



Calvert County, Maryland

Progress Report 2013

2010-2014
Board of County Commissioners



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A Message from the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners

*W*e are about to begin the final quarter of a four-year term that has been full of challenges and new experiences. Through it all, our county and its residents have met those challenges with grace and integrity.

As the national economy slowly recovers from one of the worst recessions in generations, Calvert County has persevered because of strong, conservative fiscal policies. The Board of County Commissioners managed to structurally balance the budget each year despite revenue decreases, held the line on property taxes, maintained public services without disruption to our citizens and avoided layoffs and furloughs.

However, we were selective in choosing new initiatives and believe the projects detailed in this report are necessary in maintaining the quality of life Calvert County residents have come to expect.

We are proud of this community we call home and all the people who continue to make Calvert County a great place to work and live. Without the efforts of staff, the honest feedback of residents and the participation of so many in the government process, we would not have been able to accomplish so much. Thank you.

Pat Nutter, President

Steven R. Weems, Vice President

Gerald W. Clark

Susan Shaw

Evan K. Slaughenhoupt Jr.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Calvert County maintained **structurally balanced annual budgets** in a difficult financial climate.

County **bond ratings remain excellent**, with both Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's placing the county at their highest AAA ratings and Moody's Investor Service giving an Aa1 rating.

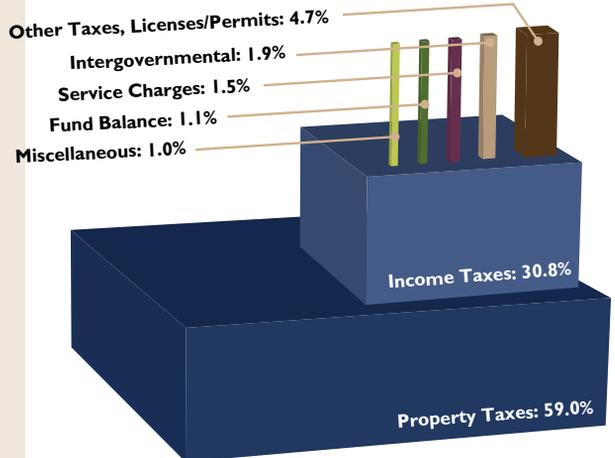
Capital projects continue to be funded for the county's vital infrastructure, including roadway improvements and projects at Calvert High School and the College of Southern Maryland.

Salary step increases averaging 2.6 percent were given in FY 2014 for the first time since FY 2009. In FY 2010 and FY 2011, employees were given a .5 percent increase with no step increases.

While the nation slowly climbs out of recession, the fiscal environment at the local level is more stable. As a result of the housing crisis, we saw a drop in property tax revenues as housing prices plummeted. After several years the decrease was somewhat offset by increases in income tax receipts. We kept our tax rates unchanged and Calvert County's real property and income tax rates remain in the bottom third statewide. In fact, property taxes have not been raised in Calvert County since 1987.

This Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has taken a conservative approach to managing tax dollars. Prioritizing the use of county revenue is a deeply serious task and we have worked to implement sound fiscal policies based on controlling expenditures and rigorous financial planning. This approach has helped the county maintain its strong bond ratings that contribute to favorable financing terms for major projects.

