



HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

September 2025



Susan Jones
Executive Director



Kaylee Payne
Business Development &
Marketing Associate

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Member Message

From Executive Director, Susan L. Jones

September is my favorite month! It brings a lively energy, with visitors ranging from wine and music lovers to motorcycle enthusiasts, and lots of locals happy to relax a little a bit. A warm smile is a classic part of great hospitality, and it really does go a long way. Real hospitality means giving the best of yourself to others, and **Dr. Berger** truly lived that. We were deeply saddened by his passing and grateful for his contributions to our community.

September also marks a busy season for our small-but-mighty two-person office; it's selling time! We recently launched booth sales for the 2026 Trade Expo, and we're excited to report that exhibitor spaces are already selling fast. Another key project underway is our OC Keycard Holder. This opportunity is exclusive to restaurants, attractions, and tourism-related businesses. See page 2 for full details!

Our first **Hospitality Huddle** with hotels and restaurants was a success, so stay tuned for details on the Fall Hospitality Huddle - October 29th. Be sure to note the dates on the left for our **Nibble & Network** events (formerly known as OCHMRA Dinners) - a relaxed way for members to meet! Until then, have a safe and happy Labor Day weekend. 😊

Dates For Your Calendar

Walk for Recovery

September 6th - 9am
(more info on pg. 11)

OC Bikefest

September 10th - 14th
Inlet & Convention Center

TAM Class

September 16th - 1pm
Berlin Library
(more info on pg. 10)

Harbor Day at The Docks

October 11th - 10am to 3pm
West OC Commercial Harbor

Nibble & Network Events

November 13th - BLU Crabhouse
December 18th - Kalamata
January 15th - Aloft Hotel
February 19th - Vista Rooftop
April 9th - Seacrets



FEATURED PARTNERS



Your singles 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

Congratulations to **Shawn Harman, Fish Tales Bar & Grill**, on the birth of his second grandson - Jude Anthony joins his big brother Alfonso! **Grace Ruppert** is OC's **Emergency Management Specialist** and manager for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Diakonia recently broke ground on the **House of Hope** located on Route 611 beside Decatur Diner. The campus will include housing, a veterans resource center, consolidated admin and case management offices, a larger Thrift Store, and increased capacity to accept and distribute Food Pantry donations.

Lots of exciting new restaurants in town! **Matt Ortt, Coastal Salt**, recently opened up a new restaurant right on the boardwalk, Flamingo Coast with the Vault speakeasy inside. Additionally, they recently launched a new catering truck, Coastal Catering. **Peter Elias, Spain**

Wine Bar, recently opened not one but three different restaurants this year, The Kebab Project, Bai-Tee Bakery, and the latest, Oyster & Scales. **Ember's Island**, just opened one of OC's newest mini golf courses, SteamPunk Island on 129th Street.

SAD GOODBYES

Our sincerest condolences to **Malcolm Van Kirk, Best Western**, on the loss of his stepfather, **William "Bill" Schneider**. Also to **Jackie Berger** on the loss of her father, and Kari Berger on the loss of her husband, hospitality legend, **Dr. Leonard "Lenny" Berger**. Although he previously ran multiple businesses and practiced medicine, he is best known to us as a savvy expert for OC's hospitality industry. He was the driving force behind the EDC UMES Hospitality Training Institute fund. We are forever grateful for his leadership and guidance in our hospitality world. Services for Dr. Berger will be held on **September 3rd at 1:00pm** at Temple Bat Yam in Berlin. [Full obituary](#).

Put Your Business in the Hands of Visitors With The 2026 OC Keycard Holder

This convenient, pocket-sized 4x6 OC Keycard Holder is supplied **COMPLIMENTARY** to our hotel members for inserting plastic guest keys.

If you're a restaurant, attraction, or business looking to connect with hotel guests, the OC Keycard Holder is a must for your advertising plans. It's a **HIGHLY EFFECTIVE** way to reach guests directly, without relying on brochure racks!

Contact us to reserve your 2026 advertising space!

