

TODAY Tourism

VISITOR NUMBERS ON THE RISE

The thermometer wasn't the only thing showing higher numbers this spring. During its first three months of operation, the new Frederick Visitor Center had 25 percent more visitors compared to the same months last year at the Church Street location.

"Despite having the rainiest April in recent history, our numbers are clearly showing more people are visiting us in our new location," says John Fieseler, Executive Director for the Tourism Council of Frederick County, adding that visitors from 49 states were welcomed at the new Visitor Center in April, May, and June. "Additionally, visitors are spending four to five times as long in our new location, compared to the one on Church Street, plus souvenir and Downtown Frederick Gift Card sales are up." Studies show that people who spend time in a visitor information center go on to spend more time and money in the destination, Fieseler explains.

Current industry indicators reflect a healthy rebound in travel to Frederick County. Hotel occupancy is up 8.6 percent in Frederick County for January through April 2011, according to Smith Travel Research. (The economic downturn is still reflected in a lower Average Daily Rate, though.) In Frederick County, total sales tax revenue for all tourism-related categories is up 8 percent for the first nine months of FY2011, compared to last year.

GENERATION Y ASKS FOR DIRECTIONS

Who uses visitor centers the most? The answer may surprise you...

Even in our high-tech world of GPS navigation and smart phones, studies show that visitor centers still provide essential services for travelers. A new study, *Project 85-The Drive Market*, by Mandala Research and SolutionZ in partnership with the Destination & Travel Foundation, sheds new light on travel trends and behavior. One of the study's most interesting findings is that Generation Y-ers (birth dates ranging from the mid-1970s to early 2000s) stop at roadside visitor centers more often than any other age demographic. Additionally, they're asking for (gasp) directions.



This recent study may indicate that Generation Y-ers are comfortable with not plotting out trip details in advance as their parents did, instead preferring to select a destination at the last minute and then seek information and directions once they arrive. The Frederick Visitor Center staff recently experienced this exact scenario. On a late May afternoon, three Gen Y-aged back-packers arrived at the Frederick Visitor Center ready to explore the Appalachian Trail for a day or two. "They had done some research on hiking the Appalachian Trail and knew it was in Frederick County, but they needed our help to navigate locally and get on the trail," explains Visitor Services Manager Lori Paddy.

The study demonstrates that visitor centers are still needed today across a variety of demographic ranges. National trends show other services offered by the Tourism Council are important to visitors who are planning trips. According to the *Project 85* study, 63 percent of respondents said they relied on destination websites for planning their trip and one out of seven (14 percent) said they contact a tourism office when planning their trip. More than half use social media, with younger generations more likely to use social media to learn about a destination.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, summer is upon us! For most of us, this means that the visitors are now arriving in the highest numbers of the year. With any luck, you are so busy that you will be unable to read my comments. But if you do get a moment, I think there are few things we need to reflect upon.

We have many things to be thankful for this summer. The Visitor Center is now in full operation, the new wayfinding signs are working well, gas prices have eased a bit, and people seem to be travelling. In addition to these factors, the BBC has promoted our community worldwide, several great articles have hit regional and national publications, and Frederick's reputation is growing every day. While Thanksgiving is still many months away, we have much to be thankful for right now.

All in all, these are exciting times for tourism in Frederick County. I want to personally thank all of you who attended Tourism's Spring Social. I think all in attendance would agree that the staff has done a remarkable job in promoting our county. It is now up to each of us to welcome our visitors and give them a reason to return to one of the best places on earth. I wish all of you a good summer and I look forward to seeing the fruits of our labor come fall.

— George Wunderlich

Save the Date

The Tourism Council of Frederick County will celebrate its 35th Anniversary on Wednesday, October 26, 2011.

Look for your invitation in the mail later in the year.

Please note: The Tourism Council continues to receive mail forwarded from our previous location. Please update your files with our current address at 151 S. East Street, Frederick, MD 21701. Thank you!



