City of Hagerstown, Maryland
Status & Information Report No. 14 for 2015

April 10, 2015

To Mayor Gysberts and Members of the City Council:

UPCOMING MEETINGS

APRIL 2015						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 **Holiday** **City Offices Closed**	4
5	6	7 No M&C Meeting	8	9	10	11 7am Community Yard Sale @ Fairgrounds Park
12	13	14 3pm Work Session 5:30pm Celebration of Business @ Fountain Head Country Club	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 10:30am Earth Week Celebration @ USMH Plaza 4pm Work Session	22	23	24	25 10:30am Community Garden Ribbon Cutting @ 513 South Potomac Street
26	27	28 4pm Budget Work Session 7pm Regular Session	29	30 5-8pm Taste of the Arts @ City Center		

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS & COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIVISION

1. **Grand Opening/Anniversaries**
   - A Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting for Advanced Auto Parts was held this week. Councilmember Martin Brubaker officiated. Advanced Auto Parts is located at 12818-D Shank Farm Way in Hagerstown. This is their third location in the Hagerstown area.

   - Please mark your calendar now for a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting for TriBridge Partners, LLC. The business is located at 38 South Potomac Street, Suite 303, in City Center Hagerstown. The event will take place on Tuesday, May 5 at 11:30 AM. Light refreshments will be served after the Ribbon Cutting.

2. **Events**

- The fourth annual Maryland International Film Festival, Hagerstown was held from March 26-28. With all the tickets sold and given out (to sponsors, film-makers, etc.), the film festival attracted a total of nearly 5,000 "visits." (note, this isn't total people, but the added visits from blocks of time, for instance, one person who came to all three days would be six visits, counting in each block, etc.). It was estimated that about 450 people were in the Maryland Theatre on opening night. The film festival also benefitted downtown restaurants and venders (limo companies, for instance, printers, etc.). Hotels alone had over 300 room nights generated by the festival. WHAG-TV did live broadcasts from the Red Carpet as well as inside and outside the theater. The media picked up the film festival (AP ran a preview story, and Nora Roberts receiving the Mendez Award). Stories on the event were in media in California, Chicago, NY, Seattle, etc. An article from the Seattle Post Intelligencer is attached to this week's report. The estimated value of the publicity from the film festival totaled over $35,000.

- The Western Maryland Blues Fest is just continuing its fundraising campaign, and a number of sponsors have committed. The committee has raised approximately $89,000 to date. Tickets went on sale this week. Maryland State Lottery Representatives met with City Staff on possibly doing a live television lottery drawing from the Western Maryland Blues Fest.

- Staff are gearing up for the Taste of the Arts Event on Thursday, April 30th. There are 15 venues plus galleries participating.

- Staff met with representatives of the Downtown Movement. The group is interested in doing an outside market on Saturday afternoons in downtown.

3. **A&E District.** Staff is working with the State of Maryland to organize the Annual A&E Managers Meeting being held in City Center Hagerstown on April 20. The meeting will begin and end at the Washington County Free Library. The agenda for the meeting is now set. Attendees will be touring Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, the Artist Housing Project, the Washington County Arts Council and the Maryland Theatre. So far we have 45 members from Arts and Entertainment Districts attending.

4. **Volunteers**: The Volunteer Program is continuing. Bev David has been speaking with general volunteers, event volunteers and others. A number of people want to assist in enhancing the City. We are now focusing on getting volunteers for the Blues Fest.

5. **This Week's Headlines and Media Releases:**

- Hager House and Railroad Museum Open for the Parks Season

- Blues Fest Sneak Peek: Check Out the Full Weekend Line-Up

- Advance Auto Parts Celebrates Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting

- E-casts:
  - Main Street Hagerstown Launch Event!

6. **Channel 25:**

- Watch the City Newsroom at the top of every hour. This week's news stories include:
  - Taste of the Arts commercial
  - State of the City
  - Neighborhoods 1st 2014 Accomplishments
  - Hub City Mid-Miler Check-In Event

- Special Broadcasts:
  - State of the City Community Presentation - Wednesday and Sunday at 7:00 PM

- Divided Valor - Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 PM

- In production:
  - Blues Fest Previews
  - Pop-Up Shops May promotion
  - Month in Review segment

7. **Websites:**
   - *City Website:*
     - About 6,900 users visited www.hagerstownmd.org for the week of March 30 - April 5, 2015.
     - Top entrances (first page users accessed on the website):
       - Home page 2,183 users
       - Jobs page 347 users
       - Utility billing page 308 users
     - Top Searches:
       - "building permit"
       - "hotels"
       - "city light"
       - "egg hunt"
   - *engageHagerstown*:
     - Total Participants: 457
     - Unique Visitors: 8,996
     - Page Views: 46,633
     - Current topics:
       - What City services would you like to see made available online?
       - What is the best way to make a splash and enhance the Potterfield Pool experience this summer?
       - Main Street is taking off! What have you seen in other Main Street communities that could work in Hagerstown?
       - What do you believe is key for creating positive change in Hagerstown's future?

