

the Worcester County

SAND PAPERS

ISSUE 18

NEWS FROM THE BEACH AND BEYOND IN WORCESTER COUNTY

SUMMER 2010

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[PHOTO: TOWN OF OCEAN CITY TOURISM OFFICE]

Total visitor spending in Worcester in 2008 was \$793.3 million, while total tourism taxes generated was \$210.7 million.

Tourism gets advertising boost

The Worcester County Commissioners recently adopted the FY 11 budget with tourism getting an additional \$150,000 to promote its beaches, towns, events and various outdoor activities and attractions.

Tourism is one department that actually makes money for the county. Total visitor spending in Worcester in 2008 was \$793.3 million, while total tourism taxes generated was \$210.7 million.

The number of visitors to Maryland rose 3.5 percent in 2009, while nationally, tourism fell 5.5 percent. Maryland is one of only a half-dozen states where tourism increased. That is a remarkable success and no doubt fueled, in part, by a recession that has caused more travelers to stay closer to home.

Maryland's tourism's ROI is about \$36 for every \$1 spent on tourism by the State. Tourism supports jobs for more than 146,000 Marylanders and generates more than \$1.8 billion in state and local taxes.

We know tourism is a great investment and want to thank our county commissioners for showing their support!

Statistics come from Global Insight.

Worcester takes lead in Welcome Center transition

The Worcester County Commissioners voted to assume responsibility of the Pocomoke Welcome Center effective July 1. The welcome center, which was operated by the state tourism department, is now under the Worcester County Department of Tourism. Cost-cutting measures precipitated the state's decision to cut several centers throughout the state. In order to make transitions easier, the state offered a \$50,000 matching grant to each county facing a welcome center closure. The center currently receives nearly 400,000 visitors annually. It's hoped that the county can sell Ocean City souvenirs and locally made fine art and crafts, for example, as a way to generate income.

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NATURE TOURISM

Evening paddles on the Pocomoke

[STORY BY GUEST AUTHOR AND BOARD MEMBER RON PILLING]

Not to suggest that there is a bad time to be in a canoe or kayak the most beautiful river on the Eastern Shore. There isn't. But this summer, canoe and kayak outfitters on the Pocomoke River have a series of evening paddles that show the river at its very best—as the sun goes down.

"The river changes dramatically in waning sunlight," said Barry Laws, proprietor of the Pocomoke River Canoe Company in Snow Hill.

"Shadows cast by the cypress trees lengthen, owls come out, and the wind usually drops to a whisper."



ESPN2 coming to OC

A production team for ESPN2 is coming to Ocean City to shoot an episode for the 2011 season of George Poveromo's *World of Saltwater Fishing*. Each action-packed episode of this exciting series is created around a particular species and region, and is guaranteed to entertain and inform. George teaches viewers how to catch a wide variety of game fish, from exotic species like blue marlin and bonefish to regional favorites such as dolphin, wahoo, tuna, king mackerel, striped bass, grouper, snapper, bluefish, redfish, flounder and numerous others. The program which airs on ESPN2 is now in its 11th year. Thanks to the MD Office of Tourism and Susan Jones for their help in lining this up!

HOW TO ENJOY AN EVENING PADDLE

Pocomoke River Canoe Evening Paddles

When: Pocomoke River Canoe Company is open the first Friday of every month through October, with a special rate of \$15/boat (canoe or kayak) from the shop's dock for the evening. "We can launch paddlers on one of our portaged trips as late as 5pm on First Fridays," said proprietor Barry Laws. The paddles accompany the popular First Friday art walks in Snow Hill.

To reserve: Call 410.632.3971 or e-mail canoe@atbeach.com.

Pocomoke River State Forest Evening Paddles

When: Pocomoke River State Forest will schedule evening paddles, led by ranger-naturalists, throughout the summer. Leaving from Shad Landing, just south of Snow Hill, the paddle includes Corker's Creek, one of the prettiest creeks in the entire watershed.

Info: Call 410.632.2566, or visit www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/eastern/pocomokeriver.asp.



Left: Erroll Webber (left) and Erik Yount are exploring Worcester County and Delmarva as part of Host Our Coast. Center: One of Webber's shots from the OC Air Show. Right: A shot from a video of kayaking on Ayers Creek. [PHOTOS COURTESY HOST OUR COAST]

Host Our Coast travels Delmarva

Host Our Coast season II has a new winner! Erroll Webber, Jr. is this season's host. Following four months of intense competition, Host Our Coast™ chose Webber out of a field of 34 contestants who applied to win Season II of the award-winning online travel journalism contest. The idea behind Host Our Coast is to have the winner spend the summer traveling around Delmarva and sharing their adventures through a blog, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr.



