

MARYLAND TOURISM & TRAVEL SUMMIT

Awards Nomination 2026

Deadline for Submittal: September 9, 2026

Nominators and recipients of all awards **MUST** be a member of the Maryland Tourism Coalition and are open to all sectors of the tourism industry. All awards will be announced and presented during the Maryland Tourism & Travel Summit Awards Banquet on November 19th, 2026 at the Baltimore Convention Center. The nominating period is from September 2025 thru August 2026. Nominators and recipients of all awards **MUST** be a member of good standing for the 2026 calendar year.

Please only submit ONE entry in EACH category. Click [here](#) to access the nomination form.

Professional Awards

- Tourism Person of the Year
- Audrey Davenport Hospitality Person of the Year
- New Professional of the Year
- Visionary Impact Award
- Tourism Advocate Award
- Cooperative Partnership Award
- Small Business of the Year Award
- MTC Volunteer of the Year Award
- Rising Star Award
- MTC Group Impact Award - NEW

Marketing Awards

- Best Product or Event (choose ONE: sm, med, lg)
- Best Promotional Material (including destination guide)
- Best Media and Public Relations Campaign
- Best Website Award
- Best Use of Social Media
- Best Digital Campaign

Support Materials

All nominations must be submitted via the link by **September 9, 2026**. Please list nominee's name as it should appear on the award if they win. Questions regarding submissions should be submitted to Chris Zindash - Awards Chair at info@mdtourism.org.

Nomination Statement:

- Why do you think the nominee is deserving of this award?
- How was the project undertaken? (Give details from concept through production). Innovative features (what was special about this project).
- Project budget and total project cost (for Marketing Awards only).
- Specific results (increased income, attendance, publicity, visitor service, etc.). Name of partners involved including outside consultants or agencies.

2026 Professional Awards

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Every successful team has a strong leader – someone whose commitment, energy and exemplary service leads to great results and inspiring others. The Maryland Tourism Coalition's (MTC) professional awards honor your colleagues, employees and associates whose skill, dedication, and talent bring professionalism to Maryland tourism. Nominators and Recipients must be members of the Maryland Tourism Coalition in good standing. **NOTE:** Nominations can be entered in only ONE category.

Tourism Person of the Year

This prestigious award is given to an industry leader whose exceptional commitment has significantly enhanced and perpetuated the tourism industry in Maryland. **Criteria:** A nominee must work in a tourism-related company in Maryland that is a member of the MTC. A nominee must be a resident of Maryland with a minimum of five years involvement in the tourism industry in Maryland. Nominee must be in a leadership position and have demonstrated significant success in fostering tourism and furthering the tourism industry in Maryland. Nominees may be from the private or public sector.

Audrey Davenport Hospitality Person of the Year

Named in honor of a MTC past president who is legendary for exceptional customer service, this honor is awarded to an individual demonstrating outstanding service to Maryland visitors. **Criteria:** Nominee must work in a tourism-related company in Maryland that is a member of MTC. The nominee must have worked in the tourism industry for a minimum of three years, and must display consistently outstanding service and a positive image about Maryland and his/her company. Examples of outstanding service should be included with the nomination.

New Professional of the Year

The New Professional of the Year Award is given to a newcomer to Maryland tourism whose spirit and commitment exemplify the ideal of our profession. **Criteria:** A nominee must work in a tourism-related company that is a member of MTC. The nominee must have worked in a new position or capacity in the tourism industry for no more than three years and must be an active participant in industry-related activities.

Visionary Impact Award

Leading a new initiative, working diligently to accomplish a shared goal, the Visionary Impact Award recognizes an individual, business, organization, group or coalition that has made a major impact with an important industry project or product. **Criteria:** Nominee(s) must have generated significant impact on Maryland tourism within the past year.

Tourism Advocate Award

The Tourism Advocate Award is given to the individual or organization that has successfully led legislative initiatives or has made a commitment to education in state, local or county government. Someone who has heightened the awareness of the tourism industry and its impact on the economy. **Criteria:** Nominees may be elected officials, private-sector employees, volunteers, government employees or organizations. Nominee's leadership should be demonstrated on behalf of a significant legislative issue or public awareness campaign within the past year.

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Cooperative Partnership Award

Teamwork and partnerships are recognized by this award which is presented to multiple destinations, businesses or organizations that come together to form a marketing alliance. The successful program can be an advertising program, a tour, a publication or any activity with pooled resources promoting a common product or experience. **Criteria:** All entities in the partnership must be MTC members.

Small Business of The Year Award

Many private sector small businesses give MTC a great deal of their time and talents serving and empowering MTC to grow, flourish, and succeed in promoting Tourism throughout the entire Mid-Atlantic region and beyond. Their MTC work in the past year brings them right along-side the MTC Board Members and Staff with praise and thanks. **Criteria:** Small businesses must be registered in the State of Maryland and be a member of MTC.