PLANNING & CODE ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. **Zoning Certificates Issued**
   - 561 Papa Court – SUFCO Enterprises – home work station for online retail sales of flea market items.

2. **Planning Commission:** On April 8 the Planning Commission reviewed the following matters:
   - Site plan renewal for Hagerstown Commons Shopping Center improvements. The commission agreed to extend the site plan renewal with a condition that if the project does not begin in 90 days that the construction debris on the site must be removed or the site plan is void.

- The commission approved a waiver request for the Venice Inn, not to require certain site plan elements for a pending site plan submittal for adding a driveway entrance onto Dual Highway.

- Review of Proposed FY 2016 Capital Improvements Program. The commission recommended approval of the CIP to the Mayor and Council with a comment to study water pressure in the southeast corner of the city.

3. **Weekly Activity Report:** March 30 – April 3, 2015

PERMITS								
TYPE	**NUMBER OF NEW APPLICATIONS**							**NUMBER ISSUED**
Building	5	Residential -	2	Commercial -	1	Other -	2	7
Electric	10	Residential -	3	Commercial -	5	Other -	2	10
Plumbing	15	Residential -	12	Commercial -	3	Other -	0	15
Mechanical	6	Residential -	4	Commercial -	2	Other -	0	6
Engineering Dept.	6							5
TOTAL	42		21		11		4	43

Est. Value of Issued Building Permit Projects:		**Fiscal Year Totals:**
Residential	$ 37,450.00	$ 4,500,962.00
Commercial	$ 578,000.00	$ 37,049,420.00
Apartment	$ 0.00	$ 7,916,720.00
Sign	$ 9,999.00	$ 245,617.00
TOTAL	**$ 625,449.00**	**$ 49,712,719.00**

- Construct one story block/concrete structure and interior renovations of kitchen and restrooms at 636 North Prospect Street - $75,000

- Reconfiguring office cubicles and removing some walls at 80 West Baltimore St. - $500,000

RENTAL LICENSING PROGRAM		
	PROPERTIES	**UNITS**
Total registered or invoiced for 2014-2015 program (some have since been canceled)	3,481	9,505
Registrations received weeks of March 30 – April 3	6	6
New applications issued weeks of March 30 – April 3	4	5
Percentage of total invoiced that have registered & paid	99.8 %	99.8 %
PAYMENT		
Weekly payment received	$ 450	
Weekly adjustment/credits	$ 0	

INSPECTIONS	
TYPE	**NUMBER CONDUCTED**
Building	28
Electrical	35
Plumbing	25
Mechanical	6
Safety	17
Neighborhood Vitality	56
Quality of Life	0
Preventive Maintenance	10
Planning & Zoning	0

INSPECTIONS KEY:	
Categories of Conditions	
Safety	Conditions which are or reasonably present a hazard to occupant or public.
	Example: No smoke alarms, improper wiring, handrails
Neighborhood Vitality	Conditions which cause or tend to cause diminution to property
	Example: Weeds, trash, debris, junk vehicles, deterioration of a structure.

Quality of Life	Conditions which negatively impact occupants.
	Example: Damaged surfaces, damages elements, missing screens
Preventive Maintenance	Conditions which are technical violations and need addressed to prevent deterioration.
	Example: Mortar deterioration, clogged gutters, minor rotting wood
Planning & Zoning	Conditions which violate Land Management Code requirements (zoning, forest conservation, floodplain, historic district and other requirements) and progress inspections of development projects for site plan compliance.
	Examples: Uses not permitted in property's zone, construction of new facilities, follow up inspections on open violations.

PARKS & ENGINEERING

1. **Hager House and Train Museum.** Staff is preparing for the 2015 season opener of the Jonathan Hager House Museum and the Hagerstown Railroad Museum & Engine 202 this Friday, April 10th. These historic sites merge education and fun and are open to visitors every Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., and one Sunday a month from 12-5 p.m.

