



Town Council AGENDA

Monday, March 2, 2026 - 5:00 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

5:00 PM: CliftonLarsonAllen to discuss FY2025 Audit.

5:30 PM: Call to Order by President Abbatiello.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Dr. Montgomery.

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes from the February 16, 2026 Code Workshop.
Minutes from the February 16, 2026 Regular Meeting.
Minutes from the February 16, 2026 Closed Session.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Items by Town Manager

Approval for Property Maintenance Bid.

Public Assembly Event: Recurring Vigil for Peace: 3/5/26 - 12/31/26
Public Assembly Event: St. Patrick's Day Parade and Potato Race: 3/17/26
Public Assembly Event: Easter Egg-Stravaganza: 3/28/26
Public Assembly Event: Chesapeake Creative Wellness: April to 10/10/26
Public Assembly Event: Outdoor Summer Concert Series: 6/6/26 - 8/29/26
Public Assembly Event: Plein Air 7/10/26 - 7/18/26

Accept FY2025 Audited Financial Statements as presented by
CliftonLarsonAllen LLP.

Items by Town Attorney.

Presentations.

Ms. Olivia Wade, Easton High School Clay Target Team to make a presentation on gun safety.

John J. Horner, Easton Utilities President & CEO and Ted Book, VP of Easton Velocity to update on Connect Talbot, Talbot County Rural Broadband Project.

Ms. Deena Kilmon, Waterfowl Festival Executive Director, to discuss the positive impact of the 2025 Waterfowl Festival.

Public Participation/Comments.

Committee Reports by Members of the Council

Items by Members of the Council:

CLOSED SESSION: General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(4) To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand or remain in the State.

Adjournment.

The public can access the meeting as follows:

<https://www.eastonmd.gov/129/Agendas-Minutes>

If you are an Easton Velocity Cable TV subscriber, you can view the meeting live on Channel 98.

Please note: There is a possibility of all or part of the meeting may be held in Closed Session.

Town Council Meeting

Date: February 16, 2026, **Time:** 5:30 p.m. **Location:** Council Chambers, Easton Town Office, 14 S Harrison Street, Easton.

Attendees: Present were: Mayor Megan JM Cook, President Don Abbatiello, Councilmembers Ms. Maureen Curry, Mr. Robert Rankin, Dr. David Montgomery, and Rev. Davis. Also, present were the Town Attorney Ms. Sharon VanEmburch, Chief of Police Alan Lowrey, Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch and Town Clerk Ms. Kathy M. Ruf.

I. Opening Proceedings

- **Call to order:** At 5:30 p.m., President Abbatiello called the regularly scheduled meeting to order.
- **Opening remarks:** Meeting opened with remarks and the Pledge of Allegiance by Council Member Robert Rankin.
 - Shared excerpt from his grandfather's 1967 commencement address, "Roots of the Tree of Liberty", emphasizing the importance of citizenship, civic engagement, and the vitality of local/state governance.
 - Set a tone recognizing the role and value of community participation.

II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **Date Approved:** February 2, 2026
- **Action:** Upon motion by Rev. Davis seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, minutes of the February 2, 2026 meeting were approved as written.

III. Main Topics Discussed

A. Municipal and Mayor's Updates (Mayor Cook)

1. Team Solidarity

- **Employee Welcome:** Community, public safety, and utility departments came together last week to welcome back a team member seriously injured in December.

2. Budget Workshops

- **Scheduled Dates:** March 25, March 26, April 2, 2026.
- **Council to Receive Budget:** Early March.
- **Department Schedules:** To be sent once finalized.

3. Infrastructure Projects

- **Train Station Roof:** Near completion. Delayed due to weather, expected to finish next week.

4. Upcoming Community Events & Dates

- **Comp Plan:** Planning Commission discussion this week, with eventual council review.
- **St. Patrick's Day Parade:** March 17, 2026; council/leadership to coordinate cart/walking options.
- **Little League Baseball Opening:** March 28, 2026
- **Softball Opening:** April 10, 2026
- **Run/Walk Group Start:** April 15, 2026 (collaboration with YMCA, hospital, Talbot Thrive)
- **Kickball League Start:** April 22, 2026

5. Board Appointment

- **Talbot County Park and Recreation Board:** Upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Rev. Davis, Michael Brophy was confirmed as the Town's representative to the County's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, replacing Mr. Tom Klein.

B. Town Manager Update (Mr. Kitzrow)

- **Internal Bid Review:** Only one item (Choptank Turf for pest management/fertilizer), fell below threshold, so contract approved internally—no council action needed.

C. Town Attorney (Ms. VanEmburch)

- No report or action requested by council or community.

D. Police Department Update (Chief Lowrey)

1. Employee Promotions

- **Promotions Recognized:**
 - Sergeant Joseph Shinault (formerly corporal, SWAT team)
 - Corporal Anthony Cullins (patrol/K9 officer, drone operator, SWAT)
 - Corporal Frank “Norm” Sova (detective bureau, drone operator, transitioning to patrol)

2. 2025 Department Metrics

- **Calls for Service:** 22,148
- **Community Engagement:** 17,079 events
- **Patrol Checks:** 3,900
- **Neighborhood Checks:** 189
- **Foot Patrols:** 562
- **School Resource Officer (SRO):** Program for St. Peter and Paul Elementary launched; plans to expand to high school next month. Officer Proctor is currently staffed at SSPP.

3. Staffing/Retention Issue

- **Concern:** All command staff could retire immediately, which would create major gaps.
- **Budget Request:** Chief Lowrey asked for consideration for an enhanced retirement benefit program to retain staff; equipment needs for the coming fiscal year.
- **Council Response:** Expressed full support for department efforts and community safety.

E. Easton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) – Holly Dakarski

1. Events Planning

- **St. Patrick’s Parade:** Signups open.
- **Fire & Ice:** Moved to coming weekend (due to weather/business requests), live carvings, fire dancers, music; no street/parking closures; 60+ sculptures and multiple family activities.
- **Easter Egg Hunt:** April 4, 2026, expanded location due to crowding (West Street Road closure requested).
- **Taste of Easton:** April 26–May 2, 2026; ticketed event, followed by Restaurant Week and Mayday.

2. Business & Community Projects

- **Creative Placemaking/Small Area Plan (East End):**
 - Past meetings delayed due to weather; rescheduled for March.
 - Expansion of east entry lighting.
 - Upcoming meeting involving arts organizations and leadership to discuss placemaking findings.
- **Retail Assessment:**

- Chesapeake Group (Howard) to present retail/housing report at Dover Station (date pending).
- **Merchant Relations:**
 - Parking improvements and waste management discussions ongoing with downtown merchants.
- **Visitor Center:**
 - New accessible entrance signage, open 9 a.m.–5 p.m., seven days/week (unstaffed lobby).
 - New part-time staffing position to be posted.
 - \$47,000 MHAA grant for outfitting (budget constraints); working with Public Works for exhibits and installations.
 - Fire & Ice staffing for visitor engagement.
- **Data Collection:**
 - Placer AI subscription renewed for downtown foot traffic analytics.
 - Ongoing event-influenced in-person surveys for council/event decision support.

