

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SINCE 1932

Vol. 91, No. 46 November 16 — November 22, 2023 Prince George's County, Maryland Newspaper of Record Phone: 301-627-0900 25 cents

Team Maryland Joint Statement on the Selection of Greenbelt for the FBI's New Headquarters

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Governor News

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 8, 2023)—Today, members of Maryland's federal, state, and local governments including Governor Wes Moore, Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, Congressmen Steny H. Hoyer, Dutch Ruppersberger, John Sarbanes, Kweisi Mfume, Jamie Raskin, David Trone, and Glenn Ivey, and Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks released the following statement regarding the General Services Administration's decision to select Prince George's County as the home for the new, consolidated FBI headquarters:

"This is a historic moment for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and our nation. For decades, the dilapidated J. Edgar Hoover Building has failed to meet the FBI's operational needs, which has undermined our national security. The once fabled building has crumbled before our eyes, with nets surrounding the facility for years to protect pedestrians from falling debris. Today's decision by the General Services Administration (GSA) will ensure we fulfill the FBI's dire, longstanding need for a new consolidated headquarters that meets the modern-day demands on the Bureau's work to protect Americans and our nation.

After a thorough deliberation process and consideration of stakeholder input, the GSA selected

the Greenbelt site as the location for the new FBI headquarters. The GSA's analysis of the facts and its consultations revealed that the Greenbelt site is the most fitting site of the three final candidates when all factors were considered together.

We agree with the GSA's determination that based on merit the Greenbelt site is best suited to serve the present and future FBI and the dedicated public servants who work tirelessly to protect America and uphold the law. Considering cost to the taxpayer, equity, construction timeline, transportation access, and the FBI's mission requirements, we have long believed that Greenbelt is the best site for this crucial facility. We are pleased that the GSA arrived at the same conclusion. Our

decades-long, bipartisan effort to bring the Maryland sites' many merits to the GSA's attention was never about politics. It was always about making the case for what is best for the FBI, our region, and the country.

Team Maryland has worked tirelessly to deliver this result together. Our close cooperation will continue as we break ground on this new headquarters and tackle other pressing issues facing Marylanders. We are committed to doing everything we can to ensure the FBI has the best possible headquarters in the quickest timeframe so that we can facilitate a smooth transition to Prince George's County. We look forward to building a strong, productive partnership with the Bureau and its staff."

FBI Headquarters Move to Maryland Faces New Headwinds From Agency and Congress

By FATEMA HOSSEINI AND JOSIE JACK
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Nov. 9, 2023)—The Biden administration's announcement that the new FBI headquarters would be constructed in Greenbelt, Maryland, was met Thursday with criticism from the agency's director and allegations of corruption in the selection process from Virginia lawmakers.

On Capitol Hill, a spending measure that would be a vehicle for helping to pay for the new FBI headquarters was pulled from the House floor, part of a broader battle among lawmakers ahead of a looming Nov. 17 government shutdown.

The latest developments suggest that the years-long debate over the location of the new FBI headquarters seems to be continuing, notwithstanding Wednesday's announcement by the General Services Administration.

FBI Director Christopher Wray said there was

a "potential conflict of interest" in the agency headquarters decision, writing in an internal email Thursday to FBI employees, according to multiple media sources. Wray said he believed one senior GSA executive may have acted in favor of Greenbelt's selection.

Wray said the FBI has "concerns about fairness and transparency in the process and GSA's failure to adhere to its own site selection plan."

"Despite our engagement with GSA over the last two months on these issues, our concerns about the process remain unresolved," Wray wrote.

Senator Mark Warner, D-Virginia, said on a call with reporters that Virginia lawmakers will be calling for a Department of Justice inspector general's review due to alleged "corruption" in the selection process.

See FBI Page A4



PHOTO BRIDGET BYRNE/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON—The FBI's headquarters in the nation's capital, occupying an aging and outdated building, is slated to move to Greenbelt, Maryland.

Mental Health Center Takes Aim at Patients' Long Wait for Crisis Care

By STEPH QUINN
Capital News Service

SILVER SPRING, Md. (Nov. 9, 2023)—Lawmakers, clinicians and educators gathered Thursday for a ribbon-cutting celebration of Compass Health Center, which aims to provide timely mental health crisis care to adolescent and adult patients throughout Maryland, where emergency room wait times are the longest in the nation.

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Chair Will Smith, D-Montgomery, who attended the event, said the center, which opened in September, is a key step to connect all patients in need with appropriate services.

"A lot of times, because there's a dearth and lack of mental health services, our jails become de facto treatment centers," Smith said. "It ends up costing the taxpayer a lot of money. It's not good for the patient. It's not good for the families, and it's not good for the state of Maryland."

Compass Health Center does not currently accept Medicare or Medicaid, but Compass Clinical Vice President Erin VanLuyen told guests the center refers patients to



PHOTO CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE/STEPH QUINN

Compass Health Center co-founder Dr. David Schreiber, accompanied by Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Chairman Will Smith, D-Montgomery, and Sen. Malcolm Augustine, D-Prince George's, among others, celebrates the opening of a new mental health facility in Silver Spring on Nov. 9, 2023.

other resources.

