



2010
Annual
Report



Wicomico County residents enjoy many amenities contributing to their high quality of life. The Youth and Civic Center, parks system and public recreation programs are meaningful contributors. In addition to being assets that our citizens can enjoy, they are also leveraged to attract visitors to our community for participation in cultural entertainment, sports tournaments, signature events, meetings and receptions, thereby enhancing our local economy. Wicomico's tourism industry is forecasted to infuse over \$10,000,000 into next year's local economy!

Protecting these assets during the ongoing economic downturn rendered last year the most challenging in my 35 years of public service. The economy's effect on tax revenue collection precipitated a 40% reduction to the Recreation and Parks and Youth & Civic Center's budgets.

It was heart warming to witness board members, stakeholders and a capable staff rise to the challenge! Recreation & Parks stakeholders accepted [hefty] service fee increases and undertook numerous fund raising endeavors to generate over \$150,000. Staff revisited and enhanced sound cost avoidance practices which increased tax avoidance to \$1,700,000 a year.

These tactics paved the way for the staff to continue services without disruption and without diminishing quality. The cost per citizen has been reduced to \$13.60 for recreation & parks; \$3.30 for the Y&CC and zero for tourism.

A state-wide survey was undertaken showing the tax appropriation required to subsidize county recreation & parks departments in each Maryland county. The survey revealed an average of \$40 per citizen. In comparison, Wicomico offers its services at \$16.90 per citizen or one third the state average...a great value!

It is been our long standing goal to ensure that the public receives the best return on its investment. The intention of this report is to provide information for the public to evaluate our performance in achieving this critical goal. After reading the report, I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

It is my pleasure to submit to you the Department's 30th annual report.

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary W. Mackes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Gary W. Mackes
Director of Recreation, Parks and Tourism

PUBLIC RECREATION

The Recreation Division continues to focus on its mission of enhancing the quality of life for Wicomico County residents by providing life-long benefits through a wide variety of educational, social, and recreational activities in safe and healthy environments. More than ever our focus has been to provide the highest quality programs and events to our residents at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer and participant. The public recreation program includes the following components:

- Sports Leagues
- Instructional Activities
- Environmental Education
- Recreation Services
- Senior Citizens (Happy Timers)
- Child Care Programs
- Summer Playgrounds
- Special Events & Bus Trips
- Special Interest Facilities:
 - The Westside Community Center
 - Wicomico Equestrian Center
 - Pemberton Historical Park
 - Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex
 - Nanticoke Marina
 - Cedar Hill Marina
- Recreation Councils

A significant economic down turn precipitated a re-calibration of measures to reconcile a budget shortfall. Staff focused on our foundation, the people of Wicomico County, to chart a course. Stakeholders, such as volunteers, coaches, league and community board members, gym and playground leaders and instructors participated in creating a plan consisting of significant fee increases while maintaining quality of programs. The community supported these initiatives as more than \$125,000 was raised mostly by increasing service fees. 12,589 people registered to participate in our activities...a 5% increase! Overall attendance accounted for more than 367,000 visits.



Recreation Division 2010 Highlights

Special Interest Facilities

- The Westside Community Center received \$4,500 in grant awards from Land O' Lakes and the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore that funded operations and enhancements to child care programs at the facility, easing the cost to participants.
- Pemberton Historical Park's environmental education program received \$400 in grants that led to the initiation of two new programs.



Pemberton Park Naturalist Kerri Liming with a black snake and his new friend

New Initiatives

- Instituted seventeen new program or event offerings which generated \$13,000 and attendance exceeding 12,000.
- Program content was enhanced (Structural changes to Summer Camps, the After School Program and Youth Soccer that resulted in a 20% participation increase).
- Partnerships were developed with local businesses to generate \$4,000 in new programs and events sponsorships.
- New fundraisers were conducted. More than \$8,000 was raised to offset increased registration fees.
- Stakeholders planned and executed the County's first annual Good Beer Festival. Recreation councils supplied needed labor and generated over \$4,500 for their activities. This signature event will grow in popularity and raise significant money to offset program and facility cost.



Community Partnerships

- Past practices were continued to offer the Children's Pet Fair, Annual Fishing Derby and Hershey Track Meet free of charge to participants. This was made possible by community partnerships, sponsors, and the hard work of the volunteers who engage with the Department to organize them.



The summer Kappa Alpha Psi Youth Basketball League celebrated its 20th year and received a Congressional Citation for service to the community from Representative Frank Kratovil. 112 games were played at Billy Gene Jackson Park. This year's attendance exceeded 4,000 visits. This program is made possible by a partnership with the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Salisbury Alumni Chapter.

