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Senate Adopts Commerce Spending Bill, Adds EDA Provisions

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On September 15, the Senate adopted its version of the fiscal year 2006 Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Bill (HR 2862). The bill contains \$48.9 billion in total spending, an increase of \$884 million over current spending and \$1.7 billion over the administration's request. The measure also contains an additional \$4.3 billion in emergency spending related to Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts. The House passed its \$57.4 billion version on June 16. The measure will now head to conference committee.

In its Statement of Administration Policy, the White House indicated its opposition to a number of provisions in the bill including the lack of funding for the Strengthening America's Communities Initiative. In addition, the administration also

indicated its disappointment in the Senate's decision not to implement a number of other proposed program terminations and reductions, including the Technology Opportunities Program (TOP), steel loan guarantee program and several Small Business Administration (SBA) initiatives.

During floor consideration, the Senate adopted two provisions affecting the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The first amendment, sponsored by Sens. Max Baucus (D-MT) and Richard Shelby (R-AL), would delay implementation of interim final rules recently promulgated by the agency until April 1, 2006. The delay would only apply to rules affecting economic development districts and the planning program. The second amendment adds a total of \$210 million to EDA for economic adjustment activities in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. Both provisions must be included in the final conference version before they go into affect.

The NADO-endorsed provisions provide much needed relief to sustain the existing and proven economic development service delivery mechanisms and ensure on-the-ground resources will be available during the long-term recovery efforts needed in the Gulf States region.

Also adopted during floor debate was an amendment sponsored by Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) that adds \$5 million to the TOP program, bring total funding to \$20 million and an amendment introduced by Sen. Mark Dayton (D-MN) adding \$275 million for Justice Assistance Grants and increasing overall program funding to \$1.35 billion.

For additional information, contact TCCWMD at 301-777-2158.

Your questions and comments are welcome!

Please contact Leah Lowe at TCCWMD.

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Phone: 301-777-2158

The Development District Digest is a bimonthly publication. To be featured in the next issue, articles must be submitted to Leah Lowe ten days prior to publication, which occurs the last day of the month.

8th Annual Rural Maryland Summit to be Held at the Wisp Resort

The 8th Annual Rural Maryland Summit will be held on October 27 and 28, 2005, at the Wisp Resort Hotel and Conference Center in McHenry, Maryland. This two-day summit is "the" opportunity of the year for rural leaders and policy makers to meet and discuss common issues. There are eight new workshops planned along the

theme of "Rural Workforce and Entrepreneurship Development: Investment in our Future." The workshops have two parallel tracks in rural development and rural health. The summit also features a Statewide Rural Legislative Forum, featuring 6th District Congressman Roscoe Bartlett, and a rural awards luncheon that will honor outstanding peo-

ple and achievements in rural health and rural development.

For more information, please go to www.ruralforum.state.md.us/Summit/, or call the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce at 301-387-4386.

Regional Education

TCC/Regional Education Service Agency Merger

In the past year, the RESA Board of Directors has held strategic planning discussions regarding the purpose and function of the Regional Education Services Agency. It has funded significant projects including telecommunications systems, educational programs and services, professional development and some capital projects throughout its 35-year history. During this time this organization has always worked in collaboration with Tri-County Council. It was decided to strengthen this relationship further through a full merger with TCC. As a result the RESA organization is projected to fully

merge with TCC by December 2005. The existing organization will become the Education Committee of Tri-County Council and have an ex-officio status on the TCC Board of Directors.

Trish Yoder was hired Oct. 1, 2004 as the TCC Associate Director of Education.

Some of the priorities that have been identified for the upcoming year are:

- Assessment of education needs within the region
- Major emphasis on resource development for the Education Committee's new organization and initiatives.
- Development of a strategic plan that integrates business and economic development

There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed.

*-Woodrow Wilson
(1856-1924)*

Project Lead the Way

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is a national program forming partnerships among Public Schools, Higher Education Institutions and the Private Sector to increase the quantity and quality of engineers and engineering technologists graduating from our education system. Project Lead the Way prepares students for high-demand, high-wage careers in engineering using an interactive, project-based technology curriculum.