The center offers in-person and virtual partial hospitalization, or day programs, and intensive outpatient care for patients 12 and older, with specialized treatment for obsessive-compulsive disorder, trauma, substance abuse and school anxiety, in addition to depression and general anxiety.

Dr. David Schreiber, CEO and co-founder of Compass,

which operates three health centers in the Chicago area, stated the importance of working with emergency rooms to get patients immediate care, and to prevent hospitalization when possible.

Hospital inpatient units are "costly resources (and) not always the most therapeutic," Schreiber said. "If we're using waiting lists as a point of (access to) treatment, then we are

not treating mental health in parity with physical health."

Compass, he said, begins providing comprehensive mental health services to patients within 24 hours of contact and offers psychiatric evaluation within 48 hours.

Patients wait an average of three hours and 48 minutes for mental health care in Maryland emergency rooms, according to Dr. Norvell Coots, the president and CEO of Holy Cross Health.

Lawmakers will work toward mental health parity for Maryland residents on Medicaid as the 2024 General Assembly session approaches, Smith said.

"That's something that we will be addressing," he said.

For Denise Key, director of counseling and student support at Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda, facilities like Compass meet a critical need.

"I never feel good about when someone's expressing suicidal ideation to have to send them to the ER," said Key. "...So to know that a place like this exists, where they can get an assessment and evaluation and care within 24 hours is pretty amazing."

Council Passes Legislation Banning Real Estate Appraisal Bias

Measure Prohibits Illegal Discrimination in Real Estate Appraisal Analysis

By ANGELA J. ROUSON
Prince George's County
Council Media

The Prince George's County Council, during session on Tuesday, November 7, unanimously enacted CB-075-2023, establishing a ban on real estate appraisal bias in Prince George's County.

Proposed by Council Members Mel Franklin (At-Large), Calvin S. Hawkins, III (At-Large), and Sydney Harrison (District 9), the measure prohibits real estate appraisers from considering race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, disability, familial status, or national origin in their appraisal analysis.

CB-075-2023 also directs the Office of Human Rights to publicize its role in enforcing the ban, including instructing residents on how to file a claim. Violators could be fined up to \$10,000.

Council Member Franklin says the goal of this legislation is fair and equitable real estate assessments for Prince George's County residents.

"Racial and other discrimina-

tion in the appraisal of real estate has been documented numerous times across our country, including right here in Prince George's County. Appraisal bias costs working families millions each year in equity and generational wealth in the value of their homes, the largest asset for most families. When someone's home is devalued just because of the color of their skin, it is a violation of their civil rights and basic humanity."

Council Member Franklin added, "Prince George's County has long been a standard bearer for homeownership for black and brown communities. There must be zero tolerance here and anywhere in our nation for real estate appraisal bias. The Real Estate Appraisal Bias Ban will establish fines of up to \$10,000 for appraisal bias and direct the Office of Human Rights to enforce the law and empower our residents to report real estate appraisal bias when it happens to them. We must end real estate appraisal bias everywhere."

CB-075-2023 will take effect 45 days after it becomes law.

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

As a family member, I'm cheering FBI Headquarters move to Prince George's

Jack and I relocated here from San Francisco in 1958 because the FBI transferred Jack to FBI Headquarters, which then was at the U. S. Department of Justice on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Soon, however, a new FBI building began to take shape, just across Pennsylvania. Jack could watch the construction from his office window. In 1975, the new Headquarters opened and was named for longtime director J. Edgar Hoover. Jack worked there until he retired, taking the bus every morning from the intersection of Suitland Road and Randolph and retuning every evening to Suitland Road and Skyline Drive.

At less than 50 years of age, the Hoover Building is deteriorating—in fact, netting has been installed around the building to protect people on the sidewalk from falling concrete. There's also the need to consolidate the Bureau's 11,000 personnel from more than a dozen locations.

About 10 years ago, Federal officials began to plan a new FBI Headquarters. They would have liked to keep the Bureau in Washington but needed more space than the city could offer. Eventually they narrowed the hotly-contested search to one of three possibilities: Landover Mall and Greenbelt in Prince George's and Springfield, Va.

Greenbelt has won! The new FBI Headquarters will be built on an empty 61-acre lot outside the Greenbelt Metro Station. It will be in a mixed-use area which will include apartments, a hotel and retail.

As Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen says, the FBI "deserves to have a headquarters that's worthy of their mission."

I think Jack would agree.

Councilman Burroughs, Crossland grad, honored by PGCPs

That is what last week's headline should have been. I cannot find the erroneous article I used as a resource that cited him as a Suitland HS graduate. Lindsay Watts, of his staff, contacted me with his concern. I apologize for not digging deeper.

Edward Burroughs III graduated from Crossland High School in 2010, and Crossland can be very proud of what he has accomplished since—14 years on the County Board of Education and election to the County Council for District 8 (where I live).

He has now been inducted into the 2023 PGCPs (Prince George's County Public School) Hall of Fame as a Distinguished Young Leader. Crossland and I am proud of him.

Town of Morningside

Morningside's Senior Residents will have a Thanksgiving Feast Luncheon followed by Bingo on Thursday, Nov. 16, 11:30 a.m. I will be there.

