

FY2010 Annual Report

RMC

Rural Maryland Council

www.rural.state.md.us

The Rural Maryland Council, an independent state agency, brings together rural leaders, government officials at all levels, and representatives of the non-profit and for-profit sector to identify and craft solutions to the challenges facing rural Maryland. Ultimately, our mission is to improve the quality of life while preserving the pastoral heritage of Maryland's rural communities.

The RMC is also one of 28 federally recognized State Rural Development Councils under the USDA's National Rural Development Partnership.

RMC Leadership

RMC Officers

Chairman: Michael Pennington, Executive Director, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore

Vice Chair: Bonnie Braun, Ph.D., CFCS Endowed Chair/Director, Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy; Associate Professor, State Family Policy Specialist, Maryland Cooperative Extension

First Vice Chair: Thomas McLoughlin, Retired Hospital CEO (St. Michaels, Maryland)



RMC Officers: (from left) RMC Chairman Michael Pennington, RMC Vice Chair Bonnie Braun, Ph.D.; RMC Second Vice Chair Tom McLoughlin

FY 2010 RMC Board Members

- Representing Garrett, Allegany and Washington Counties: Rodney B. Glotfelty, RS, MPH, Health Officer, Garrett County Health Department
- Representing Frederick, Carroll and Harford Counties: Annie Kronk, Retired Lobbyist, Johns Hopkins Institutions
- Representing Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties: Robert Schaller, Ph.D., Director, St. Mary's County Department of Economic and Community Development
- Representing Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties: Paul Gunther, Commissioner, Queen Anne's County
- Representing Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot Counties: Don Bradley, Circuit Rider, Town of Hurlock
- Representing Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset Counties: Erroll Mattox, Farm Management Specialist, Maryland Cooperative Extension
- Representing Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: R. Kevin Brooks, Executive Director, Maryland Rural Development Corporation
- Representing the State At Large: Eric Wargotz, M.D., Commissioner, Queen Anne's County
- Representing Nonprofit Organizations: Fred Smyth, Executive Director, Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center

- Representing For-Profit Organizations: Colleen T. Peterson, Executive Director, The Greater Cumberland Committee
- Representing the Rural Maryland Foundation: Robert Agee, Consultant
- Representing the Governor's Office: The Honorable Earl J. Hance, Secretary of Agriculture
- Representing the Maryland General Assembly: The Honorable Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Delegate
- Representing the Maryland Municipal League: Cheryl Lewis, Circuit Rider, Town of Trappe; Carroll A. Jones, Mayor, City of Brunswick
- Representing the Maryland Association of Counties: Robert M. Hutcheson, Commissioner, Allegany County; Linda Busick, Commissioner, Worcester County
- Representing the Maryland Rural Health Association: Denise Matricciani, Vice President, Government Relations, Maryland Hospital Association
- Representing the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators: Sharan Marshall, Administrator, Southern Maryland Regional Library Association
- Representing Maryland Association of Community Action Agencies: David Jordan, Executive Director, Washington County Community Action Council

- Representing the Maryland Department of Agriculture: S. Patrick McMillan, Assistant Secretary, Office of Marketing, Animal Industries and Consumer Services
- Representing the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development: Greg Cole, Director, Financial Programs
- Representing the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Sarah Orth, Jennifer Kelley, Acting Director(s), State Office of Rural Health
- Representing the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development: Carol Gilbert, Assistant Secretary/Director, Department of Housing & Community Development, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
- Representing the Maryland Department of Natural Resources: Emily H. Wilson, Senior Advisor
- Representing Maryland Cooperative Extension: Nick T. Place, Ph.D., Associate Dean and Associate Director, Maryland Cooperative Extension
- Representing the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland: Wayne E. Clark, Executive Director
- Representing Tri-County Council for Western Maryland: Leanne Mazer, Executive Director

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RMC Executive Board (Continued)

- Representing the Mid-Shore Regional Council: Scott Warner, Executive Director
- Representing the Upper Shore Regional Council: John A. Dillman, III, Executive Director
- Representing the Eastern Shore Resource, Conservation and Development Council: Dave Wilson, Coordinator
- Representing the Southern Maryland Resource, Conservation and Development Council: Franklin Holley, Program Officer
- Representing the Western Maryland Resource, Conservation and Development Council: Peg Althoff, Coordinator
- Representing Federal Agencies: Jack Tarburton, Delaware/Maryland State Director, USDA Rural Development; Charles C. Cawley, Maryland State Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency
- Special Appointments by the Board: The Honorable Addie Eckardt, Maryland House of Delegates

RMC Staff:

