
BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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Harford County Executive Barry Glassman 2018 State of the County Address: “Back on Higher Ground”

BEL AIR, Md., (Jan. 9, 2018) - County Executive Barry Glassman delivered his fourth annual State of the County Address Tuesday, entitled “Back on Higher Ground”, to reflect the way Harford County’s improving financial position touches people’s lives. New initiatives included funding for a 24-hour crisis center and plans for legal action in the opioid crisis; support for volunteer fire company projects; and a push for the county’s fair share of state funding for education and road maintenance. County Executive Glassman also announced a new baseball field for youth with disabilities, and welcomed a national fishing tournament and half-marathon across the Susquehanna River coming to Harford County later this year.

In a break with tradition, Ring Factory Elementary School third-grader Gavin Donnelly introduced the county executive, who began by saying, “Gavin is a perfect example of why we work so hard for Harford’s future generations.”

Improving Financial Position

Reviewing financial data, the county executive said that revenues in FY2017 had exceeded expenditures for the third straight year, growing at 2.3% and 1.5% respectively. Rising property values contributed to these results, he said, along with limited spending under his administration. He said that tax rates would remain “frozen.”

To restore pay increases for teachers and law enforcement, County Executive Glassman said that he had directed \$24 million, or nearly all of the county’s new spending over the past three years, to fund salary increases for teachers, sheriff’s deputies, correctional officers, and dedicated county employees.

After a temporary pause to get debt under control, he announced that a modernized Havre de Grace Middle/High School would break ground in a few months. He also said that key infrastructure projects, from roadways to roofs, and storm water obligations were being funded.

As second vice-president of the Maryland Association of Counties, the county executive said he would push for changes to state funding formulas that shortchange suburban counties. He said that over the past three years, Harford County had increased operating funding for schools by \$15 million while the state had contributed just \$1 million more.

County Executive Glassman also said he would continue to seek local government’s rightful share of revenue from the state gas tax, which was intended to pay for local road maintenance. He said that Harford County had funded nearly \$23 million over the past three years to keep roads safe and local contractors working.

New Initiatives

Transitioning to the human impact of a fiscally responsible local government, County Executive Glassman said, “You see, if you want to lift someone up, you’ve got to be on higher ground.”

To help citizens in crisis, County Executive Glassman said that the county would begin moving forward with a 24-hour crisis center for access to care for addiction and mental illness, in partnership with University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health, the Harford County Health Department and Healthy Harford. He said he would recommend \$250K in next year’s budget,

doubling the county's existing allocation for addiction prevention and treatment, to help fund the project. To recoup costs, he said the county would join other Maryland counties in suing opioid manufacturers and distributors.

In support of high quality emergency medical services, the county executive announced that the first group of county paramedics would begin training next week. They will staff the first county-owned ambulances to supplement existing services and meet increased demand countywide. This follows his appointment of the county's first medical director and EMS Standards Advisory Board, as announced in his last State of the County Address. He thanked Board members for their work.

Continuing his administration's record level commitment to volunteer fire companies, the county executive announced \$350,000 in capital funding for Whiteford VFC and \$540,000 to complete Joppa-Magnolia VFC's Hanson Road substation, bringing the county's commitment to \$1.2 million for that project.

Having successfully updated the countywide master plan, County Executive Glassman announced an agreement with the University of Maryland National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education to assist the county with implementation and additional projects.

The year ahead will not be all work, County Executive Glassman said, welcoming the national Bassmaster Elite fishing competition this summer. He also thanked Gov. Hogan and the Maryland Transportation Authority for their support of a half marathon over the Susquehanna River in September. The competition will benefit the Al Cesky Scholarship Foundation.

Saying that his greatest reward comes from working with youth, families and those at risk, the county executive announced a custom-designed baseball field for youth with disabilities on county land at Schucks Regional Park in Bel Air. He said the project would be built, in partnership with The Miracle League of Harford County, because, "...every child should get a chance to play ball."

In closing, County Executive Glassman read a poignant letter from the mother of twin 2-year-old boys, who reached out to him in desperation when she became homeless. With help from county employee Lenora Robinson, the mother was able to find housing and wrote, "When you lose everything and fall flat on your face you pray for people who will not judge you." She went on to call the county executive a superman, but he said that the real hero was Lenora, and

others like her who make a difference in people’s lives every day. He led a round of applause for Lenora, who was a guest in the audience.

Concluding the last State of the County Address of his first term in office, County Executive Glassman said, “So just like on day one, in year four I will work hard every day for the county I love ... to reach the blessings and prosperity found on higher ground.”

The prepared text of the State of the County Address, a 2017 video and progress reports can be accessed on the county website at <http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/723/County-Executive>.



County Executive Barry Glassman preparing to deliver his fourth State of Harford County Address

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