We have balanced our budgets each year and have

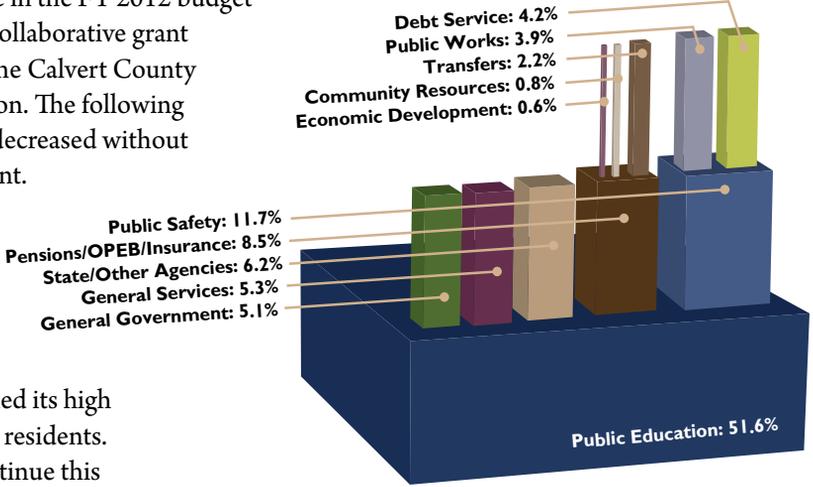


Fiscal Year 2014 General Fund Revenues

seen increases in the overall budget of 5.6 percent from Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 through FY 2014.

A budget increase in the FY 2012 budget was caused by a collaborative grant agreement with the Calvert County Board of Education. The following year, the budget decreased without that one-time grant.

With this sturdy fiscal foundation, county government staff has maintained its high level of service to residents. We pledge to continue this tradition.



Fiscal Year 2014 General Fund Expenditures

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

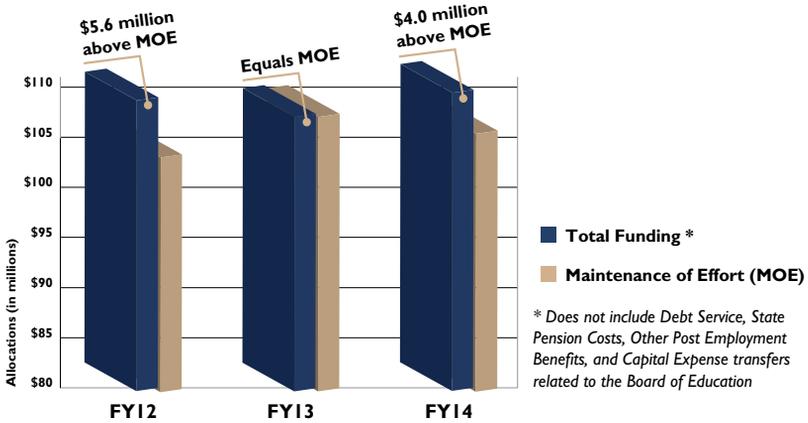
ACHIEVEMENTS

In FY 2012, the first phase of the estimated \$58.6 million **Calvert High School renovation and addition project** was completed, with the final two phases now under way. Calvert County Government has contributed \$19.3 million toward the project to date.

Building B at the College of Southern Maryland Prince Frederick campus was completed in FY 2013 with the county's funding portion totaling \$3.53 million.

More than half of the county government budget each year is dedicated to our public schools. We have an outstanding and effective partnership with the Calvert County Board of Education (BOE) that demonstrates a strong emphasis on the educational benefits to our children.

State law requires all Maryland counties to provide education funding based on maintenance of effort (MOE). Designed to protect the quality of our children's education, MOE prevents reductions in per-pupil spending from year to year. In addition to the \$105.8 million required by MOE in FY 2014, the county provided an additional \$4 million to be used at the discretion of the BOE. County education spending has increased each year even as student enrollment has declined.



Fiscal Year 2012-2014 Public Education Funding County Funding vs. Maintenance of Effort Requirements

ACHIEVEMENTS, *CONT.*

A new Northern High School is planned and in FY 2012 the county contributed \$96,700 for a project feasibility study. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of FY 2019 with an estimated county contribution of \$36 million.

Calvert County Public Schools ranked fourth in Maryland on the School Progress Index through the Maryland State Department of Education. According to Education Week magazine, Maryland's school system is ranked the highest in the country.

Calvert County Public Schools served 15,886 students in the 2012-2013 school year in 13 elementary schools, six middle schools and four high schools.

Higher education is also a priority in Calvert County. In FY 2014, Calvert County provided \$4.2 million in funding to the College of Southern Maryland, 1.82 percent of the county's total operating budget.



The new CSM Prince Frederick campus Building B is LEED certified and contains the Nuclear Energy Training Center.

