

Maryland Tourism Monitor

A monthly report of travel, trade and tourism trends in Maryland as monitored by the Office of Tourism Development

Data as of February 28, 2009

January Highlights

Performance measures for the industry show the resiliency of the Maryland tourism industry in January despite reports from around the country indicating that travel is down. In January, Maryland benefited from increased travel to Washington, D.C. over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend through the inauguration of President Obama. High points in January included Welcome Center locations serving 15.4 percent more travelers compared to last January and the hotel industry experiencing increased demand and higher revenues.

Visitmaryland.org Unique Web Site Users

Web usage for this fiscal year still lags slightly behind last year's performance. Visitation dropped in January over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. The site was down due to the transfer of the host environment during the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development's move to new quarters.

January FY09 – 63,125	FY09 to date – 624,867
January FY08 – 65,114	FY08 to date – 654,399
Percent Change – (3.1)	Percent Change – (4.5)

Advertising-generated Inquiries

OTD answered 16,802 total inquiries for information about Maryland travel and tourism this January. More than 70 percent of all inquiries received by the OTD were the result of web advertising, confirming the critical need for a continuous online marketing presence.

	January FY 09	January FY 08	% Change
Web Advertising Responses	11,941	0	—
Consumer Label Requests	1,938	2,657	(27.1)
Web Site Requests	2,630	3,898	(32.5)
Broadcast (TV/ Radio) Requests	138	338	(59.2)
Print Advertising Requests	102	601	(83.0)
OTD 800 Number Requests	53	140	(62.1)
Total	16,802	7,634	120.1

Literature Distribution

Printed materials – 141,462 pieces of literature were distributed in January to consumers by mail and to

Welcome Centers for consumption, an increase of 31 percent over last January and 149.2 percent over December.

E-newsletter

Consumer – OTD continues to increase the number of people receiving OTD e-newsletters each month. The consumer e-newsletter reached the 15,000 subscription mark for the first time since OTD launched this marketing tool in April 2008. This 16 percent growth over December was attained by encouraging sign-ups at Welcome Centers and on the web site, as well as by adding other state newsletter subscribers.

Industry: Insights – Subscriptions to the industry e-newsletter, *Insights*, were up 107 percent over last January. More than 3,600 industry stakeholders now subscribe.

Welcome Centers

Maryland Welcome Centers served 84,388 visitors in January. The I-70 locations are closed for repairs this fiscal year and the State House Visitor Center is now operated by Maryland State Archives. Excluding these two locations, January Welcome Center visits were up 15.4 percent over last January with the greatest increases at these centers: U.S. 15 (38.4%); Chesapeake House (35.2%); BWI (29.5%); and Youghiogeny (27.2%).

Lodging

The Maryland lodging industry performed well in January with help from increased tourism in Maryland over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend and President Obama's inauguration celebration. The latest report from Smith Travel Research, Inc. confirmed that room demand in the state increased 7.6 percent compared to last January and total room revenue expanded by 20 percent, which produced revenue per available room (RevPar) growth at 12.4 percent. Occupancy and room rates spiked on Inauguration Tuesday, January 19 (occupancy was at 74.5% and room rates were \$171.80) and Wednesday, January 20 (occupancy was at 69.1% and room rates were \$174.05).

Amtrak

Amtrak reported 59,200 non-commuter arrivals in Maryland in January, a decline of 4.7 percent from last January.

Airports

BWI domestic passenger arrivals declined 6.8 percent and international arrivals declined 9 percent this January compared to the same period last year. In total, 710,835 passengers flew into BWI in January, compared to 762,900 last January.

Tourism Sales Taxes

December sales and use tax data was published in the previous edition of OTD's *Tourism Monitor*. January sales and use tax data is expected to be available in the next issue of the *Tourism Monitor*.