

# St. Mary's County Maryland

Board of County  
Commissioners 2011  
State of the County Report  
September 27, 2011

THE STATE OF THE COUNTY IS SOUND, WITH A CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES DESPITE A HISTORIC ECONOMIC DOWNTURN. THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR ST. MARY'S COUNTY REMAINS FOCUSED ON THE COUNTY'S MISSION:

## ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT WILL:

BE RESPONSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE  
COUNTY'S CITIZENS;

PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY, COST EFFECTIVE AND  
EFFICIENT SERVICES;

PRESERVE THE COUNTY'S ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE  
AND RURAL CHARACTER; AND

FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESENT AND  
FUTURE GENERATIONS.



The Board of County Commissioners  
For St. Mary's County, Maryland

Standing: Daniel L. Morris; Cynthia L. Jones; Lawrence D. Jarboe  
Seated: Todd B. Morgan; Francis "Jack" Russell, President

The county commissioners, President Jack Russell, Lawrence Jarboe, Cynthia Jones, Todd Morgan and Daniel Morris continue to move ahead on key initiatives and projects while dealing with budget cuts on the local and state level.

### MAINTAINING CRITICAL SERVICES IN TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

We have recognized the economic realities of the world we live in. Our approach to the budget is one of adaptation and attention to detail. We are proud of our frugality. We want to be sure critical local government services can be sustained, not just for the next year but well into the future.

The FY12 operating budget of \$192.5 million was achieved without an increase of the property tax rate of \$.857 per \$100 of assessed value. The Constant Yield Tax Rate calculated by the State was higher, a reflection of declining assessments. This will be our new reality for years to come, a fact that we were mindful of in developing the FY12 operating and capital budgets. For the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row, we eliminated positions, and we initiated actions for FY12 that will further reduce positions in FY13.

We have re-doubled our efforts to streamline operations and control or reduce costs. Our budget allocations— except for Education, Public Safety, and Health — are reduced

significantly over the prior years. Our staffing levels—excluding Public Safety— are comparable to 10 years ago. We continue to explore ways to streamline efforts, including using technology to leverage limited staff, while meeting the expanding needs and increased expectations of a growing community. If we exclude the cost of replacing and expanding the County's 911 system, which is a \$25 million project spread over several years, our departments are County-funded at 2008 levels. Increased County funding has been directed to the priority areas of public safety and education — both for operating funds and planned capital projects.

The County has reported fund balances in its annual audits, which are posted on the web site and available in the libraries. Most recent available audited information indicates that after using about \$700,000 in the FY2012 budget, we have close to \$12 million that was unapplied. That was *before* Hurricane Irene. As we go to press, we have authorized \$3 million of that savings to be used for Irene related costs. As always, we will pursue reimbursement from FEMA. Of course, costs might increase. And we are only 2 months into our FY12 - we have the potential for more weather events. It is the County's intent not to apply fund balance to recurring costs. A position supported by rating agencies and governmental best practices, .....and just

good common sense. We need to be able to respond to emergencies like Irene or the February 2010 snowfall without decimating necessary services elsewhere. Additionally, using fund balance for recurring costs only leads to structural deficits, building recurring costs on a non-recurring source. We believe that is an irresponsible fiscal practice that must be avoided. Our FY2012 budget uses fund balance only for one-time costs, and we intend to stay true to that practice.

### OPENNESS...

Meetings of the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County are scheduled for Tuesdays at 9 a.m. each week in the Chesapeake Building, 41770 Baldrige Street in Leonardtown. Board of Commissioners meetings are broadcast live on St. Mary's County government cable television Channel 95 or on the county's website at [www.stmarysmd.com](http://www.stmarysmd.com). They are rebroadcast on Channel 95 and are downloadable for viewing from the county's home page.

St. Mary's County Government can be found at [www.stmarysmd.com](http://www.stmarysmd.com). More than 7400 pages of information at your fingertips...