PUBLIC SAFETY

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Department of Public Safety is in the first year of a three-year project to upgrade the **public safety radio communications system** to improve communication capabilities among fire/rescue/EMS and police services.

The **Calvert Control Center** has been renovated and expanded to a total of eight 911 dispatcher stations.

The **911 telephone system is being upgraded** with new hardware and software using funds from the Maryland Emergency Number Systems Board. The work is expected to be finished this fall.

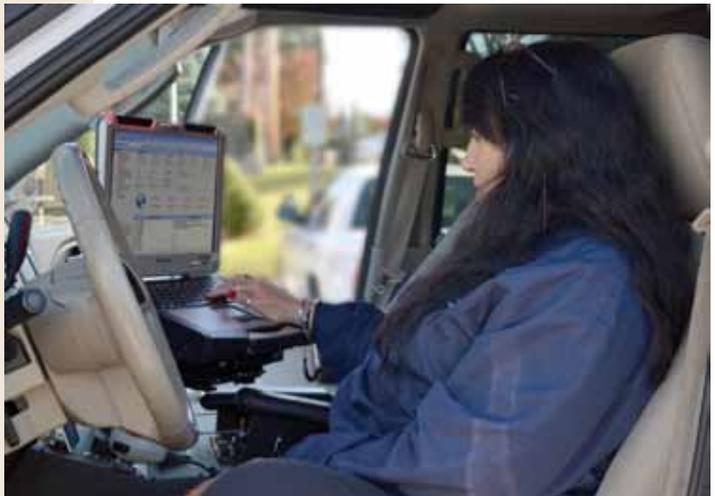
The auxiliary 911 center in Barstow also received a telephone system upgrade and now has nine operator stations.

New mobile data terminals help county EMS personnel provide more efficient service.

Public safety is one of the primary functions of local government. We are proud of those in the Calvert County Sheriff's Office, the county Department of Public Safety, our 911 emergency dispatchers and the 100-percent volunteer fire/rescue/EMS service who work to protect the public each day.

Calvert County's 2010 violent crime rate was the lowest it's been since 1976. The Maryland State Police Uniform Crime Report shows a 15-percent reduction in overall crime from calendar years 2011 to 2012. Demonstrating our ongoing commitment to public safety, funding is available in the FY 2014 budget for the sheriff's office to hire three new deputies, four office positions and provide promotions for sheriff's office management. Ten sworn officer positions were added between FY 2010 and FY 2014.

Funding for public safety in FY 2014 totals more than \$27 million, representing 11.6 percent of the General Fund budget.



ACHIEVEMENTS, *CONT.*

New **mobile data terminals** were installed in county medic units and ambulances. This grant-funded project gives EMS workers new tools for starting reports as well as mapping and call information. A federal grant funded the project.

The county continues to work with Calvert County Public Schools in support of the **high school fire/rescue/EMS program**. In the one-year program, students obtain certification and are granted college credits. In 2012, 16 students completed the program and 19 are currently enrolled. Close to 200 students have completed the recruitment program since its inception.



Emergency Notification System Upgraded

Calvert County has implemented the new Calvert County ALERT system that allows agencies to communicate with residents and businesses within minutes during emergency situations.

Residents can learn about severe weather, fires, floods and other emergencies by cell phone, landline, email, text message, fax or pager. More than one of each device can be registered.

Messages can be sent according to specific geographic areas or countywide. Landlines in the 911 database are already subscribed to the alerts. Residents can also register themselves and provide additional contacts, like cell phones or pagers, or opt out. Individuals who had previously registered for the county's CodeRED system will need to register again with Calvert County ALERT to receive messages through methods other than a published telephone number.

Residents can visit online at www.co.cal.md.us and click on the Emergency Alerts link to register for the notification service. Those without Internet access can call 410-535-1600, ext. 2638, to register.



Upgrades to the county's 911 call centers and telephone systems help keep this vital service on the cutting edge of technology.

