

Maintain a High Level of Public Safety

December 11, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Department of Public Facilities outlined the County's snow removal policy on the more than 1800 lanes miles for which the Department is responsible. The program involves County and contractor who remove snow based on a priority system. Depending upon the number of storms, the costs can range from under \$500,000 to more than \$2 million.

Contact for more information: Department of Public Facilities Roads Division, 301-932-3450.

December 4, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners enacted Bill 2006-14 requiring residential sprinkler systems in news homes built in the County.

Contact for more information: Department of Planning and Growth Management, Permits Administration, 301-645-0692.

November 27, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners supported a request for an emergency \$50,000 grant to Angel's Watch Shelter to provide housing for an additional 10 women and children providing that St. Mary's and Calvert counties share by each contributing one third of the request.

November 14, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners approved the abandonment of certain alleyway/roadways in Cobb Island requested by the Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department that will become part of the site for the new fire house.

Contact for more information: Office of the County Attorney, 301-645-0555.

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners conducted a public hearing on Bill 2006-14 that would amend the Charles County Building Code to require residential sprinkler systems in all new homes. The towns of Indian Head and La Plata have already enacted residential sprinkler system legislation.

Contact for more information: Department of Planning and Growth Management, Permits Administration, 301-645-0692.

November 13, 2006

- ☛ The date for the UNITY in Our Community: A CALL TO ACTION Diversity Forum has been changed from December 2, 2006, to January 20, 2007, from 8 a.m.- 4 p.m., with a February 10, 2007, inclement weather date. The Commissioners also approved up to \$3,800 to cover costs for speakers and lunch at the event, if needed.

Contact for more information: Office of Public Information and Media Operations, 301-645-0580.

August 28, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners approved a \$5,000 reward that would lead to the arrest and conviction of the individual(s) responsible for the August 19, 2006, racial vandalism of homes and cars in the Townes at South Hampton neighborhood in Bryans Road.

The County Commissioners also approved the creation of a blue ribbon commission to work toward reducing racism in Charles County. The Commissioners will be working with community leaders and the College of Southern Maryland to plan a community forum to address this issue.

Contact for more information: Office of Public Information and Media Operations, 301-645-0580.

June 27, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Association of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Chief of the Waldorf Volunteer Fire Department briefed the County Commissioners on the history of the volunteer fire and EMS services in the County, training needs addressed by the volunteers, response statistics/trends, volunteer participation in SWOT meetings, technical response teams, and the task force to address delayed BLS response.

The volunteers indicated they would be briefing the Board of Fire and Rescue on residential sprinkler systems. In addition, they noted the need to establish an Emergency Services Planning Committee with both career and volunteer members, and the commissioners agreed to schedule quarterly updates with volunteer EMS staff, as well as schedule a retreat for EMS, career EMS, and County staff.

- ☛ The Department of Emergency Services briefed the County Commissioners on the following issues/priorities as a follow-up to the meeting with the Medical Director: Code of Maryland Regulations Title 30, Definitive and Singular Chain of Command, Emergency Services Authority, and Emergency Services Planning Committee. EMS staff is to provide a follow-up report in September on the status of the initiatives.

June 19, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners adopted Bill 2006-06 Animal Regulations, which will become effective August 4, 2006, which adds new provisions and clarifies or modifies existing provisions within the Charles County Animal Regulations. The new provisions address the inclusion of potentially dangerous animal provisions and increases fines for failure to vaccinate animals against rabies.

The Chief of Animal Control Services will provide the Commissioners with the public nuisance complaint hearing process, especially as it relates to barking dogs.

Contact for more information, Department of Emergency Services Animal Control Services, 301-609-3425. _____

June 5, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners issued a proclamation for the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Maryland to be held June 8, and encouraged County employees to purchase a T-shirt and wear them in support of the event.

May 15, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners approved adjustments to the hours of operation at the Tri-County Animal Shelter due to staffing shortages. The Shelter will remain open six days a week, with Saturday hours the same, with the weekdays changing from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. to 10 a.m.-6 p.m. 5 days a week. Hours of adoption will shift from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. to noon-5 p.m. The new changes begin May 30.

Contact for more information, Animal Control Services, 301-609-3425.

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners presented certificates of appreciation to Department of Emergency Services Staff – from Communications, Emergency Management, Animal Control, and Emergency Medical Services – for their service to assist Mississippi residents affected by Hurricane Katrina, and proclaimed Emergency Medical Services Week.

