

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY - Congressman Steny Hoyer today joined the Accokeek Foundation and students from the Independent Baptist School in Clinton, Maryland, to celebrate the construction of a NEW Education Building at the Accokeek Foundation.

The Accokeek Foundation is an educational non-profit organization which practices and teaches land stewardship and sustainable use of natural resources. Their 200 acres serve as an outdoor classroom for educational programs, research, agricultural and conservation projects.

Congressman Hoyer helped secure \$500,000 for the construction of the Education Building which will be the first indoor classroom for the more than 6,000 students who visit the farm each year. Community and statewide organizations will also be able to use the facility for public programs, exhibits and meetings.

“In 1957, the Accokeek Foundation was established to preserve the land directly across the Potomac River from George Washington’s Mount Vernon,” said Congressman Steny Hoyer. “For nearly 50 years, the foundation has done a remarkable job in preserving the historic view shed and protecting our natural and cultural resources.”

“The Foundation has been a steward to the lands of Piscataway National Park by using a practical, hands on approach that gives visitors of all ages a unique insight and understanding of farming techniques of the past, present, and future. Together with its partners, Accokeek has safeguarded 5000 acres of parkland and transformed 200 acres into an outdoor classroom for educational programs, research, agricultural and conservation projects.

“The National Colonial Farm and Ecosystem Farm serve as the two main education components of the Foundation. Each farm presents us with an opportunity to understand how we have shaped the land over centuries and enables us to discover alternative methods for our environment.

“Today, we are celebrating a third element to Accokeek’s program. The Education Building’s primary use will be as a classroom for the 6,000 Maryland students who visit the Foundation each year, but will also serve as a place for public programs and community gatherings.

The center itself will be a learning tool. The structure will incorporate several green building features such as a vegetated green roof so that plants growing on parts of the roof will catch rainwater and help insulate the building, recycled materials for various interior and exterior furnishings, and will have the potential for solar power and solar orientation to reduce the amount of heating and cooling.

“The Education Center will be an invaluable resource for Accokeek. There is no better way to teach future generations how to appreciate our environment than by providing a forum in which they can enjoy our natural resources. I am proud to have been a partner over the years with Wilt, Charlie, other board members, and community supporters of the Accokeek Foundation.

“While they are very generous with sharing me the credit for making things like the Education Center possible it is really their good work and reputation that allow me to secure federal funds for these important initiatives.

“To recognize the federal contribution for the Education Center, please accept for inclusion in the time capsule a copy of a statement that will be submitted to the Congressional Record and five Maryland quarters to represent Maryland’s 5th Congressional District - the home of the Accokeek Foundation. We do not know who will open the time capsule we seal today, but hopefully they will enjoy the same view of Mount Vernon, a restored Chesapeake Bay, and prosperous, healthy community,” Hoyer concluded.

Charlie Estes, Chair, Board of Trustees, the Accokeek Foundation said, “the Accokeek Foundation is delighted to be beginning construction on this much-needed Education Center. It is the culmination of a five-year project to expand and improve our facilities to serve the public here in Piscataway Park. Congressman Steny supported this work in every way. He led the way with \$500,000 in federal funding, with which we were then able to leverage state and private funds. The beneficiaries will be school children, community groups, and statewide organizations who will use this building in the coming years. We could not have done it without Congressman Hoyer’s leadership and continuing interest in our success.”

Congressman Hoyer, the students and the Accokeek Foundation also contributed to a time capsule to be included in the construction of the building.

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