3. Funding/Sponsorships

- **Fiscal/Annual Sponsors:** Now match fiscal years with town/state (24 annual sponsors, several three-year commitments).
- **Grants/Sponsorships:** 32% of funding; conference sponsorship fundraising noted.

4. Upcoming Business Openings

- **Accanto Restaurant:** Ribbon cutting February 18 at 4:00 p.m.
- **Preston Toyota of Easton:** Grand opening February 19 at 11:00 a.m.

5. Mistletoe Hall Business Park Update (w/ Miguel Salinas and Holly DeKarske)

- **EDA Grant (2018):** \$2.3 million (town-matched), created infrastructure and 13 subdivided commercial lots.
- **Current Occupancy:**
 - Total Home (Lot 1)
 - Vetagro (Combined lots, under construction, Northern Italy-based)
 - Easton Volunteer Fire Department (Lot 8)
 - Carrion Electric and Blue Crab Storage
 - Remaining lots marketed; some grouped for larger applicants
- **Jobs/Grant Compliance:**
 - No explicit jobs number in grant, but required to document private investment and job creation/retention.
 - 3, 6, and 9-year EDA report deadlines; next/final: August 2027–early 2028 (expectation to be fully built-out or show impact).
 - Lot status, job expansion commitments from new/existing businesses discussed.
 - Approval Process: Application, committee review/scoring, council approval; planning/zoning and covenants also apply.

F. Easton Utilities Report: Diesel Fuel Spill Incident (John Horner, CEO/President)

1. Incident Overview

- **Date of Incident:** Discovered February 8, 2026 (valve malfunction likely started Feb 7).
- **Total Diesel Fuel Spilled:** Approx. 10–15 gallons, with about 5–10 gallons entering stream.
- **Immediate Cause:** Valve failure during emergency generator use (due to regional cold and grid demand).
- **Initial Response Issues:**
 - Operators notified supervision but failed to report to senior leadership or MDE as required.
 - First external notifications came from public (smell/fuel reports) and social media activity; senior leadership informed late morning February 10.

2. Response, Communication, and Investigation

- **Cleanup Measures:** Absorbent materials deployed; BP Environmental contracted for mitigation; Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) engaged.
- **Wildlife Impact:** 7 dead birds (5 geese, 2 ducks); others possibly affected.
- **Timeline Clarification:** Initial misinformation on incident timing corrected; public apology issued.
- **Community/Interagency Support:** Multiple agencies (local emergency, PD, FD, MDE, DNR, Waterfowl Festival, etc.) commended for rapid, coordinated response.

3. Remediation & Accountability

- **Continuous Remediation:** Ongoing with guidance from MDE; soil cleanup completed, absorbent barriers monitored.
- **Plan for Future:**
 1. Technical upgrades—modern controls, redundant alarms, enhanced containment.
 2. Improved internal communication, leadership training, and tightening of emergency/corrective procedures.
 3. Enhanced partnership with local environmental groups (e.g., Waterfowl Festival).
- **Transparency Commitment:** Full public updates and regular reporting to continue.

4. Community/Council Response

- Gratitude expressed for candor, leadership, and Utilities' swift corrective action.
- Additional technical questions fielded:
 - **Extent of Impact:** Contained past the second pond, did not reach Tred Avon River.
 - **Readiness for Events:** Clean-up expected to finish before major festivals; no known fish impact.
 - **Fuel Use Context:** 100 tanker trucks of diesel used over two weeks of generator operation, yielding \$50 savings per household last month.
 - **Investigation of Incident Causes:** Valve failure not definitively linked to high generator run-time.
- **Fire Department Statement (Assistant Chief Daryl Caldwell):**
 - Provided detailed emergency response timeline and procedural overview.
 - Confirmed incident contained efficiently with cooperation from multiple agencies; MDE assumed leadership for environmental response.

G. Legislations

1. Annexation Resolution No. 6216 & Ordinance No. 849

- **Scope:** 36.52 acres (Norris E. Taylor Contractors, Jeffrey H. Goodman, Patricia T. Goodman) on east side of Ocean Gateway, adjacent to East Kennedy, Reagan, Nixon Drives.
- **Status:** Pending response from property owner; will be discussed again at future council meeting.

2. Invoices

- **Total Approved:** Upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Curry, invoices totaling \$1,697,154.29 were approved.

H. Public Participation and Comments

- **Assistant Chief Caldwell Statement:** (See above).
- No additional public comments registered.

I. Committee Reports and Council Comments

1. Board Recruitment

- Council President Abbatiello encouraged residents to serve on various town boards; information and forms available on town website.

2. Council Updates

- **Community Event Reminders:** Accanto restaurant opening, Preston Toyota opening, Fire & Ice event.
- **Recognition:** Congratulations to promoted police staff; thanks to Fire Department for annual event invitation.
- **Thanks, and Appreciation:** Multiple council members commended Easton Utilities, Police, Fire Department, and local leaders for service and responses.

3. Black History Month Remarks (Reverend Davis)

- Emphasized the inseparability of African American and American history.
- Shared gratitude for ancestors, local community, and ongoing quest for justice, opportunity, and inclusion.

IV. Closed Session

- At 6:53 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Rankin, seconded by Dr. Montgomery, President Abbatiello moved into Closed Session for General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(4) to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand or remain in the state.
- At 7:26 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Rankin, seconded by Rev. Davis, and carried unanimously, President Abbatiello moved into Open Session.

V. Adjournment

- At 7:27 p.m., upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Dr. Montgomery, President Abbatiello adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk



TOWN OF EASTON
OFFICE OF CODE ENFORCEMENT
14 S HARRISON ST
EASTON MD 21601

Memorandum

Subject: Recommendation for Contract Approval - Property Maintenance Bid 26-01

To: Andy Kitzrow

From: Nick Ewing, Code Enforcement; Thomas Diem, Code Official

CC: Mayor Cook

Date: February 19, 2026

Andy,

On February 18, 2026, the Town opened sealed bids for property maintenance services related to enforcement of the Town Code, including but not limited to:

- S 11-5.2.20 Chapter 3, General Regulations (302.4.2 Failure to remove weeds)
- S 11-16.1, Control of rubbish, refuse, garbage, recyclable materials, and waste

The following companies submitted responsive bids:

- Warnke's Lawn Service, LLC
- Marshall's Professional Property Management LLC
- Prestwood LLC
- Tidewater Landscape and Property Management

The bids were reviewed for completeness, pricing, experience, ability to perform the work in a timely manner, and overall responsiveness to the specifications outlined in the Invitation to Bid.

