

STATE OF THE COUNTY 2024

ALLEGANY
• COUNTY •

Table of Contents

Leadership Comments	_____	2
Human Resources	_____	3
Finance	_____	4-5
Tourism	_____	6
Emergency Services	_____	7
Economic & Community Development	_____	8
Public Works	_____	9
Additional Highlights	_____	10-12



Allegheny County Office Complex
701 Kelly Rd, Cumberland, MD 21502
Photo taken on November 22, 2022

Leadership *comments*

As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that Allegany County is entering an exciting era of growth, modernization, and collaboration, all while preserving the small-town charm and unique character that make our community so special. Despite the challenges of navigating an inflated economic environment, our dedicated staff has worked tirelessly to manage resources responsibly and provide the high-quality services our residents deserve. As we look ahead, we recognize the importance of continuing to balance fiscal responsibility with the needs of our community. Together, we will keep striving to ensure a bright and sustainable future for all who call Allegany County home. I am deeply grateful for the hard work of our exceptional team and proud to lead in such a remarkable place.



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

The Human Resources Department has had a productive year focused on supporting Allegany County employees while navigating fiscal challenges. In its second year, the Thinkzoom Employee Training program provided valuable learning opportunities, covering topics such as supervisory skills, compliance, and wellness. A comprehensive review of the employee health insurance package led to plan design changes, including cost-sharing measures, while maintaining competitive premiums to ensure an attractive benefits package. Significant time was dedicated to communicating and explaining these changes to employees, reflecting a continued commitment to assisting staff in navigating future claims and benefits inquiries. Additionally, the department hosted its inaugural Employee Health Fair, featuring a variety of health-related vendors, wellness activities, and prizes. Amid budget constraints, HR provided essential support during staffing adjustments, including the freezing of positions and EMS layoffs, demonstrating a commitment to balancing organizational needs with employee well-being.

County Administrator

This past year has been one of growth, resourcefulness, and careful planning for Allegany County. We are proud to see businesses not only choosing to establish themselves here but also expanding their operations—a clear sign of confidence in our community's potential. Collaboration has been key, and our strong partnerships with the state have allowed us to maximize available funding to support critical areas.



Jason M. Bennett, CPA

County Administrator

Our team has worked diligently to make the most of every resource, ensuring that even in challenging financial times, we can continue to deliver high-quality services to our residents. At the same time, we are keeping an eye on the future, balancing immediate needs with strategic planning to maintain and upgrade vital systems and equipment.

During times of financial restraint, the dedication and creativity of our staff and partners truly shine. Their commitment to innovation and efficiency ensures that we can remain focused on what matters most—serving the citizens of Allegany County with excellence. Together, we are building a brighter, more sustainable future for our community.

Finance

The Fiscal Year 2025 budget was crafted with a focus on sustainability and fiscal responsibility in the face of new financial challenges. Key highlights include:

- **No Property Tax Increases:** The budget maintains the current property tax rate and the reduced income tax rate implemented two years ago.
- **Selective Fee Adjustments:** Increases were made only to the 911 fee and trash sticker prices, ensuring these services keep pace with rising costs.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** Outside agencies, including Allegany College of Maryland, the Health Department, and more, contributed by finding ways to do more with less funding.
- **Difficult Workforce and Budget Decisions:** Measures included workforce reductions, position freezes, adjustments to health insurance programs, and operating budget cuts to address revenue declines and rising expenses.
- **EMS Budget Adjustments:** Rising EMS operational costs prompted significant budget reductions to maintain long-term sustainability.

These steps reflect a commitment to maintaining essential services and avoiding additional tax burdens for residents during a challenging economic period. While these decisions were not easy, they were necessary to uphold Allegany County's financial stability for the future.



FY25 Budget Summary

Total General Fund Revenue & Expenditures: \$106,821,679

Major Budget Allocations:

- Education: \$41,367,027 (37.6%)
- Public Safety: \$28,796,357 (27.0%)
- Public Works: \$11,429,724 (12.2%)
- General Government: \$12,736,390 (11.9%)
- Debt Service: \$1,887,283
- Health: \$2,375,226 (2.2%)
- Economic Development: \$999,875 (0.9%)
- Recreation & Culture: \$1,910,768 (1.8%)

Revenue Breakdown:

- Property Tax Revenue: \$49,075,029
- Income Tax Revenue: \$30,000,000
- State & Federal Grants: \$13,212,935

Department Budgets

Comparing budgeted expenses through November vs the actual.

