

# The Calvert Independent and the Calvert Recorder

## Beach communities get a San Francisco treat

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Staff writer

A trolley bus to carry visitors or local residents through coastal communities and to businesses and residential areas accelerated its pace in the last few days, collecting \$12,000 in donations from area businesses, said Lyn Striegel, Beach Trolley Association (BTA) board member.

Striegel said she is excited about the community response, and that BTA has come up with several ways for the community to sponsor the trolley.

“We’re selling advertisements on a brochure at various levels,” she said, so small businesses, restaurants, shops and individuals will all be able to afford to advertise. For a \$50 or above donation, a business or person’s name will be placed on the inside of the trolley and considered “a friend of the trolley,” she said. They hope to raise between \$35,000 and \$40,000, Striegel said.

A few restaurants on the route have donated \$1,000 each, Striegel said. Herrington Harbour donated \$5,000. Chesapeake Beach Mayor Gerald Donovan said he would match or exceed their donation with his own personal funds, said Striegel, who set up BTA as a nonprofit. For 25 cents a ride, BTA is not out to make a profit; it’s a way to help businesses, Striegel said. As the Beach Business Group president, Striegel said she is always looking for ways to help businesses. The trolley will integrate the community with businesses, she said. “That’s what we are trying to accomplish.” The trolley is an appealing way to entice people to the area and to visit local businesses, said Jed Dickman, Herrington Harbour South marina manager. “Our hope is, as I’m sure most of the businesses’ is, we’d like to get this jump started so everyone can see the level of interest for the trolley,” Dickman said. A trolley has a unique appeal factor, he said, with an aesthetic classic sense. “I think our customers will use the trolley,” he said. About 50 boaters visit the marina each weekend in the summer with no land transportation, Dickman said. “It’s good for the entire region and anything good for our region, is good for us as well,” Dickman said. **About a year and a half ago, Marilyn Van Wagoner [Wagner], a member of BBG, was appointed to chair a committee to research**



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*Submitted photo*

The 40-passenger trolley rented from Virginia Transit Association will travel from the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum north to Skipper's Pier and back during summer weekends.

a trolley for the Beaches, Striegel said. The vice president of BTA, Van Wagoner said after a year of looking into a grant for the trolley and possibly taking over the North Beach bus, the group selected the Virginia Transit Association, a turn key operation that rents trolleys. A trolley was rented last summer for the Taste of the Town as a promotion and it received a tremendous response, she said. As they pursued private funding for the trolley, the group began putting together a team, Van Wagoner said. “We recruited visible people in the community, from the North Beach and Chesapeake Beach town councils,” Van Wagoner said, “and people that are professional in each field. We moved to the next level by pulling in expertise.” Van Wagoner, who has worked on the trolley’s route, said they looked into venturing past the Twin Beaches and taking the route to Deale and Traceys Landing. The two-hour loop, tested several times, has 55 stops from Rod ‘N’ Reel to Skipper’s Pier, she said. “Herrington Harbour was instrumental in the trolley going north. They showed us a need for transporting people throughout the area,” she said. “Jed [Dickman] was one of the biggest motivators to keep me going.” BTA Chairman and Chesapeake Beach council member Stewart Cumbo sees the trolley providing a need in several areas around the community. The trolley will stop off at residential areas so if people want to go out for dinner and drinks they can do so and use safe public transportation, he said, and boaters who visit area marinas and are landlocked will be able to use the trolley as well. And “everyone’s trying to go green so it is an alternative to using your own vehicle,” Cumbo said, adding that it will also help ease summer parking. Bob Carpenter, BTA’s community relations chairman, presented the Chesapeake Town Council with a PowerPoint slideshow at last Thursday’s meeting that posed the trolley’s benefits to businesses and the community. He also asked the council for a letter of support or resolution showing the town’s support. Donovan commended the people involved with organizing BTA and said the town supports their efforts and sees the trolley as an asset to the community and businesses. At this month’s North Beach Town Council meeting, the council voted to add a line item of \$2,000 to donate for BTA advertising and signs. The beach trolley will be reliable weekend transportation from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day, Carpenter said, bringing people into the town and its establishments. The historically themed trolley is a turn-key operation, he said. The trolley’s operating hours will be Friday, 3 p.m. to 1 a.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 a.m. and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Carpenter said. Several promotion are in the works, including a mail out of the trolley’s schedule and map to area residents, along with a kick off on Memorial Day weekend, Van Wagoner said. For anyone interested in donating to the trolley, the BTA Web site, at [www.beachtrolleyassociation.org](http://www.beachtrolleyassociation.org), will be online soon, she said. [charvat@somdnews.com](mailto:charvat@somdnews.com)