ACCESS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

ACHIEVEMENTS

- In 2012, Calvert County launched a **new government website** at www.co.cal.md.us and a tourism site at ChooseCalvert.com. The interactive sites allow users to select types of information that can be delivered directly to them.
- A **new county Facebook page**, named “Calvert County Government, Calvert County, Md.,” gives users access to county government press releases and important information during emergencies in their newsfeeds.
- The county’s **enhanced Geographic Information System** offers a wealth of information. Residents can find county facilities, recreation areas, census information, floodplain maps, road and building projects, election districts, topographic maps and boundaries of the Critical Area. The maps are located at www.co.cal.md.us/maps.
- County government and public schools staff worked with the state’s **One Maryland Broadband Network** on a statewide initiative to bring high-speed Internet to rural areas. Fiber optic cable has been installed and public facilities such as fire/rescue stations, libraries, county offices and schools have been connected to improve system reliability and greater data transfer speeds. The project, funded through a state grant, will be completed this fall.

As technology rapidly advances, Calvert County is implementing upgrades and new systems to provide the most efficient public services to residents.



Enhanced maps, above, and new websites are part of the county’s online upgrades.



- A new **Voice over Internet Protocol system** was installed to modernize the county’s primary telephone system. The new technology saves money on telephone infrastructure while offering redundant backup capabilities.



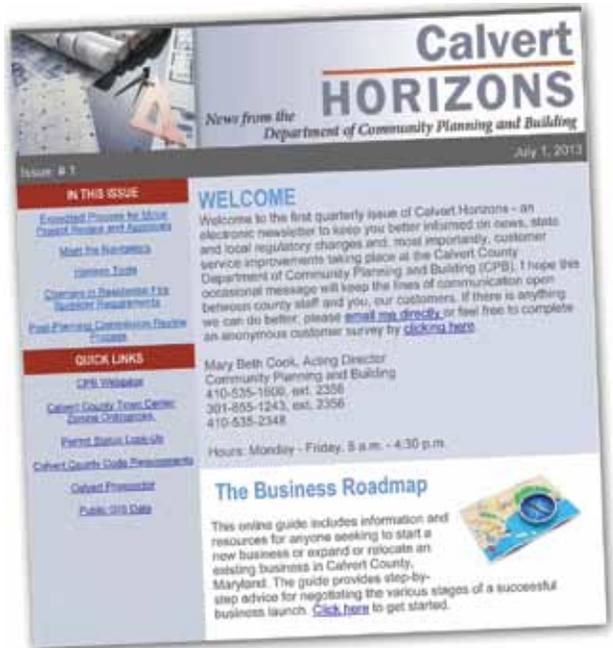
ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

ACHIEVEMENTS

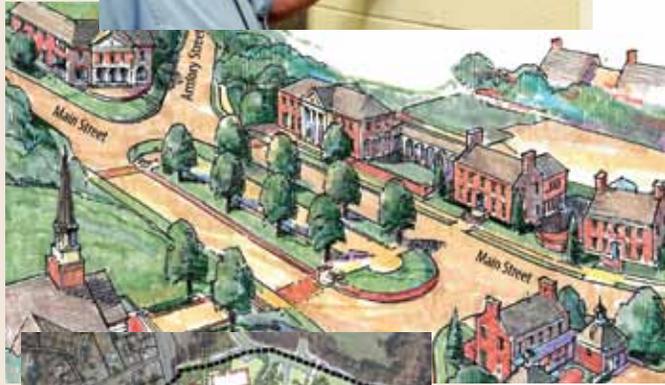
- The Department of Community Planning and Building deployed **customer surveys** to help improve processes, many of which have been mapped to describe workflows and improve efficiencies.
- A new **cashiering tool** allows citizens to pay multiple fees for inspections and permits in one step. The new system also enables future improvements like paying multiple application fees in a central location, accepting credit card payments and accepting online application payments.
- The **building permit tracking system** has been upgraded. Customers can view permit status online and obtain information about what each step of the process entails.
- Calvert Horizons**, an email newsletter, was launched and new brochures have been created to help explain processes and communicate departmental progress.

