CHAMBER NEWS & UPDATES

February is full of fun events!

We have lots of new events planned. Be on the lookout for special updates.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- February 10 - Spirits of Maryland
- February 12 - Zoom with State Elected Official
- February 13 - New Member Luncheon
- February 27 - Women's Luncheon – Robbie Loker
- February 28 - Business After Hours – Chesapeake Staging & Interiors, LLC
- February 29 -State of the Schools Luncheon
- February 29 - Ride the Chamber Bus to the MD Legislative in Annapolis
- March 2 - National Civics Bee Live
- March 8 - Chamber 50th Anniversary
- March 27 - Business After Hours –Above Par Golf & Entertainment
- April 5 - Ribbon Cutting – St. Mary's Art Council
- April 13 - National Civics Bee – Live Event
- April 18 - Legislative Review Breakfast

Join a Virtual Roundtable with our St. Mary's Delegation!

Monday, February 12
8a.m.

This will be an opportunity to hear our St. Mary's County state elected officials review the current status of the 2024 legislative session and the bills they are sponsoring that affect our business community.

Sponsored by the St. Mary's County Library.

Please register no later than Thursday, February 8, 2024, to receive the link.

Koin the Southern Maryland Delegation to hear about legislation coming out of Annapolis. You will have the opportunity to hear about how your business will be impacted and the changes you can make to such legislation. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to get involved and help your local businesses.

Register here.

Spirits of Maryland

The Maryland Distillers Guild returns to Southern Maryland for the annual all-local spirits event. Maryland distilleries invite spirits and cocktail enthusiasts to sample and explore a variety of gins, rums, whiskeys, and more.

During this two-session event, attendees may sample local spirits, meet the people behind the brands and purchase bottles of their favorite products to take home for off-premises consumption.

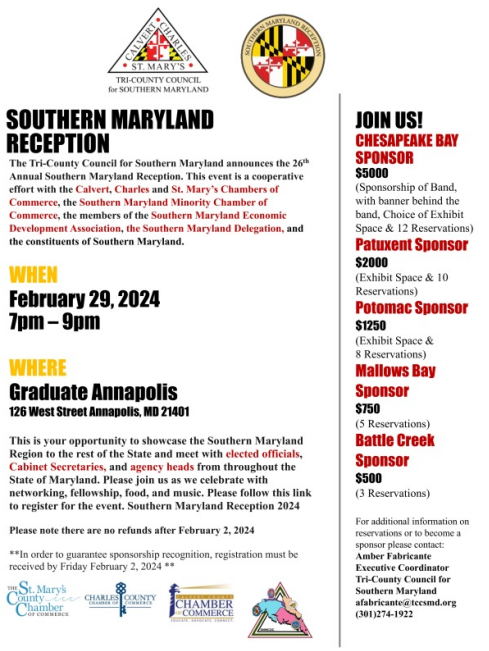
Tickets available from the Maryalnd Distillers Guild here: www.marylandspirits.org
To sponsor this event: register here.

Thank you for supporting the Maryland Distillers Guild and our continued efforts to promote the quality and availability of Maryland spirits.

"Where the right stuff meets the strong stuff."
SPIRITS OF Maryland
A MARYLAND DISTILLERS SHOWCASE
SOUTHERN MARYLAND
PAX NAVAL AIR MUSEUM
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024
SESSION 1: VIP 1:00-1:30 PM GA 1:30-3PM
SESSION 2: VIP 3:30-4:00 PM GA 4-5:30PM
General Admission $30 • St. Mary's Chamber Discount $25
VIP Admission $50
PAX
RIVER NAVAL AIR MUSEUM
marylandspirits.org
Shore United Bank
Visit St MARY'S MD
The St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce

Register to sponsor here and purchase event tickets here no later than February 13.

2024 Southern Maryland Reception
February 29, 2024
Annapolis, MD



Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland is Hosting the 2024 Southern Maryland Reception

The 2024 Southern Maryland Reception will take place on February 29, 2024, at The Graduate. This event provides a great opportunity to experience the warm hospitality of Southern Maryland, with delicious food, networking opportunities, and live music.

