Governor Hogan’s FY2022 Budget Supports Tourism, Film & The Arts

Governor Larry Hogan unveiled his Fiscal Year 2022 recovery budget, which continues to spur tourism and promote the arts as it lays a strong foundation for the state’s economic recovery. The budget includes $10.4 million for enhanced tourism board activities; nearly $2 million in annual funding for the Maryland African-American Museum Corporation; a $100,000 deficiency to fund efforts to secure 2025 FIFA World Cup matches in Maryland; $12 million in film tax credits to attract film and video production to Maryland; and $23.4 million for the Maryland State Arts Council. To read the Governor’s full FY2022 budget, follow the link below.
Governor Hogan Announces $1 Billion RELIEF Act

Governor Larry Hogan has introduced the RELIEF Act of 2021, an emergency legislative package that will provide more than $1 billion in direct stimulus and tax relief for Maryland working families, small businesses, and those who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation builds on the more than $700 million in emergency economic relief that the governor has already announced. The RELIEF Act provides direct stimulus payments to 400,000 Marylanders, sales tax credits for 55,000 small businesses, repeals state and local income taxes on unemployment benefits, and includes $257 million for the transportation sector. For more information on the RELIEF Act of 2021, follow the link below.

Learn More About The RELIEF Act of 2021

February 12 is MTC Virtual Tourism Day

The Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) is hosting its annual Tourism Day on February 12 with the event moving into the virtual space. Tourism Day is a legislative advocacy event promoting the tourism industry and while the event will look a little different this year, it still needs your participation to succeed. Join tourism industry professionals from across the state as they virtually meet with legislators from their counties and share stories about their businesses and the impact they have on Maryland's economy. Contact your local DMO or MTC regarding group activities involving your region. For more information and to register, follow the link below.
Maryland Department of Labor Offers Virtual Recruitment Events for Temporarily Dislocated Hospitality Employees

The Maryland Department of Labor’s (Labor) Division of Workforce Development has created a series of nine virtual recruitment events to help Marylanders who have been temporarily dislocated from the hospitality industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. These recruitments will connect hundreds of unemployed Marylanders with employers looking to fill positions in various industries and locations across the state.

"Strawberry Mansion" Debuts at Sundance

"Strawberry Mansion," a recipient of a Small Maryland Film Tax Credit will be premiering at the Sundance Film Festival, which runs from January 28-February 3. The film is set in a future where the government records dreams and taxes them, and a dream auditor gets caught up in the dreams of an aging eccentric. It was written and directed by local filmmaker Albert Birney, whose last film "Sylvio," was named one of the 10 best films of 2017 by The New Yorker magazine, and screened at the Maryland Film Festival. "Filming in Maryland was a dream," said Birney. "The tax credit was very helpful and we were able to take the money we saved and put it directly back into our movie." "Strawberry Mansion" also received funds from the Saul Zaentz Innovation Fund at Johns Hopkins University.
University, making this film a true Maryland collaborative effort.

OTD to Launch Underground Railroad Certified Host Program

The Maryland Office of Tourism is pleased to announce the launch of a new Certified Host Program in 2021. Certified Host Programs provide training to Maryland tourism partners to increase knowledge about Maryland Office of Tourism initiatives, 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.

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](http://www.visitmaryland.org/network-to-freedom). Training is on January 19 at 3 p.m. and January 27 at 7 p.m. Registration is open now; please click below for a registration form.

OTD, CRUSA Lure International Travelers With Virtual Culinary Event

With international travel restrictions still in place, OTD joined Capital Region USA (CRUSA) in hosting a virtual FAM for UK journalists as part of our continued efforts to keep Maryland top-of-mind for future travelers. The virtual event took place on January 26 and welcomed 20
influential UK journalists. A highlight of the FAM was the interactive portion which included a crab-picking demonstration by the Maryland team.

Visit Annapolis secured the talents of Captain Rick of the Annapolis Maritime Museum’s Wilma Lee as our local crab-picking expert. To make the event truly “Hands on,” journalists were provided with a steamed blue crab along with a crab mallet and Old Bay seasoning to follow along with Captain Rick. Efforts like these, and the continued teamwork of OTD and CRUSA amplifies the Maryland tourism message and keeps us at the forefront of international travel.

Pictured is Captain Rick Flamand (Lead Captain of the Wilma Lee skipjack with the Annapolis Maritime Museum)

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OTD Promotes Wellness Travel

Wellness travel is one of the fastest growing segments of our industry, and OTD is engaged to keep Maryland at the forefront. As part of those efforts, OTD has created a Wellness Travel page and is amplifying the message through our social media channels. We also encourage you to promote the wellness benefits of your destination, and share on social media with #MDinFocus so that we can help amplify your message.

View Our Wellness Travel Suggestions

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Last Chance to Submit Maryland Heritage Areas Grant Letter of Intent

The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) is pleased to announce that MHAA is now seeking applications for its FY 2022 grants cycle, and "Intent to Apply" forms are due this month. MHAA provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants for capital and non-capital
projects located within Maryland's 13 certified heritage areas. Non-profit organizations, local jurisdictions, state agencies, and federal agencies are all eligible to apply.

An "Intent to Apply" form is due on January 29, 2021. Full applications are due online in late February, March, and April of 2021. Deadlines for the full applications are set by each of the 13 heritage areas for their applicants. Grant awards will be announced in July of 2021.

Rams Head Live and Merriweather Post Among Venues Awarded $30m in State Grants

St. Mary’s County approves Hotel Relief Funding

Carroll County to Distribute $254,810 to County Hotels & Motels that Generate Sales and Use Tax

LSHG Announces Mini-Grants to Six Heritage Tourism Projects

Frederick County’s Tourism Executive Director to Retire according to WFMD

*The Film Stage* Calls "Strawberry Mansion" One of Sundance's Most Anticipated Films

**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!*