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

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



350,000
Copies



55+
Hotels



Thousands of
Impressions



One-Time
Investment

Welcome New Members

ALLIED

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amillionbkkp.com

Cruise Planners
itsbeachthirty.com

**Everglaze Bathtub
Reglazing**
everglazecoatings.com

Harvey Construction
harveyconstructioninc.com





Partners In Focus



MTC Tourism & Travel Summit

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.

The summit draws more than 300 attendees who engage with dynamic keynote speakers, participate in interactive learning sessions, attend the MTC Annual Meeting, celebrate at the MTTS Awards Banquet, and enjoy an off-site Welcome Reception.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the event and to register!

All [Award Nominations](#) must be submitted through the official online form by **September 19, 2025**. Please list the nominee's name exactly as it should appear on the award.

For questions, contact Chris Zindash, Awards Co-Chair, at info@mdtourism.org.

Nibble & Network Sponsorship Opportunities

We're gearing up for our upcoming Nibble & Network events, and we're looking for Allied Member sponsors to help make them even better!

If you'd like to sponsor a networking event, email kaylee@ocvisitor.com or call us at (410) 289-6733.

For \$150, event sponsors receive:

- Your logo featured on the emailed event invitation, in the program, welcome sign, & table tents.
- The opportunity to leave promotional items and/or set up a display table at registration

**Only 4 non-competing sponsors per event.*



OCHMRA Hospitality Huddle

We kicked off our first Hospitality Huddle of the season with great energy and collaboration!

Members had the opportunity to meet with Ocean City's new **Police Chief, Ray Austin**, and **Captain Dennis Eade** to discuss ways we can work together to ensure safe and successful fall events in town. It was a productive session filled with connection, communication, and collaboration.

A special thank-you to the **Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites** for hosting us!

Stay tuned for details on our next Hospitality Huddle.



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FULL SERVICE HOTEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

James Hospitality is a premier privately owned hotel management company, bringing extensive experience and a proven track record of success to hotel operations throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

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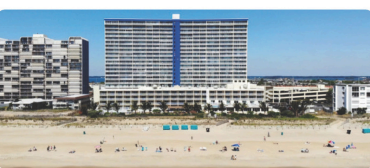
TESTIMONIALS

James Hospitality has been a valued partner for over 10 years. They manage all operations, HR, and marketing with exceptional professionalism.

Their team has created a world-class experience for our guests—an experience that has directly translated to our bottom line. I can't recommend them highly enough!

-Crystal Beach Hotel

HOTEL PORTFOLIO



Carousel Oceanfront Resort



Cayman Suites Hotel



Crystal Beach Hotel



Tideland's Caribbean Hotel & Suites



Fenwick Inn



Bonita Beach Hotel



Coastal Palms Beach Hotel



The Bay Resort Waterfront Hotel



410-390-0354



info@jameshospitality.com



jameshospitality.com



12004 Coastal Hwy., Ocean City, MD 21842

Business Briefs

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

The Ocean City, MD Comprehensive Plan guides the general arrangement of land uses within the community such as: housing, commercial, recreation and public facilities. It provides a way to communicate a shared vision of the community, and a common set of objectives for managing growth and change.

The Draft 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update is a 'working document' that will continue to be evaluated and revised over the next several months. A 60-day review period (Jul./Aug.) leads up to a public hearing held by the Planning and Zoning Commission (Sept./Oct.), followed by Mayor and City Council review for approval (Nov./Dec.).

Why does the Comprehensive Plan need to be updated?

- The Plan should respond to new trends or changes, and propose implementation strategies
- The Plan will incorporate new information such as 2020 Census data (*resident population*)

The Draft Update may be reviewed online by [opening the PDF document](#). Please [click here](#) to provide your comments.

RESOURCES

Top Ways to Maximize Your Partnership

8 simple ways to stay engaged and make the most of your partnership—so you never miss a valuable opportunity!

OCHMRA Member Portal Guide

Update your listing on OCVisitor.com, pay dues, update contacts, & register for events.

Use this [step-by-step guide](#) to get started!

Miles of Smiles Service Promise

Service Promise Flyers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Download and hang in your break room or by the time clock!

