OTD Introduces C&O Canal Social Media guide

January 8, 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the C&O Canal being authorized as a National Historical Park. The National Park Service, the C&O Canal Towns, and the region are celebrating this milestone anniversary all year long with a variety of events and special attractions. Join the celebration by going online and participating in the social media blitz. The Maryland Office of Tourism has created a social media guide to get you started with hashtags, ideas for posts, and more. Be sure to post about the C&O Canal on January 8th!

View Social Media Guide

OTD Executive Director Liz Fitzsimmons Named to U.S. Travel & Tourism Advisory Board

Liz Fitzsimmons, Executive Director, OTD, was named to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. The board serves the U.S. Secretary of Commerce on policies and programs relating to the travel and tourism industry, offers counsel on current and emerging issues, and provides a forum for discussing and proposing solutions to industry-related problems. The board is made up of 32 members appointed by the secretary who serve two-
year terms. “I have an enormous amount of respect for U.S. Travel & Tourism and the work that they do,” said Fitzsimmons. “It’s an honor for me to join the advisory board, and I look forward to contributing to this important mission.”

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**John Wilkes Booth Civil War Trail Rebranding**

Civil War Trails, Inc. and the Maryland Office of Tourism recently completed a major update to the popular John Wilkes Booth Civil War Trail. The map guide and 12 of the interpretive signs along the driving route were revised to use the new tagline “Chasing Lincoln’s Assassin.” The signs and map guide received updated content, and new wayfinding details have been installed - all aimed at improving the guest experience. The rebranding focuses the storyline from the perspectives of the Union and the re-unification and reformation work that President Lincoln faced following the Civil War. The current tourism focus on the drive market is delivering a strong return on investment for Civil War Trails and other thematic drive products.

The new brochure is available at [www.civilwartrails.org](http://www.civilwartrails.org), and bulk requests can be placed with Brandon Chan ([brandon.chan@maryland.gov](mailto:brandon.chan@maryland.gov)). For more information about Civil War Trails contact Drew Gruber ([executivedirector@civilwartrails.org](mailto:executivedirector@civilwartrails.org)) or Anne Kyle ([anne.kyle@maryland.gov](mailto:anne.kyle@maryland.gov)).

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**OTD to Launch C&O Canal and Underground Railroad Certified Host Programs**

The Maryland Office of Tourism is pleased to announce the launch of two new Certified Host Programs in 2021.
Certified Host Programs provide training to Maryland front-line staff to increase knowledge about Maryland Office of Tourism initiatives with local tourism partners, increase knowledge of regional visitor experiences, increase business promotion, and provide basic customer service training. Training sessions are 90 minutes long and will be conducted online.

The C&O Canal Experience Certified Host Program is designed for tourism partners in Montgomery, Frederick, Washington, and Allegany counties interacting with visitors to the region. Training is on January 12 at 1 p.m. and January 20 at 7 p.m. Maryland's Underground Railroad Certified Host Program is designed for tourism partners across the state who are near Maryland National Park Service Network to Freedom sites. For a list and locations of Network to Freedom sites please see www.visitmaryland.org/network-to-freedom. Training is on January 19 at 3 p.m. and January 27 at 7pm. Registration is open now; please click below for a registration form.

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center Film Wins NAI Award

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) presented its 2020 Interpretive Media Awards, an international competition drawing entries from around the world, and “Harriet Tubman: Soldier of Freedom,” won third place in the video category. The video was produced by the Maryland Park Service, National Park Service, OTD, and Aperture Films, LTD, and is exhibited at the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center. The Interpretive Media Awards promote excellence in the delivery of natural, cultural, and historical non-personal interpretive services. Follow the
OTD’s Matt Scales Presents Virtual FAM Tour Strategies to Visit Indiana

Matthew Scales of OTD’s Strategic Partnership & Public Relations Department presented to Visit Indiana on the success of OTD’s virtual media familiarization tour. Maryland strives to be at the center and forefront of today’s ever-changing media climate, leading the team to hold a culinary-themed virtual media fam in October. In today’s climate, OTD recognizes the importance to help all within the tourism industry, and Visit Indiana was pleased with the presentation, believing it better prepared them for the current media landscape.

IN THE NEWS

Stories of the Chesapeake Awards $25,000 in Small Grants

BBJ Charts Why the Coming Weeks Will Be Critical for Baltimore restaurants

Guinness Brewery Donates $1M to Groups Focused on Bettering Baltimore’s Black Communities, according to *The Baltimore Sun*

Wreckage of WWI Era Submarine Found Off Ocean City Coast

Maryland Museum of Women’s History Announces First Exhibit

Tru by Hilton Hotel Opens Near Baltimore’s Little Italy

Main Street Hancock Looks to Past in Charting Course for Future
Montgomery ‘Tourism Anchor Institution Grant Program’ Expanded

Activity May Be Down, but Frederick’s Tourism Leaders Remain Optimistic

Hagerstown to Continue Stadium Talks Despite Loss of Suns-Nationals Affiliation

High-Level Baseball to Continue in Frederick, as Orioles Keep Five Teams in Maryland

Archeologists Find Clues to Harriet Tubman’s Birthplace in Dorchester County

Maryland Hotel Lodging Association Seeks State Relief

More than $13M in Federal Grants Support Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

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.

Maryland Travel Tips

For the latest on events and everything going all around Maryland, view the latest edition of Visit Maryland Now!