

*With this inaugural edition, the Baltimore Area Convention & Visitors Association is launching its first-ever monthly Baltimore Tourism Barometer. The goal of the Barometer is to provide timely information regarding the overall state of tourism in Baltimore by tracking a wide range of industry-related statistics, including hotel occupancy, airport and Amtrak arrivals, tax receipts, employment and an aggregated attendance figure for many of Baltimore's cultural institutions and attractions. The Barometer will be shared with BACVA members and community stakeholders monthly with an analysis every quarter.*

Baltimore's tourism industry experienced a significant surge in activity during the first quarter of 2004. Almost all industry sectors reported growth as consumer confidence levels finished the quarter dramatically higher (88.5 in March 2004 compared to 61.4 in March 2003 according to The Conference Board). Americans' willingness to travel improved as concerns stemming from global economic and political challenges during the first quarter of 2003 eased. Early indications suggest that Baltimore's tourism picture will remain healthy as it continues in the spring months.

### Accommodations

The number of rooms filled in Baltimore's hotels in the first three months of 2004 soared to 412,000, up 12% (+45,000) over the same period in 2003. This represented a 61.7% occupancy rate for the city's 7300 hotel rooms compared to 56.1% in 2003. The hotel sector's average daily rate also improved, up 5% to \$130 for the quarter.

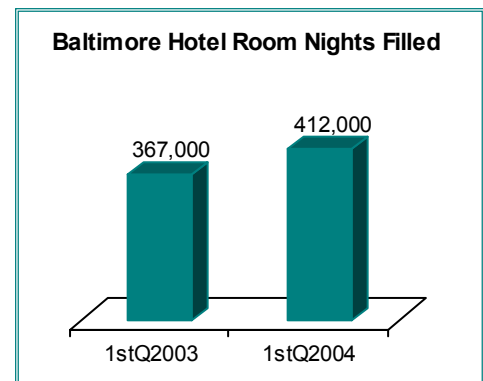
Baltimore's hotel sector fared somewhat better than the US as a whole, although room nights filled in the nation did grow a healthy 6% to 226.0 million for the quarter. US hotel occupancy ended the first three months of 2004 at 56.8% compared to 54.4% for the same period in 2003.

Baltimore's Inner Harbor hotels also registered improved activity as did the Metro Baltimore area as a whole. The percentage of occupied hotel rooms for the Inner Harbor rose from 57.5% in the first quarter of 2003 to 63.8% for the same period in 2004. As for the Metro Baltimore area, 59.0% of hotel rooms were filled in 2004 compared to 55.6% in 2003. Average daily rates for these two areas matched the growth rate for Baltimore: +5% to \$139 for the Inner Harbor hotels and +6% to \$111 for the Metro Baltimore area as a whole.

### Transportation

Air travel to the Baltimore/Washington International Airport climbed 15% (+300,000) to 2.3 million inbound passengers (scheduled and charter) in the first quarter of 2004. Nationally, overall air travel (as measured by revenue passenger enplanements) grew 4% to 124.6 million

The dramatic improvement in international travel to the nation, up 12% to 8.0 million visitors in the first quarter of 2003, was reflected in international arrivals to BWI. Although this market



# Baltimore Tourism Barometer

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2004 in Review - page 2

segment a small portion of the overall passenger traffic, approximately five percent, it is a segment worth monitoring, having experienced a 25% leap to 108,000 passengers during this time period.

Amtrak arrivals (excluding commuters) to Baltimore also rose, registering a healthy 5% increase to 89,113 passengers. At the national level, Amtrak ridership grew just under 4% to 5.8 million.

## Baltimore Venues

Baltimore's attractions and cultural institutions also continued to collectively shake off the travel doldrums of 2003. The combined attendance reported by ten of the city's tourism venues surged 8% to 611,000 in the first three months of 2004, up 46,00 compared to the same period in 2003. Increased awareness of Baltimore's offerings and special exhibitions contributed to this enhanced activity level.

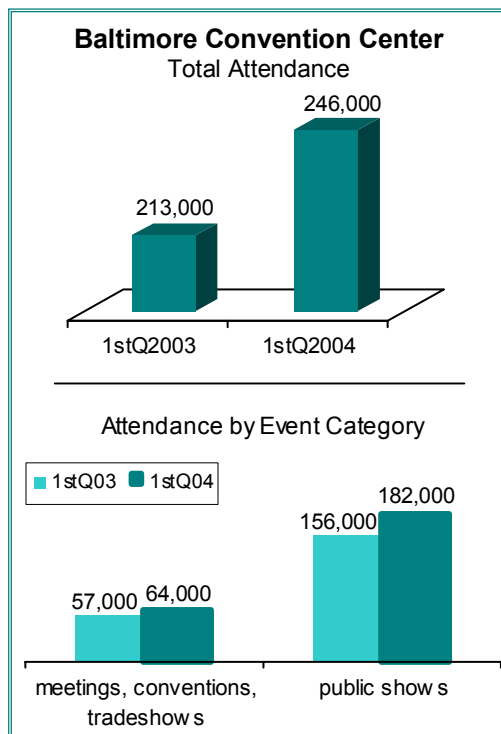
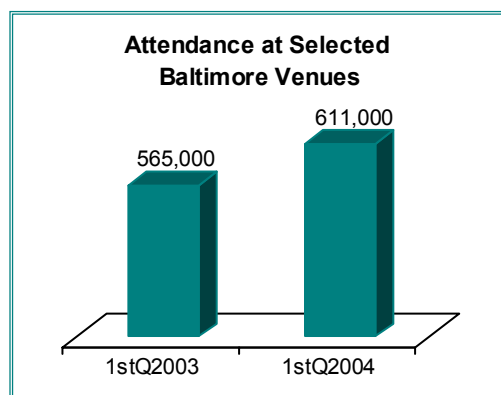
The Baltimore Convention Center also benefited from the city's overall improved travel picture. Overall first quarter 2004 event attendance at Center was 246,000, up 17% over the same period in 2003. Trade events (meetings, conventions, tradeshows), numbering 30, also experienced double-digit attendance growth – up 13% to 64,000 – as did the Center's 11 public shows, which grew 17% to 182,000.

## Tourism Tax Revenues and Jobs Supported

The tourism industry remains a solid contributor to the Baltimore and Maryland economies. Employment in Baltimore's *Leisure & Hospitality* industry sector (NAICS) numbered 25,300 at the end of the first quarter, off by one percent (-300) compared to the same period in 2003.

Baltimore's hotels generated \$2.9 million in hotel room tax receipts for the first quarter of 2004, down 14% over the same period in 2003.

Sales and use taxes generated by Baltimore's tourism-related businesses grew almost 2% during this period, producing \$12.5 million (+\$218,000) in tax revenue.



For further information on the *Baltimore Tourism Barometer* or other BACVA research programs, please contact Sara Gunsiorowski, BACVA's Research Analyst, at [sgunsiorowski@baltimore.org](mailto:sgunsiorowski@baltimore.org), or call 1-410-468-1623.

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