For event tickets and more information, email afabricante@tccsmd.org.

Ticket to Ride! Bus Service to Southern Maryland Reception

Skip the drive and parking hassle. The St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce is offering a bus service to the SOMD Legislative Reception. The bus will depart from Hollywood Fire Department at 5p.m. and leaves Annapolis to return at 9 p.m.

Bus tickets are required and are first come, first serve. $35 per member

Register for tickets here.
Add your name to sponsors here!

New Member Lunches RESUMED!

Join us the second Tuesday of each month to get to know our new members. Our next one is February 13, 2024.

Pre-registration required. See here.

New Member Highlight!

The Chamber would like to acknowledge our newest members and say thank you for your partnership!

Special Thanks to:

- Bin There Dump That Capital Area
- Club Pilates SOMD

Women's Lunch Series - Robbie Loker

Tuesday, February 27, 2024
12:00p.m.

23131 Three Notch Rd.
Suite 200
California, MD

Learn about reverse mortgages and more!

Must pre-register here.

- Equa, LLC
- Foundations Learning Center
- Hancock Refrigeration Company, Inc.
- Innovative Wealth Building, LLC
- Raines Restoration
- Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions

Want to see your business here?Click here for registration to become a member.

National Civics Bee® Essay Deadline extended to February 19, 2024

This is such an exciting opportunity! Middle school students are invited to write an essay on an issue that concerns them in their community and how they can have an impact through the lens of civics. Attendees at the live event are also encouraged to test their civics knowledge along with the students.

The St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to offer the 2024 National Civics Bee®, an initiative aimed at encouraging more young Americans to engage in civics and contribute to their communities. Organized in partnership with The Civic Trust® of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the competition in St. Mary's County will inspire middle schoolers to become better informed about American democracy, to engage respectfully and constructively in the community, and to build greater trust in others and institutions.

Middle school students from public, private, charter, and home schools are invited to take part in the first-round civics essay competition. After a distinguished panel reviews the 500-word essays, the top 20 students will be selected to move on to the next round of competition: a live quiz event to test their civics knowledge. The St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce will host this live event on March 2, 2024 at Cole Cinema, St. Mary's College of Maryland, co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Democracy and the Educational Systems Federal Credit Union. The finalists and top winners will receive various prizes, including $500 cash for the first-place student.

Sponsors can help inlock the potential of future leaders by purchasing a sponsorship for the Civics Bee and supporting the next generation of informed and engaged citizens.