At Risk Youth Programs

- The Summer Playground Program saw more than 7,000 visits...an increase of 11%! Sites are located in Wicomico's most at-risk neighborhoods and strive to offer youth safe & constructive opportunities and mentoring. This program saves taxpayers an estimated \$200,000/ year to prevent the cost of incarceration.
- The Friends of Recreation and Parks awarded more than \$7,000 in scholarships to enable less fortunate youth in Wicomico County to take part in recreation programs.

Economic Generator

- County's Tourism sports tournaments and signature events infused more than \$5 million into our local economy. These events took place at our facilities and were supported by our volunteers and staff.

PARKS

The Parks Division's mission is to preserve Wicomico's unique natural resources by maintaining our parks and facilities in a safe, functional and attractive condition. The Parks' Division staff provides vital support to public recreation and Tourism activities and signature events.

Specific Duties

- The maintenance of County parks including safety inspections of playgrounds, buildings, electric, plumbing, landscape, vehicles and equipment.
- Logistic support for recreation programs, special events sporting events and emergency services.
- Facility construction and improvements to include: development of plans, estimates, specifications & bid documents and project inspection.
- Conservation of natural resources
- Administration of special facilities such as marinas, boat ramps, sports complex and equestrian center
- Staff is on call 24/7 for weather related emergencies throughout the County

The Parks system is distributed throughout the county to provide recreational opportunities to every geographical area of Wicomico County. Facilities include boat ramps, marinas, neighborhood parks, sports venues, historical and nature parks, an equestrian center and picnic pavilions.

The Division is responsible for the maintenance of 39 sites which encompass the following.

TYPE	NUMBER
Total acres	1,423
Turf Acres	374
Buildings	23
Parking lots	18
Ball Fields	32 (10 lighted)
Tennis courts	21 (8 lighted)
Basketball courts	21 (2 lighted)
Multi purpose fields	28 (4 lighted)
Spectator seats	12,650
Playgrounds	20
Picnic facilities	24
Pavilions	17
Miles of Beaches	3
Miles of trails	10.6 (6 sites)
Food concessions	5
Restrooms	18
Boat ramps	8
Boat slips	209 (2 sites)



COST AVOIDANCE

The Parks division is committed to reduce and avoid cost where ever possible.

These practices saved taxpayers over \$677,855. Retaining capable employees who possess a variety of skills and utilization of other practices resulted in the following savings:

Maintenance Task	Savings per year
Turf Maintenance	\$173,646
Trash Collection	\$9,102
Landscape Services	\$155,075
Special Events Logistics & Support	\$45,040
Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	\$122,700
Facilities Maintenance	\$95,089
Welding/Fabrication Services	\$14,203
Vehicle Purchasing	\$23,500
Tennis/Basketball court Maintenance	\$21,000
Project Inspection Services	\$9,000
Tourism Center Annual Maintenance	\$9,500
TOTAL YEARLY SAVINGS	\$677,855

Parks 2010 Accomplishments

- Completed engineering & secured a contractor to dredge and reconstruct jetties at Nanticoke Harbor. The project, costing \$1,600,000 is funded by the State Department of Natural Resources;
- Restoration projects were completed:
 - Henry Parker Athletic Complex & Cedar Hill Park restroom floors
 - Henry Parker Athletic Complex infields;
 - Primed and painted playground equipment at 16 sites;
 - Inspected all electrical components in park facilities and replaced at 10 sites;
- Inspected plumbing fixtures at 8 facilities and replaced as needed;
- Inspected 11 pavilions and buildings and repaired roofs, siding, floors and other structures as required;
- Upgraded and expanded the Equestrian Center's electrical service;
- Nick Meyer Park's tennis and Winter Place Park's basketball courts were sealed and striped
- Adapted plumbing at Pemberton Historical Park's environmental education building allowing winterization of the building.
- Rebuilt Pemberton Historical Park's gates;
- Inspection services were rendered to the Wicomico Youth & Civic Center for masonry repairs and its new storage shed;



- Assistance was given to Fruitland Recreation Council to upgrade athletic field turf conditions.
- Assistance was given to Mardela Recreation Council to prepare estimates and bid documents to procure pavilion replacement roof materials and a private contractor to install property line fence.
- Assistance was given to Sharptown Recreation Council to construct a new walking trail at Cherry Beach Park
- Constructed the new Marketing Office at the Wicomico Youth & Civic Center
- Fabricated and installed traffic gates at Wicomico Youth & Civic Center
- Replaced Pemberton Historical Park's education building's siding
- Renovated the Tourism Centers meeting room's closets and shelving; coordinated the replacement of failed plumbing systems.
- Provided logistical support and assistance in managing 6 special events and 11 regional and national sports tournaments.