MTC Volunteer of The Year Award

This award is given to an individual who has dedicated their personal and business time, skills, and energy to promote and assist with MTC's mission and vision. Their MTC "volunteer" work in the past year has been greatly appreciated and will bring them much praise, affirmation and many thanks from the MTC Board, Staff, and MTC members. **Criteria:** Nominee must work in a tourism-related company that is a member of MTC. This award winner will be determined by the Maryland Tourism Coalition Board & Staff.

Rising Star Award

The Rising Star Award honors a tourism professional under the age of 30 who is making an early yet significant impact on Maryland's tourism industry. Nominees should demonstrate exceptional promise, leadership, and commitment to the field, with no more than two years of industry experience. Eligible candidates must be actively employed in Maryland's tourism sector — including hospitality, attractions, events, destination marketing, or transportation — and be an active MTC member or employed by an organization in good standing. This award recognizes those poised to become the industry's future leaders.

Group Impact Award - NEW for 2026

This award recognizes multi-property and ownership groups whose collective efforts strengthen the Maryland Tourism Coalition's mission and enhance Maryland's tourism industry. Nominees are evaluated on their active participation in MTC, leadership and volunteer involvement, membership engagement across their properties, and demonstrated commitment to advancing collaboration, advocacy, and professional development within the state's tourism community. **Criteria:** Eligible nominees must represent multi-location tourism organizations with **all participating properties maintaining an active MTC membership in good standing.**

Note: Awards will be based solely on the information included with the nomination. Please assume that the judges know very little about your project/destination. The background information should be as complete and concise as possible. To further enhance your nomination, you may submit ONE attachment that includes photos, digital materials, brochures, etc. Multiple items of support should be combined and presented as ONE attachment. Due to new Google regulations, your attachment should be emailed to eteisch@baltimore.org. The judges reserve the right to change categories if appropriate. Judges who have a nomination in any category recuse themselves from voting in that category. MTC will cover the cost up to 3 award plaques. Each additional award is \$100 each at the expense of the winner.

2026 Marketing Awards



Deadline: September 9, 2026

Creative. Thoughtful. Innovative. Important qualities for award-winning marketing programs that bring visitors to Maryland. Nominators and Recipients must be members of the Maryland Tourism Coalition in good standing. **NOTE:** Nominations can be entered in only ONE category.

Best Product or Event Award

There's always something new. This award honors 2026 years' best new event, tour, destination, program, promotion or experience. What makes it the best? It's innovative, a model for others, and a successful Maryland tourism product. Criteria: Nominee should be the entity creating or coordinating the new product or event. The new product or event must have been introduced in the past year. In order to ensure greater representation, the award will be presented to the top entry in the following budget categories. 3 Levels: **Small** (under \$10,000 budget); **Medium** (\$10,000-\$50,000 budget); **Large** (over \$50,000 budget). Please provide actual budget figures.

Best Promotional Award (including Destination Guide)

This award recognizes the media/advertisement, newsletter, brochure, map, video, etc., that uses the best strategy and implementation to promote a tourism entity or activity. Criteria: Nominee should be the entity creating or coordinating the new product. The product must have been created and introduced between September 2025 and August 2026.

Best Media & Public Relations Campaign Award

The campaign should focus on a single, unified theme. Can be related to a special event, crisis management program, or overall promotion. Criteria: Nominee should be the entity that created or owns the campaign and started the campaign between September 2025 thru August 2026.

Best Website Award

The new website should demonstrate a creative implementation of a brand that is visually pleasing, unique, that captures the spirit of the brand, and is user-friendly. The entry should include descriptions of features such as social media integration, Google Maps®, search filters, user-personalization, and content-driven strategy. Criteria: Nominee should be the entity that created the website or that owns the website launched as between September 2025 thru August 2026. Website URL must be provided.

Best Use of Social Media Award

Best of Facebook®, YouTube®, Twitter®, Pinterest®, Instagram® or other social media platforms. Judged on creativity and appeal of visual components, originality, and brand consistency combined with unique idea or approach. Criteria: Nominee should be the entity that created or owns the social media campaign launched between September 2025 thru August 2026.

Best Digital Campaign Award

Judged on the creative and unique use of digital media integrated with advertising creative and other campaign components. Criteria: Nominee should be the entity that created or owns the digital campaign launched between September 2025 thru August 2026.

Note: Awards will be based solely on the information included with the nomination. Please assume that the judges know very little about your project/destination. The background information should be as complete and concise as possible. To further enhance your nomination, you may submit ONE attachment that includes photos, digital materials, brochures, etc. Multiple items of support should be combined and presented as ONE attachment. Due to new Google regulations, your attachment should be emailed to eteisch@baltimore.org. The judges reserve the right to change categories if appropriate. Judges who have a nomination in any category recuse themselves from voting in that category. MTC will cover the cost up to 3 award plaques. Each additional award is \$100 each at the expense of the winner.