



Calvert Currents

A monthly newsletter from the Board of County Commissioners

Issue #34

January 2012

Happy New Year from the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners. Our first edition of 2012 kicks off with a look at our recent budget audit and a follow-up on the roadside signage issue we first covered in November. We also congratulate Calvert Marine Museum on yet another award and revisit the status of the old Calvert Middle School site in Prince Frederick. Thanks for reading.

In This Issue

[Plans Move Ahead to Study Roadside Signage Options](#)

[Former Calvert Middle School Site Project Advances](#)

[Audit Affirms County's Strong Financial Performance](#)

[Calvert Marine Museum Recognized as Region's Best](#)

[What's Happening in Calvert County](#)

Quick Links

[County Commissioners Meeting Summaries](#)

[County Government on the Web](#)

[Calvert County Business and Tourism](#)



The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners members are, from left, Steven R. Weems, Gerald W. "Jerry" Clark, Susan Shaw, Evan K. Slaughenhaupt Jr. and Pat Nutter.

Plans Move Ahead to Study County Signage Regulations

Public Process Geared to Developing Local Solutions

As we first discussed in the [November 2011 Calvert Currents issue](#), new state regulations governing roadside signage on state roads are posing a challenge for local businesses looking



Calvert Marine Museum Recognized as Region's Best

Congratulations to the Calvert Marine Museum for being named by Bay Weekly readers as the Best of the Bay Museum for 2011. This marks the sixth

to promote their services. We are responding by mounting a local effort to find solutions.

In spring 2011, prior to the implementation of the state law, we had asked county staff to review our local signage regulations. That effort will now take into account the state regulations that took effect Oct. 1.

County staff has gathered an ad hoc committee of business owners, citizens groups, commission members and residents to study the issue and offer recommendations. The group will tackle a variety of concerns including temporary weekend signs, signs on vehicles, off-premise/directional signs and electronic signs. We hope this inclusive approach will yield solutions that adhere to the law while helping businesses with much-needed advertising.

Representatives from the State Highway Administration will give a presentation on the state signage laws during the commissioners' Jan. 17 meeting. County staff is planning a public forum to review county regulations and solicit resident input. The ad hoc committee and county staff will then work to have draft regulations ready this spring for presentation to the commissioners in April. Once the proposed regulations are drafted, county staff will move forward to the public hearing process at our direction.

We will make public announcements as meeting dates are finalized and we welcome any input to this process as we move ahead.

Former Calvert Middle School Site Project Advances

We moved a step closer to the highly anticipated new development project at the former Calvert Middle School site in Prince Frederick with the approval of a demolition contract at the board's Dec. 20 meeting. The \$252,000 contract with Sun Demolition will fund the dismantling of the two-story building on the corner of Route 2/4 and Dares Beach Road.

Work on the demolition is anticipated to begin by the end of January. As part of the project, bricks from the building and the cornerstone will be saved for commemorative use at the site.

We are still considering development proposals for the site and have worked with our consultant, Fore Consulting, to develop criteria and evaluate potential uses. As part of this process, Fore Consulting conducted a Retail Purchasing Power and Space Demand Analysis to determine how additional retail space at the site would dovetail with the county's current retail stock.

The analysis, [available online](#), looks at expenditures by county residents across a range of retail categories both in and outside the county. The findings are eye-opening. For example:

- Calvert County experiences a net "loss" of retail sales spending of more

year the museum has received this honor.

Thanks to the museum's staff and volunteers whose hard work and dedication helped earn the recognition.

Become a member and visit the Calvert Marine Museum in 2012. Members receive special perks including free admission every day, discounts in the Museum Store, the opportunity to purchase summer concert tickets before the general public and much more. [Join online today.](#)

The museum is open and free to the public on the First Friday of each month, 5-8 p.m.

[Visit online](#) for a complete listing of programs and activities or call 410-326-2042 for more information.

What's Happening in Calvert County

Jan. 13 - Feb. 26

Living Gallery
Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center, Dowell

January 14-16

MLK Days
Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center, Dowell

Jan. 14 - Feb. 26

MLK Days
Community Art Exhibit

- than \$325 million annually as residents leave the county to shop.
- There is an estimated unmet demand for approximately 1.6 million square feet of retail space.
- Gaining back lost retail sales could increase county tax revenues by nearly \$1.9 million and create more than 2,500 retail jobs.

This is valuable food for thought as we look forward to new uses on this property in the heart of the Prince Frederick Town Center.

Audit Affirms County's Strong Financial Performance

Each year an outside auditor reviews the county's financial statements to attest to their accuracy. The report from Murphy & Murphy, CPA is in for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 and the "unqualified opinion" shows that the county has followed the accounting rules appropriately and has accurately represented its financial condition.

At the Jan. 10 presentation to the commissioners, the auditor detailed the county's strong results for the year. A noteworthy result is a budget surplus of \$7.9 million due mostly to unexpectedly strong income tax receipts. This couldn't come at a better time. The surplus will help fund certain critical capital projects such as fire/rescue equipment, public safety technology upgrades and bridge maintenance.