Contact for more information, Department of Emergency Services, 301-609-3400.

- ☛ Dennis Schrader, Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, outlined the County's Homeland Security Grant program. He briefed the Commissioners on seven national priorities and eight priority capabilities, grant funding, Federal grant programs, the 2006 grant timeless process, the grant review decision structure, and State investment areas and initiatives.

Contact for more information, Department of Emergency Services, 301-609-3400.

- The County Medical Director, Dr. James Mitchell, and Assistant Medical Director, Kris Larsen, presented the EMS response update. Dr. Mitchell discussed chain of command issues, staffing at the County's ALS stations, and challenges relating to the County's growth and County EMS response times. He also recommended a quality assurance office position to be added for better dissemination of information to him and his assistant, and a training officer to expand the Basic Life Support training program. The Commissioners requested a follow-up to discuss the recommendations.

Contact for more information, Department of Emergency Services, 301-609-3400.

May 9, 2006

- The Charles County Commissioners attended the luncheon at the Charles County Detention Center honoring the County's correctional officers as part of the celebration of Correctional Officers' Week.

May 1, 2006

- The Charles County Commissioners approved \$2,500 for the Charles County Substance Abuse Advisory Coalition to support anti tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs projects, and \$6,000 for the Chemical People to support Project Graduation from the Drug Forfeiture Account; and \$1,000 for the La Plata Community Garden Club from the Tornado Disaster Relief Fund for a memorial garden to be placed in La Plata in memory of the five persons killed during the tornado that swept across Charles County on April 28, 2002.

_____ *Contact for more information: Department of Fiscal Services, 301-645-0570.*

May 2, 2006

- The Department of Emergency Services and Meridian Financial Management provided an update on the County Advanced Life Support (ALS) Transport Fee for Service Policy, as well as background on the program. The County EMS Budget, which provides ALS services, is more than \$1 million per year. The volunteer system handles Basic Life Support calls, but population growth and demand for ALS services has outpaced the number of available trained volunteers to handle calls for assistance, therefore requiring the hiring of full-time career EMS staff.

Contact for more information: Department of Emergency Services, 301-609-3400.

- Mr. Leslie Johnson, Assistant Director for Administration, Department of Social Services (DSS), presented the final Katrina report, which noted that there are 13 families still receiving assistance in the County. DSS is recommending that the Katrina donations in the Disaster Relief Fund be distributed equally among these families. The Commissioners directed Mr. Johnson to look into providing assistance to County residents who assisted the Katrina evacuees in the County.

Contact for more information: Charles County Department of Social Services: 301-392-6400.

April 11, 2006

- The Charles County Commissioners conducted a hearing on Bill 2006-06 –Animal Regulations, which clarifies and modifies the existing provisions of the Animal Regulations. The proposed bill prohibits ownership of wild animals, creates a violation for potentially dangerous animals and allows the Board to be more proactive in dealing with dangerous animals, and increases the fine for failure to vaccinate for rabies and requires the violator to appear before the Animal Matters Hearing Board. The record will be left open for public comment until April 28.

Contact for more information, Animal Control Services, 301-609-3425.

April 10, 2006

- The Charles County Commissioners adopted an “M” rotating shift schedule for Charles County Emergency Medical Services (EMS), effective July 1, 2006. Charles County EMS is the primary ALS provider in the County. The new shift eliminates programmed overtime, reduces monthly work days from 15 to 10, employees work a rotating 40-hour work week, and reduces supervisors overtime by 50%. It assumes that volunteer rescue squads are going to cover an 8-hour shift every Saturday.

Contact for more information: Department of Emergency Services, 301-609-3400.

- The Charles County Commissioners conducted a public hearing and voted in favor of a resolution to approve a tax-exempt loan by Mercantile Southern Maryland Bank to the Newburg Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad for \$2,662,556 to construct a new facility.

March 28, 2006

- The Health Department of Charles County provided a new protocol for water testing and posting of a visible advisory sign when necessary as well as providing the information for dissemination by the County’s Public Information Office and placement on the Health Department’s web site.

Contact for more information: Health Department of Charles County: 301-609-6900.

March 27, 2006

- The Charles County Commissioners voted to sign a resolution supporting the College of Southern Maryland’s application for a grant to provide \$100,000 per year for up to five

years for the Substance Abuse Advisory Coalition to support the Drug-Free Communities Program to reduce substance abuse in Charles County.

