

### **Arts and Entertainment District**

An Arts and Entertainment District is a geographically designated area in which a high concentration of arts and entertainment facilities serve as an anchor attraction. The intent of the District is to stimulate neighborhood revitalization, improve the attractiveness and safety of areas, stimulate business activity (particularly in the evenings and on weekends), attract residents and visitors, and build the tax base.

The tax incentives available within the designated Arts and Entertainment District include: an income tax subtraction modification for qualifying residing artists; a property tax credit; and an exemption from the Admissions and Amusement Tax.

In April 2007, the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development granted the City of Salisbury an Arts & Entertainment District designation. This designation brought additional tax and financial incentives to certain arts and entertainment related businesses and investments. The benefits offered to participants in the Arts & Entertainment District included:

- Property tax credits for new construction or renovation of certain buildings that create live-work space for artists and/or space for arts and entertainment enterprises;
- An income tax subtraction modification for income derived from artistic work sold by qualifying residing artists; and
- An exemption from the Admissions and Amusement tax levied by an arts and entertainment enterprise or qualifying residing artist in a district.

For more information contact the City of Salisbury Department of Community Development at 410-334-3031, or visit the City of Salisbury's website at <http://www.ci.salisbury.md.us>.

### **Maryland Broadband Cooperative**

The Maryland Broadband Cooperative (MDBC) is a public/private partnership to promote economic development through the deployment of technology supporting infrastructures. The mission of MDBC is "to drive economic development through universal, open access to broadband services via a fiber optic network that serves rural Maryland by building an advanced, world-class broadband network across the rural communities of Eastern, Southern and Western Maryland supported by its' members who provide Last Mile services." The MDBC receives funding to build the infrastructure through the Maryland Rural Broadband Coordination Board.

Wicomico County is part of the Lower Eastern Shore network which serves Easton, Cambridge, Salisbury, West Ocean City, Snow Hill, Wallops Island, Pocomoke, and Princess Anne through a system of fiber optic cable.

## **TOURISM**

### **Economics Benefits of Tourism**

Wicomico County is the hub of Maryland's Eastern Shore as it is ideally situated within a drive market extending from Philadelphia to Baltimore and Washington. The County offers a wide range of natural, cultural, and historic assets that provide prime opportunities for tourism and a steady stream of income to the local economy.

Tourism is an effective mechanism to bring new revenue into a local economy. Creating year-round, as well as seasonal tourism opportunities can increase spending, thereby infusing money into the local economy. Other positive benefits include the creation or expansion of new and existing businesses that are dependent on the tourism.

### Wicomico County Recreation, Parks and Tourism

The mission of the Wicomico County Tourism Division is to create memories through heritage and eco-tourism, conferences, trade shows, sports tournaments, and special events. The Division is driven by creative marketing and sales efforts, and the maximum use of its tourism assets. These efforts enhance the County's quality of life and economy.

Tourism enhances and contributes to the overall identity and economic well-being of the county and region. In Fiscal Year 2012, 1,097 events were brought to Wicomico County by the Department of Recreation, Parks, & Tourism with an estimated \$32,800,000 economic impact on the local economy. The current objectives of the County include the following:

- Develop and implement a plan making the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center competitive within the marketplace (cultural entertainment, conferences, conventions, special events and sporting events);
- Continue to develop regional signature annual events which are multi-day, and the primary attendee is the overnight visitor from the 150-mile radius target market of Baltimore, Washington, and Philadelphia;
- Develop a means to support signature events;
- Research and develop a sports marketing package that provides high motivation for sports teams and events to come to Wicomico County;
- Continue to attract conventions and trade shows;
- Continue operation of the Visitor's Center;
- Develop "tourist & day tripper intercept" and "extended stay" programs to better capitalize upon the traveler passing through or near Wicomico County;
- Roll out Wicomico's new tourism brand;
- Develop a consistent information tool whereby businesses appreciate the value of tourism & become active partners to develop and support the County's enterprise;
- Continue to develop consumer data for the purpose of marketing events and measuring trends; and
- Coordinate with neighboring counties on increasing a regional experience for visitors.

### Agri-Tourism

Agriculture has played a strong role in the development of Maryland's Eastern Shore over the years, and continues to be of importance today. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Wicomico County was home to over 500 farms that encompassed roughly 93,000 acres. With an increasing popularity of agri-tourism over the last few years, many visitors have been interested in learning about the cycle of food production and gaining a firsthand glimpse of the behind the scenes workings of a farm. Several of our area farms have opened their doors to visitors offering opportunities to pick their own fruits and vegetables, purchase locally-grown produce, or even have fun with agriculture through outdoor corn mazes.

### Heritage Tourism

There are numerous economic benefits to preserving and protecting the history of Wicomico County. Besides establishing a sense of civic pride, capitalizing on the unique importance of local historic structures and places has resulted in additional tourist dollars contributing into the local economy. Further strengthening the marketing of such treasures can capture additional tourist, especially summer travelers on the way to the beach. For more information regarding historic and cultural resources in the County refer to **Chapter 10**.