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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE RURAL MARYLAND COUNCIL AND THE UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL TO HOLD YOUTH TOWN HALLS IN THE UPPER SHORE REGION

The Rural Maryland Council and the Upper Shore Regional Council will hold youth town halls to discuss their recent youth engagement and assessment initiative. The town halls will be held:

Queen Anne's County

December 8, 2014

Queen Anne's County High School
125 Ruthsburg Road
Centreville, Maryland
7:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Cecil County

December 9, 2014

Elkton High School
110 James Street
Elkton, Maryland
7:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Kent County

December 10, 2014

Kent County Middle School
402 East Campus Avenue
Chestertown, Maryland
7:00 pm to 9:30 pm

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) and Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) partnered to conduct a youth engagement and assessment initiative for Kent, Queen Anne's and Cecil Counties. Through the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, we surveyed young people and their plans for the future with a special emphasis on their perceptions of what are "ideal" communities, career options, and business prospects.

Preliminary Upper Shore youth survey results found that among 2,320 middle school and high school age youth in the Upper Shore region:

- 58% rate their community as an above average to excellent place to live as a young person.
- 51% picture themselves living in their hometown area in the future, if quality career or business opportunities are available.
- 69% feel their community is a good place to raise a family, while 57% feel there are better career opportunities available elsewhere.
- 47% of youth surveyed are interested in owning their own business in the future.
- 76% of youth surveyed said that they have never been asked by an adult to become involved in improving their community, while 74% said they would volunteer if asked.

The findings of this project will provide information to community leaders to encourage them to build upon the too often untapped involvement and energy of young people in socio-economic and business planning strategies. Community leaders will be equipped to take direct actions to engage and cultivate the full potential of youth populations. Utilizing the information obtained from this project will create goals for youth engagement, retain and attract young adults and families to our region.

"A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland"