

VISIT FREDERICK

FREDERICK COUNTY • MARYLAND • FALL 2020



VISITOR CENTER REOPENS

The Frederick Visitor Center reopened to the public on Saturday, June 27th and is welcoming visitors back to the city and county. Prior to opening, Visit Frederick worked with destinations around the country to compare reopening strategies. The staff developed a set of strategies for a touchless brochure option and installed a sneeze guard around the front desk. As a proactive measure, visitor services staffers are required to take their temperatures at the beginning of each shift and to stay home if they're feeling unwell.

Embracing the philosophy that an informed visitor is a safe visitor, clear signage on Maryland's guidelines is prominently displayed. Complimentary masks are available for visitors who forget their masks and to accommodate out-of-state guests unfamiliar with Maryland's mask policies.

Visitation has been moving towards pre-COVID levels. Visitation was down 54% in July and 30% in August. September and early October saw an increase in out of town visitors compared to 2019. Since reopening, a shift has occurred in visitor interests. July interests were predominately in Outdoor Recreation. August and September saw a wider variety of interests.



FIRST 6 MONTHS OF COVID-19 IMPACT ON FREDERICK COUNTY TOURISM

March 2020 began with great promise for the coming season, according to Visit Frederick's Executive Director John Fieseler. "Our newest edition of Visit Frederick—City & County had just been printed and delivered," according to Fieseler. "Requests from potential visitors to be mailed this official visitor guide were already pouring in. A successful Frederick Restaurant Week wrapped up on March 8, thanks to the best weather for the period in recent years." Within a week the new virus that we'd heard about in the news was shutting down life here as we knew it, with stay at home recommendations ordered in Maryland and in many other places. The hospitality industry was particularly hard hit with devastating revenue and job losses for restaurants, shops and attractions. Over the following six months, hotels in Frederick County lost more than \$16.6 million dollars bringing in just 45% of the revenue that they earned in the same period of last year.

From mid-March to mid-September, hotels rented 193,882 rooms according to STR, an industry leader in providing hotel market data, compared to almost 330,000 in normal times. The average rate dropped to 76% of the value in recent years, leading to the 55% loss of revenue.





BEST WISHES for a
SUCCESSFUL FALL SEASON

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I hope you are all doing as well as can be expected during these challenging times, unprecedented in any of our lifetimes.

Now that we are more than six months into this pandemic, it is encouraging to see positive signs of improvement in our tourism industry, even though there is a long way to go. As reported in this newsletter, hotel demand has been gradually picking up. Our Frederick Visitor Center is seeing more travelers coming in, more people are requesting our Visitor Guide be mailed to them and visits to our website continue to increase.

We know that many businesses are continuing to suffer, and that there remains a good deal of concern about how we will all fare this winter, but there have been encouraging developments.

We thank Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner for allocating some of the CARES Act funding for Coronavirus Relief for us to use to remarket our destination to visitors and to let

them know what measures are in place to ensure a safe experience for them. We have been advertising as different types of businesses and attractions were able to reopen. We were among the first visitor centers to reopen in Maryland, but only after putting the necessary safeguards in place with sneeze guards, sanitizer stations, face mask requirements and doubling the frequency of professional daily cleaning of the facility. Like everyone else, we’ve adapted to virtual and hybrid meetings where some of the attendees are remote.

We have been encouraged to see the level of creativity, collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders in our community, from businesses to the different levels of government.

In spite of a serious downturn in the hotel tax revenue that funds much of our operation, with hotel recovery projected to take years, your Board and staff have worked to make sure that our TRIPP grant program has continued to make funding available to local nonprofit attractions and organizations. The Board will soon be voting on an unprecedented second round of grants in a single year, as we can now better predict the tax revenue that funds these awards.

We certainly appreciate everyone’s efforts to continue to promote our great County during this difficult time. We are working hard to ensure we will be on the forefront of the recovery when this is all behind us. Thanks to all of our members, Tourism staff and Tourism Board for all of your efforts.

