

## County Executive's Weekly Message



**For the week of May 15, 2017**

My fellow residents of Cecil County:

On Tuesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:30, the Council has scheduled the final departmental budget presentations for my FY2018 proposed budget. The Cecil County Health Department, the Cecil County Department of Social Services, the University of Maryland Agricultural Extension Office and the Cecil County Soil Conservation District Office will be speaking in front of Council and answering questions about their budget requests. Each of the agencies that will be presenting on May 16<sup>th</sup> have a unique State/County funding relationship. As you read about their budgets and listen to their presentations, please keep in mind the following:

- The Cecil County Health Department's role is to improve the health of Cecil County residents in partnership with the community by providing leadership to find solutions to our health problems through assessment, policy development and the assurance of quality health services and education. The services they provide range from the prevention of epidemics and the spread of disease to responding to disasters within the County. The Health Department also serves as one of the central agencies on the front line fighting against the County's substance abuse problems. The Health Department offers crisis intervention, counseling, school based screening and early intervention while working closely with the Sheriff, Department of Emergency Services and the Courts to assure that together, we are all doing what we can to improve the health and well being of the citizens in Cecil County. Again, where the State funding ends, it is the responsibility of the County to fund this department adequately to address the County's ongoing health concerns. The drug problems in Cecil County are not going to solve themselves, and I as County Executive continue to pledge support to those agencies on the front line of the fight. It would not be right to cut funding to these areas until the drug issues in our communities are resolved.
- The funding for the Cecil County Department of Social Services is also a shared responsibility between the State and the County. The services provided to our citizens by this agency are ones that are available when people need help during trying times and may have no other place to turn for help. This department responds to needs such as energy assistance to pay utility and home heating bills, food supplemental programs to help low-income households to buy nutritious food, timely response to reports of child abuse and neglect, and medical benefits for disabled and low-income residents. The role of government in these areas at times can be controversial, but today in Cecil County, there is a need to support families and individuals who find themselves in these unfortunate circumstances. The State decreases local funding based on state budgets, not the needs of the individuals behind the numbers. We as a County have to find the ways and means to serve this struggling population, whether the situation manifests itself through drug use, or loss of income.
- The University of Maryland Agricultural Extension Office and the Cecil County Soil Conservation District Office are very different in the services they provide; however, they ultimately assist citizens in their relationship to the environment. The Agricultural Extension Office delivers non-formal educational programs that address issues of concern at the local and state level such as: Local Food Agriculture Systems, Environment and Natural Resources, Healthy Living, Youth Development and Building Resilient Communities. The Soil Conservation District Office promotes nutrient management, cover crops and land preservation, and is responsible for the review of all erosion and sediment control plans. The District administers and provides technical assistance for the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and many other USDA Farm Bill Programs.

Although the County is **not the only funding source** of the above-mentioned departments, the level of service that is achieved rests on the County dollars invested to support their priorities. Theodore Roosevelt once stated, "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing." I believe my job as County Executive is to ensure our most vulnerable citizens have the services they need when they need them. I continue to believe that raising revenues in order to provide adequate services to all Cecil County citizens is required.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan S. McCarthy".

Dr. Alan McCarthy