We are also carefully looking at future county revenues in light of recent state property assessments. We know that assessments in the county's First Election District are showing a 16-percent decrease in home values in the southern portion of the county. Property taxes make up 61 percent of county revenues and the slump in property values poses a significant challenge for our financial planning.

While the auditors gave us some good news, the continued decline in property values is sobering as we look to future budgets. Calvert County has a history of prudent, conservative financial planning and we pledge to continue that tradition.

Thanks for reading **Calvert Currents**. Now we want to hear from you! Click the Feedback link at the right to send us your questions or story ideas.

Sincerely,
 Gerald W. "Jerry" Clark, President
 Steven R. Weems, Vice President
 Pat Nutter
 Susan Shaw
 Evan K. Slaughenhaupt Jr.
 Calvert County Board of County Commissioners

Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center, Dowell

Jan. 15
 Sunday

Conversations with Chesapeake Authors:
 Richard LaMotte,
 Pure Sea Glass
Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons

Jan. 16
 Dig In!

Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons

Jan. 19

PEM Talks: Lost Landmarks - The Boatbuilding Tradition in Southern Maryland
Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons

Jan. 24

Poetry Out Loud
CalvART Gallery, Prince Frederick

Feb. 3

Annmarie After Hours
Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center, Dowell

Feb. 3

First Free Friday
Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons

Feb. 4

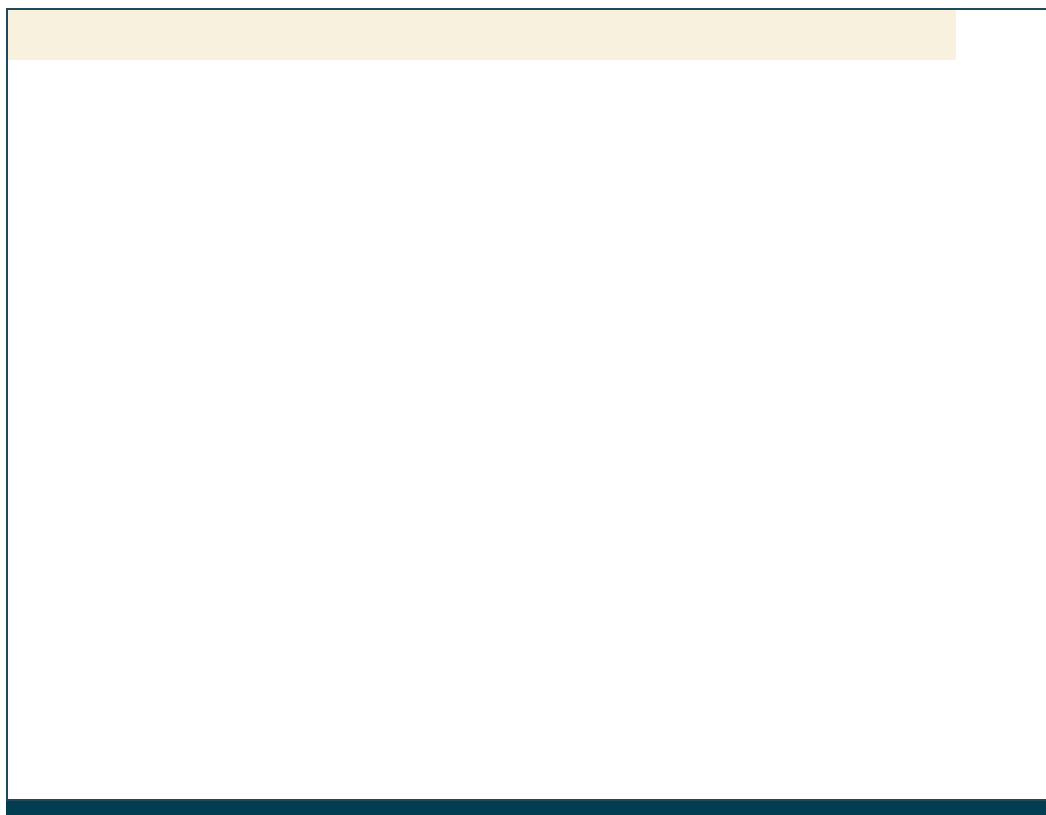
Valentine's Maker's Market
Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center, Dowell

Feb. 4

6th Annual Chocolover's Affair
Holiday Inn Solomons Conference Center & Marina, Solomons

Feb. 11


Poetry Out Loud
Calvert Marine




Museum, Solomons

Feb. 12
 Bayside Chats -
 Oyster Cultivation
*Chesapeake Beach
 Railway Museum,
 Chesapeake Beach*

**Visit the events
 calendar to learn
 more.**

 Join our
Mailing List

FEEDBACK 

We want to hear from
 you. [Click here](#) to
 e-mail your feedback.

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to vollanrm@co.cal.md.us by info@co.cal.md.us |
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Calvert County Board of County Commissioners | Courthouse | Prince Frederick | MD | 20678