



Courthouse News

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of Counties

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A Message from the President

A Great Year

Just yesterday, I completed my visits to every Maryland county and the city of Baltimore. It was a pleasure and an honor to meet with elected officials from every corner of our State.

The visits invigorated my sense of the service MACo provides and the appreciation for that service. As I emphasized during every visit, MACo's strength lies in the support and participation of officials from every county.

I was pleased the O'Malley Administration intervened to resolve the untenable situation by which counties were being billed for state-funded services the Public Defender's Office is required to provide. We successfully argued that these "slight of hand" cuts to counties reflect poor policy.

This success cannot be viewed as an end to our budget woes. The State deficit continues to grow and history documents that counties will be contributing to the resolution of that deficit.

MACo continues to note its history of collaborating in efforts to resolve the State deficit, emphasizing our support of the slots referendum and acquiescence to adjustments in State funding during the Special Session. But, we stand steadfast in our opposition to permanent cuts or state responsibility transfers, including teacher retirement, arguing the deficit problem now is cyclical, not structural.

The Executive Director transition is now fully "greased" with Michael Sanderson assuming the position January 1. Let's make sure to give Michael a warm welcome at the Winter Conference.

We are also pleased that our long-tenured Executive Director, David Bliden, has agreed to remain on staff through the Session to assure a smooth transition during what will surely be a most challenging time. Let's also make sure to bid David good wishes at the Tribute Dinner scheduled at the Winter Conference on Wednesday night. *The dinner is sold out!*

A great program will be offered at the Winter Conference. Full

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Know Best - Grow Best



Annual Winter Conference

January 7-9, 2009

Hyatt Regency Hotel & Golf Resort

David Bliden

Tribute Dinner

SOLD OUT!

Sorry, no ticket sales at the door

Wednesday, January 7

6:30 - 8:00 pm

Hyatt Regency Chesapeake
Bay Hotel and Golf Resort

2008 Officers

President James T. Smith

jimsmith@baltimorecountymd.gov

1st VP Wilson Parran

parranwh@co.cal.md.us

2nd VP David R. Craig

dcraig@harfordcountymd.gov

Secretary Wayne Cooper

cooperw@charlescounty.org

Treasurer Robert M. Hutcheson

rhutcheson@allconet.org

Important Dates!

August 12-15, 2009

Annual Summer Conference - Ocean City -
Convention Center

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time registration already exceeds 225 and we have expanded our room block for the third time. Great opportunities for formal education and for equally valuable networking will be offered at a fine venue for a most reasonable registration fee. The program content itself is the best justification for attending.

MACo is pleased House Minority Leader Tony O'Donnell has accepted MACo's invitation to participate in the General Assembly Forecast general session at the Winter Conference. This presentation traditionally features the Senate President, Speaker of the House, and Governor's Legislative Officer, all who are confirmed participants.

During the prior Administration, both party's perspectives were presented during the Session. With the new Administration, that perspective would be lacking without including a specific minority party representative. The addition to the panel reflects MACo's longstanding commitment to being non-partisan.

The Growth Task Force will report its findings soon. This report will be a Winter Conference focus, during a general session presentation in which we are encouraging audience participation.

The MACo voice was loud and clear during the Task Force deliberations through the vigorous engagement of our Task Force members, Jan Gardner and Sandy Coyman. They did a great job and were provided outstanding support from the county planners and MACo's Associate Director, Les Knapp. This advocacy was coordinated and credible, ensuring a true appreciation for the real "county seat" challenges in managing growth.

I have a long history with MACo, starting as a Baltimore County Council member in 1978. I enjoyed MACo then, particularly the opportunity to work closely with my colleagues from throughout our State. After 16 years as a Judge and upon my return to county service as County Executive, I wanted to renew my MACo relationship. I am so glad I made that choice and so pleased to have had the opportunity to serve as President.

Last year was another challenging year for MACo. We can all be proud of the collaboration and mutual respect, which brought us much success and enhanced our credibility during these most difficult times.

My successor... if he can pass muster at the Winter

Conference, which I am confident he will.... Wilson Parran . . . will do a tremendous job. We have all experienced his great skill in managing to consensus as Legislative Committee Chair this past year. His great demeanor and diplomacy will serve MACo well in the coming year.

I want to thank you for the honor of allowing me to serve as your President this past year. I leave the office firmly committed to MACo and very proud of our Association, its fine staff, and talented membership.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday and a happy, healthy, and hopeful New Year. A little prosperity wouldn't be bad either.



James T. Smith, Jr.
President

Executive Director Transition Scheduled for January 1

Michael Sanderson will transition from being MACo Legislative Director to its Executive Director January 1. MACo's leadership felt it important for Michael to assume his leadership role before Session's beginning to assure clarity during a surely most challenging session.

