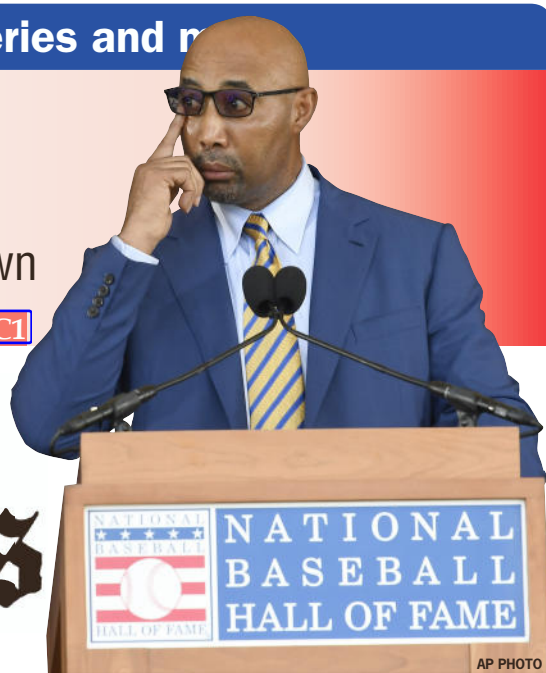


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Mid-Shore's Baines enters Cooperstown

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Kent County News

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Chestertown, Maryland \$1.50



Reid Fry, 9, of Chestertown accepts his first-place blue ribbon for market lambs Saturday. Standing next to Reid is his younger brother Owen, who placed second.

PHOTO BY TRISH MCGEE

Kent County Fair beats heatwave

By **ABBY WARGO**
Student Intern

TOLCHESTER — Despite extreme weather conditions, the Kent County Fair still managed to liven up the summer doldrums for many people.

"The fair is always a success, but this year we had some extra challenges due to the weather events," said Beth Hill, principal agent associate for 4-H youth development in Kent.

Temperatures during the fair, which took place July 18-20 at the Kent Ag Center, were in the mid-90s. The heat index, which combines air temperature and humidity, was as high as 109 degrees. A heat advisory from the National Weather Service was in effect from Friday, July 19 until Monday, July 22.

"It was not pleasant," Hill

said matter-of-factly.

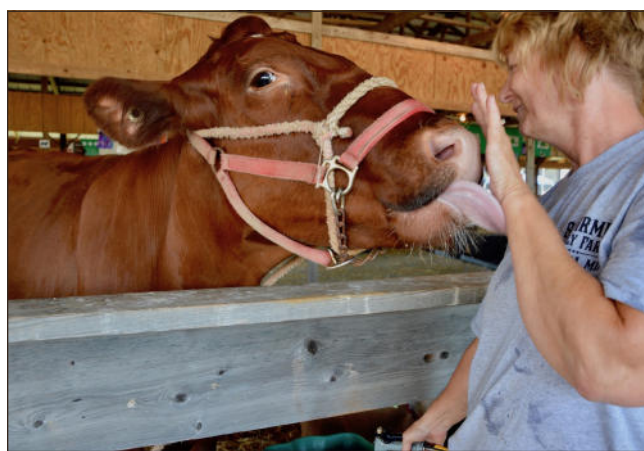
She said the heat affected fair attendance, especially during the mid-afternoon hours.

On Friday and Saturday nights, when the temperatures dropped a bit, the crowd swelled for the most popular events: the greased pig contest on Friday and the livestock auction and chicken barbecue dinner on Saturday.

"They're always well attended even if the weather's bad. It was uncomfortable, but it was still a good time," Hill said.

She noted that it rained all day Saturday and Sunday during last year's fair, which also affected the attendance, but the temperatures were more reasonable and less events had to be modified.

This year, Hill said, some programming had to be



A market dairy steer raised by Jack Kirby, 11, of Kennedyville shows its affection for Kirby's grandmother, Belinda Schirmer of Pampered Acres Farm near Galena.

modified to accommodate and 4-Hers a reprieve from the sun's rays. The Eastern Shore Jousting Association's competition, scheduled for noon

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State education workgroup lacks Shore members

By **DANIEL DIVILIO**
ddivilio@thekentcountynews.com

CHESTERTOWN — The membership of a state committee reviewing education funding formulas has some local officials on edge.

As announced last month by state Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. and House of Delegates Speaker Adrienne A. Jones, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Funding Formula Workgroup comprises no members from the Eastern Shore or from other rural areas of the state.

