20th Anniversary of the Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival Wins Annual Statewide Tourism Award

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Leonardtown, MD – The 20th Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival was honored as the only event in Maryland to win one of four statewide awards at the 39th annual Maryland Tourism & Travel Summit on November 7, 2019 in Allegany County, Maryland. The award was accepted by Dale Springer, President of the Friends of St. Clement’s Island & Piney Point Museums; Andrew Ponti, Marketing Manager of the St. Mary’s County Museum Division; Jason Aul, Executive Director of Visit St. Mary’s MD; and the Town of Leonardtown, all of whom were partners in guaranteeing the success of the multi-day weekend event.

The 20th Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival won the “Maximizing Opportunities Award.” The recipients of this award are recognized for successfully taking advantage of an existing event to generate overnight stays. The festival expanded from a one-day Saturday event into a three-day weekend celebration by partnering with the St. Mary’s County Museum Division, the Town of Leonardtown, the Friends of St. Clement’s Island & Piney Point Museums, and Visit St. Mary’s MD.

The four partner organizations who won the “Maximizing Opportunities Award” worked for nearly a year prior with organizations and businesses throughout St. Mary’s County and beyond to make the 20th anniversary a success. Representatives were even chosen to appear on two Baltimore-area news stations with the Maryland Office of Tourism to promote the festival as part of Maryland’s larger “Summer of Music Series” to encourage music lovers from all over the mid-Atlantic to visit.

“This award is a huge testament to how relationships and working well together for a common goal can eventually reap great rewards,” says Karen Stone, Manager of the St. Mary’s County Museum Division. “We are honored that the Maryland Office of Tourism recognized the efforts of partner organizations to make St. Mary’s County a premier tourism destination. The award shows that we can make a true economic impact on our state by encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more here.”

The Commissioners of Leonardtown were proud to work side-by-side with the other partners in expanding the premiere, one-day-festival at St. Clement’s Island Museum to a full weekend jazz celebration throughout historic Leonardtown. “The 20th Anniversary Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival Weekend Celebration provided a wonderful opportunity to highlight historic Leonardtown along with St. Clement’s Island Museum. Jazz enthusiasts traveled from near and far to enjoy a full weekend of jazz-themed events and special offers from the local businesses. The Commissioners of Leonardtown are excited to continue this fruitful partnership with the St. Mary’s County Museum Division, the Friends of St. Clement’s Island & Piney Point Museums, and Visit St. Mary’s MD.” says Brandy Blackstone, Public Relations & Events Coordinator for the Commissioners of Leonardtown. Brandy Blackstone and Laschelle McKay, Town Administrator for the Commissioners of Leonardtown, accepted the Town’s award at the December 9, 2019 Town Council Meeting.

The county’s tourism organization, Visit St. Mary’s MD, helped to promote the event and engage local businesses, hotels, and restaurants with the weekend activities. “The year-over-year increase in hotel occupancy for this festival exemplifies how our collaborative efforts are helping to bring in more visitors,” said Jason Aul, Executive Director of Visit St. Mary’s MD. “With everyone working together, we were able to showcase more of our beautiful county than ever before.”

The 2019 Maryland Tourism Awards, given by the Maryland Department of Commerce Office of Tourism Development and the Maryland Tourism Development Board, recognize excellence and major contributions in expanding the market of Maryland tourism products, maximizing opportunities to generate overnight stays, leveraging partnerships, and showcasing Maryland as an exciting, must-see tourism destination.

The partners are now hard at work planning the 21st Annual Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival Weekend to take place the weekend of July 10 – 12, 2020.

For more information about the Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival, please visit www.PotomacJazzAndSeafoodFestival.com or contact Andrew Ponti, Marketing Manager, St. Mary’s County Museum Division, at Andrew.ponti@stmarysmd.com. For information on tourism group sales, please contact Gail Perry, Sales Lead, Visit St. Mary’s MD at Gail@VisitStMarysMD.com.

The Friends of St. Clement’s Island and Piney Point Museums raise funds in order to support historical interpretation, education programs and special needs of the sites managed by the Museum Division of St. Mary’s County Department of Recreation and Parks. The Friends organization is a 501(c) 3 organization sponsoring events, assisting with acquisitions and supporting efforts to broaden the understanding of our culture and community’s heritage.