBYES

Our sincerest condolences to the **Hooters** family on the loss of Mary Brocato. Condolences to **Carolyn Kennington**, of **Senor Cigars**, on the loss of her husband, Bruce Kennington. We also want to express our deepest condolences to the entire **Harrison** and **Phillips families** on the loss of Olivia Harrison Phillips.

BEHIND THE BOARD - KEITH WHISENANT

Keith Whisenant is a 3-year Director of the OCHMRA and the General Manager at the Residence Inn by Marriott. Keith grew up at the Quality Inn on 17th Street, spending weekends working with his father. At 16, he became a bellhop and front desk associate, continuing these roles until graduation and studying Journalism at the University of North Alabama. After returning home, he decided to pursue a career in professional wrestling, much to his parents' delight. Following unexpected success and incredible moments living his dream with WWE, he eventually returned to his career path in hospitality, joining the Hyatt Place Dewey Beach as General Manager. There, he learned under Vince DiFonzo, who invested considerable time and effort in meticulously developing his skillset.

In 2017, he was hired to manage the new Residence Inn, working alongside an exceptional ownership group. Rich Palmer and Brian Cook entrusted Keith and Courtney Black to run the property with creativity, care, and unwavering support.

When Keith isn't working, he loves spending time with his 16-year-old son, who he says is "16 going on 40," and watching college football, always rooting for the Alabama Crimson Tide. He also enjoys his early morning workouts and is committed to his faith journey through church.



Volunteering at Junior Achievement

In 2023, we launched our Travel Storefront at the new Perdue Henson JA Center in Salisbury. The building serves more than 10,000 students from 9 shore counties! As you know, it is vital for us to have a continual pipeline of future employees to fill the needs and demands of our industry. We encourage your workplace to get involved through volunteering! You can have employees sign up for specific dates/schools or you can get together and volunteer as a team building activity! Contact: Shelby.Lewis@ja.org to learn more, take a tour or have a presentation for your team!

[VOLUNTEERHUB](#) – choose a date or school!

[Click on the links below to learn more](#)

Perdue Henson JA Center Booklet [HERE](#) | Perdue Henson JA Center Website [HERE](#) | Video [HERE](#)

FEATURED PARTNERS:



(410) 543-0693



(410) 779-1275



Member Mentions



Maryland's Coast Worcester County Office of Economic Development is excited to offer FREE, marketing workshops from September 24 - October 22 to Worcester County business owners and individuals this fall. You're invited to join them and learn tips and tricks on various topics.

[RSVP online](#)

Tuesday, October 1 - Canva Design Tutorial

Tuesday, October 8 - Yelp Accounts and Customer Reviews

Tuesday, October 15 - LinkedIn Recruitment and Advertising

Tuesday, October 22 - Website Creation and Management

Nominate Now for 2025 RAM Awards Gala

Public nominations for [RAM's 2025 Awards Gala](#) are open through **Thursday, October 31**.

Hundreds of nominations have already poured in, so the time to [nominate your staff](#) is today! This process is open to non-RAM members, and competition is abundant. Give your team the recognition they deserve, and show the entire state why your staff is the best of the best.



Be part of the 2025 OC Keycard Holder!

This convenient, pocket-sized 4x6 Keycard Holder is supplied **COMPLIMENTARY** to our hotel members for inserting plastic guest keys. If your hotel needs a supply, just let us know! In 2024, we printed 350,000 copies.

If you're a restaurant, attraction, or business looking to connect with hotel guests, be sure to include our Keycard Holder in your advertising plans. It's a highly effective way to **REACH HOTEL GUESTS DIRECTLY** while supporting the OCHMRA!

Contact Kaylee at kaylee@ocvisitor.com or (410) 289-6733 to reserve your 2025 advertising space!

Restaurants and Attractions - [click here](#) to reserve your space

Hotels - [click here](#) to sign up for next year's distribution

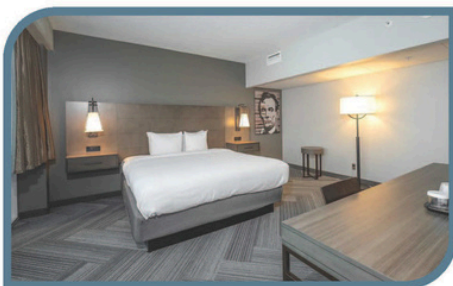




AVALON HOSPITALITY GROUP

*Personalized Service
Delivering Creative Solutions*

Avalon Hospitality Group's culture is one of individualized service and continuous improvement, strengthened by a collective "task force" approach to every client project and property.



Avalon Hospitality Group (AHG) is an owner-operated full-service management firm. Through our three divisions we have the resources and unique ability to meet the specific business goals and requirements of any property owner or community association.