After careful evaluation, we recommend that the Town approve **Prestwood LLC** as the primary contractor for lawn mowing and trimming for properties up to **2 acres**. We further recommend **Marshall's Professional Property Management LLC** as the primary contractor for properties greater than **2 acres**, including hedge and tree trimming, debris removal, and brush removal.

The Department finds that the recommended contractors are responsible and responsive bidders and are best suited to meet the Town's operational needs under the contract specifications. This recommendation is made in accordance with **Section 2-16 of the Town's Procurement Policy**, which allows the Town to consider factors beyond price when determining the most qualified contractor.

It should also be noted that this contract results in **no direct cost to the Town of Easton**, as services are billed to the property owners in accordance with adopted code enforcement procedures.

We respectfully request that this item be placed on the agenda for the **Monday, March 2, 2026, Town Council meeting** for consideration and approval.

Please let me know if you need any additional information regarding the bid submissions or this recommendation.

Respectfully,

Nick Ewing
Code Enforcement

Thomas Diem
Code Official



TOWN OF EASTON
OFFICE OF CODE ENFORCEMENT
14 S HARRISON ST
EASTON MD 21601

26-01 Property Maintenance Bid Comparison Table

ITEM #	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	WARNKE'S LAWN SERVICE	MARSHALLS PROPERTY MGMT	PRESTWOOD LLC	TIDEWATER LANDSCAPING
1	Lawn mowing and trimming Properties < 2 Acres Per ¼ Acre	\$50	\$60	\$40	\$50
2	Lawn mowing and trimming Properties > 2 Acres Per Acre	\$65	\$215	\$120	\$130
3	Bushhog and trimming Properties 2 to 7 Acres Per Acre	\$100	\$174	\$50	\$150
4	Bushhog and trimming Properties > 7 Acres Per Acre	\$100	\$174	\$350	\$140
5	Hedge and tree trimming Per Hour	\$75	\$65	\$100	\$125
6	Debris Removal Per Ton Inclusive of tipping fee	\$400	\$235	\$131.50	\$265
7	Brush Removal Per Ton Inclusive of tipping fee	\$400	\$210	\$106.50	\$235

EASTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

"With Pride We Serve"

UPCOMING PUBLIC ASSEMBLY EVENT

TO: Mayor Cook and Andy Kitzrow
DATE: February 17, 2026
PREPARED BY: 1st Sgt. Patrick Sally 0135

EVENT: 2026 Plein Air – Easton

APPLICANT: Marie Nuthall – Avalon Foundation

LOCATION: Harrison Street between Dover and Goldsborough Street (7/10/26)
South St. between Harrison St. and Talbot Ln. (7/16/26 & 7/17/26)
Harrison Street between Dover Street and South Street (7/18/26)
Academy Art Museum and Waterfowl Building

DATE/TIME: 7/10/26	5pm - 10pm	PAE Nocturne Paint Out
7/16/26	8:30am-11:30am	Competition Artist's Submissions
7/17/26	5pm – 9:30pm	Collector's Party
7/18/26	7am - 3pm	Quick Draw Competition and Sale

ATTENDANCE: approx. 5,000 over 9 days

PURPOSE: Community outreach promoting arts in Easton

SPECIAL REQUESTS:

- No parking posted on Talbot Lane between South Lane and South Street on 7/06/26 and 7/20/26 for loading and unloading of AC Units
- 7/10/26 – street closure of N. Harrison Street between Dover St and Goldsborough Street for Nocturne Paint Out event (3pm – 10pm)
- 7/16/26 - closure of South Street between Harrison Street and Talbot Lane to allow foot traffic to travel safely between Waterfowl Building and Academy Art Museum during artist submission (8:30am – 1130am)

- 7/17/26 – closure of South Street between Harrison Street and Talbot Lane to allow foot traffic to travel safely between Waterfowl Building and Academy Art Museum during the Collectors Party (5pm – 9:30pm)
- 7/18/26 – closure of S. Harrison Street between Dover Street and South Street during the Quick Draw Competition and Artisans Market (8am – 4pm). Also request closure of Lot 1 and portion of Glenwood Ave between Harrison Street and rear entrance to Shore United Bank
- 7/17/26 – additional garbage and recycle bins deployed on S. Harrison St, with pickup on 7/18/26 at 3pm if possible or 07/19/26 in the morning.

APPROXIMATE COST:

Street closures and No Parking postings to be handled by on-duty EPD personnel (no additional overtime costs anticipated).

Overtime for public works to handle trash pickup - \$100.00

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommend approval.

EASTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

"With Pride We Serve"

UPCOMING PUBLIC ASSEMBLY EVENT

TO: Mayor Cook and Andy Kitzrow
DATE: February 24, 2026
PREPARED BY: 1st Sgt. Patrick Sally 0135

EVENT: Easter Egg-Stravaganza

APPLICANT: Christina Matthews – Easton Church of God

LOCATION: VFW Post 5118, 355 Glebe Rd. Easton, Md. 21601

DATE/TIME: March 28, 2026 1pm – 5pm (Rain Date – 3/29, 26 1pm – 5pm)

ATTENDANCE: 4,000 +

PURPOSE: Community Outreach

DETAILS:

- Free public event
- Vendors will be present
- Portable sound system to be utilized

SPECIAL REQUESTS:

- Traffic control when event concludes

EPD CONCERNS:

- Parking is of great concern due to Street parking and parking at the Amish Market on a Saturday. I spoke with both Christina Matthews and Josh Maxwell concerning the parking. They stated that the VFW will be used for vendors only as they are open that day. They are providing handicapped parking on street using their signs. They have also reached out to the Amish market and advised them of the parking. People at the Amish Market are supporting their issue of parking in the lot. The event goes in waves of 45 minutes, so people will be coming and going throughout the event. This event

was held there for years until it was moved to the parking lot off of St. Michaels Rd. with little to no issues.

APPROXIMATE COST:

- \$950.00 – 3 officers and a cadet to provide security and traffic control during and after the event. (16-man hours)

RECOMMENDATIONS: Approve

EASTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

"With Pride We Serve"

UPCOMING PUBLIC ASSEMBLY EVENT

TO: Mayor Cook and Andy Kitzrow

DATE: February 17, 2026

PREPARED BY: 1st Sgt. Patrick Sally 0135

EVENT: St Patrick's Day Parade and Potato Race

APPLICANT: Thomas Maglio / EEDC

LOCATION: Parade Route – Start at District Court Parking lot on Dover St. Proceed east on Dover Street to Harrison Street. Head north on Harrison to Goldsborough Street. West on Goldsborough St. to Washington Street. Washington Street to Federal St. Federal St to West St. West to Dover St. Dover St. back to The District Court lot.

The Potato Race, immediately following the parade, will be in front of the Circuit Courthouse on Washington St.

