



Howard County Government News Release

Office of Public Information
3450 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland, 21043

410-313-2022 / FAX 410-313-3299 / www.howardcountymd.gov

Kevin Enright, Director
kenright@howardcountymd.gov

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Media Contacts:

Kevin Enright, Director, Office of Public Information, 410-313-2022

Joy Levy, Administrator, Agricultural Land Preservation Program, 410-313-5407

Howard County Agricultural Land Preservation Application Period Begins in June for “Batch 14”

ELLICOTT CITY, MD -- Howard County Executive Ken Ulman today announced that Howard County will accept applications for the sale of agricultural land preservation easements beginning on June 1 and continuing through July 31, 2009, as part of “Batch 14” of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP).

“Preserving our farmland goes hand-in-hand with protecting the quality of life in Howard County,” said County Executive Ulman. “Local farms provide us with healthy, locally-grown food, scenic landscapes, jobs, recreational opportunities, and the list goes on. This is a great opportunity for landowners interested in preserving their land for future generations to find out how the program may benefit them.”

“The General Plan calls for the preservation of 30,000 acres in the Rural West, of which 25,000 should be Agricultural Preservation easements,” said Marsha McLaughlin, Director of the Department of Planning & Zoning. “During the ‘Batch 13’ application period in 2006, the County acquired easements on two farms, bringing the total number of agricultural acres in the preservation program to nearly 20,500. Now we’re ready to build on that success.”

Howard County offers property owners a maximum of \$40,000 per acre for agricultural easements. Landowners who meet the eligibility requirements may submit an application to sell an agricultural easement to the County. All applications will be scored based on characteristics such as size, soil capability and productivity, and adjacency to previously preserved properties to determine the offer price. Applications will then be ranked by the County’s Agricultural Land Preservation Board. It is anticipated that the average offer will be in the \$25,000 to \$35,000 per acre range during this new application period, dubbed “Batch 14” in reference to the fourteen application periods since the program began.

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Howard County Agricultural Land Preservation Application Period Begins June for “Batch 14” *(continued)*

In addition to certain criteria for soil quality, the eligibility requirements for Batch 14 are:

- Parcels 50 acres or larger
- Parcels 20 acres or larger that are contiguous to protected land. Protected land includes State or County agricultural preservation easements, environmental preservation parcels, parkland, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission land, donated easements, public school sites and other permanently protected properties.

The Agricultural Land Preservation Program will use installment purchase agreements (IPAs) to purchase easements on properties that qualify for preservation. To maximize the acreage that can be preserved, the county intends to pay the purchase price under each IPA in 20 equal annual principal installments with twice a year tax-exempt interest payments.

At the request of Executive Ulman, the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) has created a colorful roadside sign for property owners in the ALPP to display, indicating that their farm is preserved.

Applications and informational materials regarding this program are available from Joy Levy at 410-313-5407, by e-mailing her at jlevy@howardcountymd.gov or writing to her at Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043. Information and applications are also available at the Public Service Desk of the Department of Planning & Zoning, at the County’s temporary office location, 8930 Stanford Boulevard, Columbia, Maryland, 21045 between 8 am and 5 pm weekdays and at the County website, www.howardcountymd.gov/DPZ/agriculture.htm.

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