

# Dew Tour record set in resort

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Written by: Scott Muska | Staff Writer

OCEAN CITY -- The Dew Tour's inaugural stop in Ocean City saw the highest attendance of any of the tour's events since its first in 2005, and it is being touted as a resounding success by resort and tour officials.

An estimated 73,000 people came through the Pantech Open's Boardwalk entrance during the four-day event, setting an attendance record, and Demoflush statistics -- culled from the number of times toilets are flushed in town -- estimate a figure of more than 320,000 were in town during the weekend, a 7 percent increase over last year's corresponding dates.

Dew Tour officials and athletes were pleased with the weekend's event, which took place July 21-24, and Dew Tour General Manager Chris Prybylo said Alli Sports will "definitely" be in contact with resort officials about returning next year and engaging in other future opportunities.

"We really couldn't have been happier with the event, and that's a sentiment from everybody involved," Prybylo said, with the only setback coming from bouts of inclement weather. "It was just packed from start to finish, and we certainly had great success with everything we were able to control."

## Crowd's effect

The expansive crowd the event helped bring to the resort provided economic benefits without much unruly behavior, as well.

Hotels in town saw strong bookings, with a heavy last-minute push from people looking to get rooms for the weekend, according to Susan Jones, executive director of the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association. By Friday, the association was having difficulty getting people rooms, and by Saturday there were only seven or eight of the association's 108 lodging members that still had rooms available, Jones said.

The spike in visitors didn't seem to have much of an effect on resort crime levels. The Ocean City Police Department did not see any crimes they could discern were related to the Dew Tour, according to spokeswoman Jessica Waters.

"We saw large crowds, and we were busy, but it was a very good weekend and a successful event," Waters said.

Prybylo was impressed with the resort's widespread support, saying the amount of help the event received from the resort government, staff, businesses and community was unprecedented.

"I think we absolutely created a win-win partnership with the Ocean City community," he said, and some community members are already working to coax a tour to return a year or so from now. Jones said Monday she'd already written a letter thanking them for coming, and saying she hopes they'll come again.

"I think events of this caliber are what we need to set our sights on, because it certainly brought the clientele we like and want to fill our city with," Jones said.

At Thursday morning's Dew Tour's ribbon-cutting ceremony, Mayor Rick Meehan predicted it would be the most exciting event to come through the resort this summer, and he wasn't disappointed.

The town's beach and Boardwalk provided a perfect backdrop for the competition, Meehan said, adding he was pleased to see so many families show up to see the athletes compete.

The tour stops next this August in Portland, Ore., and Salt Lake City in September. The final stop takes place in Las Vegas in October.

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### *LASEK, BESTWICK GET VICTORIES SUNDAY*

*Baltimore native Bucky Lasek pulled out his 10th Dew Tour skate vert finals win Sunday evening, and Jamie Bestwick took top honors in the BMX vert competition.*

*Lasek's 10th win sets a new record for most Dew Tour skate vert final victories, and Bestwick has won the Dew Cup at the tour's conclusion every year since its inception.*

*"Words can't explain how I feel right now," said Lasek, who went all of 2010 without a win. "To come back this year to win the first stop, the Pantech Open, in my home state of Maryland, is unbelievable."*

*Bestwick said he had fun riding for the crowd and the fans made the event. "The energy was electric," Bestwick said.*

*A Dew Cup champion will be crowned in each category at the tour's final stop in October in Las Vegas.*

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## **OC 'Dew-ed' itself proud**

### **Fans, performers and organizers were all thrilled**

Jul 25, 2011

The athletes and fans have left Ocean City, but the resort may have found its calling card in the Dew Tour. The national extreme sports event that features skateboarding, BMX bikes and the tour's first-ever surfing competition made its inaugural visit to Ocean City last week, drawing what Dew Tour officials said was the event's largest-ever opening-morning crowd Thursday.

It was truly an event custom-made for the Worcester County resort, where an existing skateboard park was dressed up to accommodate the tour's events. Ocean City gained national attention because some events were televised on NBC. And the weekend's events are not the end; a Dew Cup champion will be crowned in each category when the tour stops in Las Vegas in October. This was the Dew Tour's only

East Coast stop this year; it heads for Portland, Ore., in August and Salt Lake City in September --neither of which has a beach for surfing, making Ocean City a special event.

The Dew Tour was significant in a resort that's grown accustomed to big summertime events. The hype began early in the month, with a beach cam streaming online and fixed on the Dew Tour preparations, so people could watch as the stadium and festival village took shape. Events took place near the Ocean City Pier. Bus service and shuttles to and from parking in West Ocean City and the Roland E. Powell Convention Center were arranged to accommodate the huge crowds in a part of the town that's short on parking.

Ocean City officials, sensing the enormity and importance of this event's success, did everything right, providing everything the organizers asked for.

Fans responded in a tremendous way to this opportunity to witness the live professional action sports. BMX, skateboarding and surfing are already popular on the Shore; there was no need to drum up interest. People waited at the gates for more than two hours for the ribbon-cutting on opening morning. The athletes who competed were likewise thrilled by the excitement and energy of the fans who embraced their presence. Tickets for Saturday and Sunday events were sold out well ahead of time.

Attendees were treated to exciting performances, and there were booths with free activities and samples -- including a chance to pad up and skate on a miniature course -- in the festival village. But maybe it was the possibility of meeting one of the athletes face to face that drew many fans. It was a dream that came true for many, as athletes signed autographs in and near the village throughout the weekend.

Ocean City has seen huge crowds, but perhaps nothing on the scale and excitement of the Dew Tour. We can only hope the positive energy and warm reception will encourage organizers to make a return visit to the resort in the near future.

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