Vanessa Orlando, Executive Director
Megan Cohen Stakolosa, Program Manager

Departing Board Members Recognized

Several RMC Board members finished their terms or retired during FY 2010. We extend our deep thanks to all of our Board members for their service, with special thanks to our out-going members who served with passion and distinction. We will miss their expertise and friendship. They include:

- **Sam Boston**, Somerset County Commissioner, finished his term as a representative of the Maryland Association of Counties.
- **Michelle Clark**, Director of the State Office of Rural Health, is now the Executive Director of the Maryland Rural Health Association.
- **Tim Hann**, Coordinator of the Western Maryland RC&D Council, and **Stanley T. Ruchlewicz**, president of the Maryland Downtown Development Association, both retired after distinguished careers.
- **Jeremy West**, Coordinator of the RC&D Council in Southern Maryland, was promoted to Manager of the NRCS Norman A. Berg National Plants Material Center in Beltsville. Our congratulations to Jeremy on his new position.

**RMC Working Committees**

Background: State Rural Development Councils enhance rural policy development and coordination by regularly bringing stakeholders together to identify challenges common to rural areas and, by consensus, developing, implementing and monitoring public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions. The RMC develops policy expertise across rural concerns by engaging committed and knowledgeable rural advocates in its Working Committees.

Current committees already working actively include the RMC's Health Care Working Committee, the Rural Residency Work Group and the Telehealth Working Committee.

During FY 2010, the RMC Executive Board authorized the creation of five new committees. Three of those committees have been established and begun working.

- **Rural Prosperity Committee – Mike Pennington, Chair.**

This committee is charged with developing long-term strategies for funding the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund, which was authorized in 2006 to provide grants to rural regional planning, rural entrepreneurship, rural infrastructure and rural development projects. The Fund, however, has never received an appropriation, despite support from the Rural Caucus.

- **Legislative Committee – Annie Kronk, Chair.** Nearly 3,000 bills are introduced during a typical 90-day General Assembly session. The RMC, as part of its policy coordination charge, is responsible for reviewing all bills, understanding what they mean to rural areas, following them through the legislative process, and educating lawmakers on the possible repercussions, positive and negative. The Legislative Committee oversees this task.

- **Rural Broadband Committee – Wayne Clark, Chair.** The ultimate goal of the committee is to ensure that affordable, high-speed broadband services are available to residents, businesses and public facilities throughout rural Maryland. The committee tracks the short- and long-term deployment plans of broadband providers throughout the state and works to ensure that all opportunities available to rural communities for broadband access are known, understood, pursued and obtained.

- **Rural Senior Issues Working Committee.** The committee has not yet been formed, but the RMC worked closely with the Maryland Department of Aging on its SMPI grant projects (see page 7) during the last two years. The RMC also joined MDoA's Evidence-Based Health Promotion Advisory Council.

- **Rural Housing Committee.** Although the committee has not yet been formed, the RMC is an active member of the Asset Building and Community Development (ABCD) Network, which works closely with housing organizations and related issues.

RMC

Rural Maryland Council

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Rural Development

RURALSTAT is Online: How Well is Rural Maryland Doing?

How do we know how well rural Maryland is doing? How do we know if rural Maryland is making progress in key areas of concern? To help answer those questions, at least in part, the RMC developed **RURALSTAT**, which went online in January 2010.

RURALSTAT (ver. 1) is an interactive web-based tool that tracks the general health of rural counties and regions in Maryland. Developed in partnership with the GeoDASH Initiative at Salisbury University, **RURALSTAT** allows a user to see how any rural county or region is doing in specific quality-of-life areas (such as poverty, unemployment, etc.) compared to the state, the region, or any other county or region in the state.

Although not officially part of Maryland's StateStat program, the RMC

developed **RURALSTAT** for the same reasons – to show leaders where the trends and challenges are, which show where resources need to be deployed. The RMC intends to update it with the latest figures annually. Almost a year in the making, **RURALSTAT** is available for viewing at: www.rural.state.md.us.

The State of Rural Maryland

The RMC used **RURALSTAT** data to identify trends and challenges in Maryland's three major rural regions -- Western Maryland, the Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland. Five presentations, called "*The State of Rural Maryland*" were developed and delivered at different venues during the year. They include: the Tri-County Council of Western Maryland in Cumberland, the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland in Waldorf, the Upper Shore Regional Council in

Chesapeake City, the joint meeting of the Mid-Shore Regional Council and Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore in Cambridge, and the Washington County Chamber of Commerce in Hagerstown, which asked the RMC to present it at its Eggs and Issues Speaker series after hearing it in Western Maryland.

