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*The Honorable Phyllis Kilby, Chair
Stephen R McHenry, Executive Director*

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Application Deadline September 1, 2006

Grants Available for Rural Nonprofits and Community Colleges

Annapolis, MD -- Grants up to \$50,000 are available to regional or statewide rural-serving nonprofit organizations which promote economic and community development, and agricultural/forestry education. Also eligible are community colleges which support natural resource-based businesses through enhanced training and technical assistance opportunities. Most grant awards are between \$10,000 and \$20,000. The application deadline is September 1, 2006.

The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF), administered by the Rural Maryland Council, was established to increase the overall capacity of rural-serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges to meet a multitude of rural development challenges, which in turn will lead to new opportunities for establishing public and private partnerships. The grant review board gives preference to organizations which have equal matching funds available from non-state sources.

In the six-year life of the MAERDAF Program, 73 grants totaling \$1.4 million have been awarded in four focus areas: (1) agribusiness development or agricultural and forestry education; (2) rural economic development (non-agricultural); (3) infrastructure and community development; and (4) rural health care access.

Application instructions and other supporting materials are available on the Rural Maryland Council website at: www.rural.state.md.us. Or call 410-841-5772 to request materials be mailed to you.

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The Rural Maryland Council brings together community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify and seek solutions to the unique needs of Rural Maryland communities. Our goals are to: (1) Enable citizens in rural communities to achieve success in employment and have access to quality, affordable health care, and other services; (2) Preserve agriculture and other natural resource-based industry as an integral part of Maryland's rural economy and culture; (3) Advocate for a manageable regulatory process and reasonable and effective compliance; and (4) Address the impact of changing conditions on the environment, heritage and economic well-being of rural Maryland. As a collaborative partnership, the RMC operates in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner.

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”