EMS

- Budgeted through Nov: \$2,022,091
- Actual expenses: \$2,783,317
- Exceeding Budget by \$761,226
- Difference is primarily Overtime and Professional Fees.



All other Departments within Budget as of 11/30/24

Revenues



Difficult to predict at this point in time, but there are no red flags as of 11/30/24.

What to keep an eye on:

Income tax can materially fluctuate

Department Overtime Budgets

Comparing budgeted expenses through November vs the actual.

EMS

- Budgeted through Nov: \$183,040
- Actual expenses: \$473,958
- Exceeding Budget by \$290,918
- They have already spent 100% all of budgeted overtime for the year. Average bi-weekly overtime is \$40,000. At this rate, \$600,000 additional by year end.



Detention Center

- Budgeted Expenses through Nov: \$57,200
- Actual expenses: \$128,418
- Exceeding Budget by \$71,218
- They have already spent 93% all of budgeted overtime.



Health Insurance Costs

\$982,140 over budget as of 10/31/24

EMS Accounts Receivable

Amounts out for billing that have not been paid. Difficult to predict what percentage of the owed amount will actually be paid, for various reasons.

- At 6/30/24, \$813,325 owed
- At 9/30/24, \$1,020,376 owed
- \$158,000 was written off in October.2024*
- At 10/31/24, \$696,382 owed



*Each month, write offs are deducted from balance

Overall Budget Deficit as of 11/30/24

Budget Deficit from the FY25 Adopted Budget

\$283,961

This is the amount of predicted expenses for FY2025 that was not covered by predicted revenue.



Expected Budget Amendments

\$331,216

State's Attorney Office - Body Cam Units

\$250,000

Transit - possible transfer to cover loss of funding.



Credit Card Collection Fees

\$650,000

Amount we are covering until changes can be made to pass fees on, as planned.



Salaries Moving Off ARPA Funding

\$130,000

3 employees moving off ARP funding between 1/1-6/30



Vacation Buy Back

\$156,000

Per policy, amount of vacation buy back beyond budgeted amount.



Salary Freeze Differential

\$1,700,000

Planned to lose and not refill 16 positions but have lost only 3 so far.



Total Predicted Year End Deficit as of 11/30/24

\$3,501,177

Tourism



- Visitor Growth: In 2023, visitor volume increased by 114% compared to 2019, the last non-pandemic and record-breaking year.
- Visitor Spending: Grew by 5%, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 22%.
- Economic Impact: Tourism generates \$202 million in annual visitor spending, contributing \$50 million in total tax revenues.
- Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues: Over the past six years, four months in 2024 ranked among the highest in monthly tax revenue.
- Website Traffic: 83% increase in visits to MDMOUNTAINSIDE.COM year over year.
- Grant Funding: Secured \$202,000 in grants for noncapital projects within the county.
- Public Relations Success: Placed 165 PR news stories in the past year.
- Featured in Travel + Leisure, Southern Living, Fox News, HGTV, and USA Today.



Recipient of a bronze Telly Award for "Best Non-broadcasting Campaign"



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

We hosted Maryland's 1st ever Maryland Outdoor Economy Summit

We were named the 3rd "Best Places to Visit in the Fall" by USA Today.

We traveled to Chattanooga, TN, to present at the Appalachian Regional Commission's Annual Conference

We continue to work closely with our partners on the development of the River Park at Canal Place and Wills Mountain State Park

We won the 2024 State of Maryland "Leveraging Partnerships" award



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

- 911 System Upgrades: Maryland 9-1-1 Board awarded \$3M for a phone system upgrade and \$290K for console furniture at primary and backup centers.
- School & Government Building Mapping: Completed the first statewide project integrating indoor maps into Motorola Flex CAD and VESTA Phone System.
- New CAD System: Replaced the 15-year-old Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system with Motorola Flex CAD on March 19, 2024 after a two-year installation.
- 911 Specialist Training: All specialists completed the state-mandated Stress Management course through APCO.

Emergency Management

- Hazard Mitigation Plan: Formally adopted by FEMA and all municipalities in August 2024.
- EOC Security Upgrade: Funded by a Senator Cardin Grant to enhance security at the PPG Road Public Safety Building.
- Cybersecurity Grant: Awarded for inclusion in Maryland's ISO Shared Service Program, ensuring updated system-wide cybersecurity.
- P25 Radios: Purchased for Board of Education Special Police Officers using SHSP funds to improve interoperability with local law enforcement..