Webber was 21 years old when he flew to Zimbabwe to begin shooting the Academy-award winning documentary film *Music by Prudence*, just two weeks after graduating from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Despite his age, he had already worked as a commercial cinematographer and photographer for five years, shooting everything from concerts and promotional events to TV broadcasts and commissioned art videos for museums.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Webber immigrated to the United States at the age of 15, aspiring to become a commercial airline pilot. Once he picked up his first video camera, however, he knew he needed to spend his life behind the lens.

So far, in Worcester County, Erroll, along with his college friend and fellow videographer Erik Yount, have covered Ocean City and Berlin. They've attended the Second Friday Art Stroll in Berlin, paddled Ayers Creek with Ayers Creek Adventures, went birdwatching in the coastal bays, tried their hand at paddle boarding, and witnessed the OC Air Show.

Webber decided to apply for Host Our Coast after he saw the announcement for the job on Craigslist. "I take pride in doing fantastic work," Webber said.

"When his video came through, both his videos, we were stunned," said contest organizer Jim Rapp. "And when I got him on the phone, I was like—'Are you sure?' If he can do with this region what he's done with his other projects, it's going to be amazing to watch."

Keep up with Host Our Coast's adventures at www.hostourcoast.com.

Maryland Backroads and Byways author tours Worcester

Freelance writer Leslie Atkins is traveling across Maryland as she researches her upcoming guidebook, *Maryland Backroads and Byways*, which will be published by Countryman Press. She began her travels in Worcester County this spring, accompanied by Connie Yingling, public relations coordinator for Maryland's Office of Tourism.

The itinerary included visits to Assateague Island National Seashore and the Ocean City Lifesaving Museum, and a kayak ride on the Isle of Wight Bay with Ayers Creek Adventurers. In Berlin, Atkins watched artist Jeffrey Auxer demonstrate glassblowing and visited Baked Desserts Café. She also toured Snow Hill and visited the Furnace Town Living Heritage Museum.

A big thank you goes to Angela Reynolds for hosting Atkins at the Lighthouse Club Hotel and to Michael Day for arranging a great walking tour of Berlin.

MAIN STREET CORNER

Berlin Main Street looks back at progress

[STORY BY MICHAEL DAY]

The summer has been hot and so has Berlin's Main Street Program. On June 24, BMS held its second annual meeting and awards reception at the Water's Edge Gallery. Terri Sexton, chairperson, talked about what the five committees, composed of 26 individuals, achieved in the past year:

Promotion Committee: New themed rack cards produced by the Promotion Committee, promote 2nd Friday, events, Victorian Christmas 2010, and Sundays in Berlin. The two promotional grants the committee received paid for a print ad in the Ocean City Visitors guide and a forthcoming internet promotion with Comcast Spotlight.


Organization Committee: The Organization Committee sponsored a Victorian Picnic last September, raising more than \$5,000 to fund the downtown Christmas wreaths. This committee was also an essential part in opening a Visitor's Center on Main Street in partnership with the Berlin Chamber of Commerce.

Economic Restructuring Committee: This committee literally changed the face of Berlin with a \$75,000 dollar façade renovation grant. The committee's new website is at www.chooseberlin.org.

Design Committee: The committee's efforts have been big, as in re-designing two large billboards for Rt. 50 and Rt. 611 that will be up shortly. There are also new classic wayfinding signs on Main Street, enabling visitors to find their way around to the side streets and all that downtown has to offer.

Mayor Gee Williams was on hand to dedicate the new signs, which took several years of hard work. Mayor Williams also reflected on what's been accomplished since the Main Street Program started two years ago, noting that downtown has netted 15 new businesses in that time.

Awards: Bill Outten, owner of A Step Above Gallery, was named the 2010 Main Street Volunteer of the Year for his outstanding efforts to help develop the Berlin 2nd Friday Art Stroll. The Town of Berlin was named Business Partner of the Year in recognition of the town's ongoing support.

For more information, or to get involved, contact Terri Sexton at the Treasure Chest, located on Main Street in Downtown Berlin. 



Mayor Gee Williams with new wayfinding sign. [Photo by Lisa Challenger]

IN THE NEWS

Worcester makes cover of *Spokes*

Worcester County was featured on the cover of the June issue of *Spokes Magazine*, a monthly publication that caters to the cycling crowd. The issue featured the **Viewtrail 100**, the county's 100-mile cycling trail.

GlenRiddle Golf Club and **Public Landing** were both featured in the summer issue of *Chesapeake Life* magazine.

Associated Content in Denver ran stories on several **Ocean City restaurants and attractions** totaling over \$100,000 in value.

The *Salt Lake Tribune* featured **Frontier Town Campground**.



Berlin Brewery coming this fall

Brian Brushmiller, owner and brewmaster of Burley Oak Brewery, will be opening the doors this fall on Old Ocean City Boulevard in Berlin. The web site is www.burleyoakbrewery.com. Friend it on Facebook at www.facebook.com/burleyoak.

