Mathias Optimistic About Post-Holiday School Start Committee

Posted on 10/04/2013 by Shawn J. Soper

OCEAN CITY — The task force studying the issue of moving the start date for public schools across Maryland back after Labor Day had its first meeting last week with positive results, but it will likely take serious support from the resort business community to make the change a reality.

Last spring, the Maryland General Assembly approved a bill that created a task force to study the issue of moving the start date for public schools across the state back after Labor Day. Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot last year pushed legislation to create task force to study a post-Labor Day start date for public schools, citing the economic benefit while preserving the mandated number of days in the school calendar.

In a report released in August, Franchot pointed out a post-Labor Day start date for schools could result in $7.7 million in state and local revenue and an additional $74 million in direct economic impact.

Senator Jim Mathias introduced legislation in the 2013 session that would establish a task force to study the issue and state lawmakers approved the bill. The task force, which includes Ocean City business owners Greg Shockley and G. Hale Harrison, met for the first time last week and began preparing recommendations.

Mathias told Economic Development Committee (EDC) members this week the first task force meeting was positive and called on business leaders to continue to press state lawmakers for the change.
the Ocean Pines Community Center Sept. 20 to raise funds to benefit Wounded Soldiers of Maryland.

Pictured, from left, are Charles and Sharon Sorrentino, Worcester County Commissioner Judy Boggs, Anna Foulitz, candidate for Maryland House of Delegates for District 38C Mary Beth Carozza, Senator Jim Mathias, Co-host Gilly Foulitz and Emcee Larry Walton...

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Yenney, Emergency Outreach Coordinator for the Community Church’s Emergency Outreach Program, Guest Speaker At Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City Weekly Meeting

At the Aug. 14, weekly meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City, the guest speaker was Mary Yenney, Emergency Outreach Coordinator for the Community Church’s Emergency Outreach Program. Also pictured is speaker chair Graham Caldwell.

“...The task force had its first meeting and there is real optimism in the air about getting this done,” he said. “I feel really good about it but there is a lot of work yet to be done.”

Mathias said the economics of the post-Labor Day start for schools alone could make a significant difference business in the resort. “You all need to reach out and let us know just how important this is,” he said. “It’s millions of dollars. We all know when we lose a weekend in the summer in Ocean City it could be all of our net. By the same token, if we get a week back in August, that can be huge.”

EDC Chairman Michael James agreed the resort business community needs to continue to push for the post-Labor Day start date for schools.

“This is an important issue and it’s not just about the economics,” he said. “This is really about families and quality of life. We’re really going to need a full-court press on this one. We need to work hard and let our officials know just how important this is.”

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