Click on E-Notices on the home page to sign up to receive news releases, procurement bids, agendas, minutes, Channel 95 schedule, the Dept of Economic and Community

Development weekly e-newsletter, emergency notifications, Sheriff's Office announcements, FEMA notifications, Finance audit and budget documents, web page updates, Library announcements, MD Amber Alerts, Public Safety announcements, Recreation and Parks announcements, tourism news, and vacancy announcements.

The county commissioners want and need your input. A public forum is held the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the Chesapeake Building. Citizens can also email comments to [bocc@stmarysmd.com](mailto:bocc@stmarysmd.com) or mail to Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County, PO Box 653, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650.

The St. Mary's County Commissioners appoint members to more than 40 commissions, boards, committees and task forces. These citizen-led groups advise them on topics ranging from land use and development to human services. Through this system, civic-minded citizens can be involved in County Government and the local government can benefit from the knowledge, experience and expertise of the citizens. Vacancies are announced through media releases and more information can be found on the county's website at [www.stmarysmd.com](http://www.stmarysmd.com). Click on Volunteer Boards under the Government box.

### ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

County Government is organized into nine departments. In an ongoing effort to streamline county government resources, two departmental reorganizations took place over the past year combining the Departments of Public Safety and Information Technology and the Departments of Aging and Human Services. These reorganizations are part of the county's effort to make sure that local government continues to provide quality services at a reasonable cost. Departments each have a webpage on the county's website and department heads can be contacted with questions, concerns and suggestions.

Department of Economic and Community Development  
 Director: Bob Schaller, Ph.D.  
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 301-475-4200, x1400

### AGRICULTURE AND SEAFOOD

The County purchased 157 acres of land south of Lexington Park on Rt. 235 in 2006. Forty acres were identified as a location for a farmers market which has since been leased to the Home Grown Farm Market, LLC - seven members of the agriculture community who have come together for the sole purpose of operating a farmers' market and agritourism facility on this property. The market construction began in the spring of 2011 and the Grand Opening was held on August 23, 2011. The County considers the construction of a farmers market to be a



Home Grown Farm Market, LLC

major asset to both the farming community and all residents of the area. Because of the property's close proximity to the Patuxent River Naval Air Station and Lexington Park, this is an ideal location for a farmers market.

Additionally, in the spring of 2011, the Board of County Commissioners approved the consolidation of four separate agriculturally-related boards and commissions into a single advisory group entitled the St. Mary's County Agricultural, Seafood and Forestry Board.

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Victory Woods is a new affordable housing project located at 22611 FDR Boulevard in Lexington Park that added 75 one and two bedroom apartment rental units of senior citizen housing in St. Mary's County. Victory Woods is a partnership between the Archdiocese of Washington/Victory Housing, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, and the developer, Osprey Property Companies and its affiliate Habitat America.

Victory Woods opened its doors to new senior residents in the spring of 2011 with the help of St. Mary's County Government assisting with engineering work, a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement, and timely extension of a quarter-mile section of FDR Boulevard to the site giving the construction crews and residents access to the previously land-locked property.

The site plan includes future additional affordable workforce and affordable senior housing on adjacent parcels of land.

### TOURISM

The division strategically redirected county tourism promotional resources to electronic marketing and related social media. An ambitious new Tourism web site is under construction and scheduled for completion in 2012. The site will be mobile



Indian Bridge Apartments



Victory Woods

friendly and feature trip-planning, enhanced listings, interactive mapping, search engine optimization and other features designed to attract visitors and make St. Mary's County more competitive as a travel destination. The division also established an online presence through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other popular sites. Tourism eNewsletter via Constant Contact now reaches more than 2,000 recipients.

The *Savor St. Mary's* restaurant week program was developed to bring together local restaurants, growers, food-related events and the public to position St. Mary's County as a food and dining destination.