   New this year! Visit the Train Museum and take a ride on our newest addition, Tommy 202! Tommy 202 is a wagon ride that resembles a locomotive-pulled train that will operate during designated weekends this summer and during special events. Admission to the Railroad Museum will allow kids of all ages to enjoy this new attraction. Tommy 202 can accommodate as many as 24 visitors per ride! The Train Museum is also available for rent for children's birthday parties.

   The following is a listing of events, hours of operation and admission information for both historic locations:

Jonathan Hager House Museum	
March 28- April 2*	German Easter
April 10-12*	Opening Weekend
May 1-3*	Museum Ramble
May 22	Geocache City Park Trail
June 12-14* & 19-21*	American Doll House Tours
July 24– July 26*	Civil War Memories
August 7-9*	Hager Wedding Prep
August 14 @ 8 & 9:00 pm	Ghost Tour Preview
Sept. 18, 19, 20*	Fall Fest 2015
October 16, 17, 24, 30, 31	Ghost Tours
December 4-6*, 11-13*	German Christmas

Hagerstown Railroad Museum & Engine 202	
Hours: Fridays 10:00 am- 4:00 pm Saturdays 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Sundays* 12:00 pm- 5:00 pm Open 1 Sunday a month! * Indicates a long weekend- open on Sunday*	
April 10-12*	Opening Weekend
May 1-3*	Museum Ramble
May 16 & May 17*	Railroad Heritage Days
May 22	Geocache City Park Trail
June 12-14 *	Tommy 202 Rides
July 17-19 *	Christmas in July
August 7-9 *	Tommy 202 Rides
Sept. 18, 19, 20*	Fall Fest

2. **Fairground Park Yard Sale.** The first yard sale of the season will be held this Saturday. All stalls have been successfully rented for this weekend's event!

3. **Hub City 100 Miler Finale.** The countdown has begun as the final days of the Hub City 100 Mile Challenge are closing in. Parks & Recreation is calling all 779 Hub City 100 Milers, and encouraging each one to bring a friend or family members, to join in the grand finale ceremony and health fair at Fairgrounds Park on Thursday, April 16, 2015 from 4-6 p.m. This finale will out shine any Hub City 100 Mile Challenge gathering yet, with health and fitness vendors on site to share information with you and your friends and family about exercise, nutrition, and wellness programs available for adults and children right. Please join us!

4. **Potterfield Pool.** Replacing the wading pool, work continues on the splash pad, partially funded by Program Open Space. We are presently installing the large concrete underground holding tank and the contractor is still in the process of installing the plumbing. Also to be funded by Program Open Space, we are digging footers to install a new canopy. A new Potterfield Pool sign has been installed along Frederick Street.

5. **Little League Baseball.** We are assisting all the youth leagues with their needed maintenance and repairs for this Saturday's opening day.

6. **Projects Currently Under Design**
   - A&E Trail
   - 43-53 West Washington Street(concept for building use)
   - Alley 3-36
   - Park Circle options

7. **Engineering Division Items**

Traffic issues		
Description	Week of 4/3/15	Calendar Year-to-date
Traffic complaints received	3	42
Work Orders completed	1	31
Traffic counts completed	0	3
Construction Projects		
Description	Week of 4/3/15	Calendar Year-to-date
Projects advertised for bids	1	14
Projects under construction	8	
Projects completed	0	0

POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. **STATS**

Calls for Service:	1,644	Field Interviews:	77
Arrests/Warrants Served:	23	Moving Violations:	58
Domestic Violence Calls:	16	Parking Violations:	189
DUI Arrests:	2	Safety Repair Orders:	8
Reports Filed:	138	Warnings:	107

2. **REPORTS**

- ***04/02/15***: Officer Fuqua responded to West Church Street for a reported theft from motor vehicle. The victim reported that sometime during the night someone accessed his unsecured vehicle and removed various items. No witnesses were located.

- ***04/03/15:*** Officer Walck responded to Highland Way for a reported destruction of property. The victim advised that someone had broken out the rear passenger side window in his sister's vehicle. His sister is out of state and left her vehicle with him. The officer observed a small BB pellet on the floor board behind the driver's side seat. The BB pellet appears to be what caused the damage to the window. No further information is available at this time.

- ***04/06/15:*** Officer Eichelberger was dispatched to East Washington Street at Sheetz for a trespassing complaint. Sheetz security advised that a female had been asked to leave the store but she refused. The officer served her with a Letter of No Trespassing for this business and she left the area. Approximately one hour later she returned and the Sheetz security stated she had been asked to leave several times but refused. The police were again called. She was transported to Central Booking and charged with Trespassing Private Property and Failure to Obey Lawful Order.