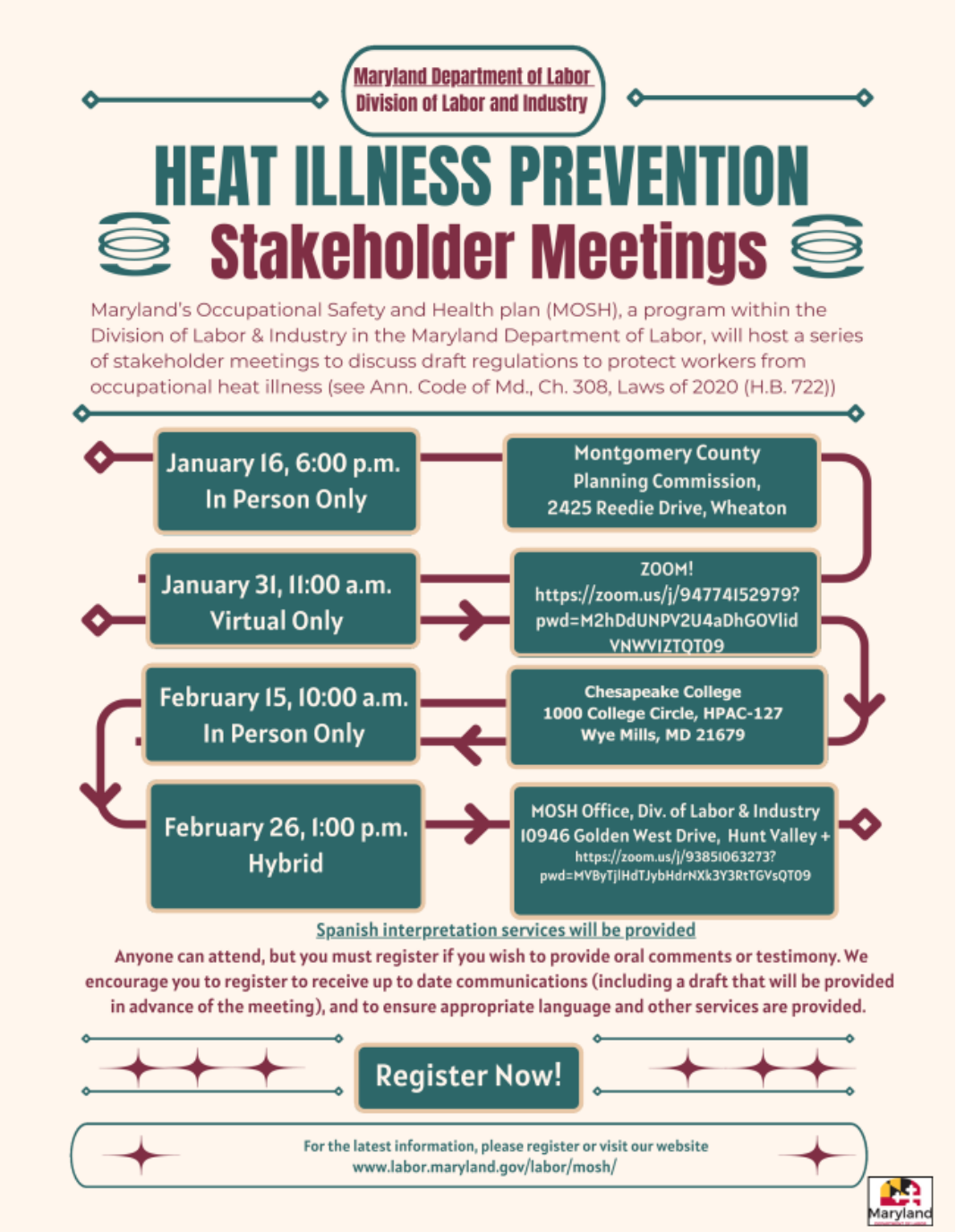
The deadline for student essay submissions has been extended to February 19, 2024. For more information to submit your essay, sponsor the event, or register to attend the live event, visit: National Civics Bee® - St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce (smcchamber.com)

More info about the Bee hereor call 301-737-3001 to learn more.Sponsor registration here.

Calling all high school seniors!! The BECA Common Scholarship Fair will provide information about local scholarships and the BECA application process.

Please feel free to visit the newBECA website for more information.

Any questions or concerns can be addressed via email at smcbeca@gmail.com or by phone at 240-257-2322



Register here.

Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Proposed statutory changes to MD's forthcoming
Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) System

Overview

Maryland's Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) system was established through the Time to Care Act passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2022. Starting in 2026, workers will leverage FAMLI to take time away from work to care for themselves or a family member and still receive up to $1000 a week for up to 12 weeks.

The Time to Care Act was amended in 2023 to adjust the implementation timeline.

In 2024, the Maryland General Assembly will review more proposed amendments to the Time to Care Act. The Division seeks several critical changes to **ease administration** of the FAMLI system; **improve customers' experience** by increasingly automating claims processing; and **fortify the State's resources** to sustainably cover administrative costs.