Calvert County has a strong history of local planning geared toward land preservation and enhanced quality of life. We have continued this commitment through the town center update process through which residents help plan the future of their communities. The Prince Frederick Town Center has become a primary focus since the county took ownership of the former Calvert Middle School site and the Prince Frederick armory building.

We now have the opportunity to take a detailed look at the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. In June 2013 we conducted a multi-day “charrette,” an intense series of public meetings, to gather input on the



The Calvert Horizons newsletter helps those in the building industry and trades stay abreast of regulatory changes.



The Prince Frederick Town Center update process elicited public input and design ideas for future development of the county's largest town center.



design of the town center. Input received by residents, developers and other stakeholders will lead to new design options and policy recommendations for Prince Frederick.

We have also approved an update of the St. Leonard Town Center Master Plan, which replaces the previous plan adopted in 1995 and is the official policy document for the St. Leonard Town Center. The next phase of the project will be to update the St. Leonard Zoning Ordinance to implement the policies set forth in the master plan.

Finally, to ensure continuous improvement, the Department of Community Planning and Building has implemented several customer service initiatives to assist customers – from homeowners to developers – who do business with the department.



PUBLIC FACILITIES

AND INFRASTRUCTURE

ACHIEVEMENTS

Public Facilities

We have worked to maintain and improve the county's system of roadways, water and sewer systems and other public facilities. We have also completed projects from sports fields to new facilities. These efforts have improved safety and efficiency, and have extended needed local services to our residents.

A new **20-acre park** in the Solomons Town Center was completed in FY 2010. The \$1.2 million project includes sports fields, restrooms and two small shelters. An accessible playground was installed with a \$200,000 grant from the Governor's Community Park & Playgrounds Program.

The new **Calvert County Substance Abuse Treatment Facility** was opened in August 2012. The county provided the majority of the funding for the \$2.6 million facility, with a \$750,000 contribution from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The center helps provide addiction services to nearly 1,100 outpatient clients a year.

Beginning in summer 2012, Breezy Point Beach and Campground now offers **kayak and paddleboard rentals**.

The **Calvert Library Interim Southern Branch**, completed in May 2013, provides much-needed additional space for



The commissioners celebrated the opening of the **Calvert Library Interim Southern Branch** on May 21, 2013.

library programs that were not possible at the former Southern Community Center site.

- The former library area at the **Southern Community Center** is now being renovated to include space for the therapeutic recreation staff of the Division of Parks & Recreation and a multipurpose room for new programs and community use.
- Through a cooperative agreement between the commissioners and the Town of North Beach, the former Boys and Girls Club is now the **North Beach Community Center** housing both Parks



The Calvert County Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, above, opened in 2012. The skipjack *Dee of St. Mary's*, below, is a new educational asset for the Calvert Marine Museum.



and Recreation and the Boys and Girls Club. The agreement allowed Parks and Recreation to expand programs beyond what was previously offered at the former North Beach Community Center, now the Bayside History Museum.

- A number of major improvements have been made at **Chesapeake Hills Golf Course**. An agronomy plan has produced much healthier greens. In addition, clubhouse upgrades include renovations to the lounge, The Chesapeake Grille House, a new women's locker room, a new roof and a patio deck.

- Funding was allocated for renovations to the **Calvert Marine Museum's exhibition building**, including \$1.75 million in construction funds for FY 2013.
- On June 4, 2013, the BOCC formally accepted ownership of the **skipjack *Dee of St. Mary's*** from the Chesapeake Bay Field Lab, Inc. Board of Directors on behalf of the Calvert Marine Museum, where it is now docked. The skipjack allows the museum to conduct immersive environmental and cultural programming.

Roads

- New **stoplights and intersection improvements along Rt. 231** – at the Calvert County Industrial Park at Skipjack Road and the College of Southern Maryland at J.W. Williams Road – increased the safety of these well-traveled areas.
- **Intersection improvements at Wilson Road and Allday Road** in Huntingtown were completed in the fall of 2011 to improve sight distances by lowering a hill and reducing roadside obstructions.
- Phase 1 of an **improvement plan for Boyds Turn Road**, from Windy Hill Elementary and Middle School to Paris Oaks Road, was completed in summer 2012. This project in Owings improved drainage on the road, added turn lanes at Windy Hill Elementary and Middle School and increased sight distance for drivers.



