



# RMC

## Rural Maryland Council



*Photo: Attendees on zoom for the RMC Annual meeting held on December 2, 2020.*

### In This Issue...

#### Greetings!

Winter is upon us; we hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas holiday. This past year has been very difficult and challenging in many ways. Throughout all the obstacles of the year, the RMC managed to adjust and keep operations going. The year 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the council. I am very proud to be chair of such a wonderful organization that strives every day to improve the quality of life in rural Maryland. Hopefully the council will have many more successful years of serving rural communities in Maryland. We are currently following the mandatory telework directive for all State employees issued by Governor Larry Hogan due to the coronavirus pandemic. Look for more information in the future on any updates upcoming state events and meetings as Maryland is currently taking the necessary actions to keep residents safe as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the state. View the Governor's most recent COVID-19 updates [here](#).

Our Annual meeting was held on Wednesday, December 2, 2020,

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12 pm - 1 pm via zoom. Highlights of the meeting included an election of our 2021 board members, sharing of our 2020 annual report, and an overview of our 2020 accomplishments and upcoming events for 2021. We also held our Maryland Rural Impact Awards during the meeting. The awards ceremony recognized individuals and organizations that have performed extraordinary acts of service to communities throughout rural Maryland. If you were not able to attend, view a full recording of the meeting [here](#). Thank you to everyone who participated, we had over 90 in attendance!

This year, five awards were presented for the 2020 Rural Impact Award Ceremony:

- The Outstanding Rural Volunteer Award was received by Mr. Erroll Mattox for his leadership, dedication, and noteworthy volunteer achievement beyond the call of one's professional duties to help improve their community.
- The Outstanding Rural Community Development Award was received by Mr. Dave Wheelan for a program, project or organization that substantially improves the quality of life in multiple rural communities.
- Outstanding Rural Economic Development Award was received by The Greater Cumberland Committee for leadership, dedication, and noteworthy achievement to help improve economic development opportunities in rural communities.
- The Rural Champion Awards were received by Senator Douglas J.J. Peters and Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr. for their outstanding leadership and public service in advocating for policy solutions to greatly benefit rural communities.

Save the date for our Winter Quarterly Executive Board meeting and Legislative Lunch that will be held on Friday, January 29, 2020, 12 pm - 2pm via zoom. Please join us!

This year we will be hosting our biennial Summit on Thursday, December 2, 2021. The Summit highlights the achievements and progress of Maryland's rural communities. If you are interesting in joining our Summit Planning Committee, please contact the RMC at [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov).

Happy New Year! Stay well and safe. As always, we strive to continue to support our rural Maryland communities.

Sincerely,



## Events

### [RMC Executive Committee Meeting](#)

3 pm - 4 pm  
1/21/2021

### [RMC Legislative Committee Meeting](#)

2 pm - 3 pm  
1/25/2021

### [RMC Winter Quarterly Executive Board Meeting](#)

12 pm - 2 pm  
1/29/2021

### [RMC Legislative Committee Meeting](#)

2 pm - 3 pm  
2/8/2021

### [Rural Maryland Day](#)

All Day  
2/11/2021

## RMC In the News

### [Charles Regional Medical Center Foundation Receives Grant From Rural Maryland Council for Telepharmacy Program](#)

November 9, 2020

### ['Farms in Focus' Video Series Highlights Southern Maryland's Nursery and Cut Flowers Industry](#)

November 16, 2020

### [TGCC Receives Rural Impact Award](#)

December 3, 2020

### [Hershey receives Rural Champion Award](#)

December 8, 2020

### [Rural Maryland Council](#)

John Hartline  
Chair

## Message from the Executive Director

The Maryland General Assembly's Legislative Session will begin on Wednesday, January 13, 2021 and will be held virtually. Bill hearings will be livestreamed and testifying will be done over Zoom. The RMC will hold biweekly calls during session to review testimony. Rural Maryland Day will be held virtually on February 11, 2021, more details to come soon!

The RMC recently published its 2020 annual report which is a summary of RMC activities, grant awardees and events for Fiscal Year 2020. View the report [here](#). If you would like join our Legislative Committee or Rural Summit Planning Committee for 2021, please contact us at [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov).

The Rural Maryland Council staff are continuing to telework due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. We hope that everyone is continuing to stay safe and healthy! At the bottom of this newsletter, you will find that we have compiled what we think are the most useful rural focused COVID-19 links and resources.

The [Rural Maryland Council](#), [Volunteer Maryland](#) and the [Maryland Heritage Area](#) will offer virtual information sessions for attendees to learn more about the organizations and the resources available to rural-serving organizations. Register to attend the sessions [here](#).

