

Local Communities Welcome Back Visitors

Bethany-Fenwick Area Chamber of Commerce Sees Thawing of an Extended 'Winter'

The quiet of winter slowly fades and the bustle of spring brings energy and visitors back to Delaware's beaches. However, this year the silence remained as everyone was faced with the unknown with what has felt like an eternal winter. As the beaches opened, visitors return to their beloved destinations which have symbolized family traditions for generations. Small business is integral in building these traditions. And now, businesses have adapted and are ready to continue serving in this new environment. We should take a moment to be humbled and inspired by the resilience of the small business community.

Something that was anticipated to only last a few weeks turned into a quarter of the year. The tourism industry which includes so many family-owned, seasonal, and visitor-based businesses have had to play a guessing game with opening dates, procedures, regulations, consumer confidence, employee safety and the ultimate question of returned cash flow. Through it all, they have taken steps weekly to continue fine tuning the new way of doing business. Businesses made modifications throughout the stay at home orders and worked tirelessly to function at the most basic level. They have pushed to creatively adapt; online stores, Facebook Live commercials, cross industry collaborations, new floor plans, products and barcode window displays that will make the business community stronger than ever as we return to a new normal.

With all this hard work and dedication, the vision of summer has prevailed. Families are gathering under their umbrellas with their summer delights provided by the hard-working families of this resilient community. — *by Lauren Weaver*

Standing Ready to Welcome Tourists Back to Delaware's Quaint Villages

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the hospitality/tourism industry in our region, the state and the entire country. To assist Kent County hospitality/tourism-related businesses affected by COVID-19, Kent County Tourism Corporation recently announced a grant fund for tourism and hospitality businesses in Kent County to use for their operations and cover needed expenses. The grant funds are up to \$500 with a maximum of 20 grants awarded.

This September, Kent County Tourism will be hosting vetted travel media and journalists during the annual Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) Media Marketplace taking place September 21-23. This will be a great opportunity to showcase Delaware's Quaint Villages through various familiarization (FAM) tours put



together by the Kent County Tourism team. We are anticipating 50 media representatives from the travel industry who will be looking to write stories for their newspaper outlets, magazines, blogs, and social media presence. In a post recovery COVID-19, we are excited for the exposure this one-of-a-kind event will be bringing to Kent County and the entire state of Delaware from all the stories written from a visitor's perspective.

As we begin the recovery process, our visitors will soon be eager to travel again. With Kent County's proximity from major cities within the Mid-Atlantic region including New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C., makes Delaware's Quaint Villages a regional drive to destination with a strong position to capitalize on Kent County's tourism assets including unique attractions, museums, festivals, entertainment, casino fun, outdoor activities, local libations, restaurants, and much more! The entire Kent County team will be here to welcome our visitors from near and far for all the warmth and care our great community is known for. We will be more than ever, a place to relax and rejuvenate. For more information, visit www.VisitDelawareVillages.com. — *by Danielle Jonigan*

Summer 2020 with the Lewes Chamber of Commerce

Lewes this summer will be a very different experience for visitors and locals who have been sheltering in place since March because of the pandemic. One thing that hasn't changed though is our small-town friendliness. Despite having to wear masks and social distance, our visitors will be warmly greeted this summer by Hospitality Ambassadors.

The impetus for this came directly from the business owners while strategizing what could be done to make visitors to their retail shops and restaurants feel safe and at the same time have

a positive, fun experience. Another community partner, the Lewes American Legion, volunteered their auxiliary members to be our ambassadors.

This initiative dovetailed nicely with the Chamber members' "Restarting Lewes's Economy" program with input and assistance from our municipality. They developed a branding campaign that reflects how business owners and residents feel about living and working here. The campaign is called "Love, Lewes" with a Facebook page (Love, Lewes) and on Instagram (@lovecommalewes).

When you drive into Lewes this summer, you will see banners on our light poles with the Love, Lewes icon. You'll see signs in our residents' front yards with the same message – Love, Lewes. Retail businesses will be selling branded merchandise and our Hospitality Ambassador volunteers will greet our visitors wearing their Love, Lewes t-shirts. It won't take long for them to convey why the slogan is so appropriate! — *By Betsy Reamer*