- ***04/08/15***: Officers Goggin and Cox were on patrol on Locust Street when they were flagged down by a male. The male stated he had just been jumped by two unknown black males. The suspects struck him with a closed fist in the jaw. The victim pulled out a knife that he carries for protection and the suspects fled the area. The victim had injuries to his face but refused care from CRS. No additional information is available at this time.

3. **PRESS RELEASE**
   - ***04/05/15***: Officers from the Hagerstown Police Department were given information of a male who was making threats to harm other people and making allegations of being in possession of a weapon. The male was located in the 100 block of Summit Avenue, when he became non-complaint with the officers' commands and had to be taken to the ground. The male sustained no injuries but was transported to Meritus Medical Center for evaluation.

4. **OTHER NEWS/INFORMATION**
   - **CONGRATULATIONS**: Sgt. Johnny Murray has been selected for the position of Criminal Investigation Division Sergeant. Sgt. Murray will be under the command of Lt. Jim Hurd. He has been employed with the City of Hagerstown for 18 years. Congratulations to Sgt. Murray and thank you to those who invested the time to participate in the selection process.

   - **THANK YOU**: Some perceive drunk driving merely as a statistic. Others see it for what it is: a dangerous accident waiting to happen. Realizing that DUI arrests had decreased of late, Sgt. Andrew Lewis challenged his platoon to remain especially vigilant for impaired drivers. Officer Michael Biddle accepted the challenge. In a five day work week last month, he made six DUI arrests. He has been employed with the City of Hagerstown for 10 months. Thank you Officer Biddle for keeping Hagerstown's streets that much safer.

PUBLIC WORKS

PARKING SYSTEM DATA

		Current Week	Previous Week
Number of Permit Holders	A & E Deck	244	224
	University District Deck	462	465
	Downtown Parking Lots	381	370
Number of Patrons Using Decks	A & E Deck	1,567	2,128
	University District Deck	1,734	2,205
Sales of Discount Coupons		150	0
Number of Citations Issued	(Includes Warnings)	197	212
Number of Late Payment Notifications		39	13
Number of Cars Booted		0	6
Peak Occupancy (%)	A & E Deck	59% (Sun @ 2 pm)	72% (Sat @ 10 pm)
	University District Deck	68% (Tues @ 2 pm)	74% (Thur @ 4 pm)

CENTRAL MAINTENANCE GARAGE REPAIR DATA

	Current Week	Previous Week
DCED	0	1
Fire	2	3
Human Resources	0	0
Light	0	1
Parks & Engineering	3	4
Police	6	6
Public Works	3	2
Wastewater	2	0
Water	4	5
Weekly Totals	20	22

CMG data represents completed work orders for any size repair. The repairs can include smaller items such as windshield wiper and headlight replacements to larger items such as hydraulic system rebuilds or transmission replacements. Repairs in progress will only be reported when complete.

UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

ELECTRIC DIVISION

Problem Areas. Recent call-outs included:

Thur. 4/2 - 1119 Outer Drive - lines down; wires were found to belong to Verizon. Time Out: 16.2-16.5

Mon. 4/6 - 417 Indiana Avenue - street light pole was broken during vehicle accident. The pole pieces were removed and the site was secured until replacement was completed the next business day. Time Out: 23.4-0.7

Distribution: Recent activity included:

- Metering Staff received one high bill complaint this week; upon testing, meter was found to have met all Public Service Commission requirements.

- Line crews continue trimming trees in various residential locations.

Lamps Replaced	New Fixtures Added	Changeouts	Fixtures Removed
10	1	0	0

Engineering Staff worked on the following projects:

- Multiple permit reviews and service upgrade requests have been completed.

- The downtown street light facilities continue to be located and added to the electric model in the GIS environment.

- Reviewed substation sites and right-of-ways for vegetation management.

- Evaluated bids for tools and equipment.

Administration:

- The Ten Year report has been completed for submission to the Maryland Public Service Commission.

WATER DIVISION

Plant Flows - System Demand (MGD)

Date	Willson	Breichner	Total
4/02/14	11.78		11.78
4/03/14	11.40		11.40
4/04/14	11.59		11.59
4/05/14	11.50		11.50
4/06/14	11.92		11.92
4/07/14	11.96		11.96
4/08/14	11.56		11.56
Average			*11.67*

Water Production at RC Willson

- *Operations*
  - Routine cleaning
  - Routine PMs

- *Maintenance*
  - R C Willson - Routine PMs

- *Instrumentation*
  - R C Willson – Working on the SCADA system
  - Pump Stations – Working on the sodium hypochlorite system at PS #4

Water Production at Breichner

- The Edgemont Reservoir is currently -5.37'; the bypass is open and the hydrant is closed.