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Monocacy National Battlefield

The Tourism Council is a non-profit organization. Membership is open to all parties interested in undertaking a joint effort to promote the growth of travel to Frederick County, MD.

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BYWAY BITS

The Frederick Visitor Center hosted Scenic Byway representatives from around the state for a recent tour and meeting, part of an ongoing effort led by Maryland Scenic Byway Director Terry Maxwell (MD State Highway Administration) to develop a strategic plan for the Maryland Byways Program. The plan's objectives include re-examination of the program's goals, organizational framework, sustainability, marketing, signage, and future performance measurements. A formalized strategic plan will ensure fulfillment of the program's heritage tourism and preservation agenda.

The working committee for the project consists of Byway managers; a representative from the National Scenic Byways Resource Center; and state, county, and local tourism, planning, and preservation entities. The Tourism Council's Chris Haugh represents the Journey Through Hallowed Ground (Catoctin Mountain-MD) as Byway Manager and also serves on the board of the Maryland National Road Association.

ENHANCING OUR NEW HOME

Thanks to the Garden Club of Frederick, visitors will be greeted by Maryland's state flower, the black-eyed susan, this summer. The club's Civic Concern Committee donated these and other plantings around the new Frederick Visitor Center and planted the beds this spring. "We're grateful for their efforts to beautify this part of East Street and for their gift to us," says John Fieseler, Tourism Council Executive Director. From left to right: TCFC Board President George Wunderlich, Garden Club of Frederick/Civic Concern Committee Co-chair Denise Gouin, Garden Club of Frederick President Pat Mayernick, Garden Club of Frederick/Civic Concern Committee Co-chair Meta Nash, TCFC Executive Director John Fieseler. Not pictured: Natalie Loudon, Lauren Kremers, Nancy Mackintosh, Patty Kettlestrings, and Peggy O'Neill.

A beautiful metal sculpture by artist Scott Cawood depicting the clustered spires skyline of Frederick was donated by Plamondon Hospitality Partners to hang in the conference room of the Tourism Council offices at the new Frederick Visitor Center. From left to right: TCFC Board President George Wunderlich, Plamondon Hospitality Partners Co-president Peter Plamondon, Jr., Plamondon Hospitality Partners Chairman Peter Plamondon, Sr., Plamondon Hospitality Partners Co-president James Plamondon, and TCFC Executive Director John Fieseler.



KUDOS

- The Catoctin Trail was designated a National Recreation Trail (NRT) by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar in May.
- Downtown Frederick ranked eighth in *AmericanStyle Magazine's* Top 25 Arts Destinations, Small Cities.
- Mary Mannix, manager of the Maryland Room at Frederick County Public Libraries, received the Genealogical Publishing Company/History Section Award by the American Library Association in honor of her dedication to providing local history and genealogy education and reference services.
- Two local Main Street Maryland award recipients include Brunswick Main Street (Organizational Excellence) and Downtown Frederick Partnership (Design Excellence for wayfinding program).
- Nine staff and volunteers from local businesses and destinations completed their Certified Tourism Ambassador training.
- Nancy Koval, visitor specialist for the Central Maryland Heritage League, was named the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership's Volunteer of the Year.

TOURISM COUNCIL ANNOUNCES TRIPP AWARDS

The Tourism Council of Frederick County recently awarded 16 non-profit organizations a combined \$182,675 in funding for fiscal year 2012 through the Tourism Reinvestment in Promotion and Product (TRIPP) Program. Since the inception of the Frederick County hotel tax in 2004, the Tourism Council has awarded more than \$1.3 million to benefit local non-profit organizations to support their events and attractions.

TRIPP uses a portion of the hotel tax revenue received by the Tourism Council to fund the program. “By supporting organizations that develop and promote key attractions and overnight stays, the area becomes increasingly more attractive as a destination,” says Michael Henningsen, Director of Hotel Operations for Plamondon Hospitality Partners and chair of the Tourism Council’s TRIPP Committee. “The Tourism Council values what these organizations do for our community, and we are committed to helping them enhance their programs, sites, and events that attract visitors to Frederick County.”

