



Commissioners of St. Mary's County State of the County Executive Summary October, 2015



Vision

It is the responsibility of St. Mary's County Government to preserve and enhance the quality of life by recognizing and protecting the unique character of St. Mary's County as a rural Chesapeake Bay peninsula; foster economic growth and create an atmosphere of excellence by focusing and managing growth to create vibrant, attractive communities; by protecting the rural character and economy of the countryside, nurture the shoreline and adjacent waters and preserve and capitalize on the other natural resources and historical qualities of the County.

Responsible and Accountable to the County's Citizens

Budget: The approved \$227.3 million budget reflects a combined reduction of \$585,000 in the real property and personal property tax rates as the constant yield tax rate was adopted. This is the first change to property tax rates since FY2007. Income tax rates remain unchanged at 3%. The operating and capital budgets place a focus on the Commissioners' priorities of public safety and education. The Sheriff's Office received an increase of nearly \$1.5 million and include 11 new positions as well as promotion within the ranks. Included is an extra step increase for sworn officers while a classification/compensation study is completed in FY2016. St. Mary's Public Schools received a \$4.1 million funding increase, bringing the county's total allocation to over \$98 million. When combined with state funding, the Schools realized an increase of nearly \$6 million over FY2015. The results of a classification/compensation study were implemented resulting in \$688,000 in wage increases for county employees. County funding also increased for the College of Southern Maryland and the St. Mary's County Public Library. The St. Mary's County Board of Elections received a \$314,000 increase to implement state mandated ballot changes.

Provide High Quality, Cost Effective and Efficient Services

Leonardtown Library/Garvey Senior Activity Center Facility: The Commissioners approved a plan to construct a new co-joined replacement facility to house the Leonardtown Library and Garvey Senior Activity Center on the Hayden Farm site off Leonard's Grant Parkway in Leonardtown. Commissioners approved design funding in FY2016 and construction funding is programmed for FY2018.

St. Mary's County Airport Master Plan: New private sector development for over 100,000 square feet of hangar space and 8 research and development office buildings was started. One company (S. Hunt Aero) entered into an agreement with the airport and University of Maryland System for design and construction of a UAS test flight hangar.

University of Maryland Unmanned Aviation Systems (UAS) Test Site: The University of Maryland began operating an unmanned systems test, evaluation and simulation site at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport. This site is a key asset of the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership, one of only six sites in the country permitted by the Federal Aviation Administration, to test the integration of unmanned aircraft into the nation's commercial airspace.

University Systems of Maryland Autonomous Technologies Research Center: Commissioners committed \$1 million of BRAC Reserve CIP funds to support the acceleration of the project at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center in the Governor's FY2016 budget.

Advanced Life Support Building: Commissioners approved \$172,864 for the design of a new Advanced Life Support building.

Preserve the County's Environment, Heritage and Rural Character

Preservation: The County preserved more than 817 acres in land conservation easements to support local agriculture.

Patuxent River Naval Air Museum & Visitors Center: Construction of the new 20,860 square foot center utilized \$3.37 million in federal funding, \$1.2 million in matching state grants, as well as over \$1 million in private sector and is now completed. Economic development staff worked with the museum to develop a business plan and complete a market analysis on the project. Commissioners approved \$130,000 for operating costs and \$570,000 in capital improvements to upgrade two existing buildings.

Three Notch Trail: Construction of the next section of the trail – from MD 5 at Gospel Light Church to MD 236 at Thompson's Corner Road in Mechanicsville – began in March. When completed, this 10 ft. wide multi-use trail will be nearly 11 miles long in Northern St. Mary's County.



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Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields: Construction was completed in Spring 2014 with final seeding of fields adjacent to Fifth District Park. Ribbon cutting ceremony was held in June to officially open the fields for public use.

Foster Opportunities for Future Generations

Citizens Academy: The second Academy class began September 8, 2015. Upon conclusion commissioners will present participants with certificates of completion. The Citizens Academy offers members of the community a look inside County government operations, programs and services. The Academy is offered annually.

Code Home Rule: The commissioners requested the county pursue a change in governmental form from the current commissioner form of government to Code Home Rule. Commissioners were briefed by the County Attorney's office on the steps necessary to accomplish this task and the projected timeline prior to formal adoption.

NextGen and Emergency Communications: Seven additional tower sites for the NextGen radio system have been incorporated in the Final Phase of the NextGen project accelerated in the FY2015 budget process. Phase 1 of the system was activated August 5, 2013, is fully deployed and now being used by all county first responders.

Economic Development: The Economic Development Commission continued to work with consultants from the University of Maryland to refine goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Others supporting the initiative include: Regional Economic Studies Institute of Towson University, Sage Policy Group, and the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance BRAC-analysis. The CEDS will chart the course for diversifying the local economy.

Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan: The Tourism Division began work with a consultant on the development of the plan which seeks to capitalize on tourism and hospitality opportunities in the southern part of the county.

Opioid Misuse Treatment and Prevention: The county has partnered with the Governor's office and local agencies to develop a local overdose prevention and Opioid Misuse Prevention program to stem the tide of overdoses in the county.

Land Donation: The county reviewed a proposal for the donation of over 200 acres of land for the St. Mary's Crossing project. The property is being considered as a possible future site for a school.

Dr. Rebecca Bridgett,
County Administrator

Tony Jones,
Public Information Officer

Sue Sabo,
Chief of Staff and
Director
Human Resources

L. Jeannett Cudmore,
Chief Financial Officer

Chris Kaselemis,
Director
Economic Development

Phil Shire,
Director
Land Use and
Growth Management

George Erichsen, P.E.,
Director
Public Works and
Transportation

Robert Kelly,
Director
Emergency Services and Technology

George Sparling,
County Attorney

Lori Jennings-Harris,
Director
Aging and Human Services

Brian Loewe,
Director
Recreation and Parks



Commissioners of St. Mary's County

**Front: Todd B. Morgan, and Commissioner President Randy Guy
Standing: Tom Jarboe, John E. O'Connor and Michael L. Hewitt**