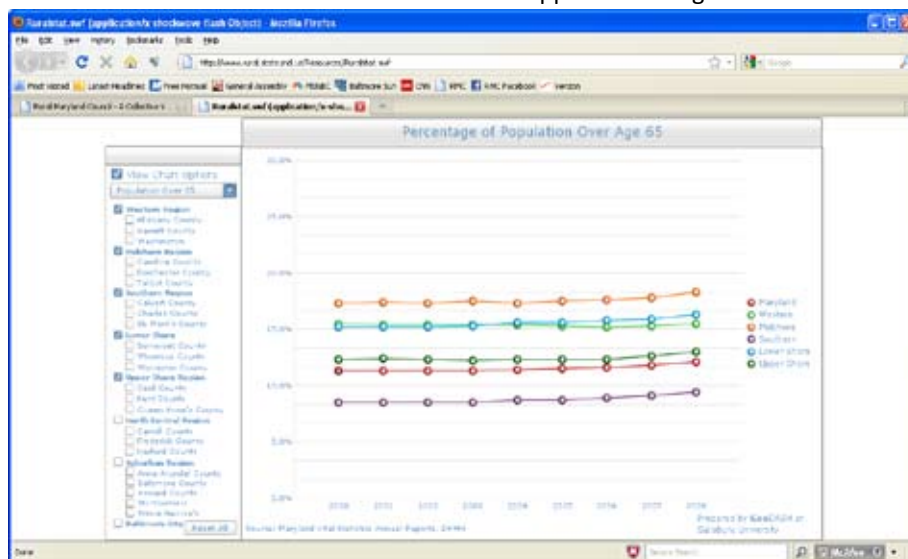
RMC Hosts Rural Leaders at Statewide Roundtable

The RMC partnered with the Maryland CASH Campaign, the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center, and the State Office of Rural Health in October 2009 (FY 2010) to host a Statewide Rural Roundtable -- a one day event where nearly 150 rural leaders from around the state met in Annapolis to discuss the issues most important to rural areas and to find new ways to collaborate. Four track sessions were offered and focused on (1) rural health, (2) rural development, (3) rural family asset building, and (4) strategies and brainstorming.

Senator Thomas "Mac" Middleton, a strong advocate for myriad rural issues, delivered opening remarks. Sen. Middleton is Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and recently chaired the Task Force to Review Physician Shortages in Rural Areas.

The lists on the next page outline the track sessions and presentations. For a complete description of each workshop, see our website.

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A screenshot of RuralStat

The Rural Health Track – workshops coordinated by the State Office of Rural Health

- *Creating A Vehicle for Funding Primary Care Education in Rural Communities.* Presented by Delegate Addie Eckardt; Michael Fadden, M.D., Chief Medical Officers, Choptank Community Health System, Inc.; and Michael Franklin, President and CEO, Atlantic General Hospital.
- *The Case for Health Literacy: Working Together to Decrease Costs and Increase Health.* Presented by Bonnie Braun, Ph.D., Endowed Chair and Director, Hershel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy, University of Maryland School of Public Health; and Elaine Anderson, Professor and Family Science Department Head, and Director, Maryland Family Policy Impact Seminar.
- *The Maryland P3 Program: An Example of Collaboration Across Governmental and Private Entities.* Presented by Magaly Rodriguez de Bittner, Pharm.D, and Christine Lee, Pharm. D, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy.
- *Recruitment - Rural Healthcare Workforce Programs to Help Recruit and Retain Health Professionals in Your Community.* Presented by Sarah Orth, Acting Director, State Office of Rural Health, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The Rural Development Track – workshops coordinated by the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center

- *Lighting up Rural Maryland: The Rise of A Rural Broadband Network.* Presented by Patrick Mitchell, President and CEO, Rural Broadband Cooperative; and John Dillman, founding president, Rural Broadband Cooperative and Executive Director, Upper Shore Regional Council.
- *Opportunities and Challenges to Wood Energy Generation in Rural Communities.* Presented by Jonathan



Robert Brennan, Executive Director, Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) talks with Barbara Klein, Associate Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, University of Maryland, Baltimore, during Statewide Roundtable.



Patrick Mitchell, President of Maryland Broadband Cooperative, updates a packed room on the latest in rural broadband deployment during Statewide Rural Roundtable.

Kays, Western Maryland Regional Extension Specialist.

- *Tools for Rural Entrepreneurs through the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center.* Presented by Ginger S. Myers, Director, the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center.
- *Farm to School: Growing Healthy Kids and Healthy Communities in Maryland.* Presented by Jane Storrs, Director, National Marketing, Maryland Department of Agriculture.
- *Farms, Communities and Collaboration: Resolving Farm-Neighbor and Other Rural Conflicts.* Presented by Mae C. Johnson, Mediation Coordinator, Maryland Conflict Resolution Service, Maryland Department of Agriculture.