The division published a regional War of 1812 map and guide in cooperation with Calvert and Charles counties as part of the state and federal multi-year War of 1812 Commemoration effort.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Board of County Commissioners awarded nearly \$50,000 to install street lighting throughout the Colony Square community in support of the residents' ongoing efforts to combat crime, illegal dumping, and vandalism. Colony Square is a townhouse community located in the heart of Lexington Park. During this past year, the residents banded together to organize a neighborhood association which has made great strides in its efforts to revitalize the neighborhood.

### HOUSING AUTHORITY OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY

St. Mary's County Housing Authority preserved affordable workforce rental housing for families in St. Mary's County with the securing of funds for the substantial rehabilitation of 112 units of Indian Bridge Apartments on Great Mills Road in Lexington Park. The renovation was completed within budget in July 2011.



Approximately \$3,000,000 was directed into the County during construction for energy conservation measures and the creation of handicapped accessible units, creating 54 construction jobs and 4 permanent jobs. The rehabilitation was also made possible through a local contribution by the Board of County Commissioners of \$130,000 for the installation of a fire sprinkler system.

**DEPARTMENT OF  
AGING AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Director: Lori Jennings Harris  
[Lori.Harris@stmarysmd.com](mailto:Lori.Harris@stmarysmd.com)  
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The St. Mary's County Department of Aging and Human Services provides a wide variety of programs and services to the community at large.

Programs provided to our county's senior residents include home and community-based services such as home delivered and congregate meals, in-home services, Ombudsman services, and caregiver support; information and assistance; social and recreational programs; community outreach; and volunteer opportunities. Whether seniors attend one of our senior activity centers on a daily basis or use some of our many services and programs on a more occasional basis, the department provides the county's older adults with an ideal way to stay in contact with friends and remain involved with their community. The department's mission is to assist seniors in remaining in the community and continue living independently. Demand for programs and services from this department is expected to increase as the senior population increases.

- Operated three vibrant senior activity centers for programs, exercise, and meals.
- Operated two congregate meals sites.
- Provided respite grants to caregivers helping them maintain their loved ones in the community.
- Provided intensive case management to consumers who were clinically eligible for nursing home placement through the Older Adults Waiver program.
- Conducted outreach presentations in the community to educate and inform the public about the many programs and services available for seniors.
- Provided information, referral services, and counseling to consumers and their family members on Medicare and other health insurance benefits.

Volunteers with the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of St. Mary's County donate their time, talents and expertise in service to more than 30 county agencies and local community organizations. Over 250 volunteers gave more than 28,000 hours of service during the past year

participating in a wide range of activities, such as delivering meals to homebound seniors, tutoring children in our schools, and providing support services to the Maryland State Police, Hospice of St. Mary's, and the American Red Cross. These committed, dedicated, and active senior volunteers help to make our community strong and are one of our greatest local resources.

In the area of human services, the County leads the effort to distribute National Association of Counties (NACO) prescription cards within the community, working with local providers, pharmacies, churches, libraries, etc. to reach consumers who may benefit from the program. <http://www.naco.org/programs/residents/pages/pdcp.aspx>. NACO, in partnership with CVS Caremark, provides prescription discount cards to NACO member counties. Prescription discount cards are free to member counties and their residents and help uninsured and underinsured residents receive an average of 24% savings on prescriptions not covered under traditional insurance plans.

The department developed and distributed a county resource directory of Mental Health and Substance Abuse service providers. The directory also includes a comprehensive list of other community and faith-based organizations that participate in offering similar supportive services to our county.

