

Advocacy Alert!

Maryland General Assembly to convene January 11, 2006. Preservation Agenda set.

The 421st Session of the [Maryland General Assembly](#) is scheduled to convene on January 11, 2006. Unlike the previous few years, the fiscal analysts for the State predict a budget surplus.

In November, a new Coordinating Council emerged from a planning session of heritage organizations at the [Maryland Historical Trust](#) to guide legislative and budget advocacy in Annapolis. The meeting included the Maryland Association of History Museums, Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions, Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas, Maryland Humanities Council, Archaeological Society of Maryland, Main Street Maryland and the Council for Maryland Archaeology. Preservation Maryland was chosen to lead the group and coordinate advocacy efforts. The following agenda was identified for the 2006 legislative session:

- **\$30 million** for commercial projects in the **Heritage Tax Credit Program** and amendments to the program;
- **\$2.5 million** for operating support for history museums through the **Museum Assistance Program**;
- **\$3 million** for the **Maryland Heritage Area Authority** and the state's 13 Certified Heritage Areas;
- **\$1 million each** for **capital** and **non-capital** grant funding for historic preservation;
- **\$53,000** for the Maryland Humanities Council
- **Strengthening protections for historic properties** affected by State funded and permitted initiatives under the state compliance law;
- **Increasing support for Main Street Maryland** and the 18 designated Main Streets communities across the state.

Preservation Maryland will again be contracting with Robin Shaivitz and the firm of Alexander & Cleaver to advise us on legislative and budget issues and guide our lobby efforts in Annapolis. We have been meeting with the Governor's Office and Members of the General Assembly to prepare the ground work for the upcoming session.

Governor Ehrlich is finalizing his budget, which he must present to the Maryland General Assembly on **January 18**. As always, we will be relying on your assistance to make

sure that the final budget reflects the preservation priorities that protect and support our state's unique heritage sites.

Take Action!

- 1) **Contact the [Governor's office](#) to register your support for the budget figures listed above. If you have received a grant or other assistance from the Maryland Historical Trust, be sure to emphasize how important the MHT programs are to your success as an organization.**

By E-mail: [Governor Ehrlich's Web Mail Form](#)

Mailing Address: Office of the Governor
Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925

- 2) **Take time to familiarize yourself with the political process by visiting the [Maryland General Assembly Homepage](#)**
- 3) **Make sure you know your representatives on a state and federal level by clicking [Here](#)**

Thank you for your support in 2005. We look forward to working with you during the upcoming session and wish you a Happy New Year!

Tyler Gearhart
Executive Director