Brainstorming and Strategy Sessions – workshops coordinated by the Rural Maryland Council.

- *Fostering and Facilitating a Viable Agricultural Community at the Local Level: A Listening Session Hosted by the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture (GICA).* Facilitated by The Honorable Earl Hance, Secretary of Agriculture, Maryland Department of Agriculture.
- *Building a Strategy for Rural Maryland Prosperity.* Facilitated by Michael Pennington, Chairman, Rural Maryland Council, and Executive Director, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore.
- *How to Reach Seniors in Remote and Isolated Areas.* Facilitated by Cassandra Brown, Health Insurance Specialist, Maryland Department of Aging; and Vanessa Orlando, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council.

The Asset Building Training Track Sessions – workshops coordinated by the Maryland CASH Campaign.

Background: In December 2008, the RMC and the Maryland CASH Campaign conducted a two-day Rural Roundtable on Overcoming Barriers to Economic Success in Rural Communities. About 35 community development professionals from across the state met in Frederick to discuss

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how to help low-income rural families become self sufficient. Participants requested follow-up training in specific areas. That training was delivered during the Statewide Roundtable, as shown below, by Robin McKinney, Director of the Maryland CASH Campaign. A complete report on the roundtable can be found on the RMC Website.

- New Tools for the Trade: Credit Cafes, FAFSAs, more!
- Financial Education 2.0, The Next Generation of Programs.
- Moving a Family's Financial Bottomline, Data and Outcomes for 2009.
- Asset Building and the Maryland CASH Campaign.

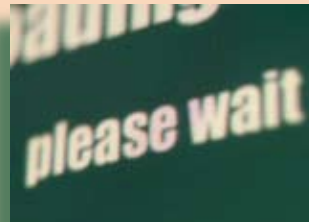
Rural Broadband Deployments Slows

Background: The Rural Maryland Broadband Coordination Board, a nine-member interagency board, was established by statute in 2006 to review and approve all disbursements from the Rural Broadband Assistance Fund, which was also established in 2006 and is administered by the Department of Business and Economic Development. The law establishing the Board also requires the RMC to provide staff support to the Coordination Board as well as one of its nine members. The fund includes state and federal funds appropriated for rural broadband build out.

During FY 2010, the Board met only once and approved the distribution of \$1.5 million in state funds to the Maryland Broadband Cooperative, a nonprofit organization building large portions of the rural broadband backbone across the state. The Board encumbered those funds during the previous fiscal year as a match to the Cooperative's Economic Development Administration (federal) grant, which is funding a project to lay fiber through parts of Worcester County up through parts of Cecil County. At the end of FY 2010, the Broadband Assistance Fund had just under \$1.7 million in available funding remaining; however, those funds are also encumbered as matching funds for the EDA project, which is to be completed by September 2012.

During FY 2010, the Board was chaired by James Stakem, an Allegany County Commissioner and Chairman of the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland. He was re-elected by the Board to continue serving into the next fiscal year.

No funds were appropriated for rural broadband build out for FY 2011.



Rural Health

Maryland Telehealth Survey: Increasing Access to Care

Background: In October 2008 (FY 2009), the RMC sponsored a Rural Health Roundtable with sponsorships from 11 other agencies and organizations to develop recommendations and an action plan to help improve the recruitment and retention of rural health providers as a means of increasing access to primary and specialty care for Maryland's rural

citizens. A major recommendation to come out of the Roundtable was to develop a statewide telehealth consortium so that both those receiving and delivering telehealth services could better coordinate their efforts and use technology more efficiently and more widely to increase access to care in rural areas. *(For a complete report on the Rural Health Roundtable, see our website.)*

In February 2009 (FY 2009), the RMC hosted a follow-up Telehealth Roundtable to discuss the feasibility of creating that consortium. Participants, however, realized that no one in the state had comprehensive information about who was currently providing or receiving telehealth services in Maryland. From that Roundtable, the RMC formed a Telehealth Working Committee which decided to conduct a statewide survey of telehealth projects already in existence before proceeding with a statewide consortium. The purpose of this survey was to compile an accurate inventory of projects already underway around Maryland and determine the current state of affairs.