Headquartered in San Diego, our nationwide portfolio includes: hotels, community associations and destination resort areas. Our clients include private investors,



institutional investment firms, asset managers and Boards of Directors.

We provide our property owners with exceptional service that delivers measurable results. That service is founded on a simple and effective strategy: *hire top-notch personnel, acquire and use the right tools, and support the on-site team with focused operations, financial and marketing guidance and daily support.*



We are confident when we say that no other company can match our diligence and commitment.

Whether you're looking to purchase, develop or manage a hotel, our in-house services team has both the experience and drive to develop the return.

Innovative. Personalized. Proven.

Learn More



Robin Grazioso

Vice President Sales & Marketing
P: 864.346.1789

8775 Aero Drive, Suite 335
SAN DIEGO, CA 92123

P: 858.277.4305 F: 858.277.4308
avalonhospitalitygroup.com

The Maryland Travel & Tourism Summit (MTTS) is Maryland's annual tourism industry conference that brings together all sectors of the hospitality industry where business and public sector leaders convene, network, and learn new strategies to advance Maryland's Tourism industry.

November 6 - 8 at Water's Edge in Harford County | [Click here](#) to register

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Defibrillator (AED) Tax Credit for Restaurants

RAM supported a new Maryland law that provides a \$500 non-refundable State tax credit for restaurants with at least \$400,000 in annual gross income that purchase an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). The total credit allowed may not exceed \$1,500 (i.e., a restaurant with 3 locations could claim the \$500 tax credit for each location). The credit may be claimed only once by an individual or business entity for each restaurant location. The tax credit is in effect for tax years 2023 through 2027 and terminates on June 30, 2028.



Restaurant Association of Maryland

Be a Part of Maryland Tourism's Upcoming Marketing Campaigns

Tourism industry businesses are invited to publicize **FOR FREE** their fall and holiday packages and deals on VisitMaryland.org. Partners are encouraged to create incentives, deals, and packages, these will be featured on VisitMaryland.org's Deals & Discounts page and directly to subscribers of *Visit Maryland Now* consumer newsletter.

The "Welcome Home for the Holidays" Campaign runs November and December with interactive advertisements, broadcast and social media with a heavy emphasis on multi-night leisure hotel stays while visiting friends and family during the holidays. Prepare your packages/deals today. Visit our Industry website [here](#) for sample ideas and the link to upload your packages/deals and events to OTD's [self-entry database](#).

ServSafe FPM Class

Brought to you by: Robert McKeon, MD ANFP (Association of Nutrition and Food Service Professionals)

Robert McKeon, MD ANFP, will be **hosting a ServSafe (FPM) Certification Class at the Grand Hotel and Spa on October 8th**. The class will begin promptly at 7:30 AM and end at 1:30 PM.

The ServSafe Certified Food Manager's Exam will take place from 1:30pm to 3:30pm. Although the exam allows up to 2 hrs., most participants complete it within 45 mins. The cost for the class and exam is \$165/person for credit card/check payments, or \$155/person for cash payments, checks should be made payable to Robert McKeon.

If you have a group of 3 or more attending, discounted group rates are available:

- Group of 3: \$159/person (*credit card/check*)
- 4-5 attendees: \$155/person (*credit card/check*)
- 6+ attendees: \$149/person (*credit card/check*)

For cash payments, deduct \$9 per person from the above rates.

To register, ask questions, or learn more, email Robert McKeon at chefrobert1966@hotmail.com.

Acts, Bills, & Laws To Stay On Top Of

Does your restaurant employ fewer than 20 and make less than \$5M in sales? - A new webinar, *Insights from the U.S. Treasury-Beneficial Ownership Reporting Deadline is Near*, is scheduled for Thurs., Oct. 10, 2 p.m. ET. Effective Jan. 1, 2024, and with a Dec. 31, 2024 deadline, many companies in the U.S. will have to report information about their beneficial owners—the individuals who ultimately own or control the company—to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Filing is simple, secure, and free of charge. In this webinar, FinCEN professionals help inform those navigating questions about:

- Why beneficial ownership reporting is important to protect legitimate business owners
- What type of information a company may need to file
- How business information will be protected by FinCEN

[Register](#)

Senate Bill 760 (2023) and Senate Bill 729 (2024) - Mandated Security Guard Training, new Security Guard Employers requirements, and Security Guard Use of Force Reporting Requirements - Effective January 1, 2025, all original security guards applicants, regardless of in house or contract, will be required to complete 12 hours of initial security guard training sponsored by a Maryland Police Training Commission approved provider. The term "in-house" refers to any security guard directly employed by the property itself instead of hiring a contract security guard company. The applicant must submit the certificate of completion with their security guard application. Security guard applicants seeking renewal of their security guard certification will be required to complete 8 hours of security guard training sponsored by an approved Maryland Police Training Commission provider and include the certificate of compliance with their renewal application. Additionally, if in-house security, the property is required to maintain \$500,000 security liability insurance if they employ under 5 security guards and if they employ over 5 security guards they are required to carry a million dollars of security liability. The property is also required to complete use of force reports, submitted to the Maryland State Police licensing division for any use of force over that of a simple escort. These regulations apply to anyone providing any type of security service regardless of an alternate title they maybe given. This regulation does not apply to unarmed security working at bars or currently certified police officers in Maryland. The law can be reviewed [here](#).