Throughout the past year the department has provided support to a variety of community initiatives including:

- Coordination of transportation for the WARM program addressing homelessness;
- Guidance to numerous county-appointed citizen advisory boards;
- Facilitated parenting programs; poverty and hunger prevention projects; training on Asset Development for youth; Mental Health First Aid; Mental Health Crisis Prevention and Intervention
- Coordinated the Christmas Caring program with Mike's Bikes and the U.S. Marine's Toys for Tots program, assisted over 1000 families with toys, food and clothes.
- Coordinated Project Graduation, a joint effort with local and state law enforcement, Patuxent River Naval Air Station, and the State's Attorney's Office.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
AND TRANSPORTATION**

Director: George Erichsen, P.E.  
301-863-8400

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The Department of Public Works & Transportation is organized into County Highways Division, Construction &

Inspections Division, Engineering Services/Development Review, Transportation, Airport Operations, Administration, Solid Waste and Recycling and Building Services.

- Maintained a user-friendly Single Stream Recycling at the Convenience Centers with new electronics and used cooking oil recycling. This continues to improve our recycling rate and has reduced amounts going into landfills.
- Finalized the design for FDR Neighborhood Connector to provide connectivity from the new improvements along Great Mills Road to Shangri-La Drive and provided both design and land acquisition funding for Phase 3 between Chancellors Run Road and Pegg Road.
- Re-built and performed code upgrades to the Chancellors Run Activity Center after a major collapse of the structure that occurred as a result of a record-breaking snowfall event.
- Leveraged state funding to install a new rotating beacon and weather ceilometer at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport to improve navigation and safety for the region.
- Finalized the re-design for a new Patuxent River Naval Air Museum and Visitors Center with State funding grants and secured \$3.37M in federal construction money.
- Funded an Energy Audit for existing County Government facilities to identify improvements that will further reduce the consumption of utilities and fuel to meet reduction goal of 15% by 2015.
- Installed and opened a new 25-space Park and Ride facility on MD 5 on surplus State Highway Administration property in Loveville with the ability to expand to 75 spaces.
- Completed Villas at Waters Edge and Kingston Creek erosion control and waterway improvement projects to protect and enhance shoreline properties from further degradation and loss.
- Leveraged America Recovery and Reinvestment Act monies to purchase new STS replacement buses, replace a major bridge structure on Mechanicsville Road and to perform partial repaving of Pegg Road,
- Completed Phase 1 of the Patuxent Park Neighborhood Preservation project in collaboration with the Metropolitan Commission. This project is upgrading and replacing aging infrastructure to revitalize the 1940's Patuxent Park neighborhood in Lexington Park and preserve this traditional workforce neighborhood. Construction funding is in place for Phase 2 with design of Phases 3 & 4 underway.

- Finalizing the design for the Adult Detention Center Minimum Facility Addition and Booking / Inmate Processing Expansion project. This critical project will provide additional capacity, safety & security improvements and a more efficient inmate processing area.
- Completed a St. Jerome's Creek jetty study and provided local funding for a major Corps of Engineers project that will benefit the boating public by providing a long-term corrective measure to the federal navigational channel and Southern Prong.
- Implemented streamlining initiatives to help improve the development review process between Land Use and Growth Management and the Department of Public Works & Transportation.

#### LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Acting Director: Phil Shire  
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 301-475-4200, x1500

The Land Use and Growth Management Department serves to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations through protection of the natural environment balanced with orderly growth, while ensuring our customers both guidance and effectiveness of the land use regulations.

In March, 2010, the Board of County Commissioners updated and adopted the Comprehensive Land Use Plan that protects rural character in most of the county while supporting dynamic, well-planned growth centers in Lexington Park, Leonardtown, Charlotte Hall and elsewhere.

In August 2010, the Board of County Commissioners adopted an updated comprehensive zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to implement the new Comprehensive Plan. In doing so, the following components of the ordinances were refined and readopted:

- Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program to preserve rural land and support continued farming.
- An annual growth policy, so that the pace of private development does not exceed our capacity to provide needed public infrastructure.

Amended the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan to provide for orderly, cost-effective expansion of service and to protect public health, and completed an analysis of remaining capacity at the Marlay Taylor Water Reclamation Facility.

Established strong consultation process with the Navy to coordinate land use decisions and reduce conflicts with naval flight operations.