Emergency Medical Services

- Ventilator Addition: Placed a second ventilator in service with Opioid Intervention Team (OIT) Grant funding.
- Paramedic Training: Nine paramedics completed Rapid Sequence Intubation (RSI) training, enabling advanced airway management by Sergeants, Lieutenants, and the EMS Chief.
- Equipment Upgrades: Used Opioid Restitution Fund (ORTF) Grant to purchase the county's first Lifepak 35 defibrillator, cardiac compression devices, and airway management tools.
- Leadership Promotions: Promoted four Sergeants to enhance operations across eight county ambulance crews covering 430 square miles daily.

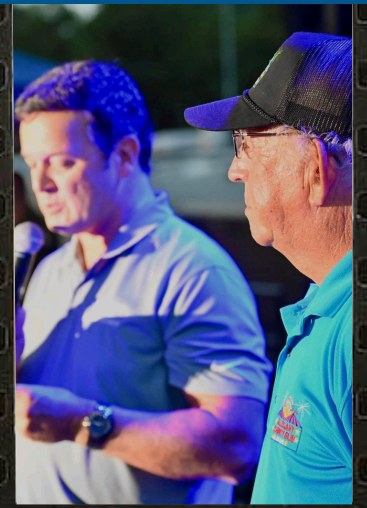
These strides highlight our commitment to providing top-notch emergency services and our dedication to continuous improvement, training, and innovation for the safety and well-being of our community.



Economic & Community Development

In 2024, the Allegany County Economic and Community Development (ACECD) department undertook several initiatives to promote regional growth and enhance the community's quality of life.

- **Housing Development:** Collaborated with D.R. Horton to create redevelopment plans for the former Allegany High School site into a new neighborhood featuring market-rate housing, green spaces, and walking trails.
- **Downtown Revitalization:** Supported projects converting underutilized buildings into residential and commercial spaces, including the transformation of the McMullen and Rosenbaum buildings in downtown Cumberland.
- **Baltimore Street Redevelopment:** Contributed \$1.5 million in funding to the comprehensive renovation of Baltimore Street, enhancing infrastructure and aesthetics to boost business and tourism.
- **Business Attraction and Expansion:** Focused on attracting sustainable businesses in the circular economy, supporting companies like Nexus W2V, Burgmeier Hauling, Geocycle, and Clym Environmental Services. Also welcomed Kingspan to Allegany County.
- **Grant Programs:** Launched the Clean Tech Research and Development Grant and the Business Expansion Deferred Loan Program to provide financial assistance for business innovation and growth.
- **Tourism and Recreation:** Advanced the River Park at Canal Place project, aiming to create recreational assets like a whitewater course and nature trails to boost tourism and community engagement.



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:

Borden Tunnel Restoration Project

- Location: Great Allegheny Passage Trail, 2.5 miles west of Frostburg, MD
- Funded by: MDOT-SHA National Recreational Trails Program (80-20 match)
- Status: Under design with Wilson T. Ballard
- Plan: Install metal corrugated lining similar to Pinkerton Tunnel (PA)
- Construction Timing: Aiming to align with Big Savage Tunnel closure (2025-2026)

Willowbrook Outdoor Wellness (WOW) Center Project

- Location: Adjacent to Allegany College of Maryland
- Phase I (Completed): Outdoor classroom, fitness court, walking trail, Access roads and parking areas, Culvert crossing installed using a recycled train tanker car (DPW - Roads Division)
- Phase II (Pending Funding): Artificial turf football/soccer field, Natural grass multi-use fields, Concession/restroom/storage building, Additional park amenities

Road & Infrastructure Projects

- Bowling Green & Potomac Park Paving Project: \$1.5 million road restoration following Columbia Gas system repairs
- Frostburg Depot Train Station Brick Restoration: Improved walking surfaces around Old Depot. Compliments recent deck rehabilitation project
- Allegany County Courthouse & Annex Security Upgrades (\$191,000): New security cameras, access control readers, X-ray machine, duress alarms. Ballistic film protection for first & second-floor windows (2025)
- Allegany County Health Department Generator Replacement (\$175,000): Provides full backup power for dental patient care

Utilities & Infrastructure Upgrades

- Locust Grove Pump Station Project: 90% complete; operational with final completion by August 2025. \$28 million total cost; 8% local funding impact.
- Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Pilot Program: 50 new smart water meters installed. Automates water usage data via cellular network.