During FY 2010, the Telehealth Working Committee compiled pages (and pages) of questions regarding telehealth practices. Several drafts were circulated and the Information Technology staffs at both the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University helped finalize the survey questions. The Upper Shore Regional Council, a member of the telehealth committee, received a grant to fund the actual administration of the survey, which was conducted by the Maryland Rural Health Association in consultation with the RMC during FY 2010. Preliminary results are expected by mid-July (FY 2011). A follow-up Roundtable will then be scheduled to share survey results and to begin identifying the key issues that need to be addressed in

order to help expand services in rural areas. After studying the survey results and meeting with stakeholders, the RMC's Telehealth Working Committee will decide whether to proceed with creating a statewide consortium or take a different approach to expanding telehealth in rural areas.

Identifying Impediments to Telehealth

Because of our work with telehealth, the **University of Maryland School of Law in Baltimore** invited the RMC to participate in a roundtable to discuss legal impediments to telehealth. The roundtable brought together telemedicine industry representatives, government regulators, health care providers, and policy makers along with several legal academics. The goal of the roundtable was to discuss how the current legal framework prevents robust implementation of telemedicine; help flesh out specific legal impediments; and determine areas of consensus that might lead to policy recommendations and a white paper. The resulting discussion, though lively and intense, did not immediately result in any consensus recommendations; however, the law school intends to keep the roundtable group together to work toward developing policy recommendations on how to address and resolve these impediments in the future. The RMC plans to continue participating.

Two-Year Senior Medicare Patrol Integration Project Completed

During FY 2009 and FY 2010, the RMC partnered with the **Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA)** on a federal Senior Medicare Patrol Integration (SMPI) grant to find innovative ways to expand the SMP Program into six rural counties and to reach seniors in remote communities with anti-fraud messages.

The RMC and its Baltimore-based partners at the MDoA met with the Western Maryland team in Hagerstown, the Southern Maryland teams in Prince Frederick, and the Lower Shore team in Salisbury. The RMC developed a password

protected website and blog to help everyone involved with the project to communicate easily and submitted a final Rural Outreach Plan in December 2009. The RMC also developed the powerpoint presentations the MDoA staff used to present its findings at professional conferences. This two year project was completed in June 2010.

Moving Toward a Rural Residency

Background: During the 2008 Legislative Session, the Governor and General Assembly created the Task Force to Review Physician Shortages in Rural Areas to study the issues of training, placement and retention of rural physicians. During the 2009 Session, the House Health and Government Operations Committee asked the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to create the Rural Residency Work Group to identify the steps and costs necessary for hospitals to establish a rural residency program on the Eastern Shore. The RMC participated on both the task force and the work group. Delegate Addie Eckardt chaired the work group, which was staffed by the State Office of Rural Health until its charge officially ended in December 2009. Delegate Eckardt, an RMC Board member, has continued that work group as a project of the RMC.

In March 2010 (FY 2010), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the availability of a Rural Health Workforce Development Planning Grant. Atlantic General Hospital (AGH) in Berlin, which has been an active member of the work group, asked the RMC to reconvene the group and determine if members were interested in applying for the grant to plan a full rural residency track on the Eastern Shore. To apply, at least three health care organizations involved in providing the residency training had to commit through a legally binding MOU to participate in the planning process. Two days



SMPI Project Partners (from left): Vanessa Orlando, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council; Donna M. Smith, Chief, Client and Community Services, Maryland Department of Aging; Milton Hunt, Native American Consultant, Hunt International; A. Cassandra Brown, Health Insurance Specialist, Maryland Department of Aging.



RMC Board Member and General Assembly Delegate Addie Eckardt chairs the Rural Residency Work Group. At right, work group member Michael Fadden, M.D., Medical Director at Choptank Health Systems.

after the legislative session ended, the RMC brought the group together in Salisbury. A week later, the group met again. Within three weeks, an 80-page application had been submitted for the planning grant, with a formal MOU signed by Atlantic General, Peninsula Regional Medical Center, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, the Worcester County Health Department,

and the Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center. Representatives from the University of Maryland School of Medicine were also involved in the discussion and application process. Several other health care facilities in the region expressed interest in joining the planning team if the grant is awarded. The announcement is expected in the fall (FY 2011).

RMC Partners with UM School of Public Health

The RMC and the University of Maryland School of Public Health at College Park agreed to enter into an MOU in May (FY 2010), agreeing to a formal partnership that focuses on improving the health of rural residents who experience health disparities. The MOU calls on the two organizations to meet, at least annually, to consider undertaking activities that benefit this common interest. Activities include facilitating collaborations, exchanging information, and sponsoring education and training sessions. The MOU is designed to ensure that the relationship between the School of Public Health and the RMC remains intact should the current leadership of the two organizations change.



