



ETHICS COMMISSION ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

July 2, 2007

By Electronic Mail Only

Re: AO-07-44

You inquired whether the employees in the central roads office of the department of public works may accept the eight complimentary tickets to the Renaissance Festival that were offered to these employees by the entity that operates the fair. The approximate value of each complimentary ticket is \$18.00. The tickets were offered to all the neighbors in the area around the fair to thank them for their patience with the increased noise and traffic and to permit them to enjoy the festivities.

Even if the Renaissance Festival is a controlled donor under §7-5-106(b) of the ethics law, the gift of tickets falls within the maximum amount usually considered to be a nominal value (\$25) for permissible gifts from controlled donors.¹ Because the gift was offered on an equal basis to all the neighbors, it cannot be said that the ticket were offered to the county employees because of their positions as county employees.

For these reasons, the ethics commission advises that the employees may accept these unsolicited gifts. Thank you for your inquiry. If you have any additional questions, please contact the ethics commission office.

The Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission

By: Betsy K. Dawson, Executive Director

¹ Nominal means “in name only.” Strictly speaking, a gift valued at \$18 is not truly a gift of nominal value, but as a practical matter, the ethics commission will not enforce the gift prohibitions for any gift valued at under \$25, unless acceptance of the gift is otherwise prohibited.