Morningside's annual Breakfast with Santa will be at the Firehouse on Saturday, Dec. 9, beginning at 9 a.m. The menu lists pancakes, sausage, fruit, juice and coffee, followed by a Magic Show, door prizes and Santa's Secret Shop (for purchasing small gifts). Fee is \$5.00 per person. Space is limited; pre-register (301-736-2301) beginning November 20.

Morningside's meetings this month will be the Work Session on the 14th and the Town Meeting on the 21st, both beginning at 7. Morningside information: 301-736-2300.

Remembering Mayor Glaubitz

Gerald August Glaubitz was born November 23, 1920, in Murdock, Nebraska. At 18 he joined the Navy and was stationed in Pearl Harbor aboard the USS San Francisco when the Japan-

ese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He survived.

He had met 16-year-old Jean Quapp, a clerk at the five-and-dime in Lincoln, Nebraska. They were married in 1942 at the American Lutheran Church in Lincoln.

After his discharge in 1945, he went to work for the Naval Research Lab.

In 1947 they paid \$6,930 (with \$100 rebate) for a new house at 507 Maple Road in Morningside. In 1961 he ran for Mayor and went on to become the longest-serving mayor in Maryland.

Jerry (as I always listed him) was a life member of the Morningside Volunteer Fire Department, active in maybe half-a-dozen other organizations, including head of the Maryland Chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors. He and Jean returned there for the 50th anniversary, Dec. 7, 1991. We watched TV with pride as Jerry and Jean accompanied President and Mrs. George H. W. Bush to services aboard the Arizona Memorial.

Jerry gave up his post as mayor after 43 years. He died on April 26, 2005. If he were alive today, he'd turn 103 on November 23.

Neighbors & other good people

Savino Gerard was born Oct. 9 to Kendra and Anthony Pomilla, weighing in at 4 pounds, 12 ounces. He has a big brother, Jerome. Kendra grew up in Skyline, daughter of Audrey Pridgen who called me with the good news. She now lives with the Pomilla family in Front Royal, Va.

Tom Ferrell turned 80 on November 15. He reminded me that he had lived in Morningside (Larkspur Road) and in Skyline (Reamy Drive), and used to hang out with Johnny Dandois, Bruce Neale and Danny Needham.

See **MORNINGSIDE** Page A4

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

Prince George's County, one of Maryland's most populous counties, has a rich and vibrant history. From agriculture to industry, school life to religious life, trolleys, trains, and tobacco, the people of this area share a distinctive regional heritage and great pride in the communities they have built.

With numerous recognized historic sites, Prince George's County boasts, among others, Mount Calvert, the only structure remaining at the site of the first county seat; Melwood Park and the Magruder House, both visited by George Washington; and his Lordship's Kindness, a five-part Georgian mansion. Other historic buildings were not elegant manors, but functional facilities. College Park Airport holds the record as the oldest continuously operating airport in the world, and the Surratt House played a role in the assassination plot of Abraham Lincoln. But the everyday lives of citizens are represented here as well, in the images of early residents, their homes and businesses, of the city services and social events, of elementary school classes and congregations.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Sonia Douwana, Ronald Crawford, Dion Jalloh, Owen Johnson, Ugo Mbakwe, Shurrell Bell, Ronald Crawford, Jr., Tiffany Knight, Daphne Rojas, Evangeline Crawford, Sheila Holmes, Pastor Dorothea Belt Stroman, Grace Omoregbe, Pauline Clark, Dorothy Glasgow-Reid, Sinaya Cromartie who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in November.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Brandon and Ashley Holmes, Barron and Kendra Neal who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating Wedding Anniversaries in November.

2023 PGCPs EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Prince George's County Public Schools Hall of Fame Gala was held October 27, 2023, at the MGM National Harbor Hotel. Thanks everyone for supporting. Individuals honored at the PGCPs Hall of Fame Gala were Chuck West Central High School '84, Philanthropist and Film and TV Producer. Superintendent's Award of Excellence. Robert Gaskin Educator and PGCPs Executive, Distinguished Educator. Jim Henson 1936-1990, Northwestern High School '54, Puppeteer, Animator, Cartoonist, Actor, Inventor and Filmmaker, Distinguished Professional. Gary Michael Northwestern High School '79 Commercial Real Estate Executive, Distinguished Humanitarian. Dr. Felisha R. Lawrence Oxon Hill High School '06, Scientist & Engineer. Kyle Arrington Gwynn Park High School '04 Super Bowl Champion & Author, Distinguished Athlete. Secy. D. Paul Monteiro, Jr. High Point School' Statesman & Political Leader Distinguished Public Servant. Councilman Edward Burroughs, III Crossland High School '10, Political and Community Dignitary, Distinguished Young Leader.

ICE ON THE POTOMAC

Saturday, December 9 at 3 p.m.—December 11, 11 a.m. EST at Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, 201 Wa-

terfront St., National Harbor, Maryland. About this event: 2 Overnight Stays at Gaylord National Hotel. Package includes Roundtrip Motorcoach from New Jersey, tickets to ICE; free breakfast daily. Tickets to ICE are not sold separately. For booking details, contact: Yvonne at yharvey@1stclasstravelinc.net or 215-678-5993.