Water Distribution

- Distribution crews are working throughout the system performing customer service as needed. We are working on the overlay and installing meters throughout the system. We have also started our large meter testing program.

Laboratory

- Continued revising and updating SOPs and QA/QC manual.
- Updated POE and Pb and Cu Loop Study spreadsheets.
- Submitted annual IOC report for Nitrates for Willson and Breichner.
- Resubmitted 2014 IOC report for Fluoride for Breichner WTP.
- Collected annual IOC sample for Fluoride for Willson and Breichner for 2015.
- Collected samples for Hazen and Sawyers Lead and Copper Loop Study
- Collected weekly TOC on Potomac River.
- Collected weekly THM/TOC samples on the Willson plant.
- Process and regulatory testing was routine for the week.

Engineering

Reviews:	City	County
Site Plan		3
Final Plat		1
Building Permit	12	8

- Staff attended a development review meeting at the County Planning Office.

- Staff met with the Water Division staff and the Assistant City Engineer regarding a Green Space project.

WASTEWATER DIVISION

Wastewater Treatment Plant at Frederick Street

Date	Flow (mgd)	Rainfall (inches)
Wednesday, Apr 01, 2015	7.66	0.00
Thursday, Apr 02, 2015	7.51	0.00
Friday, Apr 03, 2015	7.38	0.34
Saturday, Apr 04, 2015	7.25	0.09
Sunday, Apr 05, 2015	7.05	0.00
Monday, Apr 06, 2015	7.03	0.00
Tuesday, Apr 07, 2015	7.14	0.03
Weekly - Avg. Flow / Total Rainfall	7.28	0.46
Monthly – Avg. Flow /Total Rainfall	7.29	0.46

Miscellaneous

- Replace piping on Stage 1 (overflow/drain assembly) on Fermenter Scrubber.
- Assisted AR&E during start-up of new #4 effluent pump VFD.
- Lost a power phase in O2 Building. Worked with AR&E to restore power and get equipment back in operation.
- Routine maintenance (MP2 Program) and Corrective Work Orders.

Wastewater Collection

SSES Weekly Progress

Activity	Districts	L. F. main	Feet of lateral	# inspected
CCTV Inspections	1	278	66	5
Flushing	11, 12	8,848		
Point Repairs		**# of Repairs**	**Reason**	**L.F. of Repairs**
Main & Lateral	18	1	Blockage	7.2
Manholes	11, 18	4	Sulfide damage	28 V.F.

Collection System Maintenance Task

- Bypassed and cleaned wet well at station 8; removed rocks, a manhole step and rebar.
- Ewing oil called in a grinder pump failure; this is a private grinder pump.
- Cleaned in district 12.
- CCTV arch drain on Baltimore St 130 for Engineering Department.
- Reset grinder pump pressure tube at 11125 Parkwood Drive.
- Added two floor brackets to hoist holder and connected bypass discharge at station 8.
- Exercised generators, downloaded flow data at Newgate.
- Excavated at the rear of 324 North Cannon Avenue for root ball in main and lateral.
- Replaced bench in manhole 18072 with EMCOR 400 and Parged remaining wall area.

Parged walls in manhole 18073.

- Removed asphalt from manholes 11218 and 11059 and raised manhole cover.

- Picked up four 26" manhole lids from C R Semler.

Administration

Wastewater Division – Customer Call Log Summary 2014/2015							
Type	**Blockages**	**Grinder Pumps**	**Odor Complaints**	**Flushing**	**WW Pump Station**	**Other**	**Totals**
Weekly	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
YTD 2015	27	26	4	3	0	21	80

* Other - consist of calls that may be directed to other City Departments or the County Department of Water Quality

Engineering

- Staff attended a development review meeting at the County Planning Office.

- Staff met with the Utilities Dept. Director to discuss submission of an ARC funding application for an infiltration/inflow control project.

Wastewater Laboratory

- Continued cleaning and organizing wastewater lab.

- Prepared reagents for Lachat operation.