Impacts of Bill

Area of Focus	Current Status	Proposed Solution
Customer Experience	Is ambiguous about whether the Division can distinguish between types of employers when determining the ability of an employer to self-insure.	Grants Division greater discretion when requiring documentation from employers who apply to be self-insured.
	Is ambiguous around employer responsibility to cover all eligible employees in a private plan.	Strengthen language.
	Is ambiguous about whether employee contributions in a private plan cannot exceed the employee contributions in the State Plan.	Strengthen language.
	Requires the Division to base benefits on an employee's most recent wages. Without weekly reporting from employers, it would be impossible for the Division to confirm wages.	Use reported wages from recent quarters similar to unemployment insurance to reduce and streamline reporting burdens for employers.

50th Anniversary Gala

March 8, 2024
6:00 p.m.

As we mark this golden jubilee, let's come together to celebrate the achievements that have shaped our community.

This dinner and dance gala promises an extravagant evening featuring culinary delights, entertainment, and more. Dress to impress for an elegant evening of memories in the making.

Let's raise a glass to 50 years of success and toast to many more! We look forward to celebrating with you!

Chamber Member Tickets: $125 per person
Non-Chamber Member Tickets: $150 per person

Invitations have been sent out via email, but due to email changes invitations may not have

been received. If you did not receive an invite and would like to attend, tickets are available here.

Want to hear your favorite dance song to relive your most treasured decade?Suggest them here!

Sponsorship opportunities available!

Interested in Joining the Chamber?

By joining the Chamber, you can boost your business's visibility and gain access to exclusive perks such as promotion for your business or organization, discounted access to our events, networking, and educational series, opportunity to weigh in on legislative bills, voice your concerns to elected officials, use of our conference room as meeting space, and more!

For more information click here.

Are you considering hosting a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for your business?

The Chamber is here to help you make it happen! These ceremonies are perfect for celebrating a special anniversary, launching a new product or service, or expanding your business. We will advertise the event, invite county government officials, and provide the giant scissors and ribbon. Get in touch with us to discuss scheduling for your event.

301-737-3001 or **info@smcchamber.com**

Pay It Forward Partnership with the Chamber

The "Pay It Forward Partnership" initiative simplifies offers with a one-time annual payment, making it easier to budget and support promotional benefits for the Chamber's regular annual events, and it includes annual dues. You can choose which events you would like to sponsor and have your name associated with, and, of course, you always have the option to sponsor any event you prefer.

- **Platinum Partner** $10,000 Annual Investment
- **Gold Partner** $7,500 Annual Investment
- **Silver Partner** $5,000 Annual Investment
- **Bronze Partner** $2,500 Annual Investment

Call or visit the Chamber website for more info.

First Annual Kentuckey Derby
Support your favorite Non-Profit & Submit games for the Fundraiser

Looking for a fun filled competition with other chamber members while supporting your favorite non-profit? Our 1st Annual Kentucky Derby event is for you. Let the games begin

Saturday, May 4, 2024

St. Mary's Airport Terminal

Chamber non-profit members: If your organization is interested in raising money, running one game of chance, and having fun - this is for you. Each non-profit member is invited to run one interactive game and keep the proceeds.

Your non-profit provides everything needed to run the game. All personnel entering to run game must purchase a $40 entry ticket to join in on the fun. Only 1 game per charity and no like games from other charities to compete.

First come, first serve!!

Send your game proposal and specifics, along with the size requirements to info@smcchamber.com.

Chamber members: For an entry fee of $250, you can join in competition. You may then purchase our memorable chamber 50th Anniversary keychains/bottle openers ($1 each, 50 minimum). You can resell the keychains for as much or as little as you'd like with the ultimate goal of donating the funds you raise for your selected charity.

To make it fun and raise the stakes, the company that earns the most money for their charity will be able to choose the top horse at our Derby party. Competition results announced at every BAH starting in January 2024.

Day of event tickets: $40 per person.
Prizes for best dressed, best hat, best jockey outfit!

Sponsorships and keychains here. Tickets here.

SAVE THE DATES!