### Virtual Meeting Dates

January 21, 2021: 11 am - 1 pm  
January 28, 2021: 11 am - 1 pm  
February 18, 2021: 11 am - 1 pm  
February 25, 2021: 11 am - 1 pm

For more information about the information sessions, please contact the RMC at 410.841.5772 or [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov).

We want to welcome our new staff member, Dakota Matthews, as Program Coordinator. Dakota has been working with us over the past few months as an intern and we look forward to working with him as a full-time staff member. Please feel free to contact him at [dakota.matthews@maryland.gov](mailto:dakota.matthews@maryland.gov) or 410-841-5916 if you have any questions or comments.

Happy New Year and stay healthy! If the Council or I can ever be of any assistance, please contact me at [charlotte.davis@maryland.gov](mailto:charlotte.davis@maryland.gov) or (410) 841-5774.

Sincerely,

[honors community advocates](#)

December 17, 2020

['We're not the same.' Shore nonprofits balance service, COVID-19 survival](#)

January 5, 2021

[TEDCO to distribute \\$5 million in Covid relief to rural, disadvantaged startups](#)

January 5, 2021

Rural Maryland  
Foundation



Rural Maryland  
Foundation

**The Rural Maryland Foundation will meet on Thursday, March 4, 2021, 10 am - 12 pm via zoom.**

Looking for your organization to get noticed with paid advertising? Send us your logo and get your organization noticed. Send us your logo at [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov).

To learn more about the Rural Maryland Foundation or to become a member, please visit the website at [rmdfound@gmail.com](mailto:rmdfound@gmail.com)



Charlotte Davis  
Executive Director

## Committee Updates



### **RMC Joint Planning and Development Committee**

The RMC Joint Planning and Development Committee has developed a new [2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#) for the Rural Maryland Council. The next committee meeting will be held on March 18, 2021.

To learn more about the RMC Joint Planning and Development Committee, please contact the RMC at [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov).

### **RMC Legislative Committee**

The RMC Legislative Committee will meet on January 25, 2021, 2 pm - 3 pm via zoom. View more about the meeting [here](#).

To learn more about the RMC Legislative Committee, please contact the RMC at [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov).

## Community Links

Check out what's happening in rural Maryland...

### **Training Opportunities & Conferences**

- [FY2021 Strategic Economic and Community Development Funding Opportunity Webinar](#) - United States Department of Agriculture - February 9, 2021
- [Agricultural Outlook Forum](#) - United States Department of Agriculture - February 18-19, 2021
- [Telehealth Summit](#) - Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center - March 28-30, 2021

- [Tech at the Gap](#) - Rocky Gap Casino Resort - October 14, 2021

## Awards & Grants

- [Maryland Heritage Areas Grant](#) - Maryland Historical Trust - Applications due on January 29, 2021
- [Rural Emergency Medical Services Training Grant](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - Applications due on February 16, 2021
- [Tribal Opioid Response Grants](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - Applications due on February 16, 2021
- [Rural Communities Opioid Response Program](#) - Health Resources and services Administration- Applications due on March 12, 2021
- [Value-Added Producer Grants](#) - United States Department of Agriculture - Applications due on March 16, 2021
- [Business and Industry CARES Act Funding](#) - United States Department of Agriculture - Applications due on September 15, 2021
- [Summit Financing Solutions](#) - Tri County Council for Western Maryland - Applications Ongoing

## Programs & More

- [Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching and Learning in Rural Schools Survey](#) - National Rural Education Association
- [The Reluctant Entrepreneur Article](#) - University of Maryland
- [Conservation Reserve Program](#) - United States Department of Agriculture - Registration deadline is February 12, 2021

Email: [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov) to share links to your events and programs.

## COV-19 Resources

Please see the links below for general and specific rural COVID-19 information. The following resources can also be found on our regularly updated [website](#).

- [United States Rural Development COVID-19 Response](#) - United States Department of Agriculture
- [COVID-19 Resources Useful for Rural People and Communities](#) - The Aspen Institute
- [COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide](#) - United States Department of Agriculture
- [COVID-19 Information for SAMHSA Discretionary Grant Recipients](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



- [Opioid Treatment Program Guidance for Patients Quarantined at Home with the Coronavirus](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- [COVID-19 Funding for Minority, Rural and Socially Vulnerable Communities](#) - Office of Minority Health
- [Mental Health during the Coronavirus Pandemic](#) - Maryland Health Connection
- [Health Coverage and the Coronavirus](#) - Maryland Health Connection
- [COVID-19 Health Crisis: Financial Relief Guide for Marylanders](#) - Maryland Department of Labor
- [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2](#) - United States Department of Agriculture
- [Maryland Contract Poultry Grower COVID-19 Relief Fund](#) - Maryland Department of Agriculture
- [Maryland COVID -19 Crisis Support Program](#) - Maryland Department of Health

## MAERDAF Spotlight - FY2021 MAERDAF Grant Awardees Announced

For Fiscal Year 2021, the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) had 39 grants totaling \$844,543 that were awarded to rural serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges. MAERDAF provides capacity building to these organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, health care, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education.