August OC Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Catch up on the latest OC Tourism Department News

Learn More About Credit Card Surcharges

Provided By: Restaurant Association of Maryland

RAM is often asked about the rules for imposing credit card surcharges. We contacted the Consumer Protection Division of the Maryland Attorney General's office to confirm that it is legal for Maryland businesses to impose credit card surcharges (*no surcharges can be imposed on debit transactions or pre-paid cards*). A notice to customers is required prior to sale (*on menus, website, signs at point-of-sale, etc.*).

In Maryland, such a surcharge cannot exceed 4% (*some card brands prohibit a surcharge that exceeds 3% and may prohibit businesses from charging different fees by card type*). Prior to imposing surcharges, businesses must notify their card networks and follow the card network's related rules (*which can vary by network*). Businesses should also contact their credit card processor for more specific compliance information.

Please note that some processors may charge higher credit card processing fees to businesses that opt to impose credit card surcharging. This is because processors must do more work to comply with the regulatory requirements under the law and the surcharging rules/guidelines of the card brands.

RAM also contacted the Maryland Comptroller's office and they verified that such a credit card surcharge should be separately stated on the customer receipt. Such surcharges are also subject to sales tax as the taxable price is defined by Maryland Regulation [03.06.01.08](#).

Restaurant operators should know that some customers may frown upon such surcharges, especially if other area restaurants are not doing so.

TAM Classes

The Worcester County Health Department has organized TAM trainings for the upcoming months. The cost is \$55 per person, with discounts available for groups of ten or more.

All scheduled classes are at the Berlin Library at 1:00pm:

September 16th

November 18th

December 16th

If you have any questions or would like to register, please contact **Lynn Suarez** at **(410) 632-1100 ext. 1109** or **lynn.suarezapecheche@maryland.gov**.

TIPS Class

An October 6th class is being held at The Grand Hotel from 9am-1pm and is \$79/pp.

To register, please contact **Chef Robert McKeon** at **(301) 648-7119** (call or text) or **chefrobert1966@hotmail.com**



Experiential Travel is a \$1.3T Market, & Still Growing

By: Kerrigan Flynn, Sojern

These travelers aren't chasing checklists. They're seeking authentic, meaningful, immersive experiences that go beyond the traditional tourist experience. Experiential travel is on the rise, and this isn't just a trend anymore. It's becoming the norm. The market has seen sustained growth year over year and doesn't show signs of slowing down. Cultural explorers, wellness seekers, and sustainability advocates all fall into this segment.

In fact, 98% of travelers say experiences influence their destination decisions, making this audience both emotional and strategic to reach. This is especially true for millennials, who make up a significant portion of travelers prioritizing experiential travel. Research shows that 86% of millennials seek trips that offer deep cultural connections, and 71% are willing to cut back on everyday comforts like coffee and takeout to save for these types of experiences.

[Click here](#) to see what these travelers might look like and find out how you can connect!

OCHMRA Partners with OC Recreation Boosters for Sunfest

For the first time ever, we'll be joining the fun by helping pour beer at Sunfest! A big thank you to Harry How and the OC Recreation Boosters for inviting us to be part of the festivities! Want to join us and have fun while helping out a good cause? - **Volunteer slots available (4-hour increments)** - October 23-26 between 9:45am-8pm - email susanjones@ocvisitor.com or call 410-289-6733 to sign up!

Save the Date: Fall Hospitality Huddle

October 29th at 10am - more details to come!

Community Connections

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The Ocean City Department of Emergency Management is pleased to provide CERT Basic Training. Our typical 8-unit course teaches skills using updated FEMA-supplied materials, incorporating practical exercises, and culminating with a disaster scenario in a realistic environment.

For whom is the training designed?

The target audience for this course are individuals who desire the skills and knowledge required to prepare for and respond to a disaster. The minimum age is 16 and there is no maximum age. Everyone participates to the extent that they can, given individual constraints.

Fall Training Dates: November 17-22, 2025

- Monday–Friday (Nov. 17–21): 6:00–9:00 PM
- Saturday, Nov. 22: Skills Day, Final Exam, & Graduation from 9:00 AM–12:00 PM

Sign up deadline: October 31, 2025

In-person sessions will be held at the 65th St. Public Safety Building.