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Growth & Development

Growth Task Force to become Commission

Background: The 21-member Task Force on the Future for Growth and Development in Maryland was established by the General Assembly in 2007. Its major charge was to study land use policies and issues, analyze their impact on the state's growth and development, and make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly. The task force was to complete its work from January 2008 through December 2010. The RMC is a member of the task force.

During the FY 2010 Legislative Session, the Sustainable Growth Commission Bill passed, replacing the task force with a 36-member commission and an expanded charge that will remain in effect until 2020. The RMC will continue to hold a seat on the Commission. In addition, five new commission seats are specifically dedicated to representing rural areas or rural interests, which will be appointed by the Governor. The RMC Executive Board made recommendations to the Governor for those seats.

The full commission is expected to be seated by September 2010.

Agriculture

Governor Appoints RMC Director to GICA

During FY 2010, Governor Martin O'Malley appointed RMC Executive Director Vanessa Orlando to serve on the **Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture**. GICA, established by Executive Order, promotes the economic viability of agriculture in the state by ensuring that local, state and other agricultural agencies work together to use available resources effectively.

The Commission is charged with developing and implementing a consistent systematic method to coordinate Maryland's agricultural economic development, and specific protocols that improve regulatory processes for agriculture and promote a business-friendly climate. The Governor appoints commission members on the recommendation of the Secretary of Agriculture, who chairs the commission.

In addition, the RMC Executive Director is required by statute to serve on the Board of Directors of the **Maryland Agricultural and Resource Based Industry Development Corporation** (MARBDICO), an economic development entity that brings together public and private partners to help the state's agriculture, forestry and seafood businesses be profitable and sustainable. Since 2007, MARBDICO has made 18 loans for farm and real estate purchases, 20 loans to young and beginning farmers, and 11 loans for value added products.

For more information about MARBDICO's services, see: www.marbidco.org



Governor
Martin O'Malley



MARBIDCO

RMC to Assist TEDCO with Rural Forums

Background: During FY 2010, the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) received a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to host five rural regional forums featuring relevant technologies available from the USDA

Agriculture Research Service (ARS). The forums will highlight technologies available through ARS that are pertinent to the specific geographical region. Forums are targeted for technology company executives, agricultural producers, financial lenders, investors and economic development officials.

TEDCO asked the RMC to join its planning team to help make the showcases successful. The RMC met with TEDCO and its other partners in Annapolis as well as regional stakeholders in Cumberland and Salisbury. Although planning began in FY 2010, all five rural forums will be conducted during FY 2011. Other TEDCO planning partners include: the Maryland Department of Agriculture; Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development; Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Extension Service; and MARBDICO.

Maryland Food Coalition Launched

During FY 2010, the RMC assisted the Maryland Department of Agriculture to establish a Maryland Community Food Coalition and has agreed to serve on the Steering Committee. The coalition, officially launched in July 2009 (FY 2010), represents diverse organizations and individuals with an interest in Maryland's food system to share information, work together on issues, and find new ways of promoting healthy eating and sustainable agriculture. The RMC is helping the coalition apply for independent start-up funding from private sources to continue its work.

USDA-RD Conducts Rural Jobs Roundtable

USDA-RD conducted a Rural Jobs Roundtable at the Maryland Department of Agriculture to discuss obstacles and opportunities for creating rural-based jobs and rural economic growth in Maryland. The RMC assisted with the logistics of the meeting. USDA State Director Jack Tarburton and Maryland Director of USDA's Farm Services Agency Charles Cawley (both RMC Board members) led the discussion about rural-based jobs and rural economic growth with 29 rural stakeholders from across the state. The information collected by this effort was compiled into a report for the White House and USDA. The report is available on the RMC website.

Rural Housing

Rural Housing Advocates Get New Tool

Background: Many rural communities suffer from serious shortages of safe affordable and workforce housing – a major factor to community and economic stability. The Rural Assistance Center at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, sites “affordability” as the biggest barrier to rural homeownership -- not unemployment and not poverty.

During the FY 2010 Legislative Session, the General Assembly passed the Affordable Housing Land Trust bill (SB 780/HB 869), which had been introduced in different versions the prior two sessions but failed each time. The successful bill allows local jurisdictions and nonprofits to establish a land trust that can subsidize the sale of homes to low- or moderate-income families. A family may pass the home down as a family asset. The only stipulation is that when the house is sold, it must be sold at an affordable price to the next buyer – and that price is determined by a re-sale formula agreed to up front.

The bill’s passage has been a major goal of the Maryland Asset Building and Community Development Network, which partners and consults with the RMC. The RMC participated in the summer study workgroup which re-drafted the bill to include appropriate safeguards and consumer protections. With its passage, housing advocates, both rural and urban, have a new tool for establishing affordable housing without burdening the state budget.

