2022 Kent County Museums of Kent Driving Tour
Saturday, April 23 and Sunday, April 24
10:00AM to 4:00PM

Celebrate the history and diversity of Kent County's museums on the Museums of Kent Driving Tour. Each museum will have an activity in celebration of Earth Day while showcasing its unique heritage and artifacts.

Be sure to document your journey on social media using the hashtag #TourMOK.

Pick up a Museum Pass at your first stop.
You must get it stamped at each location for a chance to win a great prize.
For more detailed information about the tour:
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Visit Historic Rock Hall, Maryland: On Museums of Kent Driving Tour!

The first official county seat in Kent County, in the lost town of New Yarmouth, was established in 1675 on Eastern Neck. New Yarmouth was located on the eastern shoreline of Grays Inn Creek and became Kent County's first official port of entry. Governance for the county began before the first courthouse was built there in 1676. With St. Peter's church, a ferry system to Kent Island, two shipyards, agricultural and tobacco concerns and other forms of commerce, New Yarmouth served as Kent County's seat for more than twenty years. Although trade and commerce continued, the last court session was held at New Yarmouth in 1696 moving it to Chestertown.

In 1686 between Swan Point, Swan Creek and Tolchester, an early community named Milford Towne was laid out. This provided a water and land connection between New Yarmouth and Tolchester.

As activities and commerce developed on the Chesapeake Bay side and around Kent County, the community of Rock Hall Crossroads developed in 1707. Records indicate that George Washington, Tench Tilghman, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison visited and passed through the port and area. Packet ships provided transport and delivery from Western Shore ports and provided easier access to land routes and destinations.

In 1875, Edesville was considered the business center of the Fifth District. In 1908, the election district moved from Edesville when Rock Hall was incorporated as a town.

From 1675-1707, the stage was set for Rock Hall to provide an important channel and role in the development of Kent County and the Eastern Seaboard. The early history, entwined with early land grants and homes of distinction, forms an interesting study of a small segment of early America.

The Lodge at Eastern Neck Island
Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge: 1730 Eastern Neck Road, Rock Hall MD 21661
NOTE: Open Saturday 12:00 - 4:00 PM & Sunday 12:00 - 3:00 pm)
Eastern Neck Island was visited and inhabited in pre-colonial times by Woodland and Ozinie Native American Indians.

Prior to the establishment of New Yarmouth from 1650 to 1680, Joseph Wickes and Thomas Hynson obtained land grants for Eastern Neck Island. For 285 years, the Island remained privately owned with hunting, land-based farming and seafood harvesting the primary concerns and activities.

In 1962, an approval was given and in 1965, the Department of the Interior of the United States Federal Government purchased all of Eastern Neck Island for game preservation.

Visit the historic Lodge constructed by J. Edward Johnston for hunting use by his family and friends in 1933. Phil Ciconni and Ronnie Fithian will be the hosts on Saturday. Simon Kenyon will be the host on Sunday. On display will be Eastern Neck's decoy collection, Wickes exhibit, hunting skiff, historic artifacts and wildlife video loop.

Durding's Store
5742 Main Street, Rock Hall MD 21661
Established, originally owned and operated as Rock Hall's first apothecary by Maryland's Alpheus Sharp in 1860. The Durding family opened Durding's Store in 1872. In 1987, the Willis family purchased and restored the building offering fountain sodas, hand dipped ice cream, homemade desserts, candy, and cards. After a hiatus, Durding's Store will re-open its doors over the 2022 Memorial Day weekend. Step inside during the tour to view historic bottles, apothecary artifacts, a vintage mural of Main Street Rock Hall by Jack Schroeder and other Rock Hall memorabilia.

Waterman's Museum At Haven Harbour
Haven Harbour Marina : 20880 Rock Hall Avenue, Rock Hall MD 21661
View Rock Hall's significant commercial fisheries, seafood, and woodworking history. The concept for the Waterman's Museum began in 1990 when a joint committee of Rock Hall community members and Haven Harbour Marina employees determined that area watermen and women were in need of their own unique center for recorded history. The original curator, Richard Burton, worked with many watermen and women to collect significant artifacts. Today, the museum includes exhibits on oystering, crabbing, fishing and Rock Hall rarities. A reproduction of a shanty house is also on display, along with historical photographs, local carvings and of course boats.

Eastern Shore Wreath at the Bulkhead
5707 Caroline Avenue, Rock Hall MD 21661
Historic Rock Hall Harbor has always been an important port for official, commercial, charter, and pleasure operations and vessels. Long serving as a commercial port,

destination, crossing and terminal, the jetty that protects Rock Hall Harbor was constructed in 1939.

The Bayside Restaurant was owned and operated by Lloyd and Gertrude Francis in the 1940's. The building is now occupied by Eastern Shore Wreath and the Backfin Spirits & Wine. On display will be Rock Hall decoys by Johnny Glenn. Jessie Urie, August Heinefield and others. View local artifacts, photos and participate in an oyster tonging demonstration. On hand to talk about the collections will be decoy collectors and historians Edgar and Eric Legg. Also, visit the statue of Captain Stanley Vansant by Kenneth Herlihy that was installed at the bulkhead in 1995.

Tolchester Revisited at Tolchester Marina
21085 Tolchester Beach Road, Chestertown MD 21620
Enjoy a glimpse into the past from Tolchester Beach Amusement Park, established in 1877. Just twenty-seven miles across the Bay from Baltimore, lay Tolchester Beach in Kent County, MD. An amusement park and bathing beach opened there on ten acres of land. The park and beach included picnic grounds with tables, concessions, a bath house, a hand propelled merry-go-round, and a hand organ pulled by a goat. This was the beginning of the most popular beach resort along the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, providing entertainment and fond lifelong memories to millions of patrons over the next eighty-five years.

View bathing suits, the shooting gallery, train car, the Emma Giles model, screen show display, souvenirs, pennants, postcards, and the original mirror from the Hotel Tolchester. The display and collections are courtesy of the Bramble family and the original Bill Betts Tolchester Revisited artifacts gifted to the Town of Rock Hall.

Historical Markers
There are seven important Maryland Historical Trust Marker's along the Rock Hall, Eastern Neck Island, and Tolchester Museums of Kent County Driving Tour Route:
  - Martin Wagner marker on Maryland Route 20
  - Captain Lambert Wickes marker on Maryland Route 20
  - Rock Hall Maryland marker on Sharp Street
  - Rock Hall Landing marker on Hawthorne Avenue
  - Gratitude marker on Maryland Route 20
  - Wickliffe marker on Eastern Neck Island
  - Tolchester Beach Amusement Park on Maryland Route 21
  - Battle of Caulk's Field marker on Maryland Route 20

Around Our Route
  - Sgt Preston Ashley American Legion Post 228 – Established 1947; celebrating 75 years in 2022
  - Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company – Established 1927; celebrating 95 years in 2022
  - Rock Hall Yacht Club – Established 1937; celebrating 85 years in 2022
  - Rock Hall Marine Railway – Established 1928; celebrating 94 years in 2022
  - Maggie's Tavern – Established 1932; celebrating 90 years in 2022