This year, the TRIPP program had \$186,000 available to award and received 25 applications, with funding requests totaling more than \$290,000. “The selection committee carefully evaluated each application and awarded funding based on which programs would bring the highest return for Frederick County,” says John Fieseler, Executive Director for the Tourism Council. “For the first time in the program’s history, everyone who applied received at least partial funding for their request, which speaks to the strength of the applications.”

Organizations could apply in two funding categories: Advertising or Development. Advertising funds are used to advertise an event or attraction through traditional media placement in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and, in some cases, the web. Development funds are used to support the creation or expansion of new programs or products that enhance the visitor’s experience to Frederick County. The maximum award for TRIPP Product Development and Advertising categories was \$20,000 per organization per category.

Applications and guidelines for the fiscal year 2013 TRIPP Program will be available in January 2012. For more information, call 301-600-4047 or visit www.fredericktourism.org/tourism-council/tripp.

TRIPP FY12 ADVERTISING AWARDS

Organization	Award
Weinberg Center for the Arts	\$18,000
Frederick Arts Council	\$18,000
Downtown Frederick Partnership	\$17,500
Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center	\$14,500
National Museum of Civil War Medicine	\$13,000
MD Shakespeare Festival	\$10,000
Brunswick Main Street	\$7,000
Celebrate Frederick	\$4,000
City of Brunswick	\$3,000
Thurmont First	\$3,000
Frederick Wine Trail	\$2,000
Frederick’s Oktoberfest	\$2,000
Total Awarded \$112,000	

TRIPP FY12 DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

Organization	Project	Award
MD Shakespeare Festival	4 Plays in 4 Weeks Bare Bard Experimental Series	\$15,000
Brunswick Main Street	Saturdays in Railroad Town	\$9,000
Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center	National Juried Quilt Exhibit/Easels in Frederick	\$8,250
Catoctin Center for Regional Studies	African Americans & the Civil War in Mid-MD	\$7,200
National Museum of Civil War Medicine	Integrated Marketing/Re-branding	\$5,650
Celebrate Frederick	Event Development for Celebrate Frederick	\$5,000
Downtown Frederick Partnership	Promoting Downtown Frederick	\$4,275
City of Brunswick	2011 Railroad Days	\$4,000
Frederick Arts Council	Temporary Public Art Project	\$4,000
City of Frederick	Frederick History Bicycle Loop Project	\$3,000
HARPS Foundation	MD Summer Harp Concert Series	\$2,550
Myersville Trolley Festival	Bluegrass Competition Expansion	\$1,750
Thurmont First	Getaway to the Gateway Brochure Project	\$1,000
Total Awarded \$70,675		



SPRING FRONTLINE FAM TOUR

Participants in the Tourism Council's Spring Frontline FAM (Familiarization) Tour spent a May afternoon exploring Downtown Frederick, including the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Museum of Frederick County History, Roads and Rails, Everedy Square and Shab Row, City Hall, Weinberg Center for the Arts, and the Cultural Arts Center. Tourism's Executive Director John Fieseler led a walking tour, and Kara Norman, Downtown Frederick Partnership Executive Director,

and Amy Riley, City of Frederick Special Events Manager, were guest speakers during lunch at Brewer's Alley. Participants included staff from Green Country Inn & Diner, Best Western Historic Frederick, Sleep Inn, Hampton Inn & Suites, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, and Hilton Garden Inn.

For details on the Fall Frontline FAM Tour, which will focus on a county destination, contact Becky Bickerton at bbickerton@fredco-md.net.