Due to COVID-19 and with guidance from the Department of Budget and Management, the Rural Maryland Council allocated grant funds in two disbursements in FY21. The first disbursement, containing 93% of the grant award, was released in October/November 2020 and the second disbursement containing the remaining 7% of the award, will be released in April 2021. Note that the second disbursement of the grant awards are subject to funding availability.

For more information and to view awardees, visit the RMC website at <https://rural.maryland.gov/Grant%20Opportunities/>.

## Special Feature - Rural Maryland Council marks 25 years of championing rural heritage and equity



*Photo: Legislators and founding board members at a bill signing ceremony for legislation establishing the FORVM for Rural Maryland, May 1995. Seated are Maryland Senate President Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr.; Governor Parris N. Glendening; and Treasurer Richard N. Dixon. Standing to the right of Senator Miller and behind the Governor are Gary V. Hodge, Founding Chairman of the FORVM, and William "Bill" Walker, Executive Director, with members of the FORVM's Board and staff.*

In 1994 when Maryland Governor William Donald Schaefer signed an executive order designating a "rural development council" for Maryland, he had no way of knowing he would set in motion the formation of a new institution that would touch the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, not just in rural Maryland, but in every corner of the state.

The following year, the council organized itself as the "FORVM for Rural Maryland" and was permanently established by an act of the State legislature, adopted by a unanimous vote of both houses of the Maryland General Assembly. The ancient Roman word "forvm" distinguished its mission, to provide a place for local and State leaders to exchange ideas and pursue solutions to the issues facing Maryland's rural communities.

Today-25 years later-re-named the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), it continues to distinguish itself in its efforts to champion the cause of rural Marylanders while emphasizing the importance of working with suburban and urban communities to create a stronger, united Maryland. "It's true that our rural communities are faced with challenges that need to be resolved differently from our suburban and urban counterparts," said Charlotte L. Davis, RMC executive director and fourth ED for the group. "But when you really get down to it there is more that we have in common than what separates us."

Throughout its history, the RMC has never backed away from the big, difficult and often controversial issues like wastewater, inadequate access to health care, financial resources and broadband. From the beginning it has remained steadfast in problem solving using two important tools: Giving voice to rural Marylanders and creating partnerships.

Using these tools, RMC has racked up some impressive accomplishments including:

\* Creating the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) which to date has funded more than \$5.8 million in grants.

\* Establishing the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore, Mid Shore Regional Council and Maryland Agricultural and Resource Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO).

\* Receiving a National Rural Impact Award in 2001 from the National Rural Development Partnership (USDA) for its work. It would be the first of many accolades the USDA would bestow on RMC.

\* Establishing the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) in 2006 and waging a decade-long battle to get it funded, which finally came in 2016. To date it has funded more than \$14 million in grants.

\* Co-hosting a regional forum on Rural Broadband in partnership with USDA Rural Development and taking a leadership role in sifting through the many complex issues related to broadband to produce recommendations for legislative action. Its executive director Charlotte L. Davis was tapped by the Maryland legislature to head the Task Force on Rural Internet, Broadband, Wireless, and Cellular Service.

\* Facilitating the addition of money to the Rural Broadband Assistance Fund. State funding for this initiative was \$11.8 million between 2008 and 2011.

\* Gaining national recognition in 2019 when Partners for Rural America (PRA) bestowed its coveted Ron Shaffer Award to executive director Charlotte L. Davis. The award acknowledges an individual who excels in building a national and state rural development partnership.

Perhaps the best appraisal of an organization's success is whether it measures up to its founders' expectations. "When I founded the organization with Bill Walker 25 years ago, and drafted the State legislation that established the FORVM for Rural Maryland, we hoped it would continue to be a powerful voice for Maryland's rural communities for many years to come," said Gary V. Hodge, founding chairman of the FORVM from 1994-97, and executive director of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland from 1980-98. "As is always true, the effectiveness of an institution depends on the ability and commitment of the people who lead it and support its mission," he adds.

And for 25 years and counting, the Rural Maryland Council has answered that call. "Although much has changed since the creation of the Rural Maryland Council, we remain dedicated to the core values of preserving rural heritage, advocating for equity, and engaging partners and stakeholders to help build strong, resilient rural communities," says John Hartline, RMC chair.

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Rural Maryland Council is an independent state agency and Maryland's federally designated State Rural Development Council under the United States Department of Agriculture's National Rural Development Partnership. Our mission is to bring together federal, state, county, and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to develop and implement policy solutions. As a collaborative partnership, the RMC operates under the guidance of a 40-member Executive Board, in a nonpartisan and non-discriminatory manner.

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