DATE/TIME: March 17, 2026 5:30pm – 6:30pm (or until concluded)

ATTENDANCE: 2,500 spectators / less than 40 parade units

PURPOSE: Holiday Parade

SPECIAL REQUESTS: Police assistance for traffic control during parade and provide traffic control devices for street closures (No parking along parade route will be posted 3 hrs prior to event to allow for a clear route).

EPD CONCERNS: None

APPROXIMATE COST: 15 traffic posts will be required to be staffed, as well as providing roaming bike patrols and a lead car. EPD will bring in extra personnel to staff these posts as needed. EPD personnel will maintain a presence during the potato race, and open streets when concluded.

EPD overtime cost – approx. \$2,500

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

EASTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

"With Pride We Serve"

UPCOMING PUBLIC ASSEMBLY EVENT

TO: Mayor Cook and Chief Lowrey

DATE: February 17, 2026

PREPARED BY: 1st Sgt. Patrick Sally 0135

EVENT: Recurring Vigil for Peace and Social Justice

APPLICANT: Mary M. Yancey

LOCATION: Sidewalk in front of the Talbot County Court House

DATE/TIME: March 05, 2026 thru December 31, 2026 Every Thursday from 5pm to 6pm

ATTENDANCE: 3 to 20 participants

PURPOSE: To promote peace and social justice

REQUEST: They will be advised to keep the sidewalk open to other pedestrians

EPD CONCERNS: None

APPROXIMATE COST: There is no cost to the town for these Vigils

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

EASTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

"With Pride We Serve"

UPCOMING PUBLIC ASSEMBLY EVENT

TO: Mayor Cook and Andy Kitrow
DATE: February 24, 2026
PREPARED BY: 1st Sgt. Patrick Sally 0135

EVENT: 2026 Outdoor Summer Concert Series

APPLICANT: Michael McCormack – Avalon Foundation

LOCATION: Harrison Street between Dover and Goldsborough Streets

DATE/TIME: June 06, 13, 20, 27 July 25 August 01, 08, 22, 29

7pm – 9pm

ATTENDANCE: 200+ persons

PURPOSE: Community Gathering

DETAILS: Various bands will set up on Harrison Street on the dates provided.

SPECIAL REQUESTS:

- Close N. Harrison Street between Goldsborough and Dover Streets (5pm – 9pm)

EPD CONCERNS: None

APPROXIMATE COST: None (on duty personnel will handle)

RECOMMENDATIONS: Recommend approval



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23

Aurora Park Dr

Creamery Ln

Creamery Ln

Creamery Ln

Auro

EASTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

"With Pride We Serve"

UPCOMING PUBLIC ASSEMBLY EVENT

TO: Mayor Cook and Andy Kitzrow
DATE: February 25, 2026
PREPARED BY: 1st Sgt. Patrick Sally 0135

EVENT: Public Mini Festival

APPLICANT: Darrin Pruitt – Chesapeake Creative Wellness

LOCATION: The area between the Easton Fire Department and 31 A Creamery Lane - see attached map

DATE/TIME: Second Saturday each month from April to October from 2pm to 6pm (04/11, 05/09, 06/13, 07/11, 08/08, 09/12 and 10/10)

ATTENDANCE: Approx. 100

PURPOSE: Promote Community, mental wellness through music and the arts

SPECIAL REQUESTS: Use of sound amplification system for acoustic music

EPD CONCERNS: This event was held last year and the concern then was parking in the Fire Dept. lot. There were no issues last year and feel there will be no issues this year. Mr. Pruitt stated that he talked to Fire Dept. officials