Significantly upgraded the County's geographic information system (GIS), an

electronic mapping tool used by county residents, businesses, public safety agencies, and other entities for research, planning and construction activities.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Director: Bob Kelly  
 Bob.Kelly@stmarysmd.com  
 301-475-4200, x1013

The St. Mary's County Department of Public Safety and Information Technology is a multi faceted agency that provides 9-1-1 services, disaster preparedness and response, technology support, and enforcement of Animal Control regulations. The department works hand in hand with all county departments, county and state law enforcement agencies, and Volunteer Fire and EMS departments.

- Contracted and led the analysis of our current Radio System capabilities and provided a recommendation for a system upgrade as part of the FY 11 budget process.
- Submitted an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).
- Completed the installation of In-Car Video System for the Patrol Division of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office.
- Completed an upgrade to the video recording system located in the St. Mary's County Detention Center.
- Completed an upgrade to the 9-1-1 call taking system located in the Communications Division of the 9-1-1 Center.

#### RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT

DIRECTOR: PHIL ROLLINS  
 Phil.Rollins@stmarysmd.com  
 301-475-4200, x1800

Recreation and Parks provides programs, facilities, and parks for citizens and visitors. Programs include sports leagues, after school programs, summer camps, leisure classes, theater, and special events. The 1,500 acre park system consists of 20 parks with athletic fields, picnic pavilions, nature trails, tennis and basketball courts, a skatepark, sprayground, disc golf course, and dog park. Other facilities include several recreation centers, a gymnastics center, a swimming pool, and hiking/biking trail. Fifteen public landings with piers and ramps provide opportunities for boating access, fishing and crabbing. Recreation and Parks also provides public golfing, dining and banquet opportunities at the Wicomico Shores Golf Course and Riverview Restaurant. The Museum Division also offers opportunities to experience the history, culture, and heritage of St. Mary's County at the St.

Clement's Island Museum, the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park, and the Drayden African American Schoolhouse. Some of the highlights of 2010 include:

- Many residents and visitors have been enjoying walking and bicycling on the Three Notch Trail in Charlotte Hall for several years. There is now an additional three-mile section of trail to explore from John Baggett Park in Laurel Grove to Route 5 in Mechanicsville. Also, a contract was recently awarded for the design and engineering of the next section of trail from MD 5 to MD Route 236 in New Market. Completion of this phase in 2015 will provide 11 continuous miles of trail.
- Three new multi-purpose athletic fields will soon be under construction adjacent to Fifth District Park in Charlotte Hall.
- The Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park site enhancement project was completed and a ribbon cutting ceremony was held in May 2010. The project included additional parking, new pedestrian walkways, landscaping and other site enhancements.
- The County continues to work with the Unified Committee on Afro-American Contributions on plans to develop a Civil War Memorial at Lancaster Park that will recognize the contributions of the United States Colored Troops and all Union soldiers and sailors from St. Mary's County who fought during the Civil War. The project will pay particular tribute to James H. Harris and William H. Barnes, Medal of Honor recipients from St. Mary's County.
- The public process to update the County's 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan is underway and should be completed in 2012. The plan outlines recommendations on recreational land and facility acquisition and rehabilitation, as well as recommendations for agricultural land preservation and natural resource conservation.

John Savich <i>County Administrator</i>	Phil Rollins, Director <i>Recreation and Parks</i>
George Erichsen, Director <i>Public Works and Transportation</i>	Sue Sabo, Director <i>Human Resources</i>
Lori Jennings-Harris, Director <i>Aging and Human Services</i>	Bob Schaller, Director <i>Economic and Community Development</i>
Bob Kelly, Director <i>Public Safety and Information Technology</i>	Phil Shire, Acting Director <i>Land Use and Growth Management</i>
Elaine Kramer, <i>Chief Financial Officer</i>	George Sparling <i>County Attorney</i>