Parks 2011 Goals:

- Methods will be analyzed to improve efficiency in the following areas: fuel consumption, electrical usage, mowing patterns and scheduling of repeating tasks.
- Seal and Stripe 6 basketball/tennis courts. This will protect 8 of the 42 courts in the parks system. This practice increases the life of the courts from 18 years to 30 years avoiding premature replacement costs saving tax payers \$630,000.
- Re-evaluate Park Police and Wicomico County Sheriff's roles to improve security and surveillance.
- Re-build sheds serving the Parks Division destroyed by snow last year. Construction will be performed by staff saving taxpayers \$95,000. FEMA reimbursed the Department \$74,000 to perform this work.
- Complete dredging and jetty reconstruction at Nanticoke Harbor.
- Undertake major tree trimming and pruning program in the parks facilities to improve line of sight in parks for added security and continued health of the trees.
- Assist with the completion of the Cherry Beach and Cope Bennett park improvements
- Continue to upgrade County athletic facilities to retain & attract new regional and national events.
- Update the County's Land Preservation and Recreation Plan as required by the State of Maryland;
- Complete audits of all facilities and undertake repairs and upgrades as needed.
- Monitor use of Cove Road and address challenges created by demand.
- Organize records, leases, blueprints, specifications and plans filed in the Park Division's drafting room.
- Continuing to reduce costs without compromising superior service.

THE WICOMICO YOUTH & CIVIC CENTER

The Wicomico Youth and Civic Center represents the County government's commitment to enhance the "quality of life" for its citizens. It is also leveraged to attract events that infuse money into the local economy. This is accomplished as follows:

- By showcasing a diverse mix of cultural entertainment
- By providing a place for meetings, receptions, trade shows & sporting events
- By attracting visitors who patronize local businesses
- By maintaining the living war memorial status of the Center
- By accommodating the public recreation activities when it is not rented; and
- By serving as an emergency shelter



USE

The Youth and Civic Center serves the region within a one-hour drive with a population of 650,000. It holds a brand for being the place to hold or attend concerts, family shows, trade shows, sporting events, meetings and receptions. Last year, over 400 events were held boosting the annual total attendance to over 237,000 people. 125 events were accommodated by Encore Catering - our in house catering enterprise.

The Divisions of Recreation and Parks held 621 activities when the facility wasn't commercially occupied. Attendance for these activities was 54,664. The Department reimburses the WY&CC \$92,500 annually for this and administrative office space. These activities engage youth, club, senior, adult, sports, and recreation activities.

Fifty (50) meetings were conducted by other County agencies at no charge. More than 3,451 people attended the meetings.

FY2010 Participation Summary

Activity Category	Sessions	Total Attendance
Entertainment	60	86,429
Trade Shows	24	9,065
Sporting Events	31	32,286
Corporate Meetings	48	9,445
Educational Functions	15	33,809
Social Receptions	36	3,594
Fraternal Receptions	5	628
Religious Meetings	2	251
Government Meetings	9	964
Other Rentals	35	2,490
Public Recreation	621	54,664
Wicomico Govnt. Meetings	50	3,451
Grand Total	936	237,076



Market Place

The Y&CC competes with 29 similar venues within the immediate marketplace (a 250 mile radius) to attract concerts, family shows, trade shows, meetings, receptions and sporting events. Furthermore, there are more than 80 similar venues located within a day's drive, not including arenas operated by colleges and universities.

Restoration/Modernization

Citizens, local businesses and state and local elected officials view the Civic Center as a "quality of life" and economic asset worth protecting. Local hotel room and admission taxes coupled with State and Local bonds were leveraged to begin restoration and modernization of the 30 year old Center. To remain viable in a very competitive marketplace, the WY&CC must be restored and modernized to attract new and retain existing business.

Best Practices

The WY&CC's management and operation is driven by a set of best practices under the government model. The actual cost (tax appropriation) to operate the Center last year was \$316,000, costing each resident \$3.30. This was accomplished by the utilization of green technology, inmate labor, community service workers, revenue generation tactics and keeping catering & concessions, box office operations, maintenance and management in house reducing the local tax appropriation by \$1.2 million dollars.

