

Community Action awarded \$72K for Circuit Rider Program

From Staff Reports

OAKLAND — The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development has announced fiscal year 2018 awards for the Maryland Town Manager Circuit Rider Grant Program. The department has provided \$500,000 to four circuits involving 22 towns.

Locally, the Garrett County Community Action Committee received \$72,185 to assist the county's eight incorporated towns: Accident, Deer Park, Friendsville, Grantsville, Kitzmiller, Loch Lynn Heights, Mountain Lake Park and Oakland.

The program enables smaller municipalities to hire professional staff to assist with public administration, financial management, planning and community development. Mostly operating in rural regions of Maryland, these professional administrators "ride circuit" by serving several towns in the same area on a part-time basis.

"Many smaller towns have the desire and vision to redevelop their community, but due to lack of resources, they may not be able to hire the professionals needed to implement that vision," said

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt. "These Circuit Rider grants create a framework for like-minded municipalities to partner with each other and the state to hire qualified professionals who can provide the skills and guidance to enable these communities to achieve their revitalization goals."

Under the Maryland Town Manager Circuit Rider Grant program, municipalities, counties and regional governmental organizations can join together to sponsor a circuit and hire professional staff to serve two or more towns. The department assists the local governments that are applying by developing a work program for the circuit rider, prepar-

ing the grant application and budget, and recruiting and interviewing the candidates for the position. Once hired, the circuit rider professionals provide the town with administrative services, such as reviewing and updating town ordinances, drafting and submitting grant applications, recordkeeping, responding to public inquiries on behalf of town officials, assisting with the construction and maintenance of water and waste water management systems and developing sustainable community and other revitalization plans.

More information about the Maryland Town Manager Circuit Rider Grant program can be found online at bit.ly/CrctRdr.