



OTD Participates in French Trade Sales Mission

OTD's Travel Trade Manager Rich Gilbert represented Maryland in a Capital Region USA (CRUSA) French Trade Sales Mission in December in Paris. During the mission, Gilbert promoted Maryland directly to important tour operators and travel agents. The mission also included sales calls, product development talks, private client events and call center trainings, including 17 sales appointments and trainings in Paris, Lyon and Nice. The mission was organized and led by CRUSA's France in-market representative.

Capital Region USA (CRUSA) is the official regional destination marketing organization promoting internationally in partnership with Destination DC, Maryland Office of Tourism Development & Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Photo credit: Rich Gilbert and sales mission participants in front of the recently re-opened Cathédrale Notre-Dame in Paris.



OTD to Launch State-wide Scenic Byways Social Media Campaign

From April to October 2025, the Maryland Office of Tourism will launch a robust social media campaign to promote the state's 18 scenic byways. Each byway will be featured on our social media platforms, with posts strategically timed to coincide with themed holidays, seasonal trends or historic events. Posts will be published on Wednesdays (#WanderlustWednesday) and Sundays (#ScenicSunday) to inspire and inform potential travelers about the accommodations, attractions, restaurants, and shopping experiences along each byway. Stay tuned for more details on how you can engage with and amplify the campaign's message. To see the full tentative schedule, click [here](#).



VisitMaryland.org Achieves Record Numbers for Visitation, Engagement, Views and Partner Referrals

2024 was a banner year for VisitMaryland.org with a nearly 30 percent increase in visitation, year-over-year, reaching 4.5 million sessions. The site garnered 7 million views from 3.5 million users, resulting in 640,000 partner referrals (a 10 percent increase) to local Maryland businesses. Engagement on VisitMaryland.org rose to 61.7 percent, with a 20 percent increase in views, 24 percent more users, and a 25 percent rise in engaged sessions compared to the previous year. Additionally, the site received more than 445,000 event listing views and 130,000 accommodation listing views through organic search. Make sure you are doing everything you can to take advantage of the power of VisitMaryland.org and a host of other valuable opportunities by partnering with our

office. Contact Lisa Hansen Terhune to learn more and click [here](#) to see the full report.



Are You Ready for February's Black History Month?

Do you or your partners have events, programs, tours or exhibits planned for 2025 Black History Month? Make sure you get the most visible coverage for all the events in your area by entering all activities into the events calendar on [VisitMaryland.org](https://www.visitmaryland.org). And don't forget to direct your stakeholders back to [VisitMaryland.org](https://www.visitmaryland.org)'s state-wide Black History content with this [link](#). To put an event into the calendar click [here](#). If you need help entering your events, contact [Florence Brant](#) or [Brandon Chan](#).

Photo credit: St. Mary's County Museum Division



Heritage Fund Now Accepting Applications

The Heritage Fund, a cooperative effort of Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust, is now accepting applications. The Heritage Fund provides direct assistance for the protection of historical and cultural resources and promotes innovative demonstration projects that can be successfully replicated to meet Maryland's historic preservation needs and is only open to non-profit organizations, including religious institutions, and units of local government. All program and application information is available [here](#).



National Maritime Heritage Grants Program Accepting Applications

The National Maritime Heritage Grants Program is now accepting applications for two types of grants: National Maritime Heritage Preservation Grants and National Maritime Heritage Education Grants. These grants aim to preserve historic maritime resources and promote public education about America's rich maritime heritage. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply. Applications are due February 4.



Association of African American Museums (AAAM) Announces Funding for African American Civil Rights Network (AACRN) Members

The Association of African Americans (AAAM) has announced a new round of funding for AACRN members for the 2024-2025 cycle. AACRN Members can request up to \$25,000 in grant funding. You must be a member of AACRN to apply. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply. Applications are due January 31.



Save America's Treasures Grant Applications Open

The Save America's Treasures grant program is administered by the National Park Service and operates in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Applications for the following Save America's Treasures grant programs are currently being accepted: Historically Black Colleges &

Universities Grant Opportunity, applications due January 28; Tribal Heritage Grants Opportunity, applications due February 27; Semiquincentennial Grant Opportunity, applications due March 18. For more information visit [this website](#).



FY 2026 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) Grant Round Open

The FY 2026 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) grant round for capital and non-capital heritage-related projects is open and accepting Intents to Apply (ITA), the first step in submitting an application. ITAs are due by January 27, 2025. Full applications are due by March 3, 2025.

This grant program provides grants ranging from \$5,000-\$100,000 to organizations sustaining and creating place-based heritage experiences within Maryland's 13 heritage areas. Visit the [Maryland Heritage Areas Program webpages](#) to confirm your eligibility, review the grant guidelines, and to begin the process of submitting an ITA.



Vote for Maryland Sites Nominated for USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Awards

Spread the word to your partners to vote for the following Maryland sites in the latest *USA TODAY* 10Best Readers' Choice Awards : Best Free Museum-The Baltimore Museum of Art and The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum; Best Museum Ship-The Historic Ships in Baltimore; Best Small Town Museum-The Allegany Museum. Voting ends on February 10 and the top 10

winners, as ranked by *USA TODAY* 10Best readers, will be announced on February 19. Click [here](#) to cast your vote.



Promote Your Events on VisitMaryland.org

Do your partners know how easy it is to add events to [VisitMaryland.org's events calendar](#)? If you or an organization or attraction in your region is hosting an event, it's easy to get the word out through VisitMaryland.org's events calendar. With tens of thousands of regular visitors, it's a great tool, and with our self-entry portal, it's never been easier to use! If you're wondering if an event has the right stuff for the VisitMaryland.org calendar, you'll find the inclusion criteria [here](#), [follow this link](#) for a step-by-step guide for self entry, or if it's not your first rodeo, jump straight to the entry portal [here](#).

Photo credit: Karmen Osei

IN THE NEWS

Luxury Hotel Starts Final Phase of \$5m Renovation

German Airline Ends Service To BWI Airport

Maryland Legislature to Debate Online Gambling Legalization

New Boutique Hotel Opens in Former Maryland Convent

Maryland Casinos Generate \$69.8 Million for State in December

Maryland Film Festival Moves to Fall, Citing Academic Calendar

Maryland Public Airports Generate \$1.4 Billion

Baltimore Orioles Announce 2025 Promotional Schedule, Single Game Ticket On-Sale Date

Maryland Gov. Moore Announces \$5m Award For 31 Orgs to Preserve State's Black History

Spirit Adds BWI Flight to Tropical Destination

DNR Surveys Public for Updating Land Preservation and Recreation Plan

Maryland Sports Betting Generates \$6.5 Million in December

Live! Casino & Hotel Maryland Launches First-Ever Restaurant Week

Frederick Arts Council Announces Fy25 Community Arts Development Grant Awardees

20 Best Maryland Crab Restaurants Ranked

Posted in History Starr Center Secures Funding for African American History Initiative

Maryland Film Festival Receives \$20,000 NEA Grant

Maryland Opens Public Nominations for Admiral of The Chesapeake Bay Award

Maryland Minute

Each week, the *Maryland Minute* provides highlights and insights on this weekend's events around the state. *Maryland Minute* is featured on Audacy 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!](#)

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Wes Moore
Governor

