

STATE OF THE COUNTY 2023

ALLEGANY
• COUNTY •

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Allegany County Office Complex

701 Kelly Rd, Cumberland, MD 21502

Photo taken on November 22, 2022

Leadership + comments

We are excited to share with you some highlights that have happened in Allegany County during 2023. It's been a busy year with much positive momentum entering into the new year. This report will reflect on the many successes our County has experienced throughout various departments. I want to personally express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to our county staff for their hard work and dedication in 2023 and for the extraordinary services they have provided to the citizens of our County.

David J. Caporale
Commission President



William R. Atkinson
Commissioner



Creade V. Brodie, Jr.
Commissioner



Public
Business Meetings
live streamed
on our website!

Full meeting schedule can be found online at
www.alleganygov.org/378/meeting-schedule

Human Resources

2023 was a transformational year for us. The HR team spear-headed several large scale projects as part of our commitment to fairness, equity, and ensuring that our employees are valued for their contributions.

- Completed and implemented Evergreen Compensation & Classification Study throughout all County Departments
- Processed Retirement Incentive for approximately 34 employees and successfully recruited for those positions requiring backfill
- Implemented HSI/Thinkzoom Online Employee Training Portal and conducted two rounds of training
- In process of updating all County Job Descriptions

6 Update The
Address Book

Several supervisory and high contact positions were filled with new faces this year:

County Clerk - Samantha Logsdon
HR Employee Benefits Coordinator - Jennifer Howell
911 Joint Communications Center Chief - Steve Shipley
Roads Superintendent - John McMillan
Utilities Plant Operation Supervisor - Seth Bradley
Utilities Collection & Distribution Supervisor - Slick Ensminger

County Administrator

These are exciting times to be part of Allegany County Government. We are seeing renewed interest in our County for new housing, business and tourism that has not been felt in generations. One of the reasons being, our employees work hard and as a team to provide services and make improvements in the lives of citizens on a daily basis. Their passion and energy to make the place we all call home better is infectious and will lead to a brighter future for Allegany County.



Jason M. Bennett, CPA
County Administrator

Finance

The County operates on a fiscal year beginning July 1. During the calendar year, our Finance team wrapped up FY23 and prepared the budget for FY24. Some noteworthy information to consider:

- General Fund revenues exceeded expenditures by \$22 million, largely due to MD income tax withholding on a large local lottery winner payout.
- FY23 ended with a general fund balance of \$57 million – of which \$30 million is committed for future projects and to balance FY24 budget.
- \$6 million of American Rescue Grant money was spent during FY23.
- Staff has been preparing for a substantial system upgrade to accounting software that will offer residents additional capabilities, such as recurring/automatic payments, over-the-phone payments, and additional tender options, including ApplePay, PayPal and more.

FY24 Budget Summary

The County maintained fiscal responsibility with the Board of County Commissioners passing the **FY 2024 Operating and Capital Budget approved at \$152,465,411**. The budget reflects the following highlights:

- **Employee Compensation:** Approved 2% cost-of-living increase, without across-the-board increments.
- **Financial Policies:** Maintaining Cash Management/Investment Policy, adjusted debt service goals from over \$5 million annually to \$3 million annually.
- **General Fund:** FY24 General Fund Budget increased by 11%.
- **Tax Levy and Rates:** No change in property tax; piggyback tax decreased to 3.03% from 3.05%.
- **Revenue and Balancing:** Increased property tax revenue by \$2,031,516, income tax revenue by \$1,500,000, utilizing \$10,861,269 of fund balance for balancing.
- **State Mandate:** 50% cost of operating the MD State Department of Assessment and Taxation Office included in the FY24 budget at \$352,000.
- **Disparity Grants:** FY24 State disparity grant calculated at \$5,504,536, with a supplemental grant of \$1,632,000 allocated for the teacher pension shift.
- **Funding Allocation:** Maintenance of Effort provided for Board of Education, partial funding for Allegany College of Maryland, Health Department, and County Library System.
- **Debt Service Goals:** FY24 Budget maintains adherence to debt service goals.
- **County Health Insurance:** Continuation of the County health insurance program as self-insured for the 13th consecutive year for cost management.
- **Total General Fund Budget Expenditures:** \$113,127,728. Expenditures can be attributed to the following categories:
 - Education: 37.60%
 - Public Safety: 27.41%
 - Public Works: 12.20%
 - General Government: 11.22%
 - Recreation, Culture, Misc. & Other Transfers: 7.14%
 - Social Services & Health: 3.54%
 - Economic Development: 0.89%