RMC Programs

The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund: Serving Rural Nonprofits

Background: Established in 2000, the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) offers grants to rural-serving nonprofits that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education efforts. The Fund also offers grants to community colleges that support small and agricultural businesses through enhanced training and technical assistance offerings.

The Grant Review Board is comprised of representatives from the Maryland Departments of Agriculture, Maryland Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Departments of Business and Economic Development, Maryland Departments of Housing and Community Development, the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources, and the Rural Maryland Council.

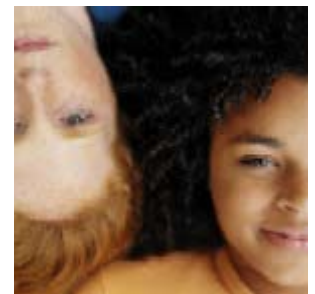
During FY 2010, the program had a total grant pool of \$142,000. The RMC, which is statutorily responsible for administering the program, received 25 applications, requesting \$463,184. Grants were awarded to the following rural-serving nonprofits:

- **Center for Children:** \$14,700
- **Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center:** \$16,000
- **Habitat for Humanity of Talbot/ Dorchester:** \$12,000
- **LEAD Maryland Foundation:** \$12,000
- **MAC, Inc. (Area Agency on Aging):** \$25,000
- **Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts:** \$7,000
- **Maryland Dairy Shrine:** \$1,750
- **Maryland Forestry Association:** \$1,500
- **Maryland Rural Health Association:** \$18,000
- **MidShore Regional Council:** \$19,000
- **Upper Shore Regional Council:** \$15,000

MAERDAF Annual Reports are available on the RMC Website.

Annie Casey Foundation Funds RMC’s Rural Families Program for Fifth Year

Since 2006, the RMC has administered the *Strengthening the Well-Being of Rural Maryland Families* with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The program provides grants to rural-serving non-profit and community-based organizations that help families develop the financial management skills they need to become economically stable over time. During the past two years, grants have been provided to those rural organizations



that ensure eligible families claim the Earned Income Tax Credit or develop systematic savings practices and provide those families with financial management opportunities and connections to other support services.

During FY 2010, six rural-serving nonprofit organizations were selected to receive nearly \$91,000 in grants for program-related expenses. Below is a summary of grantee projects funded in FY 2010:

- **The Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission** -- \$6,000 to expand its tax program and initiate an intensive financial literacy course for 25 low-income households.
- **The Chesapeake Cares Food Pantry** in Calvert County -- \$10,000 to offer a pilot project that brought financial education and job readiness skills together to motivate low income families to work toward self-sufficiency.
- **Frederick Community Action Agency** -- \$12,000 to expand its tax preparation program and outreach services to assist disadvantaged and low-income residents.
- **Harford Community Action Agency** -- \$22,657 to startup a program that helps people who are experiencing temporary financial hardships on their path back to self-sufficiency.
- **Maryland Capital Enterprises** -- \$20,000 to continue its cash-match program that helps families save for education, housing or other economic goals.
- **SHORE UP! Inc.** -- \$20,000 to expand its Earned income Tax Credit outreach project and electronically file as many free tax returns for low income families as possible.

The Casey Foundation has agreed to fund the program in FY 2011 for a sixth year. The **Maryland CASH Campaign**, the technical advisor to the program, has also agreed to renew and expand its role in the program going forward.

The Rural Maryland Council is one of 28 federally recognized State Rural Development Councils (SRDC) under the USDA's National Rural Development Partnership, which was authorized in the 2003 and 2008 Farm Bills. The Partners for Rural America (PRA) is a national nonprofit organization which represents SRDCs and maintains a working relationship with USDA.



Supporting a National Network of Rural Councils

Background: As a member of the National Rural Development Partnership, the RMC once had a formal partnership with USDA, which included an approved work plan and a corresponding federal appropriation, with a state match. No formal partnership with USDA has existed since 2005 when federal priorities shifted; however, the State of Maryland has, to date, continued to support the RMC – its State Rural Development Council. The Partners for Rural America (PRA), a national nonprofit which represents SRDCs, has been working with USDA to re-establish that relationship. The RMC's Executive Director is a member of the PRA Board.

In April 2009 (FY 2009), 26 U.S. Senators signed a "Dear Colleague" letter sponsored by Senator Patrick Leahy (Vermont) and Senator Jeff Bingaman (New Mexico), urging USDA to include a \$10 million appropriation in its budget for SRDCs; however, no funding was included in the President's budget.