Now Announcing Croatia, the Pearl of the Adriatic Trip with the Chamber

Discount Deadline: March 31, 2024

Discover the stunning beauty of Croatia, the Pearl of the Adriatic, with C I Destinations. Experience 7 nights at a luxurious 4-star hotel, scenic tours, and more on October 16, 2024. **Book your trip before March 31, 2024, and enjoy this incredible offer for only $3649**. For more information, don't hesitate to contact the Chamber at 301-737-3001. Take advantage of this fantastic opportunity!

Airfare included!
Application and more info here.

MEMBER NEWS

Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

Free Webinar: Building Your Workforce

February 7, 2024
12p.m.-1p.m.

The Maryland Department of Labor is offering a free webinar to employers seeking information and resources in regard to workforce development. They will be discussing grants, tax credits, and more.

Registration for this event can be found here.

st mary's county ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Aerospace Day

February 13, 2024,
4p.m.-7p.m.

The Graduate Hotel
126 West St.
Annapolis, MD

The Maryland Department of Commerce, Maryland Space Business Roundtable, and Maryland Aerospace States Association Chapter is hosting their annual Aerospace Day. The evening offers a great networking opportunity to

INDUSTRY GOVERNMENT ACADEMIA
The Patuxent Partnership

The Patuxent Partnership: Upcoming Events

The SoMD 2030 workforce development initiative is funded by NAWCAD to build the STEM pipeline, increase career opportunities, and network in Southern Maryland.

Wednesday, February 28, 2024
8:30a.m.-10:00a.m.
Building 2, Center Hall
TPP Program ft. RDML Tim Gallaudet

meet with industry leaders and hear from guest speaker, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller.

The event is free, but registration required for entry.

Wednesday, March 20, 2024
5:00p.m.-7:00p.m.
PRNAM
TPP/ANA Panel

Wednesday March 27, 2024
8:00a.m.-4:30p.m.
USMSM SMART Bldg.
TPP Defense Summit

St. Mary's College of Maryland: Career & Internship Fair

Tuesday, March 26, 10:00a.m.-2:00p.m.

Michael P. O'Brien Athletics and Recreation Center (ARC) Recreational Courts, St. Mary's City, MD

This event is a great way for students and employers to network. Employers can use this as an opportunity to hire interns, connect with current students, and provide information about their industry.

Deadline to Register: Friday, March 8 @5p.m.

Update: Time to Care Act

Rules and regulations in regard to the Time to Care Act, which allows for families to take paid medical and family leave, still need additional updates in order to be put into effect. The Maryland Department of Labor is asking for your insights and feedback on the act in hopes to meet the needs of workers and employers.

The draft can be viewed here, and any comments or concerns should be directed to the FAMLI Division of the Maryland Department of Labor.

Lexington Park Facade and Streetscape Improvement Program Update

The intent of the *Lexington Park Façade and Streetscape Improvement Program* is to create a positive visual impact, stimulate private investment, improve actual and perceived safety, and complement public community revitalization efforts in the historic commercial core of Lexington Park, delineated in the Lexington Park Master Plan as the "Downtown" and "Great Mills Corridor." The *Lexington Park Façade and Streetscape Improvement Program* will reimburse a portion of the

Property Tax Challange Information Update

St. Mary's County seeks to stimulate and incentivize investment in commercial real property. The Property Tax Challenge supports renovations, rehabilitation, and upgrades of commercial real property. Commercial property owners in challenged areas who invest at least 10% of the property's assessed value at a minimum of $25,000 are eligible for this program. Those who qualify will not see an increase in their County property taxes for

expenses incurred by commercial property and/or business owners who complete projects that rehabilitate their buildings, storefronts, and/or the streetscapes located adjacent to their buildings and businesses. The funding for this program is provided to the County through a Community Legacy grant from Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development.

For more information click here.

either a seven- or ten-year period.

For more information click here.

There's always something going on in Leonardtown!

Visit here to learn more.

Thank you to our Pay It Forward Partners!

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Thank you to our Corporate and Event Sponsors!

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