The overall goals of Project Lead the Way's Curriculum are to increase the number of young people who pursue engineering and engineering technology pro-

grams requiring a four or two-year college degree; provide equitable and inclusive opportunities for all academically qualified students without regard to gender or ethnic origin; provide clear standards and expectations for student success in the program; reduce the future college attrition rate with four and two-year engineering and engineering technology programs; and provide leadership and support that will produce continuous improvement and innovation in the program.

PLTW has developed a four year sequence of courses which, when combined with college

preparatory mathematics and science courses in high school, introduces students to the scope, rigor and discipline of engineering and engineering technology prior to entering college.

Introduction at this level will attract more students to engineering, and will allow students, while still in high school, to determine if engineering is the career they desire. Students who participate in PLTW courses will be better prepared for college engineering and technology programs and more likely to succeed.

FSU Hurricane Katrina Relief

As the devastation of Hurricane Katrina unfolded and individuals leapt to their feet to help, Frostburg State University officials quickly gathered to determine how they could help with the relief efforts. In addition to successful money and item collections on campus, FSU created a special online semester for any college student affected or displaced by the Katrina catastro-

phe.

Through The Sloan Consortium, a group of institutions and organizations committed to quality online education, FSU will offer 13 online courses to Katrina victims at no charge. Various classes, which run from Oct. 10 through Nov. 18, are offered in the subjects of foreign languages, geography, math, man-

agement, sociology, music, political science, visual arts, psychology, mass communications and education.

For more information, visit online at www.frostburg.edu/sloansemester/.

Science Training Opportunities for Teachers and Students

Young scientists and their teachers from secondary schools in Garrett Counties are invited to participate in a Science Fair Workshop that is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, October 18 at Garrett College. The workshop is sponsored by the Garrett County Board of Education and Allegany College of Maryland. Participants will be provided with guidelines that need to be followed as the students prepare science fair projects for school-level competitions that could result in invitations to compete at the regional EXPO planned for March 31, 2006 along with students from

Allegany and Washington counties. Outstanding projects from previous EXPOs will be shared by Dr. Molly Mastrangelo, Ms. Betty A'Hearn, and Dr. Margaret Waldmann, instructors from Allegany College of Maryland's Department of Science, during the workshop illustrating strategies that will enhance the development of projects from different categories (Behavioral and Social Science, Biochemistry, Botany, Chemistry, Earth Science, Space Science, Engineering, Environmental Science, Medicine, Health, Microbiology, Physics, Zoology, and Mathematics).

The Western Maryland Science

EXPO is dedicated to promoting science education within the region by recognizing and rewarding student achievement. The EXPO is sponsored by the Tri-county County Council for Western Maryland in collaboration with local Boards of Education, and local colleges.

During the EXPO science workshops are conducted for participants to extend the problem-solving and inquiry-based science programs occurring in local schools.

For more information, visit <http://www.tccwmd.org/science.htm>.

The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards

-Anatole France

Leadership Academy—JROTC

The Garrett County Board of Education implemented an Army Leadership Academy/JROTC at both Northern and Southern Garrett High Schools beginning in September 2005. Approximately 90 students in ninth through twelfth grades enrolled into the program during the scheduling process last spring.

The mission of the Leadership Academy/JROTC is to "motivate young people to be better Americans". Program objectives are designed to develop in each student:

- leadership and patriotism;
- a sense of moral responsibility to live as decent and law abiding citizens;
- strength of character, self-reliant, self-discipline, responsibility, and a mature attitude toward constituted authority;
- the ability to think logically and make sound decisions;
- an appreciation of the value of physical and mental fitness and the debilitating effects of delinquent behavior and illegal drug use;

- the basic skills necessary to work effectively as a team member;

- the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing;

- the motivation and skills necessary to graduate from high school and be successful in life;

- knowledge of educational and vocational career opportunities and technical requirements of the modern age; and

an understanding of the role of a democratic society through the development of a knowledge of the history, purpose, and structure of the military service.

The program provides high school students an opportunity to earn 3 to 4 elective credits toward high school graduation while participating in color guard and drill teams, summer camps, curricular-based field trips, community service, and leadership academies. Successful completion of the Leadership Academy/JROTC Program may lead students to advanced placement in a Senior ROTC Program or advanced rank in the Armed Forces.

Local Student to Compete for "America's Top Young Scientist of the Year"

The countdown to choosing the nation's top young scientist began in late August as Discovery Communications announced the 400 middle school students from around the country, including one finalist Garrett County. The DCYSC is the nation's premier science contest for students in grades 5-8. The competition gives students the opportunity to test their knowledge and push their limits as they explore the world of science.

