

Where is Rural Maryland? 18 Counties

- **Southern:** Calvert, Charles & St. Mary's
- **Western:** Allegany, Garrett & Washington
- **Upper Shore:** Cecil, Kent & Queen Anne's
- **Mid Shore:** Caroline, Dorchester & Talbot
- **Lower Shore:** Somerset, Wicomico & Worcester
- **North-Central:** Carroll, Frederick & Harford


Of the 18 rural counties:

- **Six counties** qualify for (as) economically distressed [jurisdiction development assistance] due to especially high unemployment rates
- **Five counties** are less economically distressed but still face a host of difficult economic and community development problems.

Unemployment Rate		
	2000	2008
Baltimore City	6.8%	7.2%
Lower Shore	6.8%	7.2%
Western MD	6.8%	7.2%
Mid Shore	6.8%	7.2%
Upper Shore	6.8%	7.2%
MARYLAND	5.8%	4.2%
Southern MD	3.2%	3.8%
North Central	3.0%	3.5%

Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



Of the 18 rural counties: 

- **Seven counties** are squarely in the suburban fringe, where (growth) residential development pressures are creating new challenges on top of the old ones



Rural Marylanders

- **1.6 million people (28% of Maryland)** live in these 18 counties.
- More than one-third of the state's rural citizens reside in **107** small incorporated cities and towns.





Other Unique Challenges are:

- Loss of rural working lands
- Shortages in affordable workforce housing
- Decaying infrastructure

Maryland lost 1,056 farms & more than 115,400 acres of farmland in five years (1997 to 2002)

How can we address these challenges effectively?

- We need a long-term, multi-year strategy to raise the standard of living in rural Maryland to a level that equals or exceeds the overall average standard of living in the state



Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Initiative

- Established in 2006 by the General Assembly to make important investments in rural economic and community development programs and projects; to reduce disparities in rural/metropolitan employment and services.



Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund



- A key objective is to promote intergovernmental cooperation and public/nonprofit collaboration on regional projects and service delivery in rural areas.
- Distributes equal amount of grants in four areas

Rural Maryland: Make the Vision a Reality

- Regional councils and other regional groups shared some of the projects on their wish lists that the Rural Prosperity Fund could help with.



(1) Rural Regional Planning and Development

- Provides grants to local governments and other entities which come together in multi-county regions to craft solutions to common problems.



Relies on the regional entities to prioritize and seek funding for local needs

Regional Planning



- TCCWMD -- An **internship program with Allegany College** to address State forest issues, including help warding off Gypsy Moths.
- TCCSMD -- To work with various sectors to ensure that local colleges provide the training and services needed to **support the region's workforce demands**.
- USRC -- To research the extent and impact of the lack of affordable workforce housing within the region and then develop necessary resources to create **workforce housing opportunities**.
- Lower Shore Workforce Alliance -- To assess the skills of potential trainees to find out if they need remediation *before* entering **occupational skills training** programs and, if so, to provide that training.

(2) Regional Infrastructure Projects

- Provides grants up to 25 percent of the cost of infrastructure projects that involve at least two units of local government.

- *Wastewater Infrastructure Needs in Maryland: \$5,442,344,000**
- *Needs in rural Maryland: \$1,647,595,000* (30 percent of the total)*

*MDE, 2006



Regional Infrastructure



- Eastern Shore regional councils -- To establish a **Rural Planning Organization** to determine regional transportation priorities and plan for the future of the entire Eastern Shore.
- USRC -- To **extend the broadband network infrastructure** into business and industrial parks and establish regional business incubator facilities.
- TCCWMD -- To help various entities in its region **complete identified infrastructure priorities**, especially those mandated by the state
- TCCSMD -- To hire a GIS expert to provide **timely regional planning data** analysis and synthesis to help solve multiple challenges facing the region over next 15 years.

(3) Rural Entrepreneurship Development

- Provides grants to support entrepreneurial development activities of rural-serving nonprofits, higher educational institutions and other entities that help business start-ups in rural areas.



One-third to two-thirds of any economies growth is related to entrepreneurship

Regional Entrepreneurship

- Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center – To **establish Entrepreneurship Centers** across the mid-shore to help local entrepreneurs start up and survive.
- Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission – To develop and implement "Southern Maryland Meats," a **regional meat processing facility**.
- Shore Gourmet – Some **28 producers representing 46 products would receive the assistance** they need to start up, grow, and diversify their regional production.
- The USRC -- To develop a **Research and Information Center** for agricultural businesses in the region with emphasis on locating and providing access to foreign markets.

(4) Rural Community Development and Programmatic Assistance

- Provides grant funding for the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) and the Rural Maryland Council

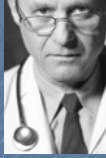


Last year, MAERDAF received nearly \$1 million in requests for \$348,000 in available funding.

The Rural Maryland Council

- RMC administers MAERDAF; will administer the Rural Prosperity Fund using MAERDAF infrastructure
- MAERDAF Review Board includes MDA, DHMH, DHCD, DNR, DBED and RMC.

RMC Board voted in February 2007 to use Rural Prosperity resources to acquire expertise in rural health policy





- Rural Prosperity has been a major initiative of the bi-partisan Rural Caucus for more than two years.
- All four delegation chairs of the Rural Caucus signed a request that \$2 million be included in the FY08 supplemental budget.

**FY 2008
appropriation for
Rural Prosperity?**

\$0

**Anticipated
appropriation for
FY 2009?**

\$0

How you can help?



- Educate your state representatives about the complex needs of Rural Maryland

Join the Rural Maryland Council

Our Mission:

- To build a bright future for Rural Maryland by addressing its unique concerns;
- To find effective solutions by bringing together diverse partnerships.



Imagine Rural Maryland as it Could be
Make the Vision a Reality

Join Us!

Join Us!

10th Annual Maryland Rural Summit

October 17-19, 2007

Solomons Island in Calvert County

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