In March 2010 (FY 2010), Senator Leahy issued a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee, requesting it include \$5 million in the USDA budget for state councils. Twenty-three Senators signed that letter, including Maryland Senator Ben Cardin. No action is expected on that request before the fall (FY 2011).

As a result of the April 2009 letter, however, USDA-Rural Development entered into a Cooperative Agreement with PRA to fund four regional meetings across the country to discuss "Partnership and Regional Collaboration." The goal of these meetings is to help USDA identify key partners and institutions that can work together on a regional level to address its key concerns over 12 to 18 months. All four regional meetings were held by May 2010 and action plans are now being developed in the areas of workforce development, broadband deployment, energy and food systems. The PRA's strategic plan, resulting from these meetings, is scheduled to be completed in partnership with USDA-RD by June 30, 2010.

Southern Region Builds Partnerships, Collaborations

The RMC actively participated in the planning team for the Southern Regional Meeting, which was led by the Virginia Rural Council and held in Charlotte, North Carolina over two days in May 2010. Jack Tarburton, the USDA-RD state director

for Maryland and Delaware (and RMC Board Member), participated in the convening and served as a moderator for the track focusing on energy issues. RMC Board Chair Mike Pennington and Board Member John Dillman also attended. (Mr. Dillman presented Maryland's story at the Broadband track.) The RMC will continue to assist in drafting and overseeing implementation of the Southern region's final action plan. PRA believes that if the current USDA administration gets a better sense of how state councils operate and how we can best help address and improve rural policy and program coordination, the potential for a more formal and successful partnership will materialize.

RMC Assists at National Rural Policy Conferences

The RMC was invited to attend **USDA-Rural Development's two-day National Rural Policy Conference** in Washington, D.C. in August 2009 (FY 2010). The meeting, which used the theme: *"Every Day in Every Way: The People's Department,"* included more than 500 national and state Rural Development leaders, including new USDA-RD leaders and state directors. The RMC was invited to participate as an exhibitor and to discuss ways to work together to revitalize and invigorate economic development in rural America. The RMC exhibited during both days of the conference on behalf of PRA and introduced the SRDC model to many USDA officials.

In **March 2010** (FY 2010), the RMC helped plan and organize **Partner For Rural America's two-day National Policy Conference** in Washington, D.C., which used the theme: *Building Regional Partnerships through State Rural Development Councils: A Policy Forum*. During the conference, the PRA conducted a Congressional Briefing on Capitol Hill for federal representatives on rural issues and concerns, and of course, funding for SRDCs. RMC Board Members and staff attended the conference on behalf of RMC and were able to meet and/or follow up with our federal delegations.

Follow Us on Facebook!

The RMC launched its Facebook page in May 2010 (FY 2010), bringing its rural development message to a potentially new audience. It is our hope that Facebook will help us build a more diverse community of rural leaders and make us easier to find them (and they us). Some 360 million people use Facebook. If you are one of them, come visit us and become a fan! (Note: You do not have to have a Facebook account to visit us.)



Support Rural Maryland

The Rural Maryland Council is facing significant budget difficulties in the current economic climate. Our three person staff was reduced to two during FY 2010, and we have seen a dramatic reduction in our General and Special Fund appropriations, as well as our private fundraising efforts.



The Rural Maryland Foundation

is a 501(c)(3) organization, formed in 2001 to support the work of the Rural Maryland Council and the efforts of knowledgeable rural leaders and economic and community development practitioners around the state who work tirelessly to help meet the needs of the 1.6 million residents in 18 rural counties. All contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible. Consider supporting our work with a tax-deductible donation mailed to: the Rural Maryland Foundation, P.O. Box 2087, Annapolis, MD 21401

The Foundation is governed by an independent Board of Trustees. They are: **Robert Agee**, President; **R. Kevin Brooks**, Treasurer. Trustees: **Colby Ferguson**, Agriculture Marketing Specialist, Frederick County; **Stephen McHenry**, Executive Director, Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation; **Robin McKinney**, Director, Maryland CASH Campaign; **Joanne Richart-Young**, Agriculture Coordinator, Cecil County Office of Economic Development; **Dan Rider**, Forest Stewardship & Utilization Program Manager, DNR; **Jane Storrs**, National Marketing Director, Maryland Department of Agriculture (retired); **Duane Yoder**, President, Garrett County Community Action Committee. Ex-officio, non-voting members are: **Michael Pennington**, chairman, RMC; **Vanessa Orlando**, Executive Director, RMC.

All contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible and may be sent to: The Rural Maryland Foundation, P.O. Box 2087, Annapolis, MD 21401.

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