Costa Ventosa Winery to open July 16



Costa Ventosa, the Eastern Shore's newest winery will be celebrating their

grand opening and ribbon cutting on Friday, July 16. Costa Ventosa is located in Whaleyville and will be offering seven varietals including Vidal Blanc, Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Rose of Merlot, and Merlot. The winery will be open Friday–Sunday 12–6pm. Group tours by appointments. 410.352.9867. www.costaventosa.com.



OC has new iPhone App

Have an iPhone? Now the best of Ocean City is at your fingertips! Catch money-saving deals and discounts with the Ocean City iPhone App (the only official OC app). You can also search for restaurants and entertainment and book a hotel. Now available in the iTunes App Store. Find out more at ococean.com/iphone.

Recommended summer reading

- Great customer service read for hoteliers and staff: **When All You Have Left Is All You Have Left, Don't Say 'All I Have Left Is...'** by Doug Kennedy
- More great statistics and trends from Ypartnership Research: **The Travel Tribes**
- Chefs take produce to a new level—the roof! **"Rooftop to tabletop,"** from the *Baltimore Sun*.

Maryland's green travel program

Working in partnership with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Maryland Tourism Council, the Maryland Office of Tourism has designed a program to encourage environmentally-friendly practices throughout the state's tourism industry and promote Maryland as a "green" destination to eco-minded travelers.



Nearly 59 million Americans say they would pay more to use a travel company that strives to protect and preserve the environment.

Maryland Green Travel is a voluntary, self-certifying initiative that designates and recognizes lodging facilities that make a commitment to conserve and protect Maryland's natural resources. The program's environmental guidelines, developed in conjunction with Maryland Hotel & Lodging Association, using the American Hotel & Lodging Association's Guidelines for Going Green, allow the hospitality industry to evaluate its operations, set goals, and take specific actions to continuously improve environmental performance.

This initiative not only follows the lead of Governor Martin O'Malley in making Maryland a leader in environmental sustainability, but it also responds to consumer demand. Today, many customers are using environmental practices as a motivator to select one tourism experience over another. Nearly 59 million Americans say they would pay more to use a travel company that strives to protect and preserve the environment. Responsible travelers are attracted to travel companies that employ sustainable business practices, which could mean more profitability for your property. The partners in Maryland Green Travel would like your business to have an advantage in marketing to those eco-conscious consumers.

Find the online application, as well as additional information and resources, at visitmaryland.org/green. Click on "How to Join" for the link to the Lodging Sector application. Questions? Contact Catherine Batavick at green@visitmaryland.org or 410.767.6342.

CALENDAR

JULY

July 10 Canoe Jousting, Snow Hill. 443.235.3300

AUGUST

Aug. 2-6 White Marlin Open, Ocean City. whitemarlinopen.com

Aug. 7 Blessing of the Combines, Snow Hill. 410.632.3838, snowhillmd.com



Aug. 8 Peach Festival, Berlin. 410.641.4775, taylorhousemuseum.org

Aug. 13-15 Paint Berlin. 410.641.0809, worcestercountyartscouncil.org

Aug. 13-15 Worcester County Fair, Snow Hill. 410.632.1972, worcestercountyfair.com

Sept. 16-19 Delmarva Bike Week. delmarvabikeweek.com

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 23-26 Sunfest, Ocean City. 800.OC.OCEAN, ococean.com

Sept. 24-26 Berlin Fiddlers Convention. 410.641.4775, berlinchamber.org



Art League to host Sand Castle Tour Sept. 23-24

The Art League of Ocean City will host its ever-popular Sand Castle Home Tour on September 23 and 24. The self-guided tour features 10 homes in the Ocean City area. Profits from the tour will go to the funding of a desperately needed new art center building. Reserve tickets (\$25) online at www.artleagueofoceancity.org.

Free summer beach concerts

See and hear your favorite music from Radio Disney this summer—on the beach at North Division Street, just steps from the boardwalk. It's fun for the whole family, and it's FREE! You can enter to win an autographed prop from the Disney Channel's hit show, *Hannah Montana*. (Winner will be announced at the meet and greet with Jason Earles on August 15. Must be present to win.) All shows run 3-7pm. Details at ococean.com/summer-of-stars. Upcoming shows:



July 25: Josh Golden. A finalist in Radio Disney's *Next Big Thing* competition, Golden released his debut album in 2009, with his hit song *Small Town Big City*.



August 15: Jason Earles. Exclusive meet and greet with the *Hannah Montana* star! Earles stars as Jackson Stewart, the older brother of Miley Stewart.



August 22: Allstar Weekend. The band participated in Radio Disney's *Next Big Thing* competition, and soon after, was signed to Hollywood Records.

SAND PAPERS

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To subscribe to the quarterly *SandPapers* newsletter or to share story ideas, drop us a line at econ@ezy.net or call us at 800.852.0335.

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Send us your story ideas!

Have news to share? Drop us an e-mail at econ@ezy.net or call us at 800.852.0335.