



ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

Media Inquiries: 301-475-4200 ext. 1340 or pio@stmarysmd.com

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NEWS RELEASE *for Immediate Release*

No. 2019 - 89

May 2, 2019 11:00 a.m.

SMADC Selects St. Mary's County's Regional Agricultural Center Proposal

Leonardtown, MD – The Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC) has selected St. Mary's County's proposal to build a Regional Agricultural Center (RAC). The RAC will provide a state-of-the-art meat processing facility as well as training and kitchen facilities for food entrepreneurs to learn to produce value-added foods using local agricultural products.

"I'm pleased that after a five-year process, we are awarding the \$1 million RAC grant to St. Mary's County. We have listened to the agriculture community for a more efficient and effective way to increase production and allow for more processing opportunities in the five-county area. This grant will be a huge enabler for our farming community to expand its livestock operations, and work cooperatively with the new Fisher slaughter facility. This partnership shows the commitment of true public private partnerships in our community. Good things are happening in St. Mary's County and Southern Maryland," said Todd Morgan, Chairman of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland.

The RAC will be constructed on a County-owned 47-acre site that is also used as a transfer station site. Only 3.3 miles from the region's only proposed USDA-certified slaughterhouse, the site will provide a convenient location for the region's farmers, who will have a short drive from the slaughterhouse to the meat processing site. It also has the advantage of not being near any residences who may not welcome the heavier uses associated with the meat processing operation.

St. Mary's County's plan will locate the meat processing facility less than a mile from the County's planned North County Farmers Market. The proximity of the two sites – less than one mile away - allows for frequent meat deliveries and simple coordination between the two sites. The North County Farmer's Market will feature the region's fresh produce and value-added products, including meats.

The SMADC recommendation will be ratified by the Tri County Council for Southern Maryland later in May of 2019. Once approved, SMADC will provide \$1 million for the construction of the RAC. The proposal will take the SMADC funding and pool it with County planned expenditures and existing County assets to create a local agriculture hub that benefits all of Southern Maryland.

"The RAC will be a multi-faceted win for the County and the region. It will help regional farmers bring their products to market and keep Southern Maryland's agriculture industry strong. It will be a gem that supports the quality of life for the region's residents and it will be a tourism asset where visitors can experience our agricultural heritage and unique culture", said Chris Kaselemis, Director of the Department of Economic Development.

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