USTASC, a HMRA member, is providing certified Maryland Police and Corrections Training Commission serviced security guard training to hotels, motels, HOA's and other businesses and can be reached at www.mdsposa.com or 888-813-4434. USTASC can answer any questions regarding this new regulation or you can contact the Maryland State Police licensing division.

Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program, known as the Time to Care Act - Starting July 1, 2026, the Maryland Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) system will support employers while a worker takes time away to care for themselves or a family member for up to 12 weeks. Workers will receive job protection and be able to take time away from work to care for themselves or a family member and still be paid up to \$1,000 a week for up to 12 weeks. FAMLI is an insurance program. Employers and workers will make contributions into a fund administered by the State. Alternatively, an employer may apply to use a commercial or self-insured plan. When a worker needs to take leave, either the State or the private plan will pay the worker a portion of their salary.

Important dates:

- July 1, 2025: Contribution period for the State Plan begins - This means payroll deductions will begin on July 1, 2025, and employers will remit the first payment to the State in October 2025.
- July 1, 2026: Benefits for all workers begin -The contributions employers remit to the State will create a trust fund. The fund will grow over time and be ready to pay out benefits to Maryland workers starting July 1, 2026.

[Click here](#) for more info and FAQ's

FEATURED PARTNERS:



(410) 543-0693



(410) 779-1275

New Maryland Labor Laws Effective October 1, 2024

Contact Melvin Thompson in the RAM office at 443-539-2455 or mthompson@marylandrestaurants.com if you have questions that are not answered in the information/links provided below.

New Pay Stub/Statement Law

A [new Maryland law](#) effective 10/1/24 requires certain information be provided in writing to employees upon hiring, including rate of pay, paydays, and any leave benefits. The new law also requires that certain additional information be included on written or online pay stubs/statements.

The Department of Labor may impose an administrative penalty of up to \$500 per employee for employers who fail to provide the required information on pay stubs.

Compliance information, a pay stub template that employers can use to comply with the requirements, and FAQs can be found on the Maryland Department of Labor website [HERE](#).

Tip Credit Wage Statement Also Required for Restaurant Tip Credit Employees

The Department of Labor compliance information about the new pay stub/statement law also mentions the tip credit wage statement requirement for restaurants with tipped employees.

This [Maryland labor regulation](#) became effective on October 1, 2020, and requires restaurant employers who utilize the tip credit to provide a tip credit wage statement to tipped employees. This wage statement must show the employee's effective hourly tip rate of pay, as derived from employer-paid cash wages plus reported tips for tip credit hours worked each workweek of the pay period. Time clock systems may need to be reprogrammed to report tipped employee hours/earnings to payroll service providers by workweek if the employer wants the payroll service to include this information with employee pay stubs/statements. Or employers may opt to provide such wage statements separately but no later than two weeks following the end of the pay period. These wage statements can be electronic or written.

Compliance information regarding tip credit wage statements is available on the Maryland Department of Labor website [HERE](#).

NOTE: RAM's endorsed payroll provider, [Kelly Benefits Payroll](#), can help their restaurant clients comply with both pay stub/statement and tip credit wage statement requirements.

New Job Posting Wage/Salary Range and Benefits Transparency Law

A [new Maryland law](#) effective 10/1/24 requires employers to disclose the wage/salary range, any benefits, and any other compensation offered (such as tips, any portion of service charges, overtime, bonuses, commissions, etc.) in job postings/solicitations (whether internal or public). Under prior law, employers were required to provide wage/salary range information to job applicants only upon request. The new law requires the disclosure of such wage/salary range, benefits, and other compensation in all job postings. This new law also requires that job posting records be retained for at least three years.