The Chesapeake Boulevard project, above, includes a traffic circle at Dares Beach Road. Below, public bus service now includes the Dunkirk area.



ACHIEVEMENTS, *CONT.*

- In June 2013 construction began on the new **Chesapeake Boulevard** — currently Armory Road — to create wider lanes, sidewalks and a traffic circle at the intersection with Dares Beach Road in Prince Frederick. Estimated completion is early 2015 with a cost of approximately \$4.5 million.
- Construction is scheduled to begin in 2014 on **improvements to Dowell Road** in Solomons, including wider travel lanes, a two-way center lane, bikeable lanes, sidewalks and more.

Water and Sewer

- The **Prince Frederick pumping station No. 2** was upgraded to increase capacity and improve reliability.
- A **new pumping station** was added in Solomons to serve the area from Solomons to Lusby.
- New **water systems and meter updates** were completed at Hunting Hills in Huntingtown and Lakewood Estates in Dunkirk.

- Water meters in Solomons and St. Leonard were upgraded to **drive-by readable meters**, allowing meter readers to receive information by radio telemetry and ensuring efficient, accurate measurement.

Solid Waste

- A **landfill gas collection and control system** at the former Barstow Landfill is collecting and flaring methane to safeguard the retired site. The \$600,000 project went into operation in May 2013 and controls gas migration to meet regulatory limits.

Public Transportation

- **Dunkirk-area public bus service** began operation Sept. 30, 2013. The new route allows easy access to shopping, healthcare, employment and more from Dunkirk to Huntingtown.



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

ACHIEVEMENTS

We began implementation of a master plan for the **Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm** in Prince Frederick in FY 2011. The main objectives for the 196-acre property are to keep its character, preserve its rural aesthetic and its history and create educational programs specific to the site.

A \$10,000 **lighting project at Calvert Pines Senior Center** in 2012 replaced incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient LED bulbs.

The project costs were immediately offset by a \$9,000 grant from Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative. Electric costs at the facility fell by two-thirds. LED retrofits continue throughout county facilities.

In October 2012 construction was completed on a project to establish a **wetland mitigation bank** on a portion of private county farm land. The county acquired easements on 10

Preserving the beauty and pristine character of Calvert County has long been a goal of local government. We believe environmental stewardship is a top priority and have implemented a number of programs to help care for our lands and the Chesapeake Bay, as well as finding ways to conserve energy.



The former Ward property in Dunkirk has been set aside for use as a recreation area and a nature preserve.

acres that were turned into wetlands, serving to offset other county projects where forests or wetlands are disturbed.

■ In FY 2013 Calvert County acquired **the former Ward property**, consisting of 224 acres on Ward Road in Dunkirk, for \$2.7 million. The purchase was funded by the Calvert County Youth Recreational Opportunities Fund, a state grant administered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Uses for the property will include sports fields and nature trails and preserves.

ACHIEVEMENTS, *CONT.*

Data and paper shredding events were introduced in June 2013. Residents can bring their unwanted papers to the events for shredding, which helps to protect against identity theft and reduces volume going to the landfill.

County convenience centers now accept rigid plastic items like sand boxes, backyard play items and trash cans.

Quarterly household hazardous waste collection is handled by a professional contractor and has been successful. This collection service keeps household hazardous waste out of our landfill.

Community centers were upgraded with energy efficient equipment, including heating and air conditioning units in the Northeast, Mt. Hope and Southern community centers. Mt. Hope Community Center also received upgrades with energy efficient lighting, on-demand water heaters and energy efficient windows and doors.

Energy-efficient lighting installed at Calvert Pines Senior Center brings significant savings.