Kent County Commissioner Bob Jacob expressed his concerns over that fact at a July 16 meeting. He suggested sending a letter to Harford County Executive Barry Glassman — who also is president of the Maryland Association of Counties, a member of the funding formula workgroup and a Washington College graduate — voicing the commissioners' concerns.

Jacob said the letter he wants to put together should include information about the "unique nature of Kent County." He wants the letter to note that Kent County is a farming community and its schools continue to face declining student enrollment.

He said maybe another letter could go to Gov. Larry Hogan voicing the commissioners' disappointment.

"Well it's bad enough that they don't have anybody from the Eastern Shore, but then when you don't even have anybody from the rest of the rural counties throughout the state, that sends a clear message whose calling the shots in all this," said Commissioner Ron Fithian at the meeting.



BOB JACOB

Fithian said school funding is one of the most important financial issues in the county.

The funding formula workgroup is a subcommittee of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, commonly referred to as the Kirwan Commission for chairman and former University System of Maryland chancellor William E. "Britt" Kirwan.

Among those joining Kirwan on the funding formula workgroup are the current and a former Maryland budget secretary; three state lawmakers, two current and one former, all from Baltimore; and officials from Harford, Baltimore, Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties.

According to a June 4 news release from Miller and Jones, the workgroup will submit a report to the full Kirwan Commission by Nov. 1.

"We have a solid set of policy recommendations and we are asking this esteemed group to work out the details for funding before the

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TODAY'S WEATHER



Sunny

High **86** Low **66**
Clearing up tonight.

The Week Ahead, **Page A10**

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Farmer's market adds low-income assistance

By **ABBY WARGO**
Student Intern

CHESTERTOWN — Sabine Harvey wears many hats. But when she heard that Chestertown was "looking desperately" for a new manager for the weekly farmers market, she decided, why not one more?

"It combines many of my passions," said Harvey, who is a home horticulturist by day. She succeeds longtime manager Owen McCoy, who died last summer. McCoy's daughters initially took over the responsibilities, but according to Harvey it became too much for them to handle.

Enter Harvey, who was hired as the new manager in February as the unanimous choice of the Chestertown Mayor and Council.

So far, she said, the job has been a "serious amount" of work, but very rewarding and a lot of fun. Currently, the market has about 32 vendors, selling everything from fresh produce and seafood to cut flowers.



PHOTO BY ABBY WARGO

A patron inspects the green peppers at Lockbriar Farms' booth at the Chestertown Farmers Market on July 20. Market vendors have started participating in assistance programs for low-income families.

"We have been very busy, I've seen a lot of happy faces," she said in an interview in the *Kent County News* office on July 17.

Harvey has been working on expanding the market's

reach to a new demographic: low-income residents.

Shoppers at the Chestertown market now can use Women, Infant and Children and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program cards

and nutrition coupons to purchase fresh produce, which they might not be able to afford otherwise. The new initiatives are available thanks to the Maryland Market Money program through

the Maryland Farmers Market Association.

To use these methods of payment at a farmers market takes a little finagling. People with SNAP cards can have their payment processed at the information booth, where they will receive tokens for the dollar amount they need. At the register, Harvey can give SNAP cardholders an additional \$5 to spend at the market.

She said the program has been going well so far.

"However, I don't want to run out of money," Harvey said. "I want to be able to continue this program."

She is working to extend these additional funds to be able to match a shopper's SNAP tokens dollar for dollar to double the money they can spend at the market. To do this, she has set up a GoFundMe page to raise money for the program, which can be found on the Chestertown Farmers Market Facebook page.

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MARKET

From
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Harvey said she also welcomes donations in the form of checks mailed to the Chestertown town hall at 118 N. Cross St.

For people who participate in the WIC program, the process is a little more difficult. None of the vendors can process the e-WIC debit cards, so WIC has a special Farmers Market Nutrition Program that allows WIC recipients a six-coupon booklet (valued at \$30) to use. The coupon booklets, given out by the Maryland Department of Agriculture, are valid until November.

If a WIC recipient uses a coupon at a farmer's booth, the farmer issues a receipt, which the shopper takes to the manager's booth.

Unlike the SNAP program, Harvey can match WIC coupons dollar for dollar.

"There, they get double their money. So that's huge, because those recipients just got to purchase produce that they otherwise never would have been able to buy, and in addition, obviously, that is also revenue for the vendors that otherwise would not have been there. So it's a win-win situation," Harvey said.

In addition, Harvey is in the process of planning a one-day market event during National Farm to School Month in October. The market will be located at Garnet Elementary School in Chestertown for an afternoon, and during the school day students will be allowed to shop.