ZION WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

November 19, Zion Wesley United Methodist Church, 11500 Berry Road, Waldorf, Maryland will have a Happy Hour Worship Service on Sunday, November 19th, with Gospel Groups (Burning Lights and Zion Specials) along with Testimonies, thanking God for how He has blessed them throughout the year.

SUBURBAN MARYLAND HOME SHOW

The Home Show is everything for in and around your home. The show is free. January 13, 2024, at 10 a.m.—January 14, 2024, 5 p.m. EST. Free. Our event features a wide selection of home improvement professionals in a fun, interactive environment. After meeting with and comparing our expert exhibitors, we know you will be inspired and motivated to start planning with confidence. Organized by American Consumer Shows. Location is Show Place Arena, 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

More importantly, we want you to be excited for all the fantastic possibilities that come with your project. Saturday 10 am.—8 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m.—5 p.m. Get your free passes on the show's website: www.MDHomeShows-sp.com.

REUNION OF THE CLASSES

Reunion of the Classes, Entertainment DJ and Rhonda Jeter Saturday, December 2, 2023, from 5-9 p.m. The cost is \$65.00. The event will be held at Glen Dale Fire Station, 11900 Glen Dale Blvd. Second floor, Glen Dale, Maryland 20769. Price includes food and entertainment. Attire: Holiday Chic. You need to register.

Rita J. Powers is a fourth generation Marylander. She was born in Frederick, Maryland and comes from a family of educators, with many of them graduating from Bowie State University. Rita is married and has a son and daughter. Both of her children (Chaz and Cherita) are proud Bowie State University graduates.

After completing her undergraduate studies at Bowie State University, she later attended graduate school majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Howard University. Soon after that, Rita was employed as a speech pathologist at Gallaudet University (Model Secondary School for the Deaf and Kendall Demonstration School), Washington, D.C. She retired from Prince George's Public Schools as a speech-language pathologist in 2016.

This event, "The Reunion of the Classes," is Rita's way of saying thank you to the Bowie State University family, the academic opportunities, lifelong friendships, and memories. And most of all, this event is for those "who want to connect yesterday with today, today with tomorrow, and tomorrow with ourselves." (H.U. Bison)

Around the County

November 19, 2023 Little Chapel Food Pantry

The next St. Philip's Little Chapel Food Pantry Distribution will be held this Sunday, November 19, 2023, from 9 a.m. to Noon, while supplies last. Our Pantry is located behind the main church building at the corner of 6th and Prince George Streets in Historic Laurel (by the playground), one block off of Main Street. We will have non-perishable items, frozen items, and some produce available while supplies last.

—St. Philip's Episcopal Church

Voters in the Town of Upper Marlboro Elect Five Members to Board of Commissioners

The town board will consist of three returning members and two newcomers, certified final results show

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Nov. 7, 2023)—Voters in the Town of Upper Marlboro today elected five members to its governing Board of Commissioners. The newly elected board will consist of three incumbent members—Mayor Sarah Franklin, Charles Colbert, and Karen Lott—along with newcomers Derrick Brooks and Alma Prevatte.

Upper Marlboro Town Clerk John Hoatson released the final election results shortly after 10:15 p.m. on Nov. 7. There are no individual precincts reporting; it is a town-wide election with no political party affiliations for the candidates.

Sarah Franklin: 100

Charles Colbert: 97

Derrick Brooks: 90

Karen Lott: 88

Alma Prevatte: 85

Linda Pennoyer: 76

Patti Callicott: 68

Thomas Hanchett: 66

Joe Hourcle: 37

As stipulated by Town Charter, the President of the Board, also known as Mayor, will NOT be determined by the final vote count. The five elected Commissioners will caucus shortly after Election Day and reach consensus on who the new Mayor will be.

Profiles and photos of all nine candidates can be found at this link:

https://www.uppermarboromd.gov/administration/departments/town_elections/meet_the_candidates.php

In August 2022, the three-member Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution that increased the composition of the Town's elected body from three to five members, consisting of four Commissioners and one President/Mayor.

—Ray Feldmann, Town of Upper Marlboro

City of Bowie Election Results

Results are in from the City of Bowie's non-partisan municipal election held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023. Voters selected a Mayor, two At-Large Councilmembers, and a District Councilmember. Each seat in this year's election was contested.

Tim Adams was re-elected Mayor after his initial win in 2019. Voters chose Dennis Brady and Wanda Rogers as the two At-Large Councilmembers. The District winners are Michael Esteve (District 1), Dufour Woolfley (District 2), Clinton Truesdale (District 3), and Roxy Ndebumadu (District 4).

