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*The Honorable Phyllis Kilby, Chair
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Rural Maryland Council Elects New Chairman

Charlie Ross, President and CEO of the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, was elected chairman of the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) during its annual meeting on October 26, 2006. His one-year term begins in January 2007. Mr. Ross succeeds Phyllis Kilby, a Cecil County dairy farmer and county commissioner, who served as council chair for the past three years.

“We are delighted that Charlie Ross has agreed to serve as chair of the RMC next year,” said RMC Executive Director Stephen R. McHenry. “Charlie is a very highly respected leader with a long and distinguished background who has a broad knowledge of the many issues facing rural Marylanders.”

Other officers elected include First Vice Chair Michael Pennington, executive director of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland; and Second Vice Chair Dr. Bonnie Braun, an associate professor and family policy specialist with Maryland Cooperative Extension. Dr. Braun also chairs the RMC’s Health Care Working Committee. The RMC, which is based in Annapolis and has a 40-member Executive Board, serves 18 counties in Western and Southern Maryland as well as all of Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

The Rural Maryland Council is an independent state agency which 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. Its 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. For more information about RMC, see its website at: ww.rural.state.md.us