

# A Statewide Effort

*Airport Authority Works To Support BWI's Neighbors*

For **Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall** (BWI), operated by the Maryland Aviation Administration, giving back to the community is an organization wide effort.

The Community Enhancement Grant Program is a major program benefitting BWI neighbors, says Jonathan Dean, MAA's manager of communications. It was created by the state to help fund transportation-related projects to improve the quality of life for communities near BWI.

In 2001, the Department of Transportation Citizens Committee for the Enhancement of Communities Surrounding BWI bill was signed into law. Under the legislation, communities located within the most recently certified Airport Noise Zone or within two miles of the outermost noise contour are able to apply for grants for transportation related projects.

Some \$1.7M in grant dollars has funded projects such as sidewalk renovations, asphalt repairs and the installation of speed bumps in the past eight years, Dean says. Funding comes from the Maryland Department of Transportation Trust Fund and is budgeted through the Office of the Secretary. The yearly funding formula is equal to one dollar for every aircraft takeoff and landing at BWI for the most recently available calendar year.

Dean explains that it is important to the airport authority and the state to help improve overall community conditions for the airport's neighbors.

"BWI has a longstanding commitment to its community and this is an important example of that," he says. "The airport values the partnership that exists between local neighbors and the airport."

About 18 local communities have received grants from this program.

Community schools are also a focus of the airport's outreach, according to Mike Phennicie, director of MAA's Office of



Business Relations.

Within Anne Arundel County, where BWI is located, MAA reaches out to elementary and high school students in a variety of ways. One program recognizes students who have been named student of the month or most improved. MAA provides the honored students with a certificate of appreciation and a small gift, Phennicie says.

For high school juniors and seniors, MAA employees hold mock interviews to help students develop and hone their skills and prepare them for future careers.

In conjunction with the national program Junior Achievement, MAA employees serve on the Business Advisory Board at two schools in the BWI area. Volunteers recently taught a career course to area students. According to Phennicie, the curriculum is developed by the national program and administered by the local volunteers.

Phennicie says educational programs such as these, including career fairs in which the airport actively participates, offer students the opportunity to learn about the airport and its available careers and are an important aspect of MAA's community outreach. According to airport officials, more than 10,000 people work at the airport, and BWI has an economic impact on the state of more than \$5.1B.


The local Boys & Girls Club also receives a helping hand from MAA. Phennicie says employees participate in events the club

*Mike Phennicie, director of MAA's Office of Business Relations, says the airport's outreach includes community schools; one event, sponsored in part by the airport, was a regional Rotary Club speech contest, in which these four students were finalists.*

hosts, taking a Nintendo Wii gaming system so children can "experience" flying a helicopter through the game and learn more about the airport. The airport also hosts the children once a year for a tour.

MAA employees also work with the county historical society, volunteering time for its annual Strawberry Festival; the MAA also supplies guest speakers for Rotary Club events. Additionally, in a partnership between **Northrop Grumman** and the aviation authority, an annual run-walk is held with proceeds benefiting the Kennedy Krieger Institute.

For MAA, it all comes down to being a good neighbor and business partner with the community, Phennicie says.

"We care about the community in which we do business," he says. "A community is only as strong as the people in it and by us helping the citizens, we're building a stronger community." 

*We'd like to hear your opinion about this article. Please direct all correspondence to Jodi Richards at [jodirichards@charter.net](mailto:jodirichards@charter.net).*