Mr. Sanderson's recognized fiscal expertise will serve the Association well in this challenging budgetary environment. This expertise is enhanced by his role as staff to the House Ways and Means Committee from 1991 to 1994, when an economic downturn rendered county funding vulnerable.

At Mr. Sanderson's request, MACo's outgoing Executive Director, David Bliden, will remain with MACo through Session, assuring a seamless transition and full staffing during Session. The timing of Mr. Sanderson's hiring effectively precluded filling the critical position his promotion left before Session. Mr. Bliden is thrilled to be able to accommodate the request and looks forward to working with Mr. Sanderson and the MACo staff.

Contact: David S. Bliden

Public Defender Funding Issue Resolved

By letter dated November 25, the State Department of Budget and Management is recommending that the Public Defender's Office receive a \$3.5 million deficiency appropriation to fund expenditures in excess of budgeted amounts for panel attorneys. Relying on the commitment for funding, Chief Judge Bell has advised the Judiciary that it is no longer necessary to issue the orders, which had raised the county concern about funding the panel attorneys.

These actions effectively resolve the dispute by which counties were made vulnerable to fund the panel attorneys. (See article, *Courthouse News* 30-12) The dispute raised much tumult with counties uniformly objecting to orders requiring funding and bar associations questioning the willingness of members to represent criminal defendants in instances where their payment was subject to debate.

MACo President Jim Smith wrote Secretary Foster on December 3 thanking her for facilitating the resolution, noting that it "...furtheres sensible policy, including ensuring the credibility of the criminal justice system. He explained that "...MACo's objection to the proposed shift in funding by the Public Defenders Office... should not be viewed as a deviation from the Association's commitment to collaboration..." with the O'Malley Administration, being founded on "...the Public Defenders Office's lack of accountability to county officials for the funding, the inability to assess the ultimate cost, and the appearance the funding responsibility would not only grow, but would be permanent." He concluded, assuring Secretary Foster that "MACo remains committed to work with you in your efforts to address the State's fiscal challenges."

Contact: David S. Bliden

New Tax System Promises Improved Compliance for State and County Taxes

The State's Board of Public Works (BPW) on December 3 approved a contract for a Modernized Integrated Tax System (MITS), a substantial project designed to improve the management and

administration of Maryland's many tax revenues. The MITS will replace information systems in use by the Comptroller's Office that are, in many respects, outdated and inefficient. Prior to the BPW approval, MACo had submitted a letter indicating its comfort with the new system and the county contribution toward its costs.

In the preceding weeks, the Office of the Comptroller and MACo discussed the MITS project, and its costs and anticipated revenue yields. Because current law allows the Comptroller to apportion cost of tax administration to the state and county (most notably for income taxes, where the State collects all county revenues), the \$87 million MITS project results in anticipated county costs of some \$22 million. However, forecasted revenue increases for the implementation of the MITS would make the net county effect a positive one, even over the period of payment for the system's implementation, as the new system identifies and captures State and county income taxes not currently being remitted. The Office of the Comptroller believes that over \$200 million in additional revenues will be gathered by the improved system.

MACo and the Comptroller's Office negotiated a "smoothed" series of county contributions, designed to increase the ration in each year of anticipated new county revenue to costs withheld from income tax distributions. With experience from other states implementing similar systems, the Comptroller's Office is confident that the net effect will be positive to the counties through the cycle of payments, but have agreed to revisit the funding structure if actual revenues suggest any lessened comfort.

At an upcoming meeting of county budget officers and revenue estimators on December 19, MACo is hoping to also feature a presentation on the MITS system, to discuss benefits for counties in improved collections and greater tracking capability.

In its December 1 letter to the Governor, MACo thanked him for his interest in the county effect of the project, and applauded the "productive dialogue" with the Office of the Comptroller. The letter's conclusion was to "withdraw our concerns with approval of the vendor contract and its associated county funding requirements."

Contact: Michael Sanderson

MD Insurance Administration Studying IWIF Oversight

The Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) held a hearing December 10 to discuss the oversight of the Injured Workers' Insurance Fund (IWIF). Pursuant to SB 679 of 2008, MIA was charged with reviewing the rate-setting and regulatory oversight of IWIF, and specifically directed to contact a variety of stakeholders. With several Maryland counties and municipalities receiving insurance coverage from IWIF, both MACo and MML were specifically invited to comment.

MACo submitted a letter for the hearing, indicating a hope that MIA "keep the interests of the county community in mind" noting, "it would be a great hardship for counties to suffer substantial premium increases or service diminution resulting from policy changes." MIA is charged with issuing its report on IWIF oversight by the end of the year, and will presumably offer any recommended statutory changes through the legislative process in 2009.

