

# ER gala being planned

By JACK SHAM  
Staff Writer

STEVENSVILLE — A committee formed to help raise funds to purchase equipment for the planned free-standing emergency room in Grasonville will hold a gala event to throw its efforts into high gear.



ALISA  
PIPKIN

The event, titled "Flying into an ERa," will be held May 9 at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club in Stevensville. "The event is set around airline tickets and a travel theme since people traveling might need the ER," said Alisa Pipkin, chairman of the 17-member committee.

"We feel this is such a huge thing for the county that we should raise money to show how serious we are about it," Pipkin said.

"I feel I should be doing this even though we don't live here full-time anymore," said Pipkin, whose family moved from Kent Island to Cecil County last year.

Her husband, State Sen. E.J. Pipkin, R-36-Upper Shore, sponsored the legislation adopted by the General Assembly in 2007 covering the licensing and regulation of the stand-alone emergency room, the first in a rural area of Maryland.

The University of Maryland Medical System will build the 15,000-square-foot facility on a 15-acre tract of land at Nesbit Road and Route 50. Shore Health System will operate it as an emergency depart-

ment of Memorial Hospital at Easton. Groundbreaking is anticipated this summer with completion in late 2010.

"We got started planning this when the bill became law," Pipkin said. "This community has got to have accessible medical help."

In addition to Pipkin, the committee consists of Kathy Deoudes, vice-chairman; Marlene Davis; Audrey Scott; Linda Friday; Susan Katz; Kim Kratovil; Camille O'Donnell; Merry Tobin; Cheryl Wargotz; Marion Waterman; Bobbie Briscuso Cusimano; Isabelle Cusimano; Elizabeth DeGuzman; Barbara Siegert; Jennifer Didinato; and Sharon Dobson.

The gala will be a "heels and tie" affair beginning at 6:30 p.m. on May 9. Tickets are \$150 a person and Pipkin said everyone is welcome. "We want it to be a community event that's open to everyone," she said.

"These wonderful volunteers who are putting on the event May 9 are just the best," said Patti Willis, vice president corporate communications for Shore Health System.

There will be a live auction featuring such items as trips in keeping with the travel theme, she explained. Music will be provided by Bobby and the Believers. Information and reservations for the gala are available by calling Julia Marlowe at 410-8222-1000 extension 5509 or by e-mailing her at [jmarlowe@shorehealth.org](mailto:jmarlowe@shorehealth.org)

Pipkin said the organizers are also seeking to sign up sponsors for the event.

"I'm thrilled to be part of it since working with E.J. on

the bill," said Deoudes, who is the senator's legislative aide in Annapolis. She recalled a time when she needed to get her husband to an emergency room on a summer Saturday morning and Route 50 was packed with weekend travelers.

"I had to decide which way to go — Easton or Annapolis. This will eliminate that sort of thing," Deoudes said.

The stand-alone emergency room grew out of a growing concern over the lack of such a facility in Queen Anne's County. It and Caroline County are the only ones in the state without a hospital.

In early 2007, state and county officials recognized the need for a facility that could provide emergency treatment without having to make the trip to Annapolis or Easton. Out of that need emerged Pipkin's legislation and the partnership between the University of Maryland Medical System, Shore Health System, and Queen Anne's County, which agreed to make the land available.

This 24-hour-a-day-seven-day-a-week ER will be able to handle "any emergency situation that a hospital-based ER could handle," said information from Shore Health System.

The 15,700-sq.-ft. facility will have 11 treatment rooms, two triage rooms and onsite imaging services. The emergency facility is designed to handle 7,000 patients in its first year.

Ground breaking for the facility is set for July 2009 with a projected opening of fall 2010.

Information on the emergency room is available at [www.ERforQA.org](http://www.ERforQA.org).