Tourism



- Visitor volume grew 11%, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.
- Tourism generated \$194 million in annual visitor spending in Allegany County.
- Tourism placed 130 PR news stories last year with a reach of - 2 Billion!
- Stories placed in Travel + Leisure, Southern Living, Fox News, HDTV, and USA Today.

These accomplishments underscore our commitment to boosting tourism, leveraging our resources, and nurturing partnerships for continued growth and enhancement of our County's allure.

Assisted the Allegany Arts Council in securing the 3 year Levitt AMP Live Music Series grant.

Launched a new website and won Best Website in the State at the 2023 MTTS Annual Travel and Tourism Summit Awards.

Secured 2nd in the Top 10 List by USA Today 10Best as one of the "Best Places to Visit in the Fall."

Managed & completed the Elevating the Outdoors' ARC, regional grant project, with an upcoming website/marketing launch.



Launched a new Visitor Services learning program to enhance hospitality industry knowledge.

Implementation of a countywide signage and distribution program to better engage with visitors.

Department secured over \$727,000 in grants to be used towards various capital and noncapital projects within the County.

Engaged with State Agencies and partners for destination asset development such as: Wills Mt. State Park, River Park at Canal Place, and trails.

Tourism is the 3rd largest industry sector in Allegany County!

Emergency Services

Our Emergency Services Department is consistently improving, in both their policies and procedures and the technology they use. A few highlights from each division:

911 Joint Communications

- Text to 911 with video fully launched.
- Implemented RapidSOS Premium for increased caller location accuracy, and completed inside mapping of all Schools and County buildings in Allegany County to support Next Generation 911.
- Launched Law Enforcement Body Camera system to support local law enforcement.
- Increase in Helicopter Utilization by over 50 percent from last year.
- Update of the communication policy, specifically to increase response times to ensure a quicker on scene time.

Emergency Management

- Requested and received over \$1.9 million in funding for projects from the 911 Board .
- Collected data and reviewed plans for a Comprehensive Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.
- Deployment of Box Trucks and Paratech Shores for Special Operations in Collapse and Hazmat Teams.
- Hosted the first-ever County-funded fire hose and ladder testing to meet NFPA standards.

Emergency Medical Services

- Featured news stories on ABC 7 WJLA & Fox 45 in the Metro Area, highlighting rural EMS.
- Approval and initiation of Rapid Sequence Intubation and cadaver lab training.
- Extensive training provided to approximately 500 students in CPR and Stop the Bleed techniques.
- Acquisition and approval for the use of a portable ventilator for acute incidents.
- Establishment of the EMS Sergeant position and promotion of four providers.
- Assumption of billing responsibilities for all EMS Departments enabling eligibility for ESPP Grant funding.
- Adoption of Handtevy program for medication administration and documentation.
- Creation of a Resuscitation Committee to enhance cardiac arrest survival rates through thorough review of every incident.

These strides highlight our commitment to providing top-notch emergency services and our dedication to continuous improvement, training, and innovation for the safety and well-being of our community.