2009-10 Civic Center Highlights

- 31 cultural events were held including several boxing events, Playhouse Disney, Sesame Street, WWE Live, Monster Trucks, Disney on Ice, Ringling Brothers Circus, The Gaithers, the Lonestar Rodeo, Lady Antebellum, Harlem Globetrotters, and the Broadway in Salisbury series.
- Over 195 local meetings and receptions were hosted last year
- 17 sports marketing and national tournaments featuring basketball, wrestling, poodles, cheerleading and dance were held infusing over \$3,400,000 into our local economy.
- Green technology was applied saving the taxpayers \$44,000 in utility bills and projects to save over 50% in restroom water consumption.

- Food Service is administered in house saving the taxpayers \$170,000 and new food tactics have been implemented to improve product selection, quality, service, eating areas and profitability by 20%;
- Upgrades funded from hotel room tax and admission taxes include: arena sound system, a center arena rigging system, new volleyball standards, Wi-Fi upgrades throughout the venue, ceiling tile replacement in many venue areas, upgrades to concession stand electric, table replacement and several new digital televisions and announcement boards.
- Restoration and modernization projects funded by a \$ 2 million State and Local General Obligation bond include: restroom renovations throughout the venue, repair/replacement of failing exterior/interior doors, a storage shed, a basketball court, video scoreboards, replacement of the entire Arena floor with utility service upgrades, and replacement of the locker room and office air conditioning.
- The oversight of the WY&CC was transferred from the Recreation Commission to a separate Civic Center Commission that was formed to oversee the operations and management of the business.
- Returning business was comprised of 114 events... a record. This correlates to \$1,230,000 in gross revenue making up approximately 31% of the Y&CC's business.
- Over 20% of the booked events held were booked by the Department's Tourism Division;
- New events developed to enhance the existing shows and events included a series of five Broadway Plays, numerous concerts & a new youth wrestling event.
- MAWA wrestling tournaments and the International Poodle Show made commitments to hold events here for future years.

2011 Goals:

- Operate the Center with a \$260,000 tax appropriation, a 40% reduction;
- Retain a business advertising salesperson to sell static & video advertising and event sponsorships;
- Fine tune food concessions to increase profitability by addressing expediting, quality and sitting area;
- Increase local business & civic group awareness of recent upgrades to meeting and reception accommodations; utilize the new sell book to attract new business
- Continue to partner with Tourism & Recreation Divisions to develop new events.
- Implement a building enhancement and sponsorship program to develop a sense of place by upgrading landscape and public sitting areas.
- Undertake an "economic impact & feasibility" study, funded by the Maryland Stadium Authority to develop tactics to increase revenue at the facility. It will include a market assessment, economic projections, evaluation of appropriate program elements, and tactics to fulfill the report's findings.
- Convert sales, booking and accounting software from Fast books to Ungerboek by July 1st;
- Perpetuate initiatives to minimize consumption of materials, supplies, and utilities by instilling a sense of "conservation" amongst staff;
- Continue facility improvements by expanding parking; table & chair replacement; upgrading exhibit area drapes; and installing security cameras; items to be paid from dedicated hotel and admission taxes.
- Keep stakeholders apprised of current initiatives and their impact.



TOURISM



DISCOVER DELMARVA'S
HIDDEN TREASURES
IN WICOMICO COUNTY

The Wicomico County Convention & Visitors Bureau's mission is to promote Wicomico County as a destination for meetings, conventions, events and all other tourism related activities for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland. It enhances and contributes to the overall identity and economic well-being of the county and region. Last year 58 events were held here infusing \$9,200,000 into the local economy.

The Tourist Information Center provides travelers with information relating to area lodging, dining, shopping, recreation, attractions and events. Wicomico's Visitor center is the 2nd busiest in the state as visits exceeded 37,400 last year. Staff accommodated over 4,894 requests for information from travelers.

Tourism efforts rely heavily on the Wicomico Youth & Civic Center, Parks and Recreation by leveraging their assets to attract business to the County. The impact of leveraging these assets is as follows:

Youth & Civic Center:	8 events	\$3,402,290 Economic Impact
Recreation & Parks:	22 events	\$5,835.820 Economic Impact

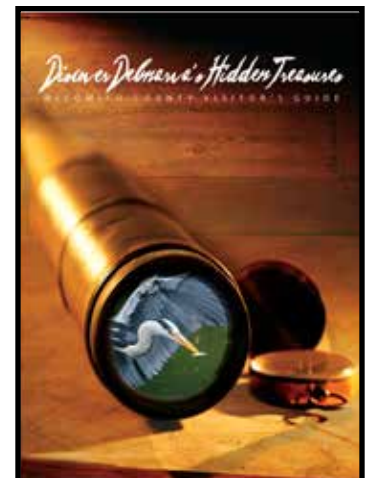
The bureau maintains a working relationship with many agencies on the local, state, and national level to promote the tourism industry in our area. Those organizations with which we frequently interact include the Greater Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce, The Wicomico County Hotel/Motel/Restaurant Association, Locally Owned Restaurant Association (LORA), the Maryland Department of Tourism Development, the Maryland Tourism Council, the Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, National Tour Association, International Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus and the American Bus Association.

