TOURISM

- Increased numerous tourism metrics in Garrett County:
  - Increased Accommodation Sales Collections by 5.4% for FY17 through March 2017
  - Increased Calendar Year 2016 accommodations collections $1.65 million over 2015 (3.9% increase) and 2015 was a $1.25 million increase over 2014
    - Every year since 2010 has been a record year in accommodations collections
    - Since 2010, calendar year accommodations collections have increased 34% to over $43 million
  - Heads on Beds in Garrett County were up 13.9% in 2016 and are currently up 2.4% thru March 2017
  - Increased Garrett County tourism sales tax collections 2.1% in FY17
  - Increased website visits to visitdeepcreek.com 23% in 2016 over 2015
    - Direct visits to visitdeepcreek.com increased an astounding 23% in 2016 over 2015
  - Increased website visits to visitdeepcreek.com 14.1% in 2017 over 2016
    - Direct visits to visitdeepcreek.com have increased 15% in 2017 over 2016
  - Garrett County had the highest increase in tourism sales tax revenues in the state in the first quarter of fiscal year 2017
    - Garrett County saw nearly double the growth at 5.8% that the state of Maryland saw at 3.0%
  - Garrett County grew lodging sales tax collections 7.8% while Maryland grew 5.5%
  - Garrett County saw an increase of 6.7% in tourism sales tax revenues in the first 9 months of FY17 while the state of Maryland saw an increase of 4.7%
    - Garrett County grew lodging sales tax collections 9.2% while Maryland grew 7.3%
  - 23% increase thus far in FY17 Admissions & Amusement Collections
  - 8.4% increase in Visitors Center Guests in 2017
  - Due to lodging growth in the county in FY16, secured $90,298 in state tourism marketing match grant funds, a 9.5% increase from the previous year.
  - Received an Award of Excellence for www.visitdeepcreek.com from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
  - Received the 2016 Best Media & PR Campaign Award from the Maryland Tourism Coalition for the Chamber's Military March promotion
  - Implemented social media advertising as part of marketing strategy resulting in a 14% increase in Facebook followers, a 16.7% increase in Twitter followers and a 113% increase in Instagram followers.
  - Coordinated Fire on the Mountain July 4th Fireworks, the Autumn Glory Festival Kick-Off Dinner, Grand Feature Parade and Craft Show, Military March, 92nd Anniversary of Deep Creek Lake and the biannual 3-2-1 Lodging & Activity Promotions
  - Blitzed D.C., Baltimore, Northern Virginia and Pittsburgh markets with advertising on TV, radio, billboards, buses, in metro stations, in print, mobile, online and social media including using Facebook and Google Adwords
  - Participated in the Maryland Office of Tourism's Maryland on the Road sales blitz with fellow colleagues around the state to promote Garrett County to Ohio Tour Operators
  - Attended the American Bus Association, Maryland Motorcoach Association, Pennsylvania Bus Association Marketplaces, and the Student Youth Travel Association Annual Conference, meeting with hundreds of group leaders, and had multiple one-on-one appointments with tour operators
  - Secured $229,598 in Heritage Area grant money for management, marketing and project grants. The Heritage Area awarded $10,000 to local Heritage related projects
  - Through our Group Sales and Marketing initiative we welcomed 26 groups including group tours, meetings and destination weddings accounting for more than $317,783 in visitor spending with a total economic impact of $444,772; and are actively working with 24 future leads in various stages of the inquiry and booking process, projecting over $447,684 in total spending and economic impact of $551,767
  - Visitors added over 6,375 accommodations, restaurants, activities, events and more to Trip Builder Itineraries on both the visitdeepcreek.com website and the garretheritage.com website in calendar year 2016 and 1,332 in calendar year 2017 to date
  - Produced a 16-page destination wedding brochure and have distributed to nearly 100 lead inquiries since its release
  - As of 5/26/17 for FY17, there have been 136 Heritage App installations
  - The Heritage Area Facebook page has grown to over 5,883 likes, a 5% increase over 2015/2016
  - The Deep Creek Groups Facebook page has grown to over 1,984 likes, a 41% increase over 2015/2016
BIZNESS SERVICES

- Hosted Economist from Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond and Liz Fitzsimmons, Managing Director for MD Dept. of Commerce, Office of Tourism, Film & the Arts at Business Before Hours Events
- Celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Chamber
- Hosted Inaugural Past Chairs’ Breakfast
- Hosted 9 HR Roundtable Meetings, covering topics such as background checks, drug screens, employee perks and incentives, overtime rules, training and development, social media, compliance tips from the Division of Labor & Industry, etc.
- Added 65 new members
- Achieved 89% member retention rate
- Hosted more than 1,900 attendees at Chamber events
- Garrett County Diplomats assisted in 24 ribbon cuttings/grand openings/ground breakings
- Achieved a 34% rate of members reading our electronic newsletters
- Recognized 52 new businesses, 8 expanding businesses and 1 business for longevity at the Annual Business & Industry Appreciation Business Before Hours
- Grew Facebook followers by 42% to 872
- Assisted 53 members with lowering electricity bills and saving more than $400,000 in the last 12 months through our electric cooperative.
- Hosted a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Cuba for 11 Chamber members & guests

ADVOCACY

- Successfully advocated for Post Labor Day School Start which came to fruition when Governor Hogan signed Executive Order
- Met with Secretary Brinkley, MD Dept. of Budget and Management to discuss tourism promotion funding and application of the Tourism Promotion Act
- Led HUBZone advocacy efforts and successfully encouraged Congressional members (Rep. Delaney, Sen. Cardin, Sen. Van Hollen) to sponsor legislation extending the HUBZone redesignation period and preserving Garrett County HUBZones
- Secured HUBZone redesignation support from MD Dept. of Commerce Secretary Mike Gill
- Reviewed 2,861 pieces of legislation and tracked 119 bills during the 2017 Maryland General Assembly session
- Effectively lobbied on state legislation achieving a 79% success rate including raising the funding cap for Heritage Areas, implementation of restructured PILOT – reimbursement to County for state-owned lands, creation of fund for state-owned lakes, securing voting rights from DMOs on MD Tourism Development Board, More Jobs for Marylanders Act economic development incentives, state grants for education aid, extension of hours for Sunday alcohol sales and defeating anti-business legislation
- Co-hosted a very successful PACE reception and breakfast in Annapolis