Economic & Community Development

We are particularly pleased with the year our ED team had. We have seen new heights of progress, interest and growth in Allegany County, and are very optimistic about what lies ahead. Some of the notable events of 2023 are:

- Completed a 5-year lease with **Geocycle at the Barton Shell Building**, with options for additional 5-year terms.
- Sale of **Lot 8 in Frostburg Industrial Park to Sierra Hygiene**, enabling up to 100,000 SQ Ft expansion for manufacturing and distribution.
- **Organic Remedies commenced operations in North Branch Industrial Park**, initially hiring 12, planning expansion for increased products and employment.
- **Allegany High School site awarded to DR Horton** for residential development, featuring single-family homes, townhomes, greenspace, and walking trails; draft site plan expected in early January 2024.
- Lease/Purchase agreement signed with **Clym Environmental Services** for construction of a 20,000 SQ Ft facility in the **Frostburg Industrial Park**, employing 15 to 25 initially, potential for 50 to 75 additional jobs in Phase 2.
- Establishment of a **tech incubator on Main St. in Frostburg**, aiming to attract startup tech firms across Maryland, supporting local talent retention after graduation.
- **Senator George Edwards Fund assisted local businesses** like Queen City Creamery, 1812 Brewery, Western Maryland Lemonade, and Reptilian Arts with expanding into mid-Atlantic region markets.

On-Going Initiatives

- Option agreement with Nexus W2V for location in North Branch Industrial Park, potential for new employment and private investment.
- Commitment to demolition on Vocke Rd in LaVale to prepare for a national chain restaurant, and redevelopment assistance for properties in LaVale, Frostburg, and Cumberland.
- Negotiations with Burgmeier Hauling for 8 acres in North Branch Industrial Park for a waste transfer station.
- Active pursuit of the purchase of a 36,649 square foot building in LaVale, MD, aiming to support potential food/beverage manufacturers and market the property regionally.



Public Works

The Department of Public Works is responsible for several different divisions including Roads, Utilities (Water & Wastewater), Engineering, Maintenance, Fairgrounds and Transit. Much of their work requires extensive planning and funding, and they are excellent at obtaining necessary grant funds to complete big jobs. Some of their milestones this year include:

- Sewer repairs and pump station replacements, and critical water infrastructure replacement with American Rescue Plan funding exceeding \$3 million.
- Replacement of water line infrastructure along MD Route 36, reducing water loss and providing emergency connection to Midland, Lonaconing, and Barton for \$400,000.
- Ongoing multiphase Locust Grove Pump Station project, nearing two-thirds completion, with an overall cost of over \$25 million and a local cost impact of around 8%.
- Renovation and maintenance work at Washington Street Library, including sidewalk and retaining wall rehabilitation and a roof replacement.
- Completion of Miners Memorial Park project, commemorating coal miners' history and lives lost, funded by local and state partners with DPW administration, totaling approximately \$500,000.
- Construction of a new solid waste and recycling facility in eastern Allegany County, adjacent to the Flintstone/Orleans Roads Garage.
- Renovation of existing warehouse (Building 41) to house Department of Public Works - Maintenance Division and employees from Department of Public Works - Roads Division.
- Replacement of culvert crossings on Spruce Springs Rd, Bear Hill Rd, and Williams Rd.
- Phased drainage improvement project in Bowling Green area, funded by a partnership between MDOT-SHA and Allegany County Commissioners, including stormwater management, sewer, and water utility improvements.
- Restoration of Borden Tunnel on the Great Allegheny Passage Trail underway through an 80-20 match with MDOT-SHA National Recreational Trails Program, scheduled for completion in early Spring 2025.
- Design and engineering of Willowbrook Outdoor Wellness Center Project adjacent to Allegany College of Maryland, funded through various partnerships for site development, outdoor facilities, and amenities.
- Replacement of grandstand ramp at Allegany County Fairgrounds using Project Open Space funding for ADA-compliance.

