

County Executive's Weekly Message



For the week of April 24, 2017

My fellow residents of Cecil County:

I hope you have been out enjoying the warmer temperatures as we seem to be swiftly approaching the month of May. This week the County Council will review the revenue and expenditure proposals that I have put forth in my FY2018 Proposed Budget for the Department of Community Services and the Department of Public Works roads, engineering, and administrative divisions. On Tuesday, April 25th at 6:00pm the Council will have the opportunity speak with the Department Heads about their objectives for the coming year and the budget they will need to support their efforts. I **urge** you to get involved and learn about my proposed budget for these specific areas of County government and how I intend to move Cecil County forward.

As your County Executive, I find it important to attend as many events as possible in order to learn as much as I can about our great County. I believe it is my job to meet you, the citizens of Cecil County, and gain a better understanding of how to address your needs. It is important for me to know what County services you value and how those services can be improved. The Department of Community Services and the Department of Public Works provide **many** valuable services every day. As you read about their budgets and listen to their presentations, please keep in mind the following:

- The Department of Community Services encompasses six divisions: Aging & Disabilities, Animal Services, Cecil Transit, Housing & Community Development, Community Partnerships and Community Wellness. First, please be mindful that over 70% of this entire department's budget is supported by federal and state grant funding. This means that for each County dollar that is invested in transit buses, affordable Section 8 Housing and meals provided to eligible citizens, it is matched with federal and state dollars. Let me list some examples of the services provided. If you are living in affordable Section 8 Housing, stepping onto a Cecil Transit bus to get to work, adopting a dog from Animal Services, working with Volunteer Cecil to help a local nonprofit organization or even working out in the Healthy Lifestyles Fitness Center, you are utilizing the services of this department. More importantly, I believe the benefits of these services to families, older adults, persons with disabilities, and our animal population, greatly outweigh the small percentage of County tax dollars required to provide these services.
- On a daily basis, the work of the Department of Public Works is much more visible. The overwhelming task to make sure 615 miles of road are accessible at all times is challenging, even in good weather. The State really stuck it to Cecil County by almost eliminating highway user revenues. This revenue stream was and still is vital to the asphalt overlay and surface treatment of our County roads. The State solved its budget problems by severely reducing the allocation to Counties. To put these cuts into perspective, in 2008 the County received \$6,229,808 from the State for use on County roads; in FY2018 the County expects to receive \$945,903. If a road or bridge has to be closed, the bus, the lifesaving ambulance and the citizens living along that road are negatively impacted by an alternate route.
- My budget restores funding to asphalt overlay and increases funding for surface treatment cut in FY2017. The increases in the income tax rate and property tax rate will allow us to continue to fund these critical areas in future budgets. If we do not address the effect of State budget decisions on our County and overcome the deficiencies imposed upon us, our infrastructure will continue to deteriorate and only become more expensive to repair in the future. I do not want Cecil County to lie down and accept the status quo; we should rise to the challenge and maintain our County as an attractive place to locate a business and raise a family.

In the words of Henry Ford, 'Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.' Let us move forward and accomplish our goals.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alan McCarthy
Cecil County Executive