[Click here](#) to sign up for training or to learn more!



Seacrets Cruises HMRA Discount

Seacrets Cruises is offering an exclusive deal for OCHMRA members! Enjoy 50% off all private corporate team-building cruises departing Monday through Thursday through the end of September.

The boat accommodates up to 45 passengers and features a full bar and onboard restroom—making it the perfect way to connect with your team while experiencing one of Ocean City's newest attractions.

Use code HMRA50 when booking your cruise at [Seacrets Cruises](#).



Lower Shore Workforce Alliance Career Carnival

LSWA invited you to a day of career exploration, community fun, and a lively carnival atmosphere on **Friday, September 26th** at the Perdue Henson Junior Achievement Center (301 Tilghman Rd. #101, Salisbury, MD).

This carnival-style event is designed to help local youth discover exciting career paths. Participating vendors are encouraged to bring a carnival game or interactive activity to showcase their industry in a fun and memorable way.

The OCHMRA will also have a table at the event, highlighting opportunities within the hospitality industry!

Have questions? The LSWA Business Services team can be reached at (410) 341-3835.

[Click here](#) to sign up as a vendor

"Thank You from Ocean City" Welcome Package

Message from Brian Phillips at Worcester County Public Schools

Wicomico County Schools recently got a fantastic surprise, a \$1,000 "Pay It Forward" gift from Pohanka, given to a new teacher to kick off their journey in the district. We loved the idea so much, we thought: why not do something just as special (*maybe even more fun*) for new teachers here in Worcester County?

We're thinking of launching a "Thank You from Ocean City" welcome package, a way to roll out the red carpet and celebrate the amazing educators joining our schools this year. With 56 new teachers coming on board, we'd love to gift one (or a few!) of them something truly memorable.

- Gift cards to local restaurants and attractions
- A night's stay at a cozy Ocean City hotel
- Tickets to fun experiences around town
- Maybe even a local swag bag!

If anyone would like to donate, contact Brian Phillips via email, BCPhillips@worcesterk12.org, or call (443) 614-0330.



Wine on the Beach 2025

Now in its 31st year, Wine on the Beach returns to Ocean City September 5& 6! Once considered part of the "shoulder season," this beachfront wine and music festival has grown into the unofficial kick-off to a lineup of popular fall events that keep visitors coming back to OCMD.

Guests can enjoy unlimited samples from Maryland wineries, along with food vendors, live music, craft booths, picnic seating, and beach chair or umbrella rentals, making it easy to turn the day into a true seaside celebration.

Each ticket includes a souvenir glass and unlimited wine samples from 11am to 6pm, with the festival continuing until 7pm.

[Click here](#) to purchase yours!



Aviation Maintenance Technician School Ribbon Cutting

Please join representatives from the State of Maryland, Wicomico County, Piedmont Airlines, & the University of Maryland Eastern Shore as we celebrate the partnership and opening of the new Aviation Maintenance Technician School at the Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport.

The event will take place as follows:

- **Date:** September 17, 2025
- **Time:** 11 am - 1:00 pm
- **Location:** UMES' Aviation Maintenance Hangar at SBY 5443 Airport Terminal Rd., Salisbury, MD 21804

[Click here](#) to RSVP



JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CENTER



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Junior Achievement™

Tourism
tour • tsm
the practice of traveling for
recreation and business
and the management
of tourists/visitors.

Hospitality

Hotel Jobs
Entry level positions to Executives
• Front Desk
• Housekeeping
• Restaurant & Bar
• Event Planning
• Food & Beverage
• Sales & Marketing
• Guest Services
• Revenue & Cost Control
• Human Resources
• Maintenance
• Security



ABOUT JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT (JA)

Junior Achievement's proven lessons in financial literacy, work and career readiness, and entrepreneurship are shown to positively impact the lives of young people. These lessons align with national and state educational standards and are delivered to millions of students across the country with the help of our education partners and volunteers from the local community.