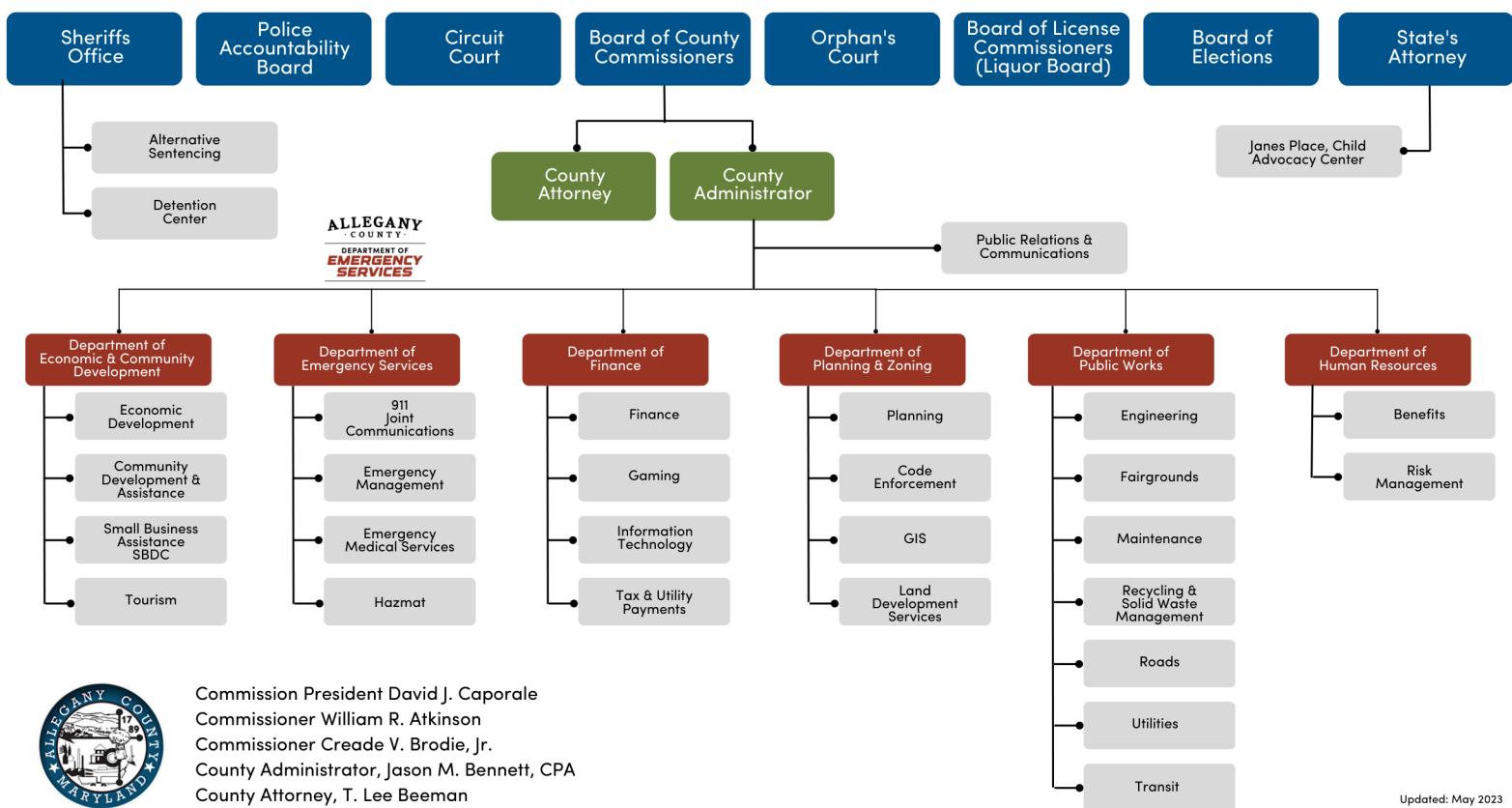


Departmental did you know?



County Government consists of many moving parts, and many different departments. Some funnel up directly to the Commissioners and some work as related groups. We are also responsible for funding/partially funding several other organizations in the County, including the Board of Education, Allegany College of Maryland, and the Department of Social Services.