Harvey said she is working with the PTA to plan a parent event later in the day where there will be demonstrations on food preparation.

"There's a lot of stuff available then. We want not only to say to people, 'Hey, you can come and get vegetables,' but we also want to show them what they can do with it," Harvey said.

It is also open to the community. Harvey said the different time, day



PHOTO BY ABBY WARGO

Sabine Harvey, the manager of the Chestertown Farmers Market, runs the information booth on July 20. The booth can process SNAP and WIC payments.

and location will allow the market to reach people who otherwise might not be able to come. The FMNP coupons given out to WIC recipients don't expire until November, so they will still be valid during that time.

The temporary market's proximity to Washington College also can be easily accessed by college students, "so the students know about the farmers market and familiarize themselves with the vendors so that they have some access to some locally grown food as well, rather than just the cafeteria," Harvey said. "The bottom line is, we want students to be able to go and shop."

Some of the money raised from the GoFundMe page will go toward funding this pop-up market.

Setting up these programs was not easy.

First, Harvey realized that the Chestertown market was not a member of the Maryland Farmers Market Association.

Once the market here joined the state association, Harvey received an email about joining the Maryland Market Money program. The deadline to apply was the next day.

"As an idiot, I tried to get all the stuff together (myself), but I did, and they

accepted us," she said.

Whereas other farmers markets in Maryland are run by nonprofits, Harvey is the only person staffing the Chestertown market. She has help from one volunteer, Jon Hanley, but is usually the only one to staff the booth, help with food assistance program recipients and collect the weekly fees from the vendors.

To further expand the market's capabilities, Harvey can't do it all herself. In addition to running the market and working a full-time job with the University of Maryland Extension in Kent County, Harvey is the president of the Chestertown Tea Party Festival Committee — among the other hats she wears.

She is hoping to attract volunteers that could help out on Saturdays as well as with some of the behind-the-scenes tasks, such as creating a new website. People interested in volunteering can contact Harvey through the Chestertown Farmers Market Facebook page or email her at greenbien@hotmail.com.

"There's so much food here. But then of course, just because there's food, that doesn't mean people have access to it in terms of actually knowing where the place is. It also doesn't mean that people actually have the means to shop there, or when they do, it doesn't necessarily mean they know what to do with it. There's a lot of hurdles," Harvey said.

"I just like to make it as easy and foolproof as possible, and this is such a great county, so I just want to bring all those groups together, make beautiful food and share it with your friends," Harvey said.

The Chestertown Farmers Market, which has been a staple in town since its creation in the early 1980s, runs on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon downtown in Fountain Park. The full market is open from the third Saturday in March until the last Saturday in December. A reduced-participation market is also open during the winter, weather permitting.

FUNDING

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next legislative session. The law that we passed this year is an important step forward but we need full implementation to ensure our students are competitive nationally and globally," Jones, herself a member of the Kirwan Commission, said in the release.

With a meetings held June 20 and July 24, the workgroup has discussions scheduled for Aug. 1 and 22 and Sept. 5, 19 and 26, according to the Maryland Association of Boards of Education website. That calendar shows a public hearing will be held on "preliminary decisions" from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Sept. 19 in Anne Arundel County. No specific location is given.

"I am grateful that leaders from the executive branch, the legislative branch, and leaders in the education and non-profit world are committed to finding a path forward on this monumental task," Miller said in the release.

Perhaps most concerning for local officials is the workgroup's charge to "make recommendations for specific funding formulas for ongoing costs within each Kirwan Commission policy recommendation." That could lead to changes in how the county share of school funding is determined by the state.

Kent County Superintendent Karen Couch, a member of the Kirwan Commission, has often raised the issue with how a county's

"wealth" plays a role in funding formulas.

While Kent County's three elementary schools and the middle school qualify for additional federal support based on the number of low-income students enrolled, the district is considered to be in a "wealthy" county by the state based in part on the large number of high-value waterfront properties. As such, it loses out on additional state funding.

Jacob reiterated concerns over the funding calculation for Kent County during the July 16 meeting. The bulk of the school district's funding comes from county coffers.

"For us to keep giving more money to the school board, it's like, where are we going to take it from?" he said, adding that the hope was that the Kirwan Commission was going to identify a means to help out the county. "Now we'll just have to hold our breath and see what happens."

During this year's 90-day General Assembly session, a bill titled "The Blueprint for Maryland's Future" and aimed at funding Kirwan Commission recommendations passed the House and Senate.

Gov. Larry Hogan allowed it to become law without his signature, voicing his concerns about increased school funding without, as he put in a letter to the General Assembly leadership, "the fiscal safeguards and much-needed accountability our students, parents, teachers, and taxpayers deserve."