Joanna Christine Guy, an 8th grader from Southern Middle School submitted a project to the annual Western Maryland Science Expo entitled, "What Do You Expect: Does Expectation

of Difficulty Level Affect Student Test Performance?"

On September 14, 2005, the list of 400 was narrowed to 40 finalists. On October 15, 2005, these 40 finalists, including Ms. Guy, will journey to Washington, D.C., to take part in the finalist competition at the Cole Field House at the University of Maryland. In D.C., they will compete in team-based, interactive challenges designed around the theme of "Forces of Nature." The young scientists will compete for more than \$100,000 in scholarships and special prizes, as well as the title of, "America's Top Young Scientist of the Year."

Garrett County Teacher of the Year

Ms. Michelle Harmon, science teacher at Northern Garrett High School was named the Garrett County Teacher of the Year last spring. Her credentials were then forwarded to the Maryland State Department of Education for consideration as the Maryland Teacher of the Year. In Baltimore on October 7 there will be a gala celebration for all the local Teacher of the Year recipients, and at that time

the Maryland Teacher of the Year for 2005-2006 will be announced. The Garrett County Schools are very pleased to announce that Michelle is one of seven finalists in the state for this high honor. The Garrett County Schools are proud of Michelle's accomplishments and appreciate all that she has contributed to the school system and to Garrett County students.

RLF Details

The Tri-County Council Revolving Loan Fund has had an active year. The RLF Committee has approved five loans totaling \$656,000 since October 2004. This money leverages over \$1.6 million in private funds invested and helps create or retain over 65 full-time jobs.

Currently the RLF has over \$1.2 million available to lend in six different loan funds. This includes over \$560,000 in the Rural Enterprise Loan Fund, formerly known as the Mountain Maryland Entrepreneurial

Development Center's Rural West Fund.

Anyone interested in learning more about Tri-County Council's financing programs should contact Krisinda Heavener at 301-777-2158 or by email at kheavener@tccwmd.org.

Small Business Lender Fair

The Western Maryland Small Business Lender Fair will be held on Tuesday, October 11, 2005, at Allegany College of Maryland, Room C12-14. The Lender Fair, hosted by Mid-Atlantic Business Finance Company and sponsored by Tri-County Council for Western Maryland and Allegany College of Maryland, begins at 8:30 a.m. The two-hour Lender Fair provides a relaxed atmosphere for small businesses to discuss their business financing

options. Over a dozen local lenders and representatives from the US Small Business Administration will be available to discuss small business loan programs.

To register, please call toll-free 1-800-730-0017. Admission is \$10.00, cash and checks (made out to Mid-Atlantic Business Finance Company) will be accepted.

Strengthening America's Communities Initiative (SACI) Update: Myths and Facts

MYTH: The administration's SACI will only merge 18 existing federal community and economic development programs into a new unified grant program within the US Department of Commerce. This will make it easier for communities to access federal grant funds and avoid duplication

FACT: The administration's SACI calls for the outright elimination of the 18 existing programs. The new program just replicates existing functions, programs and mission of the EDA.

MYTH: The administration's proposal only cuts federal grant assistance for community and economic development programs by \$2 billion each year. This is an important step in helping reduce the federal deficit during this war time economy.

FACT: The direct federal investment would be reduced by \$2 billion each year, a 34% cut from current spending on the current programs. More importantly, the \$2 billion reduction in federal investments will result in the potential loss of at least \$18 billion each year in matching and leveraging investments by the private sector and other public and nonprofit agencies at the state and local level. The same holds true for programs such as HUD's CDBG program.

MYTH: According to Commerce Department documents, the administration's proposal is being justified by the OMB performance rating results of the existing 18 grant programs. They claim the

existing programs are cumbersome, duplicative and unaccountable. Is this true?

FACT: Absolutely not. The OMB only reviewed and evaluated 50% of the programs slated for elimination. As the lead federal economic development agency, the EDA and its local partners have earned an exceptional and documented record of outstanding performance and accountability.

MYTH: The administration's SACI block grant program would be a new program under the EDA at Commerce.

FACT: While the new grant program would be operated within the US Department of Commerce, the administration's proposal calls for the termination of EDA and the creation of a new bureaucracy and agency.