Contact: Michael Sanderson

Public Information Act Workgroup Meets

MACo and MML members met with MD-DE-DC Press Association members on November 19 to discuss creating a series of protocols specifying how and what kinds of police information (such as arrest or incident reports) should be made available to the press. The protocols are intended to create clarity and uniformity when local and State law enforcement agencies respond to Maryland Public Information Act (PIA) requests. Representatives from the Attorney General's office and the Open Meetings Compliance Board also attended this third meeting of the groups.

During the 2008 Session, the Press Association raised two PIA issues: (1) uniform access to police records; and (2) better protocols for electronic record (e-record) requests. Delegate Dan Morhaim, Chair of the Government Operations Subcommittee, requested that a stakeholders group be formed to address each side's concerns. In response, MACo, MML, and the Press Association formed a workgroup that has met three times over the interim.

At the meeting, the Workgroup decided that representatives from local law enforcement and the Maryland State Police should be part of a small group that begins drafting the protocols. MACo Executive Director asked the Press Association to provide the Workgroup with the types of police information the Press Association is seeking, as well as what requests law enforcement organizations have granted or denied in the past.

The Workgroup will not reconvene until after the 2009 Session.

Contact: Leslie Knapp Jr.

Energy Efficiency Grant & Loans Programs Gathering Momentum

During recent meetings with the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) MACo has been among stakeholders helping to develop regulations and guidance for newly created and enhanced energy efficiency programs. County governments – either on behalf of their residential areas, or in support of government facilities – are among the targeted recipients for both the grant and loan programs envisioned by MEA.

Recent legislation creating Maryland auctions for "carbon credits" has reinvigorated the state's commitment to energy efficiency and alternative or renewable fuels. Among the projects enabled by the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) are "Clean Energy Grants," available to the government and nonprofit community. The essence of this grant program is to provide funding for projects that increase energy efficiency and/or the use of renewable energy.

In concert with this grant effort, recent legislation and anticipated funding through the SEFI has launched the newly refashioned Jane E. Lawton Conservation Loan Program. This program essentially envisions providing low-interest loans for capital investments in more energy-efficient facilities, with loan payments to be made from the ensuing energy cost savings. As with the grant program, these loans include local governments as potential recipients.

Both projects are in rapid development, but with the first "carbon credits" auction already held and the

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second coming in December, funds are anticipated to be available within the current fiscal year for applicants. MEA is working to make the applications process straightforward and user-friendly to enable any jurisdiction or agency with suitable projects the opportunity to apply and receive funding.

Details on both programs can be obtained by contacting David Cronin at the Maryland Energy Administration at 410-266-7665, or dcronin@energy.state.md.us

Online information on the Jane E. Lawton Conservation Loan Program and other existing opportunities for county governments is available at the MEA website: <http://www.energy.state.md.us/incentives/state-local/index.asp>

Contact: Michael Sanderson

County Schools Get High Marks for Maintenance

At the December 3 meeting of the Board of Public Works, the Public School Construction Program recognized 42 schools as "Superior" as a result of maintenance inspections and will receive the Governor's Citation. On behalf of the Interagency Committee on Public School Construction, the Public School Construction Program inspected 233 schools in the 24 school systems in fiscal year 2007. This is the 28th year that inspections have been performed.

MACo wishes to thank State Treasurer Nancy Kopp for her strong support of the counties and their public school facilities-making these awards possible.

These schools are:

Anne Arundel County:

Center of Applied Technology North
Central Middle School
Four Seasons Elementary School

Baltimore County:

Ridge Ruxton School

Calvert County:

Beach Elementary School
Calvert Elementary School
Northern High School

Carroll County:

Winfield Elementary School

Cecil County

Bainbridge Elementary School
Conowingo Elementary School
Elkton Middle School
Rising Sun Elementary School

Charles County

J.C. Parks Elementary School
J.P. Ryon Elementary School
Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School

Dorchester County

Sandy Hill Elementary School

Frederick County

Ballenger Creek Elementary School
Gov. Thomas Johnson Middle School
Spring Ridge Elementary School

Garrett County

Grantsville Elementary School

Harford County

Forest Hill Elementary School

Howard County

Bryant Woods Elementary School
Clarksville Elementary School
Deep Run Elementary School
Guilford Elementary School
Swansfield Elementary School
West Friendship Elementary School

Kent County

Rock Hall Elementary School

Montgomery County

Clarksburg Elementary School
Seneca Valley High School
Strathmore Elementary School
Travilah Elementary School

Prince Georges County

Gwynn Park Middle School
Surrattsville High School

Queen Anne's County

Queen Anne's County High School

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St. Mary's County

Benjamin Banneker Elementary School
Park Hall Elementary School
White Marsh Elementary School