The votes are as follows:

	Votes	%
Mayor		
Tim Adams *	4,821	71.79%
Troy S. Stewart	1,758	26.18%
Write-ins	136	2.03%
At-Large Councilmembers (voters select 2)		
Dennis Brady *	3,831	30.88%
Jarryd Hawkins	2,126	17.14%
Wanda Rogers *	4,263	34.37%
Preston W. Thomas, III	2,166	17.46%
Write-ins	19	0.15%
District 1 (elected only by District 1 voters)		
Jenmaire Dewberry	480	27.57%
Michael P. Estève *	1,261	72.43%
Write-ins	0	0
District 2 (elected only by District 2 voters)		
Lisa Martin	279	15.18%
Monica Roebuck	470	25.57%
Dufour Woolfley *	1,088	59.19%
Write-ins	1	0.05%
District 3 (elected only by District 3 voters)		
Babatunde Alegbeleye	214	13.60%
Iyamide House	608	38.63%
Clinton Truesdale *	749	47.59%
Write-ins	3	0.19%
District 4 (elected only by District 4 voters)		
Robert W. Day, Sr.	697	38.49%
Craig M. Muckle	192	10.60%
Roxy Ndebumadu *	918	50.69%
Write-ins	4	0.22%

—Una Cooper, City of Bowie

MCS Concert: My Soul Sings Out on Dec. 10, 2023

My Soul Sings Out, Sunday, Dec 10 at 4 p.m.

Mt. Calvary Catholic Church, 6700 Marlboro Pike, Forestville, MD 20747

Join MCS, full orchestra, and soloists for an afternoon celebration of the season. Featuring Bach's Magnificat and festive songs of the season—including a "Muppet Medley." Sure to be a family favorite!

Purchase your tickets in advance and save \$5! <https://maryland-choral-society.ticketleap.com/my-soul-sings-out/>

Use code MCS2023 at checkout.

Maryland State Independence Card/EBT cardholders and their families can attend free of charge—just show your card at the door for free admission.

—Maryland Choral Society

COMMUNITY

Maryland Officials Delight in Announced FBI Move to Greenbelt

By KIERSTEN HACKER AND
CECELIA SHILLING
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 9, 2023)—Wednesday's (Nov. 8) decision by the federal government to relocate FBI headquarters to Greenbelt is an economic windfall for Prince George's County greeted with delight from Maryland officials.

Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks said she let out screams of excitement Wednesday night when she first heard the news from Maryland U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer, who has battled for over a decade to bring the project to the state.

"This has been very exciting to me because I understand the economic impact," Alsobrooks said. "These decisions where these federal job centers are located have the power to transform the economic profile of a jurisdiction for generations."

Greenbelt was chosen over another Maryland site in Landover and Springfield in Virginia after years of debate and winnowing the choices from 35 to three. The existing FBI headquarters in downtown Washington, D.C., is too

small, obsolete and crumbling.

The new facility will sit on an undeveloped 61-acre plot next to the Greenbelt Metro Station and the protected wetlands of Indian Creek. It is expected to include a mixed-use housing development with opportunities for retail along with the headquarters.

Gov. Wes Moore joined a statement from "Team Maryland," which included the state's congressional delegation, Alsobrooks and others. All touted the economic benefits and the fitness of the site for the FBI's use.

"Considering cost to the taxpayer, equity, construction timeline, transportation access, and the FBI's mission requirements, we have long believed that Greenbelt is the best site for this crucial facility. We are pleased that the (federal government) arrived at the same conclusion," the statement read.

The headquarters, expected to cost several billion dollars, will bring about 7,500 jobs to the county, Alsobrooks said, as related companies will want to locate near the state's new hub of cybersecurity and technology between the new FBI headquarters and the nearby University of Maryland College Park.

Greenbelt Mayor Emmett Jordan

said his city's location was superior to the other sites in Landover and Springfield, Virginia, citing its natural buffer, proximity to the Metro station that could reduce commuter traffic impact, and its cost-effectiveness as a "shovel-ready" site.

Jordan said the state-of-the-art facility is expected to generate several billion dollars in investment for the region.

"I think going forward, we're going to work very hard to make sure that it's a sustainable, first, top-of-the-line, kind of state-of-the-art development that meets the needs of the FBI, but at the same time, meets the aspirations and desires of the residents of Greenbelt and the surrounding areas," Jordan said.

Greenbelt has a high quality of life, Jordan said, but commercial investment in the city and countywide has been slow. The balance of impacts from investment is an important criterion for the GSA to pay attention to, Jordan said.

Ric Gordon, a Greenbelt City Council member, said the decision is a "game changer" for the county and especially for Greenbelt's some 24,000 residents. The Beltway Plaza Mall could see an increase in shoppers, which would also create more job opportunities and ben-



PHOTO CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE/TOMMY TUCKER

The new FBI headquarters will be located next to the Greenbelt Metro station, which will provide easy access for commuters.

efit small businesses that faced financial difficulties during the pandemic, he said. The headquarters will also be near the Franklin Park apartment complex, one of the largest complexes in the county.

"It's really reached a point that Greenbelt is ready for a huge boom period," Gordon said. "And I'm glad I'm gonna be here to see it."

The Greenbelt City Council will

have a say in the planning process even though it doesn't have full zoning authority.

Alsobrooks said the county delegation will continue to work to ensure that there is funding available for the project.

"Well, we've been in the fight now for 14 years, we started, again, with 35 sites," Alsobrooks said. "And no one should assume that this was just given to us, we earned it."