—SCOTT WISNOM

Whiskey Creek Golf Club

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RICK SLADE
Catocin Mountain Park/NPS

The Tourism Council is a non-profit organization. Membership is open to all parties interested in undertaking a joint effort to promote the growth of travel to Frederick County, Maryland.

**TOURISM COUNCIL
OF FREDERICK COUNTY, INC.**
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www.visitfrederick.org

MELISSA JOSEPH MUNTZ
Editor

POSTERN
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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Congratulations to the following businesses celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2020. We thank them for their many years of contributing to the Frederick community.



Flying Dog has been brewing beers for 30 years. To celebrate, they have released a great big “hoppy” anniversary beer named Great Job!



Downtown Frederick Partnership is a national Main Street organization which works to enhance, promote, and preserve the vitality and livability of Downtown Frederick.



ThorpeWood is a mountain retreat located off a quiet mountain road, set into a forest hillside overlooking a native trout stream, and nestled 1,500 feet high in the Catocin Mountains near Thurmont, MD.



Dancing Bear Toys and Gifts makes a positive difference in the lives of children, families, and the Frederick community. Their motto is to put play in everyone’s day!



Lebherz Oil & Vinegar Emporium (L.O.V.E.) offers over 50 varieties of oil and vinegar ranging from black truffle oil to jalapeño white vinegar on tap!

Let us know if you will be marking a special anniversary in 2021 by contacting Maria Lane at mlane@fredco-md.net.



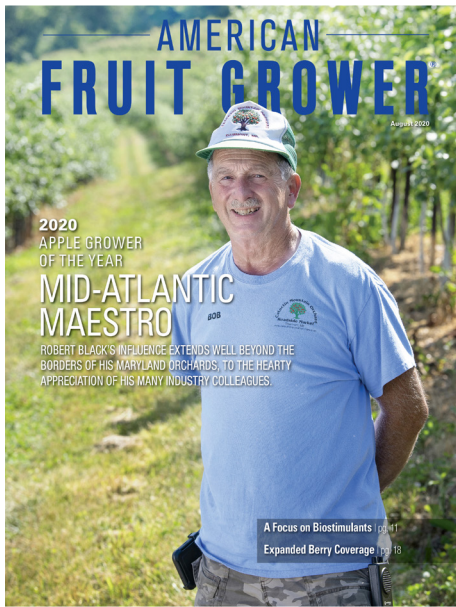
KEEPING FREDERICK COUNTY VIBRANT

Visit Frederick is thrilled to welcome several new art installations to Frederick County.

Each of the county’s Main Streets will be receiving a new sculpture that incorporates artwork created by local residents. The sculptures, designed and created by Maryland artist Parran Coltery, will be composed of brightly glazed mosaic tile designs and will be in place for one year. Each tile will be translated from a design submitted by a member of the community where the sculpture will be placed. Originally, each community planned to host a hands-on community art workshop in the spring of 2020 to create more than 300 tiles for these sculptures. Although the result will be a bit different, we are excited that this project is still able to move forward.

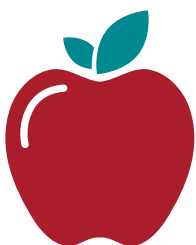
In addition to the three new kinetic art sculptures installed this past spring, Carroll Creek Park is also now home to a metal sculpture displaying its name. The piece is located at the Market Street crossing, one of the parks most popular points of entry. The artwork appropriately features flowers bending at their stalks as if blowing in the wind.





