Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ben Wu Takes on New Role as Economic Development Chief for Montgomery County

First Lady Yumi Hogan was on hand along with Secretary of Commerce Kelly M. Schulz and Commerce staffers to thank outgoing Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ben Wu for his five years of exemplary service. “Since the Maryland Department of Commerce was first created, the Governor’s economic agenda has delivered record job growth and the lowest unemployment rate in more than a decade. Ben has been there from the very beginning,” said Maryland Commerce Secretary Kelly M. Schulz. “Montgomery County accounts for 25 percent of our state’s GDP, so we are all vested in its economic vitality. Ben now has a terrific chance to replicate the state’s success in Montgomery County. Ben’s steady leadership, personal integrity, and keen organizational and economic insights will be missed at Commerce, but we look forward to working with him in his new capacity with Montgomery County.”

Pictured: Outgoing Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ben...
Register Now for Maryland Arts Day and Tourism Day in Annapolis

Arts and Tourism advocates are planning their annual industry days in Annapolis, with Maryland Arts Day set for February 13 and Maryland Tourism Day set for February 14. Produced by Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA), Maryland Arts Day brings stakeholders together with lawmakers to provide an opportunity for dialogue on the importance of arts and arts funding to Maryland. The event also features the presentation of the Sue Hess Arts Advocate of the Year Award and an address by keynote speaker, artist Joyce J. Scott. For more information, Arts Day Scholarship opportunities, and to register, follow this link to the MCA website.

Maryland Tourism Day is sponsored by the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) and the Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, and provides an opportunity for tourism advocates to meet with their representatives to discuss the importance of tourism to the Maryland economy. To register, and for a full schedule including information sessions, door-to-door visits with legislators, and the presentation of the Tourism Advocate Award, follow this link to the MTC website.

OTD and Industry Partners Attend ABA Marketplace 2020

Rich Gilbert, Travel Trade Sales Manager, OTD, joined representatives from the Maryland tourism industry in attending the 2020 American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace in Omaha, NE. The ABA represents more than 1,000 motorcoach and tour companies in the U.S. and Canada, and their annual marketplace is the premier trade event for the industry. Bus and group tourism is an important revenue stream for Maryland, and the annual marketplace is a great opportunity for Maryland businesses and OTD to meet one-on-one with tour providers from across the nation. Previous ABA marketplaces have provided solid returns in booked tours, thanks in part to innovative programs like Maryland Made Easy, which was developed by Gilbert to provide packaged tour itineraries for group tour operators. Representatives from more than 50 Maryland partners were on hand to promote their destinations, attractions, hotels and dining facilities, and Gilbert expects strong bookings and activity in the weeks and months ahead. The ABA Marketplace will be held in
Get Ready for National Plan For Vacation Day

January 28 is the U.S. Travel Association’s National Plan for Vacation Day — are you ready? With national media attention focused on the annual event, and millions of Americans expected to plan their 2020 travel, it’s time to make sure you’re ready. Are your website and social media channels up-to-date? Have you been keeping up with your Trip Adviser and Yelp reviews? Here’s a link to U.S. Travel’s Vacation Planning Tool; now is a great time to study it and make sure you are ready to respond to the 21st-century traveler. Together, we can make 2020 a banner year for Maryland travel!

Get a Head Start on Your 2020 “Crab Tank” Pitch

Have you got a can’t-miss marketing platform to increase overnight stays in Maryland? Submit your idea and see if you’ve got what it takes to win over the judges at the Maryland Tourism & Travel Summit’s (MTTS) annual “Crab Tank” pitch competition. If selected, you will make your pitch live at MTTS in November and our judges, the “Big Crabs,” will pick the pitch with the claws to get it done. Winning submissions will go beyond traditional travel “silos” and combine Maryland’s winning travel possibilities including group travel, multicultural/diversity travel, human-powered recreation, and family fun. The winning pitch will receive $50,000 in marketing support provided by OTD, including a full-page ad in Destination Maryland, social media support, coverage on VisitMaryland.org and in OTD’s newsletters, and more. All submissions must be received by October 15. Keep your eye on Insights for more information as we get closer to Crab Tank 2020!

Register Now for Chesapeake Bay Storytellers Training

The Maryland Department of Commerce Office of Tourism and the National Park Service are partnering to provide free training for Chesapeake Bay guides, watermen and women, and water-based tour providers. Enhance your tours or create new ones. Engage with experts about Chesapeake Bay nature, heritage, ecology, and stewardship, improve your presentation skills, and discover how to make your tours interactive and engaging for your customers. Upon completion of the training and preparation of a water-based tour with Chesapeake
Bay thematic messages, participants will receive official recognition and promotion of their tour business or organization as a Chesapeake Bay Storyteller. A $400 stipend per participant will be provided to help defray costs of attendance, travel and meals. Each session is limited to 20 participants. Once the first 20 spots are filled, other registrants will be put on a wait list, so register now. For class dates, registration, and more information, follow this link.

**Promote Your Event with 'Maryland Mondays' Ticket Giveaway**

How can OTD help spread the word about your attraction or event? "Maryland Mondays" is the perfect way to help us help you. Each Monday, OTD launches a new “Maryland Mondays” ticket give-away program across all of our social media channels, consumer newsletter, and weekly "Maryland Minute" radio spots. Combined, these channels reach thousands of potential customers each week. To find out how to get involved by providing tickets to your attraction for an upcoming "Maryland Mondays," email OTD's Leslie Troy.

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OTD Promotes Local Distilleries Ahead of 100th Anniversary of Prohibition

Ocean City Invites the Royal Couple for a Visit

Washington County Playhouse Prepares for 35th Season

*Old Town Crier* Takes a Road Trip to Solomons, Maryland

*Maryland Travel Tips*

For the latest on events and everything going all around Maryland, view the latest edition of
**Maryland Minute**

Each week, the *Maryland Minute* provides highlights and insights on this weekend’s events around the state. *Maryland Minute* is featured on Entercom radio stations in Baltimore and Washington, D.C., WERQ on Baltimore’s WBAL-AM 1090.