Proposals wanted for study of bay passenger ferry service

Responses due Feb. 15

ANNAPOLIS — The anticipat-ed notice of request for proposals to study the feasibility, costs and eco-nomic benefits of a Chesapeake Bay passenger ferry has been released with re-sponses due by Feb. 15.

Visit Annapolis & Princess Anne County Conference & Visitor Bureau Inc. leads a consortium with Som- mer, Queen Anne’s, Calvert and St. Mary’s counties as they take the first step to see if it’s feasible to connect bayside communities with a fast, passenger ferry system.

During the late 19th century and into the early 20th century there were passenger steamships and medi- um-sized boats carrying mail, freight and passengers to connect waterfront towns and cities. The selected re-sident to this RFP is being asked to study the sustainability of a passenger ferry service connecting key destina-tions including Annapolis, Galesville, Chesapeake Beach, St. Mary’s City, Leonardtown, Crisfield, Matapexke, Kent Narrows, and Baltimore as pri-mary destinations.

Secondary locations include Sol- omons, Cambridge, St. Michaels, Easton, Rock Hall, Chestertown, Chesapeake City, North East, Havre de Grace.

Currently, “significant travel by water” unless with a personal boat is “missing from the Chesapeake Bay experience,” say consortium mem-bers.

“A passenger ferry would build a greater connection to the Chesapeake Bay ecologically and to its commu-nities allowing more people to access the waterway by residents and vis-itors alike.” And with emphasis on a tourism component, such a ferry sys-tem “would put a greater emphasis on ‘slow’ travel and experiential travel, an approach to travel that emphasizes connection to local people, cultures, food, and music.”

“It relies on the concept that a trip is meant to be the experience, and the journey is the time to educate and provide meaning and sense of place.”

The study will examine in-water issues and access, routes, and “first and last mile” transit connections. It will also provide an estimate for cap-ital and operating costs for vessels re-quired to run a sustainable schedule based on ridership estimates.

Potential ferry dock sites are to be identified, which for Crisfield the current City Dock would likely be a suit-able location.

Funding for the study comes from a federal Economic Development Administration grant of $125,000 with the consortium of participating jurisdictions providing an equivalent match.

Ten business days after proposals are received a contract is expected to be awarded with the final report due 120 days later.

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Newest asset
Members of the U.S. Coast Guard Station Crisfield check out their newest asset, a 27 ft. Special Purpose Shallow Water II (SPC-SWII) patrol boat that will be especially useful for search and rescue, maritime law enforcement and other operations required in shallow waters at low speeds.

Janes Island
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"In my world parks became very busy," she said. "We saw new visitors and new campers and it may have stuck!"

"People that didn't recreate outdoors have found a new passion."

"On New Year's Day the park hosted a guided First Day Bike but morning fog may have kept participants away while others turned out to hike the White Trail Trail which had been previously a ranger-guided walk on the first day of the new year.

The park includes 2900 acres of uplands, wetlands and sand beaches plus 30 miles of marked water trails. There are 105 camp sites, three full-service cabins, and the Daugherty Creek Lodge.

The marina includes 25 boat slips and it's adjacent to the park store and fish cleaning stations.

Last year there were 160 interpretive programs drawing more than 2,300 participants and volunteer rangers and naturalists conducted 18 guided paddles. The park also hosts Somerset County seventh graders and Wicomico County sixth graders, and has a Junior Ranger program for ages 7-14.

This Saturday, Jan. 14, there is a build a bird feeder workshop for those who pre-register, providing a way to repurpose a plastic bottle and create a feeding station for birds.

A major event planned in late spring is the first annual Paddle Fest, which was to be held the first weekend in October last year but canceled due to weather. It is now set for the first weekend in June which coincides with National Trails Day. If that is a washout, it will be rescheduled for September.

Park day use hours are sunrise to sunset. For those interested in reservations for camping, a cabin or picnic pavilion visit https://parkreservations.maryland.gov/ or call 410-968-1565.

Fast Ferry
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Passenger service between Crisfield and Smith and Tangier islands is one of the last remaining systems of its kind in Maryland especially after the Bay Bridge opened in 1952. In 1990 the Chesapeake Flyer started service between Baltimore and Rock Hall but never generated enough business and closed in 1994.

In 2007 a New Jersey-based company investigated the feasibility of a passenger and freight ferry using hovercraft with Crisfield one of the ports but no service was established.

Since then Annapolis officials discussed starting a service involving battery-powered ferries to connect the capital with regional venues but that too has not been established. To see the RFP visit https://tinyurl.com/384fsy2d.

NOTICE:
New Application(s) have been made by:
David Franklin Humphreys
(of 4 Anchor Drive, Crisfield, MD 21817) and
Vijaykumar Natubhai Patel
(of 114 Nina Lane, Fruitland, MD 21826)
On behalf of Shereege, Inc.,
t/a Crisfield Oceanic
55 Richardson Avenue, Crisfield, MD 21817
For a Class “A” (B/W/L 7 Day Off Sale) License for the premises:
Shereege, Inc.,
t/a Crisfield Oceanic
55 Richardson Avenue
Crisfield, MD 21817

A hearing will be held on the applications at 7:00 p.m., followed by other matters brought before the Board on Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at the Somerset County Office Complex, County Commissioners Meeting Room, Room 111, 11916 Somerset Avenue, Princess Anne, Maryland 21853. All those that wish to be heard should be at the hearing.

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