APPLE GROWER OF THE YEAR

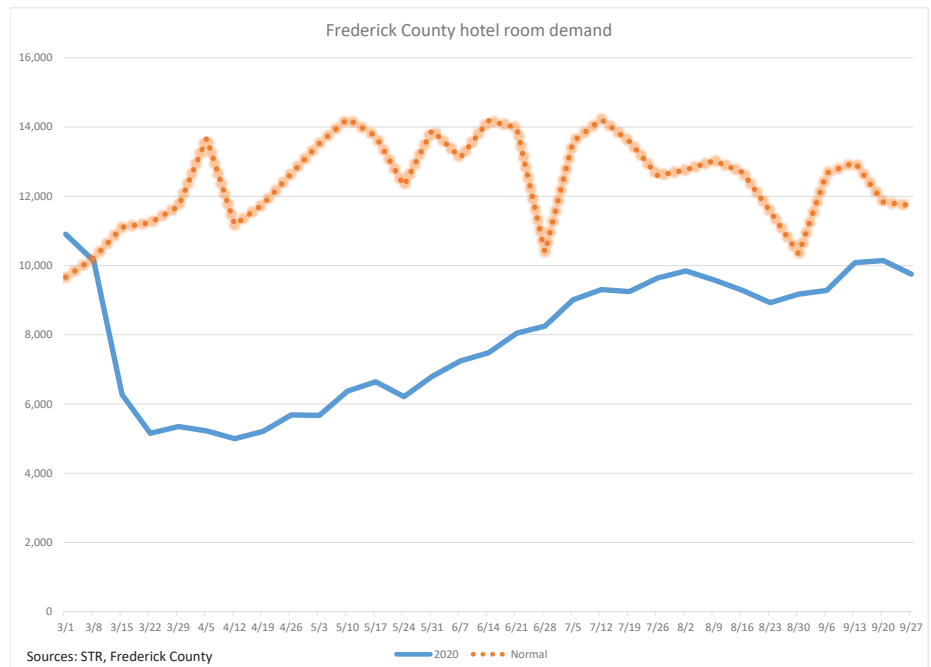
Congratulations to Bob Black of Catoctin Mountain Orchard who was recently named Apple Grower of the Year by American Fruit Grower. The 32nd recipient of this award, Bob was honored at a virtual presentation of the annual US Apple Outlook and Marketing Conference. The award honors apple growers who have gone beyond the confines of the orchard and have, through their involvement and leadership, made a real impact on the apple industry. Be sure to visit Catoctin Mountain Orchard to congratulate Bob and sample some of his delicious apples!



CONTINUED FROM COVER

FIRST 6 MONTHS OF COVID-19 IMPACT ON FREDERICK COUNTY TOURISM

As fall arrived, demand and rate were both picking up. With attractions, shops, and restaurants reopening, albeit with limited capacity, Visit Frederick has ramped up advertising and marketing efforts promoting the safe experiences that potential visitors within driving range can enjoy here. While uncertainties remain about the rest of fall and the approaching winter, we are encouraged by the fact that visitation to our website and the Frederick Visitor Center are on the increase. We greatly appreciate the Federal CARES Act funding made available to us through County Executive Jan Gardner that is enabling our current marketing efforts in spite of severe reductions to the hotel tax revenue that we receive.



ADVERTISING UPDATE

In July, Visit Frederick resumed advertising after pausing all campaigns in mid-March. Our staff is closely monitoring national travel sentiment studies from Destination Analysts and Longwoods International, leaders in tourism market research, to guide us in our advertising decisions. These studies have shown that travelers are willing to drive long distances on a road trip and are more likely to return to a familiar destination.

In response to this data, our advertising is targeting Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The soft message encourages visitors to take road trips to Frederick County. Simultaneously, we are running digital advertising promoting our safe and clean hotel rooms in Frederick County to encourage overnight stays.