Transit & Facility Improvements

- Transit Garage Door Replacement: Replaced four outdated garage doors at Transit Office, Lafayette Street, Cumberland. Funded through federal, state, and local contributions.

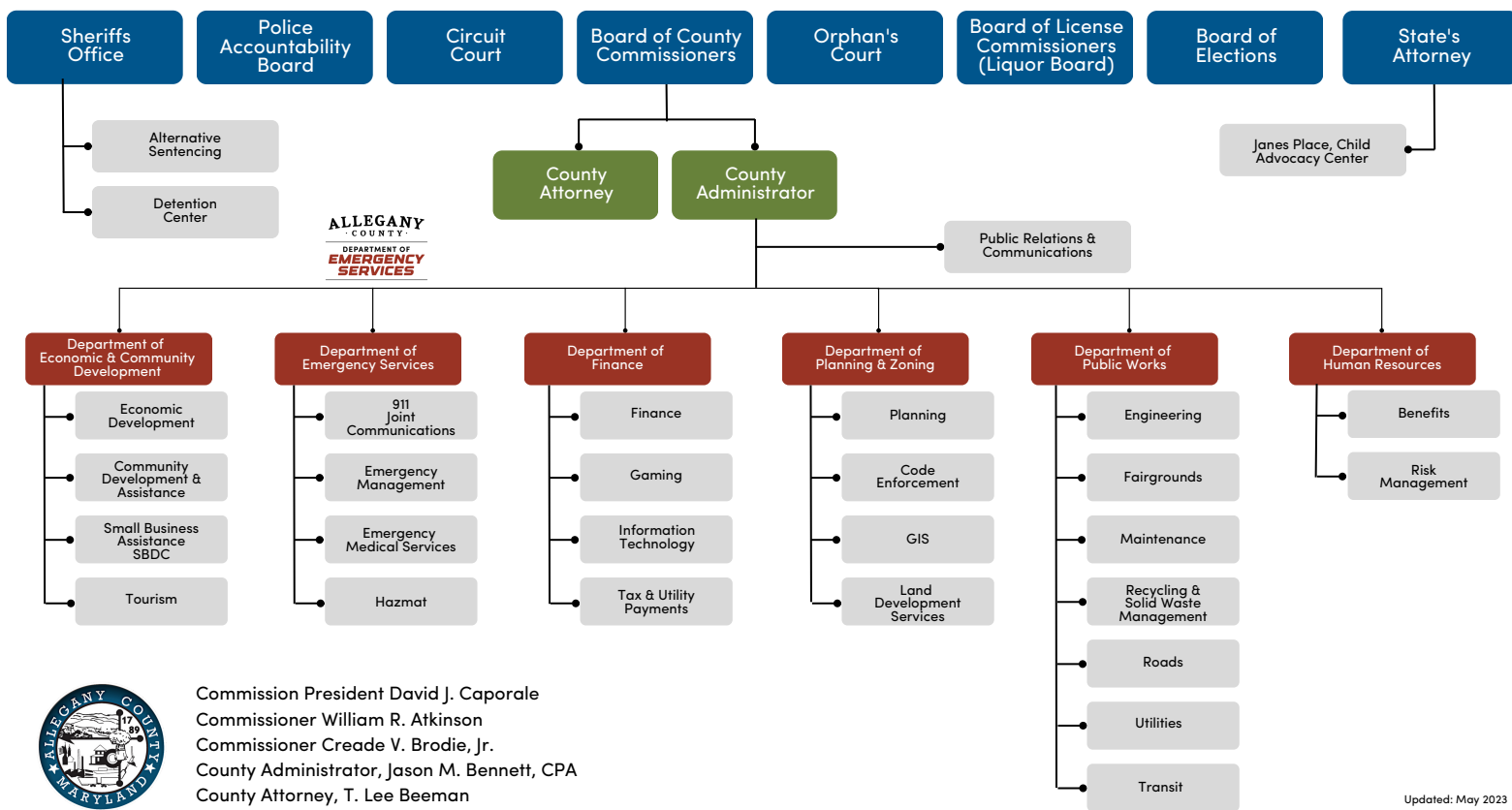


Departmental *did you know?*

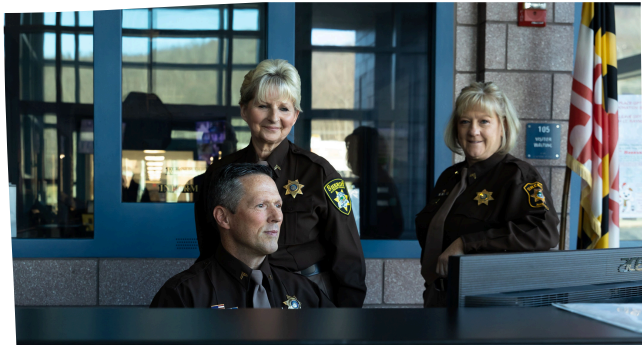


County Government consists of many moving parts, and many different departments. Some funnel up directly to the Commissioners and some work as related groups. We are also responsible for funding/partially funding several other organizations in the County, including the Board of Education, Allegany College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