APPROXIMATE COST: None

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

CONNECT TALBOT

Talbot County Rural Broadband Project



Easton *Velocity*

A service of EASTON UTILITIES

COUNTY-WIDE BROADBAND



100%
AVAILABILITY

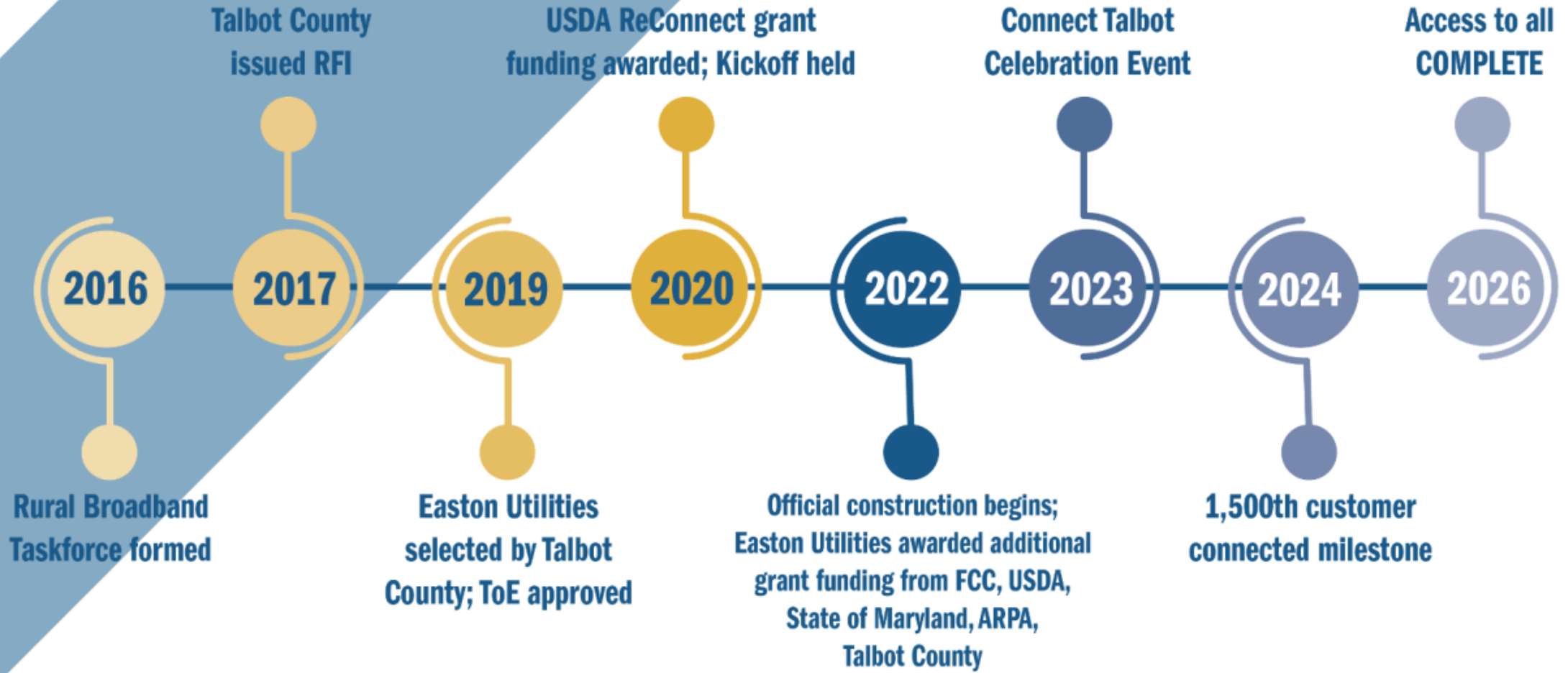


360 MILES
COMPLETED

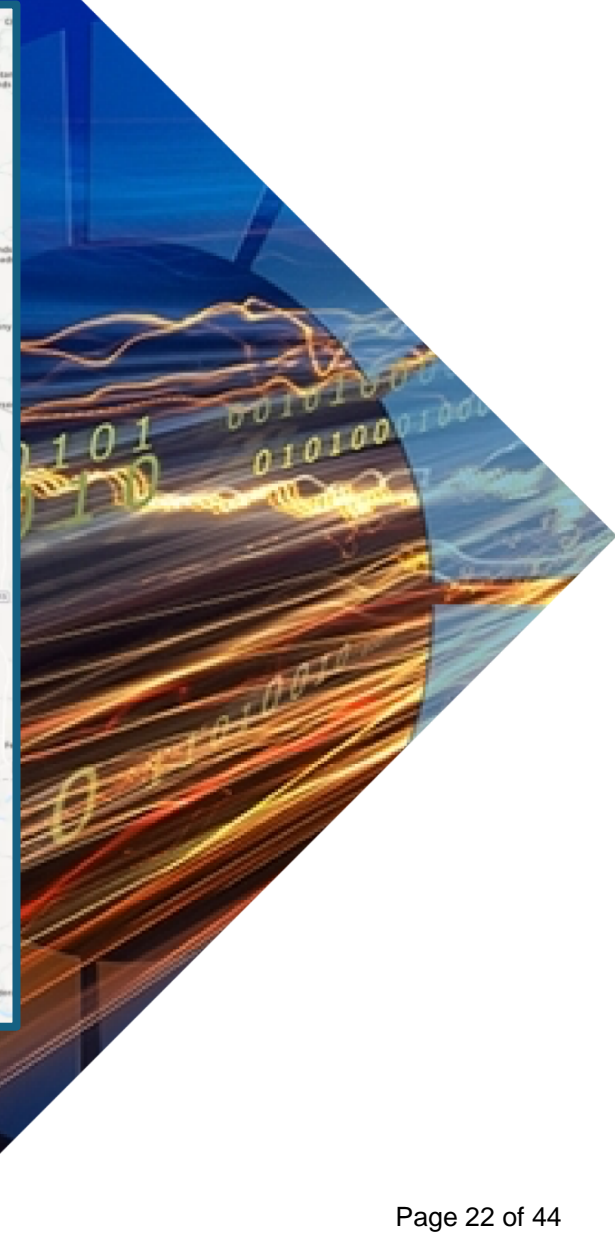
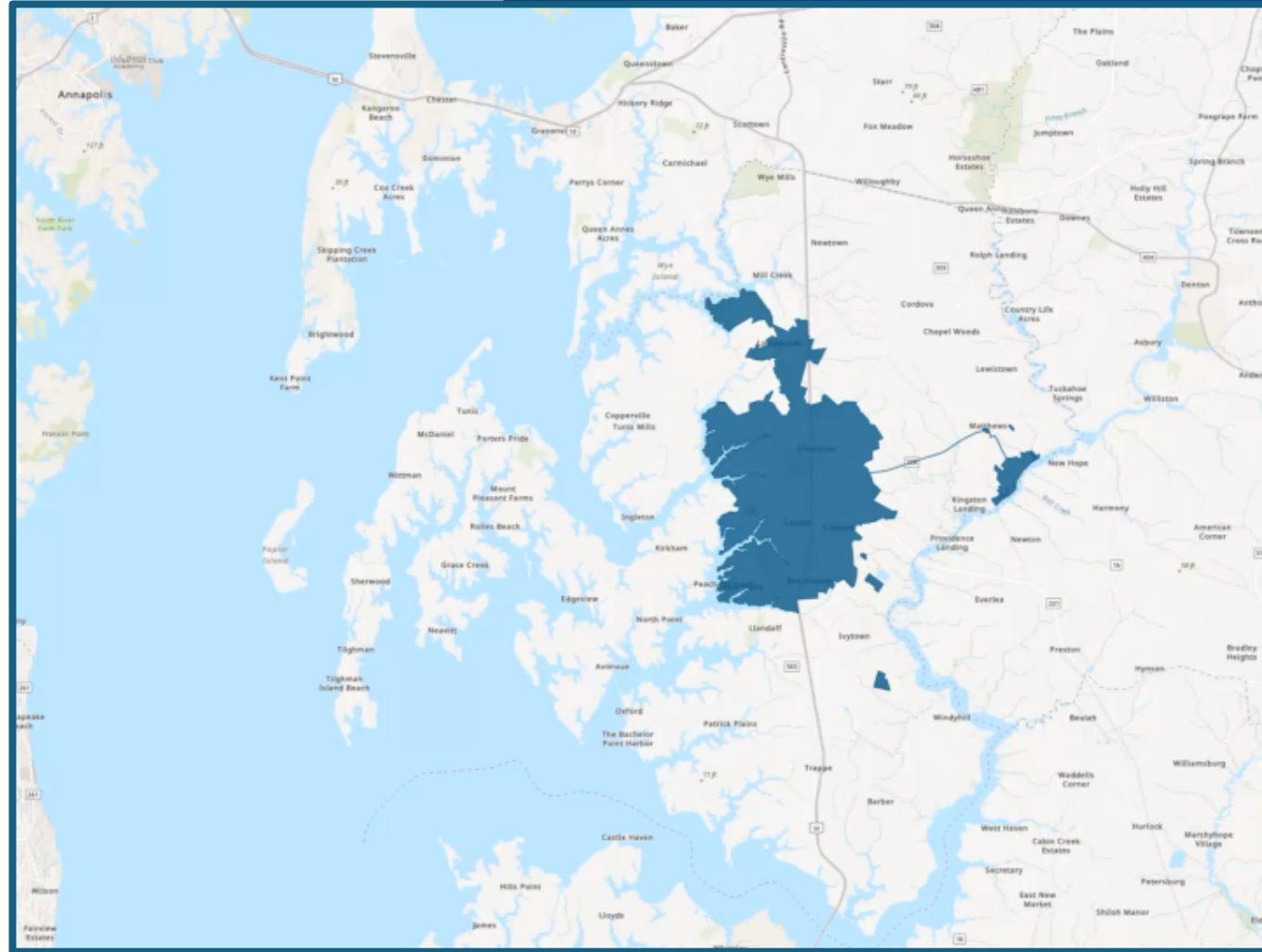