Contact for more information: Linda Smith, College of Southern Maryland: 301-934-2251.

- The Charles County Commissioners voted to write a letter of support for the Tri-County Youth Services Bureau, Inc. for the Full-Service Community Schools Act, which provides a competitive grant program to communities. General Smallwood Middle School is a full-service community school, where Federal, State and/or local educational social service programs through community-based organizations and public/private partnerships improve the coordination, delivery, effectiveness, and efficiency of services provided to children and families.

Contact for more information: Tri-County Youth Services Bureau: 301-843-2960.

March 20, 2006

- The Charles County Commissioners approved introduction of Bill 2006-06 which will modify the Charles County Animal Regulations and set the date for the public hearing on the bill: Tuesday, April 11, at 2 p.m. For the details of the bill go to <http://www.charlescounty.org/commissioners/codehomerule/apps/default.jsp?billNum=2006-06&fwd=codeHRDetails.jsp> on the County's web site.

Contact for more information: Charles County Department of Emergency Services, Animal Control Services, 301-609-3425.

- The Charles County Commissioners approved a \$5,000 allocation to reimburse Lifestyles, Inc. For the Safe Nights Program that provides shelter to County residents who cannot be served by shelters or other programs between November 1 and March 31. Under the program, local churches donate their building, dinner and breakfast, and provide volunteers who stay overnight at the church. The Red Cross donates cots, blankets and pillows, while Lifestyles provides the licensed social worker to screen participants and serve as supervisors at the churches, and provide transportation.

Contact for more information: Lifestyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc., 301-609-9900.

March 7, 2006

- The Charles County Department of Emergency Services presented a Homeland Security Update and Emergency Medical Services Plan (SWOT) Update.

Homeland Security has 7 national priorities: implement the National Incident Management System; expanded regional collaboration; implement the National Infrastructure Protection Program; strengthen information sharing and collaboration

capabilities; strengthen interoperable communications capability; strengthen chemical biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive detection, response and decontamination capabilities; and strengthen medical surge and mass prophylaxis capability. The County has spent more than \$2 million on homeland security projects to date.

Emergency Medical Services has successfully decreased the average response time to ALS (Advanced Life Support) calls across the County; provided EMS services to identified stations countywide; improved reliable comprehensive EMS service regardless of resident location; improved the success rate to service requests at stations where EMS Division personnel are assigned; and attained ability to provide multiple ALS assets to any given incident.

Contact for more information: Charles County Department of Emergency Services, 301-609-3400.

February 28, 2006

- The Animals Matters Hearing Board presented proposed changes to the Charles County Animal Regulations, compiled in cooperation with Animal Control Services, that will be prepared for legislative process introduction. There 20 proposed changes, which range from increasing the fines for failing to have an animal vaccinated for rabies and requiring appearance before the Board to assure compliance to banning the ownership of wild animals, among others.

The date and time for a public hearing will be announced at a future date.

Contact for more information: Charles County Department of Emergency Services, Animal Control Services, 301-609-3425.

February 7, 2006

- The Department of Emergency Services Communications Division provided an update on the new Charles County Public Safety/Public Service 800 MHz trunked radio system, which has approximately 1,725 Charles County radio users, including Fire/EMS, the Charles County Sheriff's Office, and County Government. The system also has 5,200 interoperability users.

The new system has increased the number of talk paths tenfold, increased coverage from 80% to 94.5% and reliability of the system, provides secure (encrypted radios), improved the fire and ems alerting system, gives the County the ability to receive emergency marine messages, provide a gateway in the system for Prince George's County and King George County in Virginia and allows the County to communicate with Calvert County in Maryland and Prince William and Fairfax counties in Virginia, and allow portable radio use inside heavier structures such as apartment buildings and commercial buildings, among other benefits.

The system uses of microwave towers placed strategically throughout the County to provide the talk paths, which also provide access to the County Government computer network at some outposts.

Items to be completed include: Rebanding, Completion of Performance Testing, Completion of the Back-up 911/Communications Center, Fire/EMS pager conversion, System Documentation and As-built Drawings, and In Building Solutions.

Contact for more information: Department of Emergency Services Communications, 301-609-3599.

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners directed the Health Department of Charles County to return in 30 days with a plan for water testing in areas that are used for recreational activities, and to seek the assistance of the Nanjemoy Environmental Sea Scouts for Youth representatives to help assist with off-shore water testing.

Contact for more information: Health Department 301-609-6901.