MASTER DOCENT RECOGNITION

Eleven docents from five local heritage organizations were recognized as Master Docents at the 20th annual Docent Recognition Party on June 15. New Master Docents are: Claudia Hart, Rebecca Arndt, Grace Heller, and George Waxter from the Historical Society of Frederick County; Maryanne Ludy, Jeffrey Ludy, and Adele Air from the National Museum of Civil War Medicine; Doris Ifert from the Middletown Valley Historical Society; Constance Trump from the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton; and Cathy Pugliese and Margie Burriss from Schifferstadt Architectural Museum.

Held at Ole Mink Farm in Thurmont, the event featured a Roy Rogers picnic donated by the Plamondon Companies and a time for docents to share reflections and anecdotes from their experiences with the visiting public. Among them, a volunteer from the National Museum of Civil War Medicine recalled chatting with two middle-school students during a First Saturday event. "They were eager and enthusiastic to learn," the volunteer shared. "I've found that when the young people are involved and enthusiastic, their significant adults also are drawn into the history and learn as well." A Maryland Room docent reflected on the special moments when people discover where an ancestor lived or that a certain building is still there to see. "Helping them connect with that realization is worth a fortune in rewards to us docents," she explained.

Docents do reap great rewards, including friendship and fellowship through the Frederick Historic Sites Consortium. If you'd like to join in the fun, contact Liz Shatto 301-600-4042 or lshatto@fredco-md.net.



New Master Docents, front row, left to right: Rebecca Arndt, George Waxter, Grace Heller, Cathy Pugliese, Doris Ifert, and Maryanne Ludy. Back row, left to right: Claudia Hart, Constance Trump, Adele Air, Jeffrey Ludy. Not pictured is Margie Burriss.

SESQUICENTENNIAL UPDATES

Every day of the year, there is an opportunity for visitors to discover something new in Maryland's Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area—especially during the Sesquicentennial commemoration. Visit www.heartofthecivilwar.org to learn more about current activities, and be sure to mark your calendars for next year's exciting focus on the Maryland Campaign of 1862. This campaign was Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the north, which led to the Battles of South Mountain and Antietam and prompted Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

Several Frederick County organizations, including a coalition of partners in the Middletown Valley under the leadership of the Central Maryland Heritage League, are planning new interpretive product, special events, and more for the 2012 commemoration, such as:

- First Call events—concerts, demonstrations, exhibitions, and more
- A Heart of the Civil War documentary film/travelogue, produced by Maryland Public Television
- A special exhibition of the actual "Special Orders 191" on loan to Monocacy National Battlefield from the Library of Congress
- Numerous events related to the 150th anniversary of the Battle of South Mountain, including military and homefront perspectives.

To learn more about these and other Maryland Campaign commemorations, visit www.marylandcampaign150.org. Please note that groups planning Civil War commemorations should contact Liz Shatto, HCWHA Director, at 301-600-4042 or info@heartofthecivilwar.org to coordinate with other efforts and to tap related benefits and opportunities.

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WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

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Contact: Dr. Maria
Higgins

Clarification: The Silver Maple Restaurant and Wine Bar is the full name of the establishment. It was listed previously in this newsletter as The Silver Maple.



Photo courtesy of *The Frederick News-Post*

PASSPORT TO HISTORY WINNERS

Winners of this year's Passport to History activity, part of Bell and History Day in April, received their prizes in front of the Frederick County History Bell at the Frederick Visitor Center. Gift totes filled with books, games, and gift certificates were donated by the Historic Frederick Best Western, Tourism Council of Frederick County and its membership, and numerous museums and historic sites.

Pictured from left: Lori Paddy, visitor services manager; Ileana Lund, winner; Elizabeth Shatto, coordinator of the Frederick Historic Sites Consortium; Noah Barth, 9, winner; Frances Randall, Bell and History Days committee member; Julia Lebedev, 12, winner; Cassie Seamon, winner; Kai Bomberger, 10, winner; and Colleen Remsberg, Bell and History Days chairwoman. Not shown is contest winner Patty Little.