2,300
NEW CUSTOMERS

TIMELINE



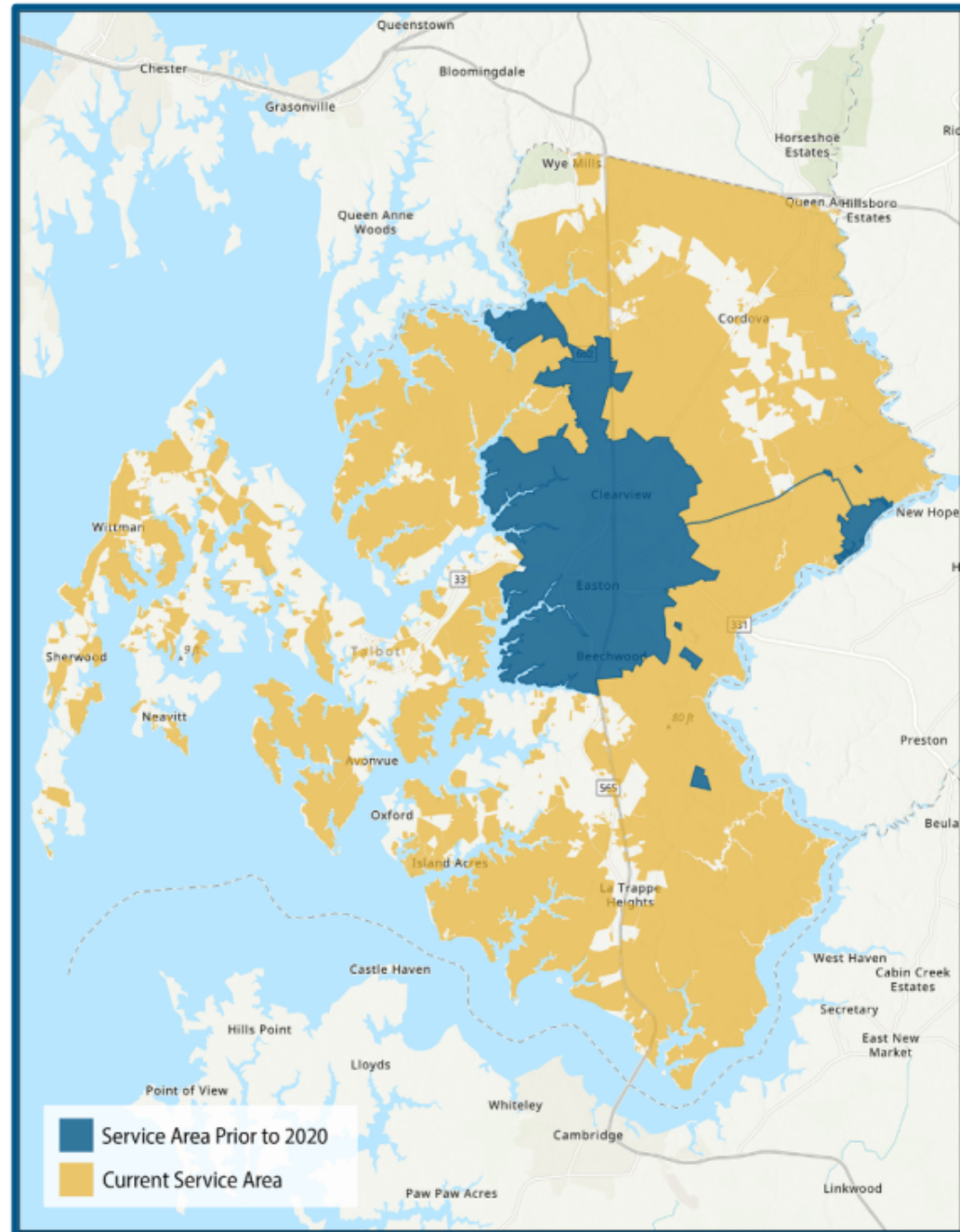
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SERVICE AREA

“ The partnership and commitment to rural connectivity has made this project possible and positioned our community for future growth.”

John J. Horner
President & CEO of Easton Utilities



ACT NOW!

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

Eligible residents and businesses in the funding area are strongly encouraged to request that their broadband service drop be installed.

SCHEDULE AN ONSITE CONSULT

Bring broadband access to your home and avoid paying any construction fees.

No need to sign up for service, but your home or business will be ready if you decide to in the future.



Thank you!



Easton *Velocity*
A service of EASTON UTILITIES



artwork by Maggie Sarfaty



Waterfowl Festival 2025

Celebrating a record-breaking year!