Calvert County RECYCLES

In 2012, residents recycled:

 **2,075 tons of paper**

1,200 tons of bottles and cans 

 **520 tons of electronics**

37 tons of textiles 

 **36 tons of plastic**

2,500 tons of vegetation 

 **900 tons of metal**

38 tons of tires 

 **7 tons of light bulbs**

Motor oil, antifreeze, propane tanks and several other items make up the remainder of our recycling efforts.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACHIEVEMENTS

Between FY 2010 and FY 2013 (estimated) the county's **commercial tax base** has increased by 7.5 percent or \$91.7 million.

Commercial floor area grew by 254,609 square feet with an estimated capital investment of \$38 million between fiscal years 2010 and 2013.

The **business base** expanded by 357 businesses from calendar years 2010 to 2013, an increase of 8.8 percent.

County staff conducted 486 **business site visits** from FY 2011 to FY 2013 as part of efforts to monitor the business climate and help local businesses thrive.

In April 2013, Dominion announced plans for a \$3.4 billion to \$3.8 billion **liquefied natural gas (LNG) liquefaction project** at the Dominion Cove Point facility. It promises to be one of the largest economic development projects in the state's history and will enable Dominion to export LNG from the Cove Point location. The project will yield significant county tax revenue

Calvert County strives to provide a positive business environment. Every county business, large or small, is important to us and the economic well-being of Calvert County. We work to bring new businesses to Calvert County and provide free support to retain and expand our existing business community.

We also recognize the importance of tourism as a driver of local economic development. We promote the county as a destination to visitors throughout the mid-Atlantic region, and new events like the Solomons Offshore Grand Prix and the Southern Maryland Blues Festival further increase our visibility.



The expansion project planned for the Dominion Cove Point LNG facility promises to be one of the largest projects in Maryland history.

and create approximately 3,000 temporary construction jobs and 75 permanent new jobs upon completion. Pending approvals, construction is expected to begin in 2014 with export operations ready by 2017.

ACHIEVEMENTS, *CONT.*

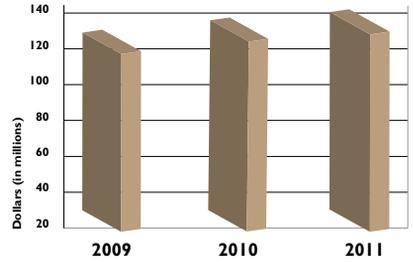
Between fiscal years 2010 and 2011 **tourism industry sales** increased by \$6.7 million or 5.4 percent. For the same time period tourism jobs increased by 0.7 percent.

The **admissions and amusement tax collection** increased nearly \$8,000, or 32.3 percent, between FY 2008 and FY 2012.

Visitation at the county's 16 key attractions increased 29.4 percent between FY 2010 and FY 2013.

Thirty six businesses participated in the county's first **Restaurant Week** Feb. 1-10, 2013. This annual event showcases the county's restaurant scene during the slower winter months.

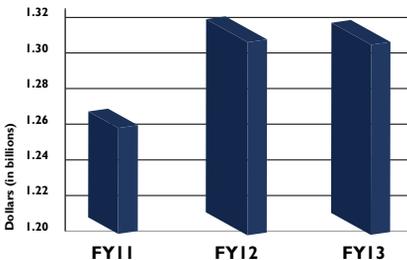
During 2013 we worked with the National Park Service to install **educational signs** highlighting the county's role in the War of 1812. The 200th anniversary of the war's Chesapeake Campaign will be marked locally by major events in summer 2014.



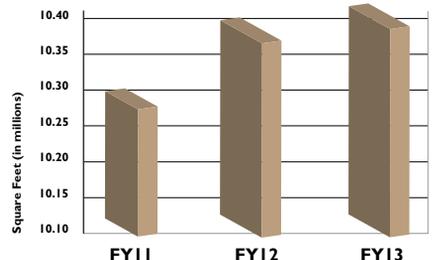
Tourism Industry Sales



Much planning has gone into upcoming celebrations of the region's War of 1812 bicentennial.



Commercial Real Property Tax Base



Commercial Floor Area



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