MYTH: The administration's proposal would retain a comprehensive strategic planning process for regions and communities. Regional development organizations and economic development districts (EDD) would continue to receive annual and on-going planning grants to continue their irreplaceable service to their communities.

FACT: The planning grant program for EDDs, along with the rest of EDA, would be completely eliminated under this proposal. The elimination of this essential regional preparedness program would result in our nation's distressed and underserved regions

being faced with severe burdens and obstacles in their pursuit of economic prosperity and growth.

MYTH: The administration's proposal offers cutting-edge approaches to improving the economic and social conditions of our nation's distressed communities and regions.

FACT: The proposal reverses the modern and tested philosophy of providing federal incentives and resources to promote regional approaches, partnerships and organizational capacity building. A primary reason for the long-term success of the EDA has been its incentive-based approach to regional planning and development.

MYTH: It is more important to help balance the federal budget and address other pressing federal priorities than to fund federal community and economic development programs for impoverished communities.

FACT: Absolutely not. By Building and upgrading our nation's community facilities and economic infrastructure, we are strengthening our local companies and industries. In addition to the health and social benefits of this long-term and on-going process, infrastructure development is vital to the nation's ability to maintain and sustain a world-class economy.

MYTH: The administration's focus on program accountability and performance standards in long overdue and will benefit our nation's impoverished areas. The

current portfolio of 35 programs are unaccountable and lack a focus on program accountability.

FACT: A primary role of the federal government in local community and economic development is to provide leadership, resources, best practices and technical assistance to local stakeholders. As part of the congressional oversight and annual appropriations processes, each federal community and economic development program is subject to regular and continuous monitoring, review and evaluation. All federal grantees are required to comply with extensive federal reporting and performance requirements.

MYTH: The administration's proposal would empower distressed areas and would provide additional resources for state and local initiatives aimed at generating new jobs and enhancing community development programs.

FACT: Instead of local communities and regions developing and pursuing strategies based on individual assets and strengths, the administration is attempting to push a "one size fits all" approach to economic development. The reform proposal includes dozens of new unfunded federal mandates and directives, such as planning mandates, extraneous performance benchmarks, and expensive grants management systems

Grants and Regional Projects

Featured Project—Allegany County Sheriff's Office

With technical assistance from TCCWMD, the Allegany County Sheriff's Office recently applied to the United States Department of Agriculture—Rural Development for a Community Facilities Grant.

The grant, which was awarded last month, will be used to fund the purchase of a digital finger/palm print capturing device. This equipment, housed at the Western Maryland Detention Center, will significantly lessen the time it takes to get finger/palm prints to the FBI. In this time of increased national security, it is extremely important that potential suspects not

be released until they have cleared a check of their fingerprints with the FBI database. Our current technology does not allow this safeguard. The booking process takes thirty minutes to complete. The individual is then either incarcerated or bonded out, which takes approximately two hours. Digitally captured prints can be taken, sent electronically through the FBI database, and the results returned well within this two and a half hour process.

To stress the importance and reliability of such equipment, the Governor of Maryland has recently mandated that each

County have and use a digital finger/palm printing device. This centrally located automated system will move the county closer to a centralized booking operation that will increase efficiency and quality of service to all law enforcement agencies in Allegany County.

For more information on USDA-RD Community Facilities Grants and Loans, please see the article below.

USDA-RD Workshop

On September 22, 2005, TCCWMD and Garrett County sponsored a USDA-RD workshop featuring the Community Facilities Grants and Loan program. Area first responders and local officials were invited to attend this two hour presentation, held at the Holiday Inn in Cumberland.

USDA-RD representatives, including Jim Waters (Business & Community Program Director),

Signe Hippert, Brad King, and Tim Taylor used a Powerpoint presentation to showcase the program, which makes and guarantees loans and some grants to develop essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population.

Funds may be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for healthcare, public safety, and public services. This can include costs to acquire land

needed for a facility, pay necessary professional fees, and purchase equipment required for its operation.

For more information, please contact Leah Lowe at TCCWMD at 301-777-2158, or Peggy Jamison at Garrett County at 301-334-1921. The local USDA-RD Representative is Tim Taylor, who can be reached at 301-334-6972.