Prince George's County Gears Up for 2024 Open Enrollment With Amplified Community Outreach

By MICHELLE LESANE
PGC Health Connect

LANDOVER, Md. (Nov. 9, 2023)—Maryland Health Connection Open Enrollment is currently underway and runs through Jan. 15, 2024. For the best individual healthcare plan for you, visit Prince George's County Health Connect, pgchealthconnect.org, to enroll or head to one of our kickoff events to sign up.

Prince George's County Health Connect, a program of the Prince George's County Department of Social Services, and an MHC partner has coordinated several enrollment events designed to create awareness, while encouraging residents to feel comfortable about enrolling in health insurance.

"We want to make sure that residents not only feel comfortable about enrolling, but that they are encouraged to seek plans that provide for the well-being of themselves and their families", says Social Services Director Gloria Brown Burnett.

Continuing she says, "Individuals sometimes find reasons not to enroll—and do not take the time to seek preventative services before it is too late. We want residents to know that Health Connect's services are community based, and we have experts who are waiting to enroll you at no cost. Peace of mind is obtained when you are covered."

"Life can feel unpredictable—be it losing a job, losing Medicaid coverage following the end of the public health emergency, moving to Maryland, turning 26 and aging out of your parent's plan, or deciding to be your own boss," said Michele

Eberle, Executive Director of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. "Maryland Health Connection has free or low-cost plans to give you peace of mind."

All plans available through Maryland Health Connection cover many health services at no cost. For example: mental health services, vaccines, high blood pressure, and prescription medicines are covered. New this year, Marylanders ages 18–37 may receive special discounts for 2024 health plans—on top of other available savings.

View below for upcoming health insurance community events:

- Sat., Nov. 18, Penn Station Enrollment Center, Penn Station Mall, 5746 Silver Hill Road, District Heights, MD, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Fri., Dec. 1, Brandywine Movie Theater, 7710 Matapeake Business Drive, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Co-hosted by SeedCo Maryland.
 - Sat., Dec. 9, Mega-Enrollment Event, North Laurel Community Center, 941 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel, MD, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Co-sponsored by Healthcare Access Maryland
 - Sat., Dec. 16, Health Insurance Enrollment, New Carrollton Library, 7414 Riverdale Road, New Carrollton, MD, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Services are available by phone and in person. To enroll or seek additional information, call the PGC Health Connect Call Center at (301) 927-4500 or (240) 719-2167; Monday through Friday (weekend and evening hours are also available); or visit pgchealthconnect.org/gethelp.

'No More Deliberation, There's no More Questioning:' Maryland Leaders Defend FBI Relocation

By TOMMY TUCKER
Capital News Service

GREENBELT, Md. (Nov. 10, 2023)—Maryland leadership, in a news conference Friday, strenuously rejected claims that the decision process for the FBI headquarters was tainted and called the matter a done deal.

The U.S. General Services Administration announced Wednesday (Nov. 8) that the FBI would relocate to a new facility to be built in Greenbelt by the Metro station. In response, Virginia officials, along with FBI director Christopher Wray, called for a reversal of the decision, with Wray claiming in a letter to the agency last month that the GSA failed to address conflicts of interest in the selection process.

Gov. Wes Moore, along with U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer, U.S. Sens. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, all Democrats, as well as other Maryland leaders, celebrated the decision Friday, while criticizing the statements made by Wray.

Cardin threw back some of the claims, calling out Wray for his actions.

"We saw the hand of the director of the FBI trying to change what should be a fair, competitive, open process to steer it to Virginia," said Cardin. "The GSA has released all of the information on how they made the decision. Transparency, it's there. Take a look at it—it's not a close call."

Finding the FBI a new headquarters has been an ongoing issue for more than a decade. Hoyer described how former FBI Director Robert Mueller came to him in 2009, describing the need for a new building and how the current headquarters is crumbling.

Van Hollen defended Nina Albert, the commissioner of GSA's Public Buildings Service, who has been named in published reports as the official who Wray



PHOTO CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE/TOMMY TUCKER

U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen defends the federal government's choice of Greenbelt, Maryland, for a new FBI headquarters. He's joined by Maryland leaders (from left) Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller, Gov. Wes Moore, U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer, U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin and Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks.

claimed had a conflict of interest. Albert previously worked for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which owns the land where the new FBI headquarters will be located.

"It is absolutely wrong of director Chris Wray to impugn and question the character, the integrity and the independence of the site selection administrator," said Van Hollen. "She's an expert in the field of real estate and transit, she's a public servant and she had a distinguished career as an Army veteran."

Virginia leadership, including U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, a Democrat, and Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, responded to the relocation decision, echoing some of the issues brought up by Wray.

"We are deeply disturbed to learn that a political appointee at the General Services Administration overruled the unanimous recommendation of a three-person panel comprised of career experts from

the GSA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation concluding that Springfield, Virginia, is the site best suited for the new FBI headquarters. We have repeatedly condemned political interference in the independent, agency-run, site selection process for a new FBI headquarters. Any fair weighing of the criteria points to a selection of Virginia. It is clear that this process has been irrevocably undermined and tainted, and this decision must now be reversed."

GSA Administrator Robin Carnahan responded to Wray, calling the claims of interference "unfounded" in a statement released Thursday (Nov. 9).

"At every step, the GSA team has worked to incorporate the FBI's feedback and appropriately address their concerns, including conducting a legal review of each concern raised."

