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**MVTA ANNUAL MEETING FOR TAG AND TITLE AGENTS SERVING MARYLAND
WAS A TREMENDOUS BENEFIT FOR THE MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED**

ELLICOTT CITY, MD (Monday, Nov. 28, 2022) -- Last month, the Maryland Vehicle Titling Association (MVTA) held a highly successful and well-attended Annual Meeting at the Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City. Throughout the day, nearly 100 Maryland tag and title agents from across the state heard from a variety of industry experts who discussed numerous relevant topics, all closely tied to the meeting's overall theme of "Moving Forward."

Those relevant topics included recent business trends, offered updates on best practices, provided important information about advances in technology and approved or pending legislation, conducted education and training opportunities for attendees, and shared insights on recent organizational marketing and partnership efforts.

"It was a fantastic Annual Meeting, and it was great to see everyone there in person," said MVTA chairperson and secretary, Beth Caro. "We were honored to have several special guests, including Maryland Delegate Kathy Szeliga, Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Executive Director Will Pines, and representatives from the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration.

"We are very appreciative of the time they spent with our members," Caro added.

Caro said MVTA was particularly pleased to hear Madison Lumpkin, MDOT MVA's Director of Vehicle Programs, highlight his agency's strong support of MVTA tag and title member agents to ensure that their customers are supported and well-served.

Pines briefed the audience on the status of Maryland's *E-ZPass*[®] toll collection system, including expiration of a quickly approaching Nov. 30 deadline being faced by more than a million drivers with outstanding Maryland video tolls who must pay those balances without facing additional fines.

"This past August, we sent out 'Act Now' letters to 1.3 million customers who had made no payments on their tolls to date," Pines said. "That number has now grown now to 1.7 million. That's why I'm here today to make sure that these customers are aware of the impending deadline."

During the afternoon portion of the meeting, Del. Szeliga recalled the hard work that she and her colleagues in the House of Delegates put forth to make sure that Maryland's more than 500 tag and title agents were included on the state's list of essential businesses during COVID lockdown in 2020.

“These are primarily small businesses, owned and operated mostly by women,” Szeliga pointed out. “They had bills and mortgages to pay, food to put on the table, families to support. There was no way I was going to sit by and let those tag and title agent businesses close. I am very proud that I was able to work with your MVTA leadership to make sure you were protected.”

Keeping MVTA member tag and title agents open during the COVID lockdown was especially critical for Maryland motorists, Caro said. MVTA member agents currently process roughly 100,000 transactions per month, compared to 25,000 per month prior to the pandemic.

“Another important reason for that dramatic increase in monthly transactions is the fact our agents offer what is essentially a ‘no appointment necessary’ option to the state MVA offices,” Caro noted. “And our tag and title agents can handle the same transactions as the MVA, except for issuing driver’s licenses.”

Several additional topics were covered during the daylong Annual Meeting:

- Scanning Solutions for ERT and Document Retention: A Case Study featuring Kodak Alaris and Jon Stuck from the Edge Digital Group, who are working to further modernize the technology in our offices, streamline processes, and improve work flows specific to our member’s needs;
- Military Excise Tax legislation, spearheaded by Senator Sarah Elfreth and Delegate Jason Buckel, which took effect July 1, 2022. MVTA Vice Chair and military veteran, Lisa Thompas, told meeting attendees how the new law exempts from the vehicle excise tax any vehicle that was formerly titled and registered in another state by a member of the U.S. military who is on active duty or returning to the state of Maryland from active duty;
- Maryland State Police Automotive Safety Enforcement Division initiatives, including computerized inspections, reduced paperwork, support to prevent fraud, education about vehicle safety inspections, and other ongoing efforts to support small businesses.

“We were also thrilled to have several of our vendors at the meeting throughout the day,” Caro said, “including our exclusive partner in electronic and registration titling services, Dealertrack. We were honored to have their regional sales manager, John Hancock, and several members of his training team.”

Other partners on hand at Turf Valley Resort last month included Rebecca Roemer from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which manages the state’s highly successful Chesapeake Bay Plate program, and Ben Brown from the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF), which manages the state’s agricultural license plate program for the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

According to Roemer, so far in 2022, approximately 6.5% of all tags supplied in MD are Bay Plates. CBT hopes to ultimately increase that total to 10%.

“Seven Bay Plates can provide nearly 150 wetland plants to protect wildlife habitats,” Roemer noted, “while 10 Bay Plates can remove 500 pounds of trash from local streams and rivers. Simply by getting a Bay Plate for your vehicle, you are literally helping to save the Bay!”

Brown said he is enthused about MAEF’s fledgling new partnership with MVTA.

“I’m so glad I was able to attend and meet so many of Maryland’s tag and title agents,” Brown said. “We are excited about forming this new partnership with MVTA, which can be a great benefit to their members and to Maryland’s agriculture community. We look forward to future opportunities to partner, work together, and share resources.”

Caro and Brown said their two organizations are looking to hold a membership and marketing event sometime in early 2023.

MVTA was formed in 2011 to represent tag and title agents and related industry professionals. A 501(c)6 non-profit organization, MVTA is committed to facilitating the exchange of ideas among its members; encouraging sound business policies; providing industry education to its members; fostering constructive progressive motor vehicle title agent legislation; discouraging destructive retrogressive motor vehicle title agent legislation; and promoting confidence, respect, and good fellowship in the motor vehicle title agent industry.

All MVTA members subscribe to a strict set of principles and standards, included in a strong Code of Ethics. Implicit with this Code of Ethics is the requirement that MVTA members comply fully with all federal, state, and local laws governing their business.

“We are proud of the reputation we enjoy across the state as an advocate for Maryland’s tag and title agents,” Caro noted. “We wouldn’t have that reputation were it not for the professionalism, dedication, commitment, and integrity of our members.”

For more information about the MVTA and how to become a member, visit the MVTA website (<https://www.mvta.org/>) or call 1-800-849-MVTA (6882).

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