February 2026

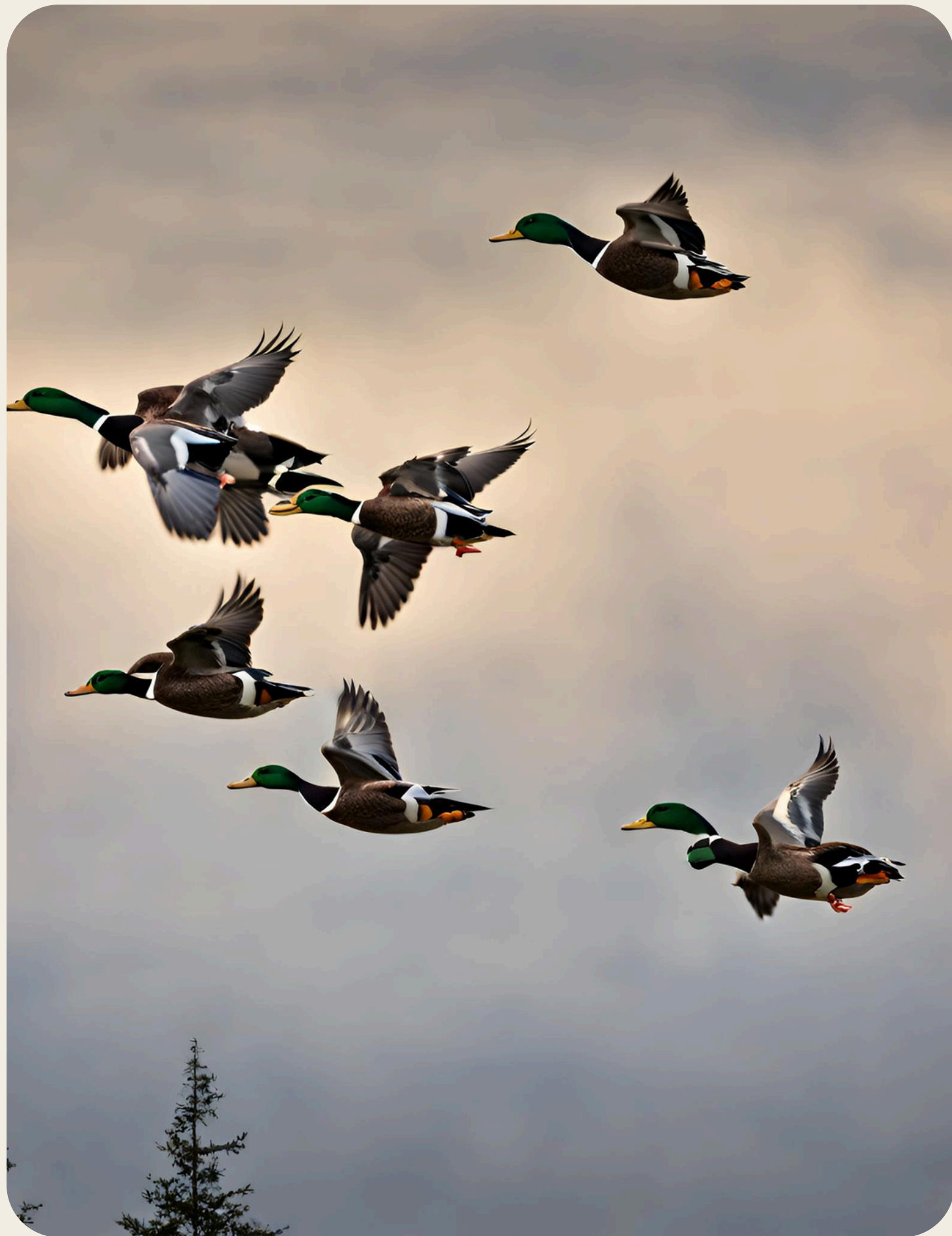


Somerset County WMA



our mission

Waterfowl Festival, Inc. (a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization) is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Chesapeake waterfowl and wildlife conservation; we promote community, education and awareness by celebrating Eastern Shore heritage, sporting traditions, and artistic expression.



Priorities

- #1: Establish a Clear Year-Round Organizational Identity (Expand awareness of annual impact)
- #2: Transform Easton's Historic Armory into a Vibrant Center for Learning, Wildlife Conservation, Cultural Heritage, and Community Engagement
- #3: Celebrate the Festival as a premier Wildlife and Sporting Heritage event in support of Conservation



Who runs the festival?

- Staff of Three:
 - Executive Director; Deena Kilmon
 - Assistant Director: Sammie Adams-Mercer
 - Admin/Volunteer Coordinator: Annie Miller
- Board of Directors (Currently 13 members)
 - President Julia Susman
- THE VOLUNTEERS!
 - Two dozen chairman and over 1000 volunteers inc. 200+ student volunteers

Our Impact

Festival 2025

\$5-6 million

Positive Financial impact on the county

100% improvement over last professional economic development survey by IRIS consulting

\$9 Million statewide Impact!

32,400

Attendees

13,500 Tickets Purchased



45 of states represented, US, Mexico

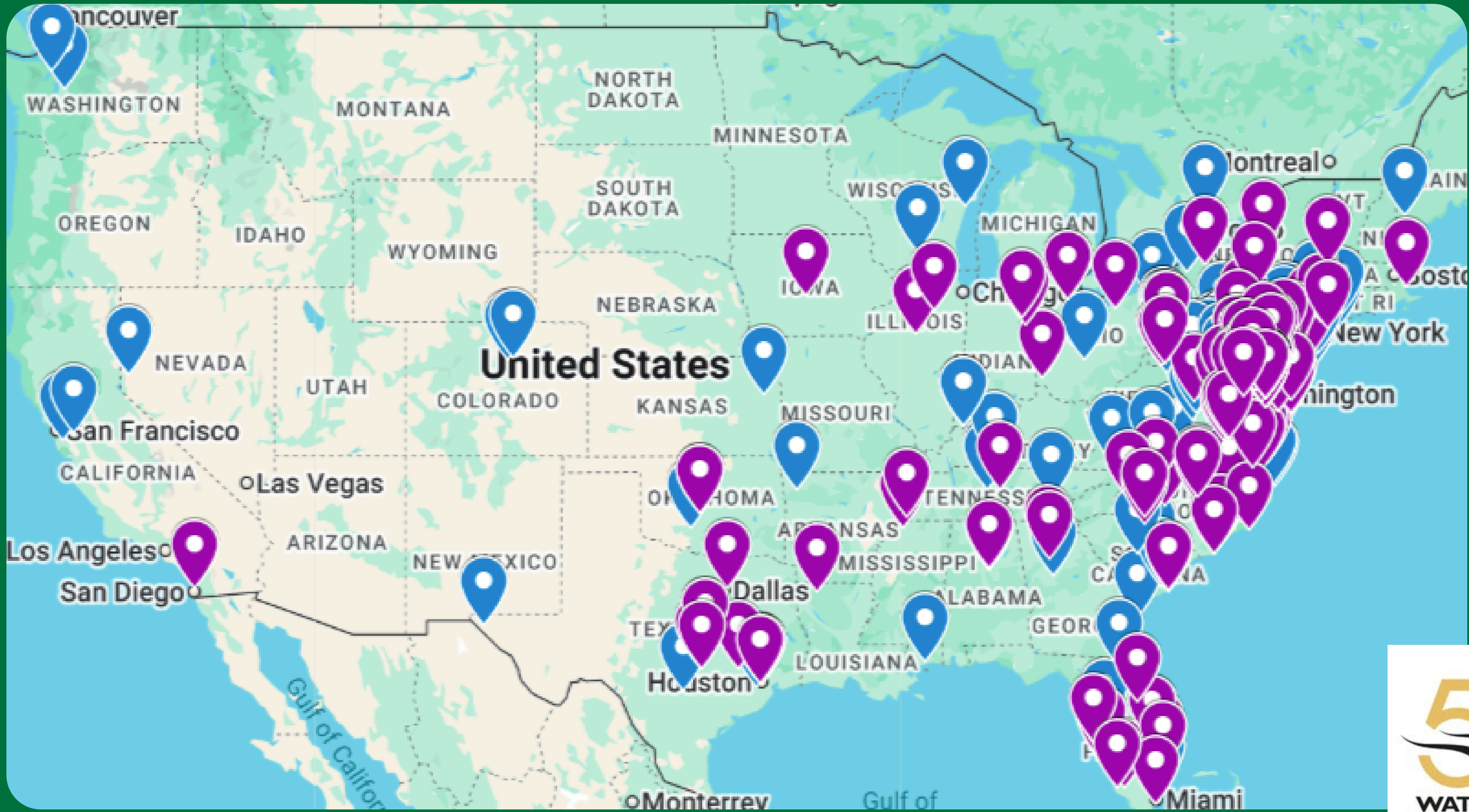
Expectations: we are keeping up with trends, accessibility features, modern conveniences and procedures , new educational and kids attractions, unticketed attractions increased good will and accessibility

“YOUR TICKET IS A DONATION” Messaging is working; transparency in festival finances is being received favorably - we need help paying for infrastructure to make sure we can also support our mission.