See DEFEND Page A6

Supreme Court of Maryland Holds Oral Arguments at Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School in Prince George's County

Maryland's highest court hosts off-site oral arguments for the first time in recent history

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Judiciary

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Nov. 3, 2023)—On Friday, Nov. 3, 2023, the Supreme Court of Maryland held oral arguments at Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School in Prince George's County, Maryland. The arguments were heard at the high school's Performing Arts Center auditorium and livestreamed. This marked the first time in recent history that the Supreme Court held oral arguments outside the City of Annapolis. The Supreme Court of Maryland plans to hold oral arguments at secondary or post-secondary educational institutions within the state one day each term year at geographically diverse locations.

"As it is the Judiciary's mission to provide fair, effective and efficient justice for all, it is important to promote public under-

standing of the Supreme Court of Maryland, and the Judiciary as a whole," said Chief Justice Matthew J. Fader, Supreme Court of Maryland. "Holding arguments outside of the city of Annapolis, and especially in our schools, provides an opportunity for additional civics education for students, teachers, and the community by enhancing public access. It also provides an important opportunity for the members of the court to engage with and hear from the community. We are grateful to the Prince George's County Schools, Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School, and their respective staff and leadership for welcoming the court and making this special event happen."

The Supreme Court's off-site oral arguments are made possible by the Administrative Order on the Supreme Court of Maryland Sitting Temporarily Outside of the City of Annapolis issued on March 2, 2023. The administrative order calls for the rotation of

the temporary sittings of the Supreme Court beginning in September Term 2023 with the Fourth Appellate Judicial Circuit, which includes Prince George's County, Maryland, and proceeding thereafter in the numerical order of the circuits. The justices from each host circuit will be able to select the educational institutions to host oral arguments in the future, which is subject to the approval of the full Supreme Court.

"I am honored that the court selected Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School in Prince George's County as the off-site location to host oral arguments," said Justice Michele D. Hotten, Supreme Court of Maryland, representing the Fourth Appellate Judicial Circuit (Prince George's County). "This brings the highest state court in Maryland directly to students so they can receive both an invaluable, first-hand civics education and an opportunity to speak with the justices and attorneys."

"Hosting the oral arguments at Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School is a testament to the importance of civic engagement and a unique opportunity for Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS)

See SUPREME COURT Page A5

COMMUNITY

School Principals Prepare for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future

By CAIT KELLEY AND CALEY FOX SHANNON
CNS/Local News Network

OCEAN CITY, Md. (Nov. 10, 2023)—As Maryland rolls out the 2021 landmark education reform law called the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, many school administrators are unsure what the plan means for their schools.

At the annual School Leaders Conference held Nov. 2–4 in Ocean City, state officials and school principals reviewed the details of the Blueprint and discussed how it will be implemented in each school district.

The wave of impending policy changes are meant to address the challenges facing educators and students across the state. For example, Emily Abell, principal of Monarch Global Academy in Anne Arundel County, said her school is experiencing the effects of the nationwide teacher shortage.

Asked about the Blueprint, she said: "Is it gonna help? I don't know. We'll have to see what it looks like on paper and when we start to implement."

The Blueprint is grounded in the analysis of a group of independent policy experts formed by the state in 2016 to establish a baseline for education reform. Though formally named the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, the group was commonly referred to as the Kirwan Commission after its chair, William E. Kirwan, chancellor emeritus of the University System of Maryland.

By 2019, the Kirwan Commission had come to some sobering conclusions about Maryland's education system. Half of all teachers leave the profession within the first five years. Only two out of every five kindergarteners arrive in the classroom ready to learn. And just a third of students leave high school being "college and career ready" in English and math.

"That was pre-pandemic. So generally speaking, it's gotten worse," said Rachel Hise, a policy specialist who worked for the state in tandem with the Kirwan Commission. Explaining the commission's findings to school leaders in Ocean City, she said the independent body concluded that "ultimately, the status quo is unsustainable."

Because of the work of the Kirwan Commission, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in February 2021, overriding a veto by then-Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican who had cost concerns about the plan.

The Blueprint allocates \$3.8 billion to schools over the next 10 years and is based on five "pillars."

- **Pillar 1:** Early Childhood Education, which includes the expansion of pre-K to three and four-year-olds through both public schools and private providers.
- **Pillar 2:** High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders, which mandates raises in teacher salaries and incentivizes them to attain National Board Certification.
- **Pillar 3:** College and Career Readiness, which establishes changes to high school curriculum, technical training programs and opportunities for apprenticeships.
- **Pillar 4:** More Resources to Ensure that All Students are Successful, which provides more money to schools in need.
- **Pillar 5:** Governance and Accountability, which creates a framework of oversight led by the Accountability and Implementation Board, the state agency created to administer the plan.

Hise is now executive director of the Blueprint's Accountability and Implementation Board. She said the policy changes will make sure students are ready to learn in kindergarten and ready to succeed when they graduate high school.

"The Blueprint is aiming to have all 4-year-olds in public full-day pre-K," said Hise.

Because public schools lack the capacity to fulfill this mandate alone, the state will fund programming via private pre-K providers as well.