- Process and regulatory testing was routine for the week.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Zimmerman
City Administrator

PRWeb
Online Visibility from Vocus

Author Nora Roberts Wins the 2015 Maryland International Film Festival-Hagerstown Mendez Award

Nora Roberts to receive Maryland International Film Festival's highest honor during opening night festivities on March 26th at the Maryland Theatre in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Hagerstown, Maryland (PRWEB) March 22, 2015 -- The Maryland International Film Festival-Hagerstown has announced its recipient of the 2015 Mendez Award, the film festival's highest honor. The Mendez Award, named in honor of American Hero Tony Mendez, is being presented to Nora Roberts.

Nora Roberts, award-winning author, has significantly contributed to the field of literature. Nora Roberts was the first author to be inducted into the Romance Writers of America Hall of Fame. She has also received the organization's Lifetime Achievement Award. Her novels have spent more than 861 weeks on the New York Times Bestseller List, including 176 weeks in the number-one spot. Over 250 million copies of her books are in print, and she has had over 40 best-selling titles.

In the world of film production, Nora Roberts has had eleven of her books turned into films. She has also been credited as a consultant on films, and additionally is an uncredited extra as a dancing wedding guest in the 2007 film Montana Sky. She has been spotted several times, in her works which have been turned into films.

Time named Roberts one of their 100 Most Influential People in 2007, saying she "has inspected, dissected, deconstructed, explored, explained and extolled the passions of the human heart." Roberts has been included repeatedly on the Giving Back Fund's annual lists of the most philanthropic celebrities, with the bulk of her donations going to the Nora Roberts Foundation. The foundation financially supports organizations that promote literacy and the arts, assist children and engage in humanitarian efforts. Funded by gifts from the Nora Roberts Foundation, the Nora Roberts Center for American Romance at McDaniel College supports academic scholarship on the American romance novel with special emphasis on the literary qualities and significance of the romance genre.

Nora Roberts has lived in Washington County for nearly 47 years. She has greatly contributed not only to literature, film, the arts, local economic development, and philanthropy, but also to hometown pride. According to MDIFF-H board president Tom Riford, "In Washington County, people walk a little taller and a little prouder, because Nora calls Keedysville and Boonsboro home. Nora Roberts' efforts have created significant economic development for Boonsboro, with Turn the Page Bookstore, the Inn Boonsboro, Gifts in Boonsboro, restaurants, and other projects. Often, on a weekend when Nora is doing a book-signing, hundreds of people from all over North America, will stand in line for hours, for a chance to meet their literary hero. When it has been Nora Roberts' Day at the Hagerstown Suns, people from across America cheer her, as she throws out the ceremonial first pitch."

The Maryland International Film Festival-Hagerstown's top award, the Mendez Award recognizes Nora Roberts' contributions not only for film, but also for contributions for literary and artistic effort, excellence in contributions for quality of life, and for support of the independent spirit. The award will be officially announced at the opening night of the festival on Thursday March 26, 2015 at the Maryland Theatre.

Past Award Winners have included:

PRWeb ebooks - Another online visibility tool from PRWeb

- Antonio "Tony" Mendez, CIA Master of Disguise, Founder of the Spy Museum, and Award-Winning Author and Painter.
- Joe Carnahan, Film Director and Producer, known as one of the most prolific film-makers in Hollywood, Creator Director of MIFF-H.

The fourth annual Maryland International Film Festival, Hagerstown received more than 250 submissions, and the judges announced that over 70 films were selected. Opening night Thursday March 26 is at the Historic Maryland Theatre. Other venues on Friday and Saturday March 27 and 28 include the Academy Theater and the Bridge of Life Center, along with the Washington County Free Library Fletcher Branch.

Tickets are now on sale, through the Maryland Theatre box office, and more information can be found online at http://www.marylandiff.com. The best value is the all-festival pass! Films include documentaries, short, animated films, features and student films. New this year for the high school student films, MDIFF-H has asked that participating students include a Maryland landmark while shooting their scenes as part of the contest.

Filmmakers and film lovers are coming from around the world to experience the festival. Film makers from Canada, New Zealand, California, New York, Florida, throughout the Mid-Atlantic, and from many other places are attending this year's festival. The award-winning Joe Carnahan will be screening his new film 'Stretch' on opening night. Carnahan is the director of producer of several major films and television projects, including 'Blacklist' and 'State of Affairs.'

Sponsors include the City of Hagerstown, Washington County, the Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Volvo Powertrain, Columbia Bank-Hagerstown Trust Division, Northwestern Mutual, Big Cork Winery, Ovation PR & Advertising, Hagerstown Community College, Washington County Arts Council, the Historic Maryland Theatre, Herald-Mail Media, Tom Riford, and Jay Frantz.

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