Positive *IMPACT!*

- 32,400 total attendees
- **62% traveled from outside Talbot County**
- **25%+ of visitors came from out of state**
- 63% of non-residents stayed overnight (2.56-day average stay)
- 82% rated the festival “excellent” or “good”
- 87% likely or very likely to recommend
- \$446 average spending per non-resident visitor
- **\$993K in lodging expenditures within Talbot County**
- \$1.95M in shopping and \$1.66M in food & beverage spending
- Over six million dollar total economic impact in Talbot County
- An estimated nine million dollar economic impact statewide





Who funds the festival?

- Maryland State Arts Council
- General Admission Ticket Sales
- Exhibitor Fees and art commissions
- Corporate Sponsors
- Private Donations/MIP Ticket Sales

The Festival does not receive funds from any other agencies, local or regional.

Why do we work so hard? Mission-Driven!

Over six million donated since 1971!

\$6,017,307

In many cases, our private funds fill the gap with projects that need matching dollars to complete their mission



Organizations we have supported include:

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, Blackwater National Refuge, Adkins Arboretum, Pickering Creek, Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Phillips Wharf, Talbot County Public Schools, Nature Conservancy, Oxford Labs, Environmental Concern, Izaak Walton League, Horn Point, National Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, Wildlife Conservation Fund, Ward Foundation



\$337,035

Scholarships to Talbot County students





Other Non-profits benefit

- Lions Club
- Christ Church
- Eternal Life Ministries
- Girl Scouts
- Boy Scouts
- Phillips Wharf Environmental Center
- The Elks Lodge
- Talbot County Chamber of Commerce
- Working Artists Forum
- Academy Arts Museum
- Avalon Theatre
- Easton Fire Department; Easton Police Department
- Talbot County Public Schools



New: Free and Non-ticketed events

Free activities and non-ticketed venues - over 10,000 people including thousands of children enjoyed free educational activities! Volunteers and other groups were offered free admission (Fello, Chesapeake Center)

Six Music Stages featuring over 100 musicians
High School Conservation Pavilion & Decoy market
Talbot Retriever Club Demo
Ward Museum Children's Art Activities
Raptor exhibition
Harry M. Walsh Waterfowling Artifacts Exhibit
Chesapeake Mermaid Story Hour
Drawing with Tim Young



Easton High

Rising to success with a focus on heritage arts and collectibles and conservation - free admission

This venue soared in popularity this year and featured over 90 vendors showcasing the best in **decoy arts, heritage collectibles, conservation displays, and more!**

The high school was also the home to the free children's art activities in collaboration with the Ward Museum . On the grounds attendees also enjoyed the calling contest and the crowd pleasing raptor educational presentation.



Did you know?

Festival celebrates Champion of Champions

The Champion of Champion World Waterfowl Calling Championships were held again at the Easton High - same time, same place since 1976!

The event was livestreamed free on Youtube for accessibility - live streamed to over 1000 people.

Sean Mann also hosted the annual free calling clinics for dozens of young callers -introducing the traditions of the eastern shore waterfowling culture. to the next generation.



Looking to Fall 2026...

The Armory: Waterfowl Festival Cultural Heritage Center

Back to the basics - with a twist

This exhibit will highlight carvers and traditional heritage artifacts in a new and improved exhibit hall - 5,000 square feet of folk traditions and heritage arts!

Carvers

Photographers

Harry M. Walsh Waterfowling Artifacts Exhibit

Federal Duck Stamp Winner

Gun Exhibits

Outlaw Gunner Museum Room

MHAA Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Exhibit



Speaking of the Armory...

- Dozens of organizations used the armory for events throughout 2025 and more are planned
- Maryland Historic Trust supporting roof restoration - project still needs \$200K in private or public donations to be completed
- Proceeds from the Festival cover significant repairs/monthly utilities
- “Rental” donations cover cleaning and trash removal and basic upkeep
- Significant costs are looming - we need help.



Community partners that use the Armory 2025 & 2026

- Easton Improv, Fello, Academy Art Museum, Talbot Historical Society, Talbot County Free Library, Talbot 250, Girl Scouts, Optimist Club, Easton Rotary, BAAM, Operation Frederick Douglas/Bailey Groce Foundation. Leadership MD, Shore Leadership, Main Street Maryland, Easton Economic Development Corporation. Talbot Interfaith Shelter, Tred Avon Players, Factory Arts Project Ward Foundation, MSAC...and more

Takeaways

The Festival has had a substantial positive financial impact on the city, state, and county for over fifty years.

We are growing. Costs are rising.

We are requesting support at all levels for infrastructure improvements that will benefit not only the festival, but the general community.

Supporting the festival allows us to grow but also perform our mission - supporting the cultural heritage of our community and the education of our children - creating a lasting legacy that is positive for all.

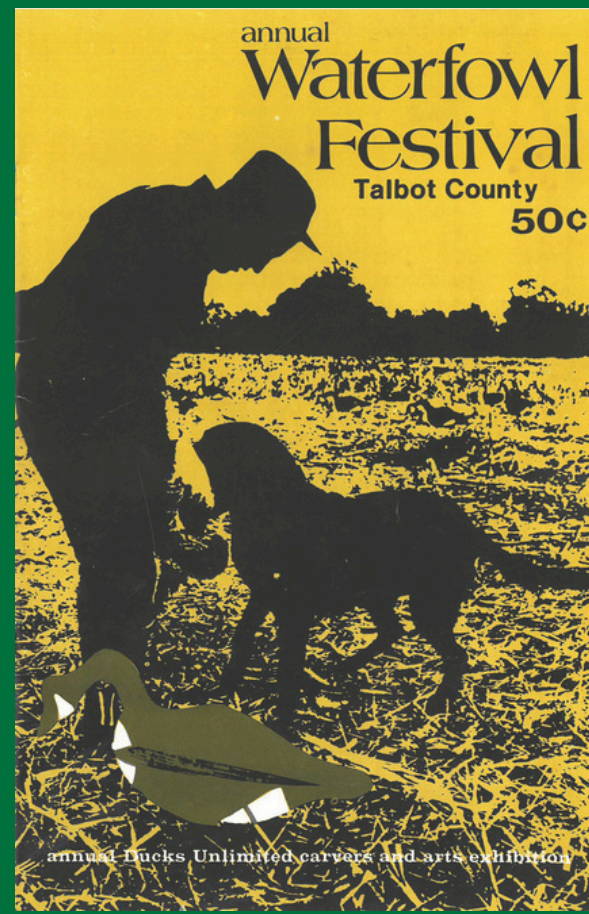


Final thoughts...



Strategic investments protect tradition and unlock growth
[Armory Restoration - On the Horizon \(video Link\)](#)





Happy 55th birthday Waterfowl!

55th WATERFOWL FESTIVAL[®]

