

Business

ESLC presents transportation awards

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WYE MILLS Maryland Upper Shore Transit, the Queen Anne's County Commissioners and the St. Michaels Nature Trail project received the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy's Eastern Shore 2010 Achievement Awards Friday. The awards were presented at the organization's 10th annual conference, "Where are the Eastern Shore's Roads Taking Us?," held at Chesapeake College.

Award recipients were honored for their work in providing public transportation, combating global warming and offering alternatives to automobile travel.

Maryland Upper Shore Transit, or MUST, was honored for regional leadership in transportation planning.

The rural bus system is a collaborative effort between Delmarva Community Transit, Delmarva Community Services and Queen Anne's County's "County Ride," and offers service in Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot and Dorchester counties, as well as a route to Salisbury.

"It's not just a transit system that takes people from place to place, but really connects people to people," said Amy Owsley, ESLC's director of land use planning.

MUST offered free bus rides to conference attendees, and about 10 percent took advantage of the service, Owsley said.

"It's a team effort," said Santo Grande, CEO of Delmarva Community services, one of MUST's providers. He thanked John General, MUST's coordinator, for his leadership.

"We're looking forward to a great future for public and community transportation in the Mid-Shore and Upper Shore area," Grande said.

The Queen Anne's County Commissioners received the county leadership award for signing on to the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration, a national initiative to combat global warming.

Queen Anne's signed on to Cool Counties in July 2007, pledging to reduce global warming emissions 80 percent by 2050.

"It's a real honor to be included (in Cool Counties)," said commissioner Carol Fordonski, adding that Queen Anne's was one of the first 12 "launch" counties last year, and the smallest to participate.

She said the county has completed the first stage of the program, an energy assessment, and "we are hard at work on the next phase, which is finding out what we can do about it."

The St. Michaels Nature Trail received the local leadership award.

The 1.3-mile trail along the west side of town is a joint project of the Town of St. Michaels, the St. Michaels Rotary Foundation, Environmental Concern and Elm Street Development, and is "an example of the best in town planning for bike and nature trails," Owsley said.

The trail began as a project of the Rotary Club in 2002, and is expected to be completed in March 2009, said David Shaw of the St. Michaels Rotary Club. He described how the project has grown over the years, starting with an approximately \$100,000 budget that now stands at \$1.3 million.

"This project is about people coming together for a common cause," Shaw said.

He said Elm Street Development contributed 6,000 square feet of a paved nature trail along state Route 33 that will serve as the trail entrance, while Environmental Concern completely restored some wetlands along the trail. Construction has just begun on the trail's footbridge, to be called the Wilson M. (Bill) Shook Memorial Bridge in honor of the St. Michaels resident who died in 2006. Shook's family and an anonymous donor raised all the money for the 58-foot-long covered bridge over San Domingo Creek.



PHOTO BY JOY LA PRADE Pictured from left to right are Steve Scott of Queen Anne's County's "County Ride;" Jerome Phillips and Jerome Stanley of Delmarva Community Transit; former Governor Harry Hughes, Scott Warner of the Mid-Shore Regional Council, Santo Grande of Delmarva Community Services and John General, MUST coordinator.