



Calvert County NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Calvert County Announces New Bus Route to Charlotte Hall *Provides Southern Maryland's first Tri-County Bus Connection*

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – Jan. 25, 2018 – The Calvert County Department of Community Resources Public Transportation Division announces the launch of Southern Maryland's first tri-county public transit connection with the addition of a new bus route from Calvert County to the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home in St. Mary's County.

Beginning Feb. 5, the new bus route will run five days a week, Monday through Friday, and provide direct connections for transfers between Calvert, St. Mary's and Charles counties' public transportation service. To celebrate the milestone, riders from all three counties can take the new route free Feb. 5-9.

"We are thrilled to launch this bus connection in Calvert County," said Calvert County Board of County Commissioners' (BOCC) President Evan Slaughenhaupt, Jr., who is a U.S. Air Force veteran and chairperson of the Tri-County Council Veterans Regional Advisory Committee. "Our veterans deserve convenient and accessible medical care and resources. We have been working on this opportunity for the region for a couple of years and I am grateful to our transportation staff for making it happen."

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Calvert County is home to approximately 9,000 veterans. "We are pleased to learn of the Charlotte Hall bus stop being included in the newly established fixed route from Calvert to St. Mary's County," said Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary George Owings. "This new route will be a welcomed addition for our veteran residents as well as for visitors to the home."

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Slaughenhaupt pointed out the new connection will also open up opportunities for out-of-county residents to come to Calvert County and provide a boon to the local economy. "Southern Maryland residents will have opportunities to take public transit now to pursue higher education and more employment choices," he added.

The new service is a result of a Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Transportation Development Planning Assessment conducted in 2016 that identified the need for transportation to the veterans home. The county's public transportation division used the assessment's findings to secure federal, state and local funds for the 22-mile route expansion.

Calvert County Transportation Division Chief Sandy Wobbleton said her staff worked closely with MTA to develop the route, determine the cost estimate and understand the grant application. MTA provided 75 percent of the total operating investment, or \$70,369, and the BOCC accounted for the remaining \$23,456 in its FY 2018 operating budget. An additional \$67,895 came from the Calvert County Capital Improvement Plan for purchase of the new bus.

"The new route was the culmination of years of work by county staff and engaged residents," said Calvert County Department of Community Resources Director Jennifer Moreland. "We are grateful for the financial and technical support from MTA so we can be more responsive to the needs of our residents."

All Calvert County public transportation routes operate through the use of designated reference points for timing the route and the "flag system." Riders must flag down the bus and can board anywhere along the route where the bus driver deems it safe to pull over. With the addition of the Charlotte Hall route, the county provides eight fixed routes and four demand-response/para-transit routes to link residents with major shopping, medical and employment areas, as well as with public services available in Prince Frederick. Learn more about Calvert County's public transportation bus routes and fares by visiting www.co.cal.md.us/transportation or calling 410-535-4268.

For information on schedules and fees for VanGO, Charles County Government's public transit system, visit www.charlescountymd.gov/pgm/vango/vango or call 1-800-735-2258.

For information on schedules and fees for St. Mary's County Government's Transit System, visit www.stmarysmd.com/dpw/STSfares.asp or call 301-475-4200 ext. *1120 or *1121.