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Page A12

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PHOTO BY ABBY WARGO

Brantley Mills, 4, participates in the watermelon-eating contest on Friday evening following the greased pig contest.



PHOTO BY TRISH MCGEE

Raelynn Wagner, 10, of Little Bohemia Creek Farm near Kennedyville and her Reserve Champion market beef steer weighing 1,265 pounds prepare to enter the show ring for the 4-H livestock sale Saturday night.

FAIR

From Page A1

Saturday, was called off due to the heat.

Special care was taken to ensure the health and safety of the animals. Large blocks of ice were placed in the hogs' pens, while rabbits were kept cool with frozen water bottles and cold tiles. Some animals that were susceptible to heat stress, such as special rabbits that required air conditioning, went home early as a precaution, Hill said.

Rachel Jones of Rock Hall, president of the Fuzzy Tales and Shiny Scales 4-H Club, said she used spray bottles and "big" fans to keep her rabbits comfortable. She had two winners — Snowflake, the Grand Champion among mixed breeds, and Amethyst, the Reserved Champion for mini lops.



PHOTO BY ABBY WARGO

A group of 4-year-old girls chase the pig Baconator during Friday evening's greased pig event.

Allison Davis, 12, of Chestertown was vigilant in the horse barn, where

she diluted liniment and sponged it over her Grand Champion horse Theo. She

also made sure Theo had plenty of water to drink. Fairgoers were reminded

via intermittent intercom announcements to stay hydrated and to take frequent

breaks from the harsh conditions. Several locations on the fairgrounds were equipped with air conditioning. Hill said the kitchen also was available to sufficiently cool off over-heated guests.

The Kent-Queen Anne's Rescue Squad provided fan misters outside of the poultry barn that were accessible to anyone needing to cool down.

"That was very nice," Hill said.

She said the fair would not be what it is without the help of volunteers — the entire fair staff are volunteers — sponsors and, of course, the attendees.

While weather conditions were less than ideal, the fair's main focus — providing a good experience for young people and 4-H'ers — was successful.

"This is really a community event. It's always wonderful to see everyone come together for the fair," Hill said.

FUNDING

From Page A11

While the bill bolsters state funding for schools in every county and Baltimore City, Kent County did not see the an increase in financial support at the same level as other districts.

Of the \$75 million earmarked for a Teacher Salary Incentive Grant Program, Kent County is slated to receive \$55,218. The next lowest district on the list, Talbot County, was set to see more than double that with \$114,126. Queen Anne's County was listed at \$544,458.

More than \$13 million of that \$75 million will go to Prince George's County. Baltimore County is next highest on the list with about \$9.8

million, followed by Baltimore City at \$8.4 million.

Another \$65 million is listed in the bill "for the education of students with disabilities."

Disbursements of those funds are broken out by percentage, with Kent County again last on the list receiving .19% of the \$65 million, which comes to \$124,390. Garrett County is next lowest with .26%. Prince George's County is again the highest, slated to receive 15.45%, followed by Baltimore City at 14.87%.

The bill also includes disbursements to help districts provide "transitional supplemental instruction" for "struggling learners."

Kent County is listed in the bill at \$47,683 — making it yet again the district receiving the lowest amount. Worcester County

is second lowest on the list with \$78,959 while Prince George's County is again at the top with \$4.8 million, followed by Baltimore City at \$4.1 million.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future received a unanimous vote in the state Senate, including a "yea" from Sen. Steve Hershey, R-36-Upper Shore. It passed 114-20 in the House, with Dels. Jay Jacobs, R-36-Kent, and Steve Arentz, R-36-Queen Anne's, opposed and Del. Jeff Ghrist,

R-36-Caroline, in favor.

When it comes to the funding formula workgroup, the next step in Kirwan Commission efforts, concerns over the membership are not just coming from the Shore. Bill Valentine, a former Allegany County commissioner and Kirwan Commission member, penned a letter to newspapers raising issues about the lack of county representation on the workgroup.

"A large financial burden

will be placed on the counties to help fund Kirwan Commission proposals, and yet the workgroup consists mainly of state senators and delegates and education representatives. The counties will be tasked with funding these new unfunded mandates without having an equal voice at the table. Only one member will be representing county interests," Valentine wrote.

In his letter, Valentine reiterates that counties provide significant financial allocations to their corresponding school districts.

"Counties are true funding partners for education, but once again have been closed out of funding discussions. This is the type of action that causes problems between county governments and local boards of education," Valentine wrote.

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