

## **Governor expected to bring \$471,000 Grant will pay almost half of cost for St. Michaels Nature Trail**

By STEVE NERY  
Staff Writer

Published: Friday, September 8, 2006 2:00 AM CDT

**ST. MICHAELS** - Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. is scheduled to be in town today to announce that Maryland is providing \$471,000 - nearly half of the overall cost - for the St. Michaels Nature Trail.

The money will come in the form of a State Highway Administration Transportation Enhancement Program Grant. The Rotary Club of St. Michaels, Environmental Concern Inc. and Elm Street Development will provide another \$565,000 in fundraising efforts and donated time, Environmental Concern Vice President Gene Slear said. Another \$70,000 in grants will account for the rest of the \$1.1 million project.

The town and the Nature Trail Committee, composed of Environmental Concern and The Rotary Club of St. Michaels, will administer the project. Work is scheduled to start in late fall and should be completed in late spring 2008, Slear said.

With the TEP grant secured, the other organizations will begin their fundraising efforts soon, Town Commission President Ted Doyle said. The grant was everything they asked for, Slear said.

"We expect it to be pretty successful pretty quickly," Doyle said of the fundraising.

The 1.25-mile long paved nature trail will be 8-feet wide and constructed along property owned by the State Highway Administration and leased to St. Michaels. When SHA purchased the land, it intended to build a bypass, but that plan never came to fruition.

The trail will include access to recreational activities, a meadows/native plant nursery, wetland ponds, bio-retention facilities and tidal marsh plantings.

It will begin at St. Michaels Road and extend northwesterly to the Hatton Gardens conservation easement, cross Boundary Lane, West Chew and go through San Domingo Park over the tidal inlet, where it will continue to Railroad Avenue. Where possible, the trail will be built on an old railroad bed that once carried trains between Easton and Tilghman Island.

The trail will connect three public parks (San Domingo Creek Park, Bradley Park and Canton Farm Park), existing community space and the swimming pool. It will provide a safe, alternative route for hikers and bikers from Main Street, where traffic increases significantly during the tourist season, Slear said, and promote public awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.

Environmental Concern will construct a tidal wetland on the San Domingo Tidal Inlet and Creek, filtering out pollutants from stormwater runoff from the surrounding streets as well as uptake nitrogen and other pollutants, Slear said. Wetland construction will begin this fall and wrap up next spring, he said.

The plan originally called for a 3,900-foot trail from Boundary Lane to Railroad Avenue, Slear said, but Elm Street agreed to pitch in on the Hatton Gardens property, extending it to 6,800 feet. This helps to better connect several neighborhoods and provide access to places like the high school and pool, he noted.

Doyle, a member of the Rotary as well, thanked Environmental Concern and Elm Street for their "significant" contributions to the project.



News Release For more information contact: H. Hugh Dawkins @ 410-310-2997 Governor to visit Easton Governor Robert Ehrlich will be visiting Easton on Saturday July 29th to attend the opening ceremonies of the Little League International Senior Softball Regional Tournament. Ehrlich will make welcoming remarks and throw out the ceremonial first pitch at the 12:00 opening ceremonies. The governor is a big fan of Little League having played himself in Arbutus. One hundred and seventy-five athletes and their fans from 9 different East Coast States will be competing for the right to represent the East Region in the World Series in August. The tournament is hosted by Maryland District 6 Little League and will run from Saturday through Thursday at the North Easton Sports Complex in Easton. Event organizer Hugh Dawkins anticipates a large number of fans, players and community leaders to be in attendance on Saturday. This is the second year Easton has served as the host to this prestigious tournament, which provides a significant influx of visitors to Talbot and surrounding counties.