Brooke E. Lierman
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News Release

Comptroller Lierman to Give Keynote Address to Women of MACo at Annual Summer Conference in Ocean City

Speech to focus on the impact of women in leadership and the importance of women to the economy

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (August 14, 2024) — Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman will deliver the keynote address at the Women of MACo Luncheon on Friday, August 16, 2024, during the annual Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) summer conference in Ocean City.

Earlier this year, Comptroller Lierman released the agency's first State of the Economy, which showed Maryland's Labor Participation Rate had dropped four percentage points between 2019 and 2023 and had not recovered to its pre-pandemic high. The report also revealed that women were among the individuals who had not rejoined the labor force, in large part, because of caregiving responsibilities and access to childcare.

In addition to Comptroller Lierman's keynote during the Women of MACo Luncheon, Chief Information Officer Robert O'Connor will share his expertise during the session entitled "Effective Remediation Strategies for Addressing Cybersecurity Issues: A Practical Guide for State, County and Local Agencies". Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Michael Bayrd will also speak during the panel, "New Money, New Strings: Taming Target Funds." The Office of the Comptroller will also have a booth inside the Exhibit Hall of the Roland Powell Convention Center, which will feature information and resources connected to the agency and its work.

The summer conference, which runs from August 14 to 17, convenes thousands of leaders from all levels of government and the private sector and provides an opportunity for connection and to engage in thought leadership on a range of topics impacting local government in Maryland.

Comptroller Lierman MACo Schedule

Thursday, August 15
10:30 a.m.
Comptroller Lierman to Tour Exhibit Hall
Roland Powell Convention Center
4001 Coastal Hwy
Ocean City, MD 21842

Friday, August 16
11:45 a.m.
Comptroller Lierman to deliver keynote during Women of MACo Luncheon
Roland Powell Convention Center, Room 217
4001 Coastal Hwy
Ocean City, MD 21842

Staff Presentations

Wednesday, August 14
10:45 a.m.
**Effective Remediation Strategies for Addressing Cybersecurity Issues: A
Practical Guide for State, County, and Local Agencies**
Mr. O'Connor will join seasoned cybersecurity and technology experts from the public
and private sectors for a fireside chat to share hands-on experiences and strategies to
safeguard state, county, and local assets. They will discuss practical insights to
prioritize vulnerabilities, optimize resource allocation, and workforce development.
Audience members will be encouraged to participate with questions and answers. The
intent is to provide valuable insights to help agencies enhance their security posture and
protect against future threats.

Speakers:

- **Rob O'Connor, Chief Information Officer, Comptroller of Maryland**
- Andrew Weidenhamer, Principal, Public Sector - Security, Privacy, and Risk
  Services, RSM
- Matt Otwell, Chief Information Security Officer, Maryland Department of Health
- Nish Thakker, Chief Executive Officer, NXT LLC
- **Moderator:** Kelly Schulz, Chief Executive Officer, Maryland Tech Council

Wednesday, August 14
1:15 p.m.
Sentinels of Digital Realm: AI's Role in Fortifying Cybersecurity

Mr. O'Connor will join a discussion on cyber threats as they evolve in sophistication and frequency, with local leaders face increasing pressure to protect sensitive data and critical infrastructure. Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers powerful tools to bolster cybersecurity efforts, enabling more proactive and resilient defense mechanisms. However, practical hurdles in adopting AI solutions, ethical and privacy concerns, and evolving technologies present challenges for county governments. In this session, an expert panel will share strategies to implement AI-driven cybersecurity challenges and solutions while avoiding potential pitfalls.

Speakers:

- **Rob O'Connor, Chief Information Officer, Comptroller of Maryland**
- Ted Pibil, Senior Government Advisor, ePlus Technology Inc.
- Gregory Rogers, State Chief Information Security Officer, Maryland DoIT
  Stephen Pereira, Director, Technology Services, Calvert County
- Timothy Gilday, Partner, EAST; Chair of Emerging Tech, ACT-IAC
- **Moderator:** Sharon Green Middleton, Council Vice Chair, Baltimore City

Thursday, August 15
3:30 p.m.
New Money, New Strings: Taming Targeted Funds
Mr. Bayrd will join a panel for a discussion on cannabis as counties grapple with the complexities of emerging revenue stream from cannabis legalization and opioid restitution and understanding the opportunities and limitations in allocating the funds effectively. The panelists will present case studies, expert insights, and a concise overview of how counties can better manage and allocate the new revenue from cannabis and highlight the permitted and restricted uses of opioid restitution.

Speakers:

- **Michael Bayrd, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the Maryland Comptroller**
- Delegate C.T. Wilson, Maryland House of Delegates
- Robbie Sandlass, Treasurer, Harford County
- Audrey Johnson, Executive Director, Office of Social Equity
- **Moderator:** State Senator Cheryl Kagan

View the full 2024 Summer MACo Program

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