ALLEGANY COUNTY Organization Chart



More Departmental Facts & Figures for Calendar Year 2023

Planning & Zoning

- **Permits Applied:** 267
- **Permits Issued:** 233
- **Dwellings (SFDs) Issued:** 10
- **CO's issued:** 50
- **Total Value of Construction authorized within County:** \$46,217,064.12

Elections

315 election judges recruited for the 2024 Presidential Election cycle!



Fairgrounds/Fair Week

- **Attendance:** 35,000
- **Total Exhibits Entered:** Over 3,000
- **4H Animal Exhibits Entered:** 300
- **Livestock Sold:** 250
- **Grandstand Performers:** Tracy Byrd, Zach Williams, and KIX



Recycling

The Recycling & Solid Waste Department hosts a Household Hazardous Waste Recycling event every two year's. Totals for this years event are as follows:

- **Hazardous Material Collected:** 17,300 lbs
- **Cans of Latex Paint:** 797



State's Attorney

The office handled a totality of **3,708 cases** to conclusion, which included 3,246 misdemeanors and 462 felony cases.



Transit

Alltrans Paratransit Service: 19,477 passenger trips.

Fixed Route Bus Service: 92,548 passengers



Detention Center

- **Intake #:** 2,091 inmates
- **Release #:** 2,097 inmates
- **Average Daily Population:** 195 inmates
- **Average length of stay:** 13 days
- **Average age:** 36

Sheriff's Office



- **Total Incidents Reported:** 13,948
- **Arrests:** 1,171
- **NEW Warrant Unit Activity:** 331
- **Motor Vehicle Citations:** 266
- **Motor Vehicle Warnings:** 2,163
- **Total Narcotics Cases:** 312
- **Total Currency Seized (CDS Related):** \$70,886
- **Firearms Seized (CDS Related):** 13

Information Technology

Our IT team supports all County Departments with their technology needs, and works on community grants and initiatives regularly. Some of their CY23 highlights are as follows:

- Secured grants to expand fiber optic broadband in Canal Place Heritage Area.
- Teamed up with anchor organizations for Maryland Connected Devices Program, distributing devices to eligible residents.
- Implemented cloud-based Polaris-Police Body Camera & Digital Evidence Management.
- Enhanced County's GIS and 911 Cad infrastructure.
- Successfully shifted from paper-based to electronic forms for many Departments, boosting organizational efficiency.



Other CY23 Highlights

Throughout CY23 we have had the opportunity to hear from/celebrate some exciting people and organizations within our community and state. Our Commissioners attend many community events and present several citations for official recognition through any given year. Here are a few highlights from 2023:

- Attended Mt. Maryland PACE Reception and Breakfast in Annapolis.
- Celebrated all three local High School Marching Bands as Champions in their respective categories.
- Celebrated the State Champion Fort Hill High School Football Team.
- Hosted the Estonian Ambassador for a day as part of the Sister Cities program.
- Honored the Cumberland Historic Cemetery Organization for their 40th Anniversary.
- Celebrated Frostburg State University's 125th Anniversary.
- Celebrated local Company, BSI, on their Community Economic Development Project award from the Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA).
- Recognized Rocky Gap Casino Resort on their 10-year Anniversary.
- Hosted MD Secretary of the Environment, Serena McIlwain, and Maryland Department of Commerce, Secretary Kevin Anderson for two separate full day tours of the County.
- Attended Winter and Summer Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Conferences, with key discussions regarding the Kirwin Blueprint and other challenges facing rural counties.
- Met with Governor Moore and cabinet during their two-day retreat to Allegany County, including a pit stop at the Allegany County Chamber Crab Feast.



Communications News

- In CY23, we launched a **new County logo and brand colors** in an effort to more clearly streamline our presence across departments. This effort was underscored with the release of our **newly redesigned website** in May.
- We also made an update to our **Meeting and Agenda software** to better organize Public Meeting documents, and host live streams directly on our site. Additional benefits include video bookmarking and Agenda search terms.
- We encourage residents to sign up for News Alerts at <https://alleganygov.org/Communications-Hub>



For more information on
County Departments, visit
www.alleganygov.org

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