

Legislative Wrap Up

This Week in the Maryland General Assembly...

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"Americana" Shown on the House Floor



Delegates Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio and Addie Eckardt pictured with Dr. Frank Tighe, Executive Producer and Michael Roe, Creator and Producer of "Americana"

(Annapolis, MD) - When Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio was asked to arrange a video presentation that could be shown on the House floor to honor Maryland's veterans, she immediately thought of her constituents Michael Roe and Bird Dog Wheeler. Haddaway remembered that a few years ago, the two Mid-Shore residents had collaborated on a music video entitled "Americana".

Michael Roe, who works for Northrop Grumman Undersea Systems, created and produced it and Bird Dog Wheeler wrote and performed a song for it. The video includes footage of September 11th, troops in the Middle East, national monuments and the State House in Annapolis. Bird Dog Wheeler's son, Sgt. Kevin Brian Wheeler, is also featured in the film.

"I had seen their video in the past and was so moved by it," Haddaway said. "I was grateful for the opportunity to share it with my colleagues because it is such a wonderful tribute to our service men and women and it really showcases the beauty of our nation."

As a result, Bird Dog Wheeler, Michael Roe and Dr. Frank Tighe, the Executive Producer, were invited to the House floor as special honored guests this Tuesday for the viewing. Wheeler was unable to attend, but was recognized by Delegate Haddaway who called him and Roe "life-long friends" and thanked him for his contributions to the project.

Haddaway also announced that the video had won a Telly Award, which recognizes the finest in creative broadcast and non-broadcast corporate video productions. "This award is the largest and most prestigious of its

kind," she said. "With over 12,000 entrants from all 50 states plus 30 countries around the world, it is quite an honor for the entire State of Maryland."

After the video played, both Roe and Tighe received a standing ovation. "I have had so many delegates and staff members tell me how much they appreciated the video and the song," Haddaway said. "They were really touched by it and it reminded us of the importance of those who are serving and those who have served."

Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio is a member of the Veterans Caucus, which is a group of legislators that work on legislation for veterans including benefits, employment and health issues. She has been an advocate for veteran's issues over the years and is cosponsoring legislation again this year that would exempt military retirement income from income tax in Maryland.

Bill Benefits Habitat for Humanity

Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio introduced legislation that would exempt Habitat for Humanity properties from property tax in Talbot and Dorchester Counties giving them additional funds to pursue their mission. Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit organization with a goal of eliminating poverty housing and homelessness from the world and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. There are more than 1,500 Habitat for Humanity affiliates operating in the United States including Habitat for Humanity of Talbot & Dorchester County. Worldwide, Habitat for Humanity has built more than 300,000 homes providing shelter for over 1.5 million people.

The bill is supported by both the Talbot and Dorchester County Councils and a hearing will be held tomorrow.

Boat Trade-In Values

A hearing was held today on a bill introduced by Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio that would benefit both consumers and boat dealers in transactions related to marine vessels. According to Haddaway, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sets the policy for how boat trade-in values are reported to the State for the purpose of calculating excise tax. At this time DNR only allows a boat dealer to offer consumers the trade-in value published in one of two national trade publications: NADA or BUC. If a boat dealer wants to offer more, he or she has to pay tax on the difference which has been a disincentive for dealers to offer consumers better trade-in values.

Additionally, trade publications are meant to be guides and do not always take into consideration upgrades that can be made to a boat such as a larger or newer engine, custom cabin work or the inclusion of electronics. Market demand for a particular style or type of boat may also influence the price a boat dealer would be willing to give a seller.

Under Haddaway's legislation, a boat dealer would have the flexibility to offer the amount they deem reasonable without being penalized if they presented the Department of Natural Resources with a notarized closing statement showing the amount of the transaction. They would also have to report the year, model and make of the vessel and the Hull Identification Number (HIN).

Coming Up Next Week

In the Economic Matters Committee

- Business Regulation - Vending Machine Sales - Bulk Vending Machine Exemption
- Business Occupations and Professions - Plumbers - Lead-Free Materials
- Maryland Locksmiths Act
- Home Builder Guaranty Fund - Fee
- State Real Estate Commission - Delegation of Authority to Conduct Contested Case Hearings
- Financial Institutions - Mortgage Lenders and Mortgage Loan Originators

For more information on these or other issues, please feel free to contact Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio's office by calling (410) 841-3429 or by sending email to: jeannie.haddaway@house.state.md.us