



# ALLEGANY COUNTY, MARYLAND

## The Board of County Commissioners

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### The Board of County Commissioners of Allegany County

#### State of the County

**January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021**

As Allegany County and the nation emerge from this pandemic, we are stronger than ever. Due to 8 years of conservative budgeting, we now have a record \$4.2 million surplus, which we will use for the benefit of our residents. Additionally, we have ensured that our \$13.2 million in ARPA/stimulus funding is used for worthy projects and not wasted.

Allegany County invested \$500,000 to upgrade and expand broadband access and service via the Allconet fixed wireless broadband network. Allconet core network speeds were expanded in some areas by 10 times and the deployment of new CBRS 4G/5G LTE technologies provided much higher speed and power to push through the challenging Allegany County terrain. The CBRS technology coupled with deployment of equipment at 6 new sites and 4 new tower sites has enabled new connectivity options in Cash Valley, Flintstone, Mount Savage and Oldtown. We have also committed an additional \$1,000,000 million with the Connect Allegany program scheduled to launch on March 24, 2022 to further address connectivity needs.

Allegany County Department of Emergency Services secured the largest amount of grant money in the history of the Department, over \$1.1 million. This saves valuable tax dollars and providing state of the art radio and dispatching equipment.

We have more personnel working at the 911 Joint Communications Center than ever before. Working with AFSCME, we secured the largest pay raise for our 911 Dispatchers in the history of the 911 Center. When you call 911, we are getting to residents faster than ever before.

We have more EMS Clinicians working in Allegany County than ever before in the history of Department of Emergency Services. We are now providing 24/7 365 staffing at the Flintstone Fire Department, thus getting to faster now than ever before when you call 911 on the east end of the County.

We have also provided additional staffing at the Cresaptown Fire Department and the Corriganville Fire Department, getting to you faster now than ever before when you call 911. We will be putting a chase car equipped with basic life support 24/7 365 coverage on Route 51 from Cumberland City to Paw Paw.

We are currently conducting a Compensation & Classification Study through Evergreen Solutions, LLC, to ensure all County classifications reflect their duties and responsibilities and salary range assignments are internally equitable and competitive within our employment market

In the Department of Public Works, the second phase of a multiphase drainage improvement project was completed in Bowling Green for \$275,000.

A Georges Creek Stream Restoration Project was completed near Georges Creek School for \$150,000.

A collaborative effort between Public Works and Economic Development successfully completed the Frostburg Tech Building Project for approximately \$3,400,000.

A Safety improvement project on the GAP were made by incorporating a solar powered lighting system in the Borden Tunnel. The project totaled \$183,000.

The county replaced the Oldtown Roads Garage and Solid Waste/Recycling Site for \$1,200,000.

The LaVale Library Renovation/Addition is well underway, the project total is approximately \$4,400,000 with 90% of the funding coming from the State of Maryland.

Allegany High School Asbestos Abatement was completed for approximately \$1,000,000 and the demolition of the building will be underway soon estimated at \$700,000.

A new location in the Bedford Road area in now served by an Allegany County water system. The project totaled approximately \$600,000.

In Economic Development:

Ground is being cleared for construction of a 193,000 square foot FedEx distribution center. This will be the largest new building in the county since 2004.

The construction of 2<sup>nd</sup> Webstaurant location in Frostburg, MD. We retained 20 jobs and will yield 25-30 new jobs over the next 3 years.

We saw the completion of the new Berkley Springs Instruments (BSI) headquarters in Frostburg. It is a state of the art, 13,000 square foot facility that houses both back office and manufacturing activities.

We gave \$125,000 to the CEDC for the purchase of a property on Messick Road, to be developed by the CEDC at a later date.

An elevating the Outdoor Economy partnership/collaboration with Garrett County and Maryland Department of Commerce, received \$75,000 from ARC to strategically expand upon business attraction specific to outdoor/lifestyle manufacturing. \$25,000 match from Allegany County, Garrett County, and Commerce for \$150,000 total project.

Invest Allegany, a \$2 million matching grant program for capital improvements for businesses located in Allegany County, and our flagship program this year went live on Feb 21st. Grants range from \$20,000 to \$250,000.

The program is designed to encourage direct investment from business owners and to support redevelopment of the downtown sections of Cumberland, Frostburg, and other main streets in Allegany County.

The partnership between Allegany County and the City of Cumberland has never been stronger. Awarded \$365,000 to the CEDC for The Baltimore Street Comprehensive Improvement Program to match \$585,000 of capital grant and DHCD money to inject an additional \$950,000 into downtown Cumberland.

Our P-Tech program is thriving and will graduate first class this year.

The Western Maryland IT Center for Excellence is introducing a new 2 year data analytics program.

To date, out of 24 jurisdictions in the state of Maryland, only six had a flat or positive increase in Tourism Sales and Use Taxes for 2021 vs 2020. Allegany County, was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest jurisdiction in state for Tourism Sales and Use Tax growth.

Our Tourism economy continues to be resilient and successful in 2021 as we welcomed:

- Nearly 1 million visitors to Rocky Gap Casino Resort
- 330,000 visitors on our two trail systems – the Great Allegheny Passage and the C&O Canal Towpath
- 47,000 riders on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad.

We continued to assist our tourism attractions and our hospitality business community through pandemic recovery, while fostering new growth and expansion. Allegany County saw a surge in entrepreneurship in last year:

Tracks and Yaks, Maryland's only rail biking excursion opened in Frostburg.

Wheelzup Adventures, a full-service sporting goods and community and experience focused outfitter, open in Cumberland.

Steam returned to the mountainside, and we are excited for the success of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad with the fully-restored 1309 steam engine, the largest operating locomotive of its type in the world.

Frostburg's downtown welcomed 9 new businesses and zero closures.

Cumberland's downtown welcomed 13 new businesses.

Our Tourism Department took home two statewide awards, the Leveraging Partnership Award and Cooperative Partnership Award, during the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Maryland Travel and Tourism Summit in November.

Great Allegheny Passage Economic Impact Study which revealed the trail system generates \$800,000 in annual economic impact, per mile, equating to \$32 million in Allegany County.

Launched new product development to engage with visitors and create transactional opportunities such as the George Washington Trail 1753 and Donut and Coffee Trail.

Our tourism office continues to work in collaboration with local and regional partners with a focus on product development that will enhance our tourism assets and continue to deliver on quality of life in Allegany County, Maryland.

Allegany County, the City of Cumberland, and Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority have an active agreement to collaborate on the development of the Canal Place River Park Project. The River Park has the potential to transform the downtown, connecting outdoor recreation associated with river usage, generating economic impact while also tackling an environmental cause.

It has been an honor to serve as Allegany County Commissioner over the past 8 years. This is my last State of the County and I want to thank our citizens, county employees, and everyone else that is involved in our community. I can say without a doubt that Allegany County is on the right path and I'm excited to see what comes next. Thank you.