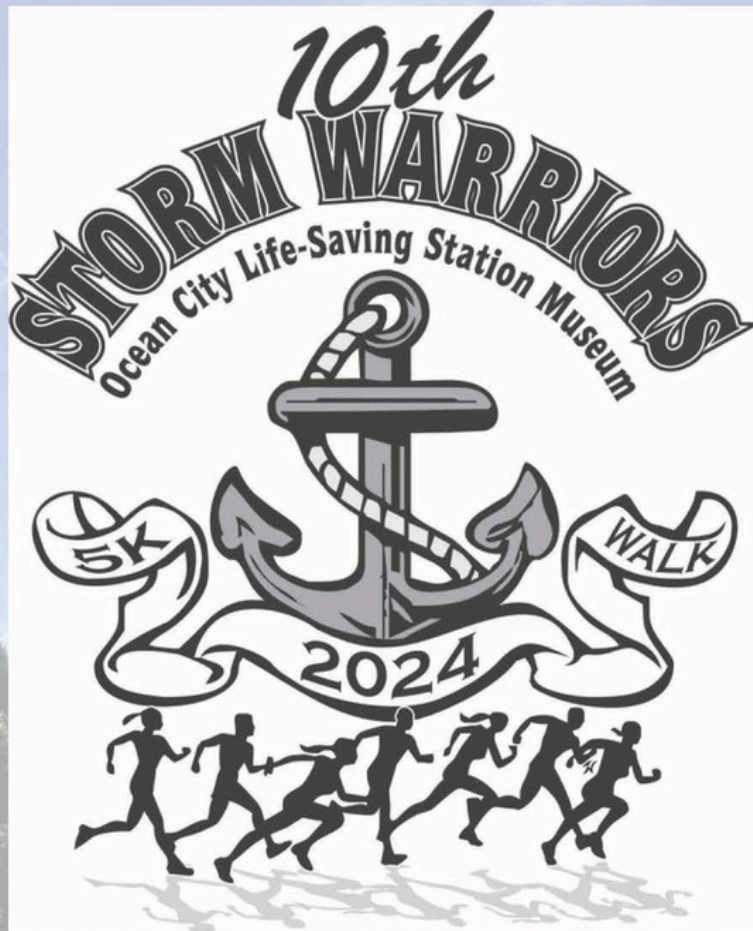
Compliance information can be found on the Maryland Department of Labor website [HERE](#).



FEATURED PARTNERS:



Community Connections



SATURDAY NOVEMBER 9

**DAY-OF REGISTRATION AND PRE-REGISTRATION PACKET PICKUP WILL OPEN
AT 8:00 AM. THE GUN WILL GO OFF AT 9:00 AM!
OUR 5K RUN/WALK WILL TAKE PLACE RAIN OR SHINE.
AWARDS WILL TAKE PLACE DIRECTLY AFTER THE RACE.**

THERE AND BACK ON THE BOARDWALK STARTING AT THE INLET

REGISTER HERE



9TH Annual

HOPE PALMER

PINK PARTY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19TH

12PM-5PM



WHERE: SUNSET GRILLE

\$1.98 BEER, CRUSHES,
DRINKS & WINE



Live Music



\$25 COVER: 100% OF COVER CHARGES WILL BE
DONATED TO JOHN H. "JACK" BURBAGE REGIONAL
CANCER CARE CENTER & TIDAL HEALTH
MOBILE MAMMOGRAPHY

STAPLES





OC Keycard Holder 2025

ACCOMMODATION DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

*If you would like to participate in this **optional, no-cost program**, please read on, sign, & return.*

This is an agreement between the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association (OCHMRA) engaged in the publication of the OC Keycard Holder and your lodging business.

In consideration of the mutual promises, it is agreed and understood as follows:

1. The Accommodation business will furnish the approximate number of bookings (check-ins) expected over a one-year time frame. It is from this number specified on this agreement, that the OCHMRA will base the amount of OC Keycard Holders distributed to the Accommodation business in May 2025 for distribution to guests.
2. The Accommodation business will hand each guest an OC Keycard Holder at check-in.
3. The Accommodation business agrees to participate in the OC Keycard Holder Program in exchange for **FREE** OC Keycard Holders. The OC Keycard Holders will have a Welcome to OC cover and the inside backspace will have a pocket so you can insert any hotel-specific material you'd like.
4. The OCHMRA will deliver the Accommodation business to the OC Keycard Holders at no charge to the business.
5. The OCHMRA is not responsible or liable for any error content of ads. For example, spelling errors/typos, web addresses, phone numbers, etc.

The undersigned agrees to the terms of the above agreement as an authorized agent of said Accommodation.

Accommodation Name: _____

Physical Address: _____

Number of Estimated Bookings: ("check-in's"): _____

Contact Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Email: _____ Phone #: _____

Response Deadline: Dec. 31, 2024

Thank you for your participation!

Please return this agreement to:

5700 Coastal Hwy. #302, Ocean City, MD 21842 or
kaylee@ocvisitor.com



OCHMRA

Hotel Flyers

The OCHMRA produces the flyers below to help keep your guests informed. If you are not receiving them or you'd like your front desk supervisors to receive, send us email addresses for e-distribution.

Dining Guide



All-You-Can-Eat



Activity Calendar



Restaurant Week



Restaurants Open for the Holidays



Rainy Day Activities



Special Event Flyers



Dining Options



Find-A-Kid Program