Featured Website—ARC's Online Resource Center

The Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) Online Resource Center offers a wealth of information for organizations in the Appalachian region. It contains Resources for Community Planning, Regional Data and Research, Funding and other information. The Regional Data section contains statistical information, such as county populations, per capita income, and education levels, as well as maps

and research reports. This data is often required in submitting grants to the state and federal government

The funding section provides assistance for grants writers, by not only listing funding opportunities, but by making "tips of the trade" available to those organizations new to ARC funding. It even offers links and information to workshops and training seminars for all grants writers,

whether they be novice or professional.

Information is available for community development, including strategic planning and success stories from past grantees. Contact information is provided on the website for all areas of community planning for your project. The website address is <http://www.arc.gov/>.

ON THE WEB

Federal Register
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>

Catalog for Federal Domestic Assistance
<http://www.cfd.gov>

Appalachian Regional Commission
<http://www.arc.gov>

Economic Development Administration
<http://www.eda.gov>

Department of Agriculture—Rural Development
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd>

MD Department of Business & Economic Development
<http://www.choosemaryland.org>

MD Department of Housing & Community Development
<http://www.dhcd.state.md.us>

Garrett County Government
<http://www.co.garrett.md.us>

Allegany County Government
<http://gov.allconet.org>

Washington County Government
<http://www.washco-md.net>

Tri-County Council for Western Maryland
<http://www.tccwmd.org>

Board Members

Officers:

Greg Snook, Chairman
Washington County Commissioner

Jim Stakem, Vice-Chairman
Allegheny County Commissioner

Ernie Gregg, Secretary/Treasurer
Garrett County Commissioner

John Kirby, Asst. Secretary/Treasurer
City of Frostburg Administrator

Members:

Allegheny County

Jim Stakem	Lee Fiedler
Bob Hutcheson	Robert Smith
Tom Cooley	Stephanie Gates

Garrett County

Ernie Gregg	Leo Martin
Jim Hinebaugh	
Stephen Hermann	

Washington County

Greg Snook	Richard Trump
James Kercheval	Fred Papa
Tim Troxell	William Pennington

Western Maryland Delegation

Senator John Hafer - Voting

Senator Donald Munson - Voting

Delegate George C. Edwards - Voting

Delegate Kevin Kelly - Voting

Delegate Christopher B. Shank - Voting

Delegate John P. Donoghue

Delegate LeRoy Myers

Delegate Robert A. McKee

The mission of Tri-County Council is to serve our constituent counties and to promote inter-jurisdictional coordination, cooperation and communication on issues affecting the region and to provide local technical assistance. Our goal is to work with local governments, businesses and educational institutions throughout the region in providing the programs and services most needed by the region and our member governments.

Calendar of Events

October 5-6, 2005

Appalachian Regional Commission
"Winning the Economic Future—The Rural Advantage"
Muskingum College, New Concord, Ohio

October 11, 2005

Western Maryland Small Business Lender Fair
Allegheny College, Cumberland, Maryland

October 27-28, 2005

Maryland Rural Summit
Wisp Resort Hotel and Conference Center, McHenry, Maryland

November 18, 2005

(tentatively scheduled)

Tri-County Council Board Meeting
Executive Session—8:00 a.m.
Full Board Meeting—8:30 a.m.

Development District Association of Appalachia Telecast

The Development District Association of Appalachia sponsored satellite broadcast "Fund raising for Public Organizations" that took place on Tuesday, September 27, 2005 is now available online at the ARC web site (www.arc.gov). To view the three-hour broadcast, simply go to the ARC homepage and click on "Events" (which is located in the

"Newsroom" section below the "Welcome" banner). The broadcast will be available online through the end of the year. If you are unable to view it, TCCWMD has a video tape of the broadcast that can be loaned out.

This telecast was just one example of what the DDAA is doing to support Appalachia's 72 Local Development Districts through its

Training Program. DDAA also recently helped to plan and co-sponsor the National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference in Louisville, KY and will be a partner in the upcoming Brown Field Workshop that will be held on November 16 – 18 in Florence, AL. In addition, the DDAA supports districts through management and professional staff devel-

opment course work as well as sponsoring a "Best Practices" Exchange program that enables Local Development Districts (TCCWMD) to learn from each other.

For more information on what type training activities are provided by the DDAA, please contact TCCWMD at 301-777-2158.