

# Resort Optimistic About Sports Marketing Venture

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OCEAN CITY – The resort’s tourism department is looking to stay ahead of the game in partnering with the Maryland Office of Sports Marketing through its TEAM Maryland initiative.

Last week Maryland Office of Sports Marketing Director Terry Hasseltine presented the Mayor and City Council with an update on Ocean City’s initiative to join TEAM Maryland.

The Maryland Office of Sports Marketing strives to enhance Maryland’s economy, image and quality of life through the attraction, promotion, retention and development of regional, national, and international sporting events.

“Two words are highlighted in our mission statement, attraction and retention, and the reason why we highlight those two words is because it is one thing to attract events but if we are not working just as hard to retain the event we are just flushing money down the toilet,” Hasseltine said.

According to Hasseltine, the Maryland Office of Sports Marketing is letting the industry know that Maryland is no longer sitting on the sidelines watching other states and municipalities across the country recruit sporting event opportunities.

He added that the sports and travel industry is one of the top 10 business sectors in the United States. It is a \$182 billion industry and attracts more than 47 million hotel rooms annually, 27 percent of all US travel is sports related and 13.5 percent of travelers are parties of three or more.

“My job is to put heads in beds, food in bellies, gas in cars, credit card checks on counters and butts in seats,” Hasseltine said. “That is how we measure this overall industry. My mission is no different from the tourism industry; I just use the vehicle of sports to make that become a reality.”

TEAM Maryland is a statewide initiative designed to collectively market Maryland to the entire sports industry by creating a synergistic approach to the way the state markets all of Maryland as a sports destination. Ocean City has been part of TEAM Maryland for three months now.

“It takes great partners in order for us to become successful in this industry, and Ocean City is a great partner,” Hasseltine said. “You joined the TEAM Maryland initiative and I am very proud to say that you are one of the top tiered members of that initiative. You have placed a huge value on the sports market because of the success of the Dew Tour, the success of Northside Park and the success you have already done.”

TEAM Maryland has 13 other partners that have joined the initiative. Those partners are Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Charles County, Frederick County, Garrett County, Howard County, Harford County, Montgomery County, Ocean City, Prince George's County, St. Mary's County and Wicomico County.

“I know that TEAM Maryland is going to be successful,” Mayor Rick Meehan said as he used the Dew Tour as an example.

The Dew Tour took place in Ocean City for the first time last year. There was estimation of 321,323 visitors in Ocean City over the weekend of the event, which was a 7-percent increase from the year before.

“Whenever we work in partnerships with different entities and the State of Maryland, we have been successful and we can do things when we all work together,” the mayor said. “I hope we continue to have that relationship, and I know the council supports that relationship and I think it is going to bring good things to Maryland and very good things to Ocean City.”