

Town receives federal funds for sewer plant

By CRAIG O'DONNELL

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BETTERTON — A brisk and chilly breeze didn't stop Monday's Earth Day pipe-signing to mark the U.S. Department of Agriculture funding for the town's new wastewater treatment plant.

The upgrade is one of 43 water and wastewater projects which debuted on Earth Day in 32 states.

Betterton's 45-year-old wastewater treatment facility has 339 connections. The plant discharges into waters classed as shellfish harvesting areas. It can no longer meet standards for nutrient reduction.

According to the Earth Day news release, "USDA Rural Development is providing more than \$145.2 million to improve water quality and provide a safe and healthy environment for rural Americans."

Betterton's share is a \$1 million grant and a \$1.39 million loan.

Last summer, the town said



PHOTO BY CRAIG O'DONNELL

Betterton had just one of almost four dozen Earth Day ceremonies across the country marking U.S. Department of Agriculture funding for water and wastewater projects. Among the pipe-signers was Upper Shore Regional Council Executive Director Doris Mason, right.

its total estimated plant cost is \$4.4 million and, at the time, Mayor Carolyn Sorge announced it would receive some \$1.6 million in grants, loans and supplemental assistance from the

Maryland Department of the Environment.

Kathy Beisner, acting director for Rural Development

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in Maryland and Delaware, was master of ceremonies for the pipe-signing.

Statements from the offices of Sens. Ben Cardin and Barbara Mikulski were read.

Dick Sossi, former state delegate, spoke for Congressman Andy Harris. Among more than a dozen people present were Sorge; Sunita Boyle, MDE project manager; Jack Bowen, of Maryland Rural Water; Doris

Mason, from the Upper Shore Regional Council; town councilmembers and county officials. Ken Shumaker represented the Sassafras River Association.

USDA Rural Development has a "portfolio of programs designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America," according to the statement.

The USDA is supplying a total of \$3,731,000, including a \$15,000 planning grant and initial funding in 2012 made up of a \$333,000 loan and a \$998,000 grant.

The most recent funding package is a \$1 million grant and a loan for \$1,385,000.

Betterton's MDE matching grant is \$477,076. The town is responsible for a \$477,000 cash match.

The total project cost is estimated at \$4,640,076.