Washington County

Clear Spring Elementary School

Wicomico County

Pemberton Elementary School
Westside Primary School
Willards Elementary School

Contact: Michele Dinkel

Job Openings

MANAGER III - CANCER AND TOBACCO USE PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM - DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - MONTGOMERY COUNTY - \$63,411 - \$115,901. This position is responsible for providing leadership and oversight to the Cancer Program and related initiatives that address colorectal, prostate and oral cancer including; screenings, outreach education, and case management. Responsibilities include coordinating grant funded activities in clinical cancer control areas with hospitals, County health care providers, cancer care facilities and safety net or community clinics; coordinating cancer diagnostics and treatment services for eligible uninsured patients through the CRF program and providing oversight and coordination of grant funded activities in tobacco control areas with tobacco control agencies and programs. In addition, this position will provide leadership for the Tobacco Use Prevention and Cancer Control coalitions as mandated by CRF law and provide fiscal management and contract management oversight for the CRF programs. Minimum Requirements: Five years of progressively responsible professional experience managing public health programs in cancer control or tobacco use prevention. Education: Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's Degree. Equivalency: An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted. For a complete description of the selection and preferred criteria and to apply on line, please visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/careers - click on Current Job Opportunities, Managerial -

Executive Category, and view Requisition #3416 by the closing date of **12/28/08**.EOE MFD

GAIN SHARING COORDINATOR POSITION - OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES - MONTGOMERY COUNTY - \$59,345 - \$98,513. Job Summary Description - This is a term position. Continued employment in this position is contingent upon renewal of term. This position oversees and coordinates all operations of the County's bonus incentive system, a Gain Sharing initiative known as Rewarding Excellence. The work involves all aspects of overseeing Rewarding Excellence, including providing/ensuring staff support to the Program Review Panel and providing subject-matter expertise, advice, and recommendations to both internal and external stakeholders (i.e., department directors and their staffs, union officials, employees and vendors). The work requires considerable resourcefulness and creativity to communicate the key aspects of Gain Sharing to a wide and diverse audience and to relay the importance of participating in the Rewarding Excellence program. The work also requires the ability to measure feedback and to make modifications/adjustments to the program based on the incumbent's interpretations of the feedback. The incumbent is responsible for coordinating the availability of Countywide training to ensure adequate preparation for the various participants. Finally, as the focal point in this Countywide effort, the incumbent is in a position to observe, track, and report on the operation of the Rewarding Excellence program; provide up-front guidance to participants; and provide first/initial response to problems. Min Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Human Resources Management, Organization Development, or a directly related field. Five (5) years applicable experience in the business administration, human resources management, or program management/development fields including one (1) year of directly related experience in gain sharing or a similar employee bonus incentive program. Experience must demonstrate the candidate's thorough knowledge of the principles, practices, requirements, systems, procedures and methods of the compensation/performance rewards area of human resources. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted. Preferred Criteria: Resumes should include information specific to the preferred criteria listed below: 1. Experience in calculating bonuses for non-exempt employees where the employees work overtime. 2. Experience in making oral presentations

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communicating new concepts and ideas relevant to Gain Sharing principles. 3. Experience in facilitating participation through collaboration and coordination with union and management officials/staff at all levels and/or with a diverse group of individuals. If selected for consideration for this position, you may be required to provide evidence that you possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities indicated on your resume. All applicants must apply online. Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/careers - click on Current Job Opportunities, General Professional Category, and click on Requisition #3421, Gain Sharing Coordinator. **Closing date 12/26/08.** EOE MFD

Tribute Dinner

Honoring

MACo Executive
Director
David Bliden



The Maryland Association of Counties

169 Conduit Street, Annapolis, MD 21401
(410) 269-0043 (301) 261-1140 FAX: (410) 268-1775

Executive Director David S. Bliden

dbliden@mdcounties.org - Direct: (410) 268-9112

Communications & Meetings Director Ellen Clarke

eclarke@mdcounties.org - Direct: (410) 268-9139

Research Specialist Michele Dinkel

mdinkel@mdcounties.org

Associate Director Leslie Knapp, Jr.

lnapp@mdcounties.org

Administrative Specialist Karen Lowe

klowe@mdcounties.org

Legislative Director Michael Sanderson

msanderson@mdcounties.org

Direct: (410) 268-9286

Administration and Finance Manager

Leslie Velasco

lvelasco@mdcounties.org

www.mdcounties.org

Wednesday, January 7
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay
Hotel and Golf Resort

SOLD OUT!

NO TICKET SALES AT THE DOOR

For more information on the
MACo Winter Conference,
visit our website

www.mdcounties.org