January 24, 2006

- ☛ The Charles County Commissioners, in cooperation with the Charles County Sheriff's Officer proclaimed 2006 as Traffic Safety Year in Charles County to reduce the number of crashes through education and strict enforcement of the law because of the alarming increase in the number of fatalities due to crashes that occurred in 2005.

Contact for more information: Public Information Officer, Charles County Sheriff's Office, 301-609-6538.

- ☛ The County Commissioners director County staff involved with reuniting the Malcolm area group SMASH to meet with the Nanjemoy Community Association, concerned about drug issues in the Tayloe's Neck area, on how SMASH was able to solve the problem when it was prevalent in Malcom.

January 23, 2006

- ☛ The Animal Matters Hearing Board presented information on basic fine structures and noted that they see the Board's role as compliance rather than punishment and had staff review the fine structure which is in the middle of neighboring jurisdictions. The Board has not reviewed all of its fine structures and will staff to look into recommendations to bring back to the Commissioners for discussion within 30 days.

Contact for more information: Animal Control Services, 301-609-3425.

January 9, 2006

- The Charles County Commissioners heard a presentation on a proposed Boys and Girls Club pilot program for the Lancaster Neighborhood this summer. The group is working with the Board of Education, Legislative Delegation, Charles County Sheriff's Office to provide a comprehensive program with a vision of eventually building a facility in the County. Programs are targeted from youth under age 18.

December 7, 2005

- The Charles County Commissioners approved an FY '06 funding request for an additional 15 officers for the Charles County Sheriff's Office. The Commissioners allocated \$216,000 from the FY '06 Contingency Fund for start-up costs. The \$1.5 million required in FY '07 for the new deputies would be funded as follows: \$786,000 would be absorbed by the Board of Education, \$414,000 from County Government, and \$300,000 from the Sheriff's Office.

Contact for more information: Department of Fiscal Services, 301-645-0570.

November 28, 2005

- The County Commissioners were briefed on the policy for quarantine and handling of dangerous animals and directed that the Animal Matters Hearing Board review current animal control regulations to tighten penalties for non-conformance. A report will be due to the Commissioners within 90 days.

Contact for more information: Department of Emergency Services Animal Control Services: 301-609-3425.

November 1, 2005

- The Charles County Commissioners approved a FY '06 budget amendment for the Department of Emergency Services for \$63,220 for a Matching Grant Award from MIEMSS (Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems) for the purchase of three monitor defibrillators with capnography for use by Emergency Medical Services.

Contact for more information: Department of Emergency Services, Emergency Medical Services, 301-609-3430.

October 18, 2005

- The Charles County Commissioners authorized the President to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Board of Education/North Point High School, College of Southern Maryland, NSWC, Indian Head, Charles County Sheriff's Office, and the Charles County Homeland Security Alliance to support homeland security requirements and related and emerging technologies. The first initiative in this cooperative program will be applied

research and development for a small unmanned vehicles (SUV's) test bed to strengthen their capabilities in the performance for Federal, State, and local agencies in support of public safety.

October 17, 2005

- The Charles County Commissioners approved a \$200,000 budget amendment for the mobile data project for the Charles County Sheriff's Office. The funding represents pilot-grant funding to place 17 mobile data units – laptops, mounts, and printers – in police vehicles, along with the necessary system infrastructure and equipment. In addition, the Commissioners agreed to consider support of a mobile data build-out program of 56 units per year, over the next five years, for a total of 280 units. The annual cost would be \$635,000, with \$500,000 eligible for funding through lease purchase, and the remainder from County funding sources.

Contact for more information, Sheriff's Office, 301-932-2222.

August 30, 2005

- Charles County Health Officer Dr. C. Devadason and Environmental Health Chief Gary Davis from the Health Department of Charles County gave a water quality update regarding test results received by the Port Tobacco River Conservancy (PTRC) and the notification process. Dr. Devadason noted the Maryland Department of the Environment does not consider boat ramps beaches. Volunteers from the Cuckolds Creek and Nanjemoy Creek areas will receive similar assistance afforded to the PTRC to do water sampling in the future.

The reported high concentrations of bacteria in a 15-square mile area from an August 9 report could be coming livestock and failing septic systems in light of the lack of rainfall and high temperatures. Environmental Health Chief Davis said bacteria grows better in heat and becomes more concentrated. A source study is underway. Maps of the tested areas are requested as well as continuing reports to the County Commissioners.