Research shows that JA Alumni are more likely to have a college degree, feel confident managing money, have career success, and have started a business as an adult

The OCHMRA Travel storefront in the Center will showcase the job pathways within the hospitality industry -- we need your help to make it a success!

DONATIONS NEEDED

Last year, we asked our members to donate items that the students could "buy" with the pretend money they earned from working in "BizTown." Once again, we're reaching out for your help, and any donations are greatly appreciated.

We are looking for promotional items such as:

- Keychains
- Stickers
- Sunglasses
- Pens
- Wristbands
- Stuffed Animals
- Etc.

If you would like to donate any items, please email kaylee@ocvisitor.com, and we can arrange to pick them up from you!

TAM (TECHNIQUES OF ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT) CLASSES

*Call us to schedule a TAM class
at your establishment or register
for one of the classes below!*



To register, contact Lynn Suarez at
410-632-1100 ext.1109 or lynn.suarezapecheche@maryland.gov

UPCOMING CLASSES

#1

August 19, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Berlin Library (13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811)

#2

September 16, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Berlin Library (13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811)

#3

November 18, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Berlin Library (13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811)

#4

December 16, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Berlin Library (13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811)

\$55/person

(Discounts available for groups of ten or more)



The Atlantic Club &
Worcester Goes Purple
presents ...



* 2025 WALK FOR RECOVERY *

150^{oc}
Years of Ocean City

Ocean City Boardwalk
September 6th @ 9AM
Price: \$25 per person

Join the Walk for Recovery in 2025
as we Celebrate 150 years of Ocean
City, Maryland—where the memories
are endless and the shore is always
calling.

* raffle tickets available
Awesome prizes!!

* To register/create a team visit:
<https://atlanticclub.org/register>





WOR-WIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ANNIVERSARY GALA
NOV | 1 | 2025

Sponsorship Levels

Scholarship Champion – \$10,000

- VIP table for eight guests in a premium location
- Unlimited wine service during dinner
- Premium logo placement on event signage and program
- Full-page ad in program
- Verbal recognition during program
- Highlighted recognition on social media and four dedicated posts
- Logo on event website with link
- Recognition in the Wor-Wic Foundation Report to the Community
- Knowledge that your support is breaking down barriers for students striving for a brighter future

Student Success Advocate – \$5,000

- Reserved seating for six guests
- Logo on select promotional materials and signage
- Half-page ad in event program
- Social media mention and two dedicated posts
- Recognition during event
- Logo on event website with link
- Recognition in the Wor-Wic Foundation Report to the Community
- The satisfaction of opening doors to education for students who might not otherwise have the opportunity

Centerpiece Sponsor (Exclusive) – \$3,000

- Reserved seating for six guests
- Signage on all table centerpieces
- Quarter-page ad in event program
- Recognition on event website with link
- Recognition on social media
- Recognition in the Wor-Wic Foundation Report to the Community
- The confidence that your gift is creating transformative change and family-sustaining careers

Wine Sponsor (Exclusive) – \$3,000

- Reserved seating for four guests
- Signage on tables recognizing wine sponsorship
- Quarter-page ad in event program
- Recognition on event website with link
- Recognition in the Wor-Wic Foundation Report to the Community
- The pride of investing in your community because almost 90% of Wor-Wic students continue to live and work on the Lower Eastern Shore

Cocktail Hour Sponsor (Exclusive) – \$3,000

- Reserved seating for four guests
- Signage at bars recognizing cocktail hour sponsorship
- Quarter-page ad in event program
- Recognition on event website with link
- Recognition in the Wor-Wic Foundation Report to the Community
- The assurance that you are helping students succeed by overcoming financial challenges

Table Sponsor – \$2,000

- Reserved table for eight guests
- Recognition on signage
- Recognition on website with link
- The impact of transforming lives through access to education and workforce training

Individual Ticket – \$150

- The joy of making college dreams possible for hardworking students

Changing Lives Since 1975

Visit worwic.edu/gala to become a sponsor or to purchase tickets.

foundation@worwic.edu | 410-334-2965

WOR-WIC
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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