@VR



Attaboy
Barrel House

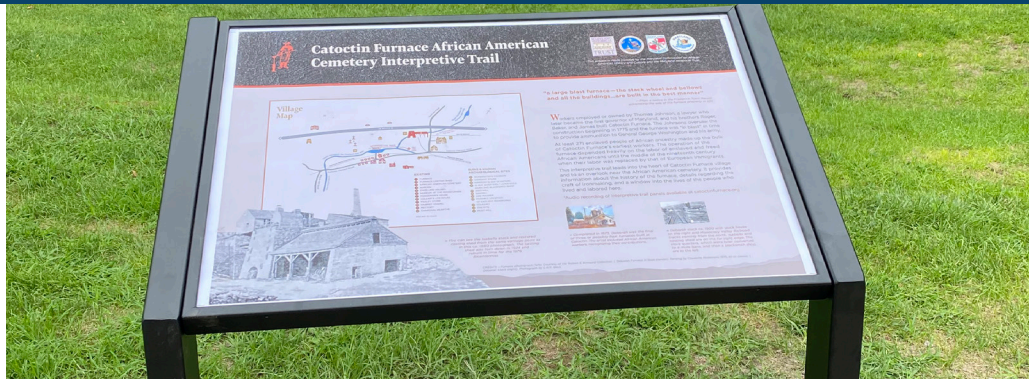


Goat for
the Soul

NEW MEMBERS

Visit Frederick is thrilled to extend a warm welcome to our newest members:

@VR	Jeffrey Socha Photography
Acoustic Matrimony	Menchie's Frozen Yogurt
Alicia L	Myersville- Wolfsville Area Historical Society
Attaboy Barrel House	Puerto Rico Distillery
Aushman Family Foundation	Smoketown Creekside
Baughers Orchard & Farm	Support Unlimited Inc.
Bushwallers	Taco Daddy Cantina & Tequila Bar
Celebration Cellars Winery	Tapia's On Main
Clay Oven	The Perfect Blend Cafe
Distilled	Up On Market Bistro
District DJ	Warehouse Cinemas
Dragon Distillery	Wren's Nest
Fratelli's Italian and Seafood	Zoup! Frederick
Frederick Tour	
Garden and Vintage Goods @Adamstown	
Goat for the Soul	
Grove Guest House	
Holiday Inn Express & Suites	



CATOCTIN FURNACE AFRICAN AMERICAN INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

We are excited to promote the brand new Catoctin Furnace African American Interpretive Trail! The trail, which begins at the "Isabella" furnace ruins at 12698 Catoctin Furnace Road in Thurmont, leads to the heart of Catoctin Furnace village and to an overlook near the African American cemetery. This ½ mile ADA accessible trail includes two overlooks with benches and 11 wayside panels. As many as 271 enslaved people of African ancestry made up the majority of Catoctin Furnace's workers between the 1770s and the 1840s.

The operation of the furnace depended heavily on the labor of enslaved and freed African Americans until the middle of the 19th century when their labor was replaced by European immigrants. The panels provide information about the history of the furnace, details regarding the craft of ironmaking, and a window into the lives of the people who lived and labored here. Visitors may read the names of 271 enslaved workers, ensuring they are not forgotten. Audio recording of the panels is available at catoctinfurnace.org. The trail is open dawn to dusk, everyday.

ROAD TRIPS

Since mid-March, Visit Frederick has been updating and pivoting our website content to stay current during these fluid times. In response to traveler sentiment, we have created new content pages on the website focusing on Road Trips in Frederick County. A series of pages offers themed itineraries and routes with shopping, historic sites & attractions, and restaurants along the way.



IN MEMORIAM

In September, Frederick County lost a great champion of tourism with the passing of Peter H. Plamondon Sr. (Pete). Pete founded Plamondon Companies which now consists of owning the Roy Rogers brand of 49 restaurants and operating 13 Marriott and Hilton brand hotels. He was a life-long tourism advocate and leader in the hospitality and tourism industry, and was recognized as Tourism's "Member of the Year" in 1996. He was one of the founders and has been a continuous sponsor of Visit Frederick's Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship. Our condolences go out to the Plamondon family and Pete's extended tourism family. He will be greatly missed.



Pete Plamondon Sr. (pictured center) honored by Tourism for his decades of support of the Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship.



151 S. East Street
Frederick, MD 21701

**CHANGE SERVICE
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Visitor Services Specialists

WANT A COPY OF OUR 2020 VISITOR GUIDE?

Contact our visitor center at
301-600-4047 or 800-999-3613.
You can also visit our website
and download our visitor guide at
visitfrederick.org/download-guides-and-brochures.