The funds required to sustain the Convention & Visitors Bureau come from a 4% local room tax, a State Grant and miscellaneous sources including advertising and vending sales. These sources generate \$856,714 to offset all costs. There is no County tax subsidy required to operate this division.

Tourism Highlights

Although a difficult year for hotels and travel the following numbers reflect the changes.

	FY 08/09	FY 09/10	COMPARISON
Room Tax Increase	\$716,683	\$716,006	0%
Annual Sales	\$13,297,912	\$13,439,360	1%
Total Sales	\$27,949,300	\$25,229,664	-10%
Occupancy	46.2	46.5	1%
ADR	\$78.51	\$79.82	2%
REV PAR	\$46.20	\$37.08	-20%
Events Booked by CVB	55	59	2%
Walk In Visitors	40,855	37,406	-8%
Website Hits	61,445	76,842	25%
Total Leads	12,423	11,996	-3%



2010 Tourism Highlights:

- Staff sold 74 events (held or to be held in out years) having an economic impact of \$25,200,000.
- The youth sports tournament market has become Wicomico's fastest growing segment. Events held include the USSSA 11/13u Girls Softball World Series, the Governor's Challenge Basketball Tournament, the MAWA Eastern National Championship, and USSSA Men's Slow Pitch Eastern Nationals.
- The International Poodle Show, several smaller conventions, and family reunions held their events here. The International Poodle Show has booked its event here for the next five years along with Mary Kay who will return again in 2011. The Lions Club will hold its Regional Convention here in 2011.
- The staff staged 2 signature events. The 7th annual Autumn Wine Festival featured 18 wineries and attendance exceeding 5,000 people. The Pork in the Park BBQ Festival, sanctioned by Kansas City BBQ Society attracted 142 competitors and attendance exceeding 25,000 surpassing earlier success. The event is recognized as the largest BBQ Festival on the East Coast and second largest in the country. Attendee surveys show demographical information as follows: 63% are local residents; 17 % live within a 60 mile drive and 21% are from distances greater than 60 miles.
- 2 new events were established. They were the Hidden Treasures Half Marathon featuring 225 participants and the Good Beer Festival. Both have large upsides for potential growth.
- Delmarva Bike Week, sponsored by Harley Davidson of Ocean City and Seaford returned to Wicomico County in September. Over 100,000 bikers visited our County.
- Completion of the County's Tourism Strategic Plan prompted development of a 3rd strategic plan. These plans are used to re-calibrate tactics used to continue grow Wicomico's Tourism industry.
- CVA currently has 105 members. They will hold a Geochaching event to be held in May... a first for Delmarva. They created a membership drive and developed a membership recruiting brochure.
- More than 35,000 copies of the visitors guide were printed & distributed this year. Publication costs were paid from ad sales;
- Delmarva's Hidden Treasures have been identified and are being used in our advertising and web site.

2010-11 Objectives

- Execute tactics outlined in the Strategic Plan
- Develop a plan and execute tactics to ensure Salisbury offers a safe, warm, and friendly environment which is conducive for group events
- Re-calibrate staff responsibilities to better fit the needs of tourism and sports marketing;
- Support execution of the plan making the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center competitive within the marketplace (cultural entertainment, conferences, conventions, special events and sporting events) while remaining responsive to local community needs;
- Develop and execute a plan to provide ways and means to grow signature special events which are multi-day and the primary attendee is the overnight visitor from the 150-mile radius target market of Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia and Virginia;
- Continue effort to research and develop sports marketing packages that provide high motivation for sports teams and events to come to Wicomico County for additional events and to seize opportunities;
- Work with hoteliers & restaurateurs to attract and retain group business;
- Develop "tourist & day tripper intercept" and "extended stay" programs to better capitalize upon the traveler passing through or near Wicomico County;
- Enhance Wicomico's Brand "Discover Delmarva's Hidden Treasures" awareness in 150 mile radius;
- Establish 3 new sports tournaments.
- Increase Visitor Guide Sales by 10%
- Increase CVA membership by 10%
- Package Chesapeake Wine Trail with hotels
- Develop strategy for niche marketing