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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commissioners Adopt 2017 Budget

Cumberland County, PA- The Cumberland County Board of Commissioners voted this week to adopt a 2017 General Fund budget of \$79 million. Combined with federal and state funds, the total County budget totals nearly \$240.3 million. The budget provides essential funding for the delivery of services to the citizens related to the Courts and Criminal Justice, Community Development and Environmental Planning, as well as Public Health and Safety and vital Human Services. Cumberland County remains in a stable fiscal position due to strong fiscal management policies and cost containment measures taken to mitigate the need to enact an increase in the County's property tax rate.

The adopted budget and tax ordinance does provide for a modest increase in the County's library tax, an increase necessitated by the state's failure to provide its fair share of funding for our libraries. The small millage increase in the library tax received unanimous support from the Board of Commissioners. Over the past eight years alone, state funding for Cumberland County's libraries has been slashed by over \$5 million. There is no change to the County's General Fund real estate millage rate which will remain at 2.195 mills. The increase in the county library millage rate from .143 to .166 mills will cost residents on average an additional \$4.09 per year, per household based on the median home value in Cumberland County of \$177,700. The Library millage rate, combined with *no increase* for the General Fund real estate millage rate, represents an overall real estate tax increase of less than 1 percent.

As a condition for the library tax increase, the county library system entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the County that, among other things, calls for the creation of intergenerational programming and other innovations at our libraries to maintain our libraries as the lifelong learning centers for young and old that they have become, now and into the future.

Since 2010 Cumberland County has been the fastest growing county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and has benefited from the population growth and economic recovery. However, along with population growth also comes the demand for public services. Cumberland County has seen an uptick in need for services and so far has been able to withstand the demand while holding the line on taxes. Both the Criminal Justice System and the Human Services agencies are experiencing heightened demand for services, in part, due to the serious opiate epidemic that exist in Pennsylvania and nationwide.

The final budget, approved on a two to one vote, also authorizes the allocation of a \$500,000 General Fund grant, an increase of \$250,000 over the prior year, toward the County's contribution for farmland preservation in the 2017 program year. The increase in the County's contribution for farmland preservation is less than one third of one percent of the County's overall General Fund budget. Combined with other resources, the county's 2017 contribution will draw down state matching funds in excess of \$1.50 for each County dollar committed, and enable the preservation in perpetuity of an estimated 835 additional acres of prime farmland. The budget also allocates more than \$250,000 in anticipated state Marcellus Shale funding for the county's Land Partnership's Program in 2017.

Looking ahead to 2017 the County's leadership will continue to adapt to challenges by perpetually monitoring costs pressures to determine the most efficient and cost effective means for modernizing and prioritizing the delivery of fundamental public services. Cumberland County maintains its standing as the lowest in comparative tax rates among counties in the South Central Pennsylvania region and has upheld its AAA bond rating since 2008.

To view the 2017 Budget document and for more information about Cumberland County Government and its financial management policies visit online at www.ccpa.net/finance.

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