ALLEGANY COUNTY Organization Chart



Updated: May 2023



Detention Center

- **Intake #:** 2,122 inmates
- **Release #:** 2,131 inmates
- **Average Daily Population:** 202 inmates
- **Inmates who arrived using opiates:** 563 inmates
- **Average age:** 35

Information Technology

Our IT team supports all County Departments with their technology needs, and works on community grants and initiatives regularly. Some of their CY24 highlights are as follows:

- **Chromebook and Connected Devices Program:** We continued our work with the Chromebook - Connected Devices program and the administration of Connect Allegany broadband grants.
- **Implemented New IT Training for Employees** – Provided targeted training programs to improve technical skills and cybersecurity awareness.
- **P-Tech Employer Partner** – Supported students by offering real-world IT experiences, workplace skills development, mentoring, and career exposure. The student's pilot project was designed to enhance the County Commissioners Public Meeting live stream by incorporating captions and multi camera views working
- **Consolidated Telephone Systems** – Achieved cost savings and improved performance through system integration.
- **Upgraded Application Platforms** – Transitioned applications to higher-performing platforms to enhance efficiency and reliability.
- **Enhanced System Integrations** – Improved process functionality by optimizing system compatibility, streamlining data flow, and providing more tools for end users to increase productivity.
- **Introduced AI Tools to Improve Departmental Efficiencies** – Leveraged artificial intelligence solutions to automate tasks, enhance decision-making, and streamline operations.
- **Reconstructed Station Cabling to Support Joint Communication Center Operations** – refreshed cabling infrastructure to support multiple critical emergency response processes.



Elections

Mail In Voting: 5,634

Early Voting: 7,198

Election Day Voting: 18,201

Provisional Voting: 1,350

Voter Turnout: 74.54%

Election Judges to work Election Day: 315

Election Judges to work Early Voting: 88



Planning & Zoning

• **Permits Applied:** 269

• **Permits Issued:** 230

• **Dwellings (SFDs) Issued:** 18

• **Certificate of Occupancy's issued:** 38

• **Total Value of Construction authorized within County:** \$26,964,721

Transit

Alltrans Paratransit Service: 23,089

passenger trips.

Fixed Route Bus Service: 96,723 passengers

Recycling

#1 Plastics: 87.98 tons

Newspaper: 2.84 tons

#2 Plastics: 37.49 tons

Cans: 31.29 tons

Cardboard: 204.39 tons

Mixed Paper: 139.30

- Roughly 100 more tons in 2024 compared to 2023 that was diverted from the landfill

Other CY24 Highlights

Throughout CY24 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 2024:

- Attended Mt. Maryland PACE Reception and Breakfast in Annapolis.
- Hosted the 1st Annual Positive People Awards, receiving several nominations of positives forces within Allegany County. We ultimately honored two winners in five categories, for a total of 10 award recipients.
- Hosted Leadership Allegany and Leadership Allegany Rising for County Government Day
- Celebrated the State Champion Fort Hill High School Football Team.
- Hosted Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development Secretary Jake Day for a tour of Allegany County and roundtable for local discussion.
- Hosted Maryland Department of Emergency Management Secretary Russ Strickland for a tour of Allegany County and roundtable for local discussion.
- Celebrated several local volunteer firefighters for services years in excess of 50 years!
- Attended the annual Maryland Association of Counties conference and participated in the Taste of Maryland showcase, featuring a local food product.
- Appointed a new Health Officer for the Allegany County Health Department, Gina Spear.
- Celebrated 100 years of the Allegany County Fairgrounds

Communications News

- The County website provides access to past Commissioner meeting minutes and video recordings. Residents can watch previous meetings and live stream future ones by navigating to Government > Board of County Commissioners > Meetings & Agendas.
- Stay informed by signing up for News Alerts at <https://alleganygov.org/Communications-Hub>.



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

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