"The goal is a socioeconomically integrated pre-K system that is publicly funded, but that is provided by both public schools and private providers," Hise told administrators in Ocean City.

The Blueprint will also mean big changes in high schools.

"What the Blueprint really envisions is we want kids to be college and career ready by 10th grade, so that the second two years of high school students can focus on the pathway that they're interested in pursuing," Hise said.

The Blueprint aims to meet this goal through curriculum changes in English and math in addition to apprenticeships and technical education programs.

Implementing the Blueprint at the school level falls squarely on school administrators, said Addie Kaufman, executive director of the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals.

"There was no doubt that the Blueprint would be a part of this conference, and the understanding of the Blueprint is actually key," she said in an interview.

After learning more about the Blueprint at the conference, some principals said they are hopeful that the reforms will address their schools' priorities.

Teachers are struggling to make do with salaries in the current

economy, said Principal Ryan Daniel of Fort Foote Elementary in Prince George's County.

"I know a lot of my teachers have to have after-school jobs or second jobs to compensate for their salary," she said.

The Blueprint will raise the minimum salary for teachers to \$60,000 across the state by 2026. And if teachers obtain National Board Certification, the Blueprint allows them to earn up to an additional \$17,000 per year.

"I am excited for the Blueprint for Maryland," said Sarah Bento, an assistant principal at Northern High School in Calvert County. "The Blueprint is really asking us to rethink what high school looks like and really make sure that we're preparing all of our students to be prepared to go to college or enter the workforce in a way that we just haven't done before."

Thanks to the Blueprint, Bento's school has been able to hire a career advisor for the first time.

"We have 1,500 students and he's meeting with every single one of them to talk about career entrance and get them connected to the resources that are out there," she told the Local News Network.

Other schools have yet to feel the concrete impact of the Blueprint. "Honestly, I'm still reading and learning, and I think that they're doing a really slow roll out intentionally for us, which is good," said Jamie Miller, the principal at Broadneck Elementary in Arnold, in Anne Arundel County. "We have people at the board level who are becoming sort of experts and then they're going to disseminate to us."

Miller expressed a mix of excitement about the expansion of pre-K and trepidation about her school's capacity to meet the need.

"I would love to have pre-K in our school," she said. "Early childhood is a love of mine, so I would love to. But our school building is very, very old and there's not a place for them."

It's hard to implement policy changes while running the day-to-day operations of a school, said Miller.

"So I think the summertime will be a big focus for us when there aren't kids in the building and we'll be able to kind of digest it more and be taught exactly what the expectations are," she said. "I'm eager to see how it all rolls out."

In March 2023, every school district submitted a detailed plan to the Accountability and Implementation Board for rolling out the Blueprint in their schools.

"The plans are fine, but they really are a baseline," Hise, of the Accountability and Implementation Board, said. "There's a need for more innovative thinking."

The Accountability and Implementation Board expects updated plans from every district in March 2024, and has offered every district a \$100,000 grant to hire a strategic planning expert. All but Frederick and Worcester counties took the state up on that deal.

The Local News Network will follow the Blueprint rollout and an analysis of each district-level plan will be published in January on the University of Maryland's Capital News Service website.

FBI from A1

"The fact that you've got three career professionals, two representing GSA and one representing the FBI, coming together even with the new criteria and still choosing Virginia only to have that overwritten by a political appointee is outrageous," Warner said. "This is the kind of behavior I expected from the Trump administration, but I think we all expect better from the current administration."

Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Virginia, whose district includes the rejected Springfield site for the headquarters, said in a statement that the "GSA has shamelessly caved to political pressure," and that the agency did not warn lawmakers in advance about the decision.

Amidst these allegations, Maryland's state and federal officials hailed the move.

"This is a historic moment for the Federal Bu-

reau of Investigation (FBI) and our nation," said a joint statement from the officials, who dubbed themselves "Team Maryland." "For decades, the dilapidated J. Edgar Hoover Building has failed to meet the FBI's operational needs, which has undermined our national security. The once-fabled building has crumbled before our eyes, with nets surrounding the facility for years to protect pedestrians from falling debris."

The 61 acres in Greenbelt emerged as the preferred location due to its proximity to multiple transportation networks, including Metro, and other federal facilities, the ease of developing the now-vacant site and the desirability of promoting equity, according to the GSA. Greenbelt had the highest score for all the mentioned criteria compared to the other two sites, the GSA said.

Greenbelt also represents the lowest cost to taxpayers, with an estimated cost of \$26.2 million

for site acquisition and preparation, GSA said. That compared to over \$100 million for a site in Landover, Maryland, and \$64 million for the Springfield site.

President Joe Biden in March issued his fiscal 2024 budget plan under which \$3.5 billion would come from a proposed Federal Capital Revolving Fund, and \$645 million from earlier appropriations for the GSA.

In addition to moving about 7,500 people from the FBI's headquarters to Greenbelt, the GSA is planning to keep up to 1,000 FBI employees in a federal facility in downtown Washington.

But prospects for funding the FBI headquarters move are hazy at the moment. That is because Congress is deadlocked over spending bills, even as a current stopgap funding bill expires on Nov. 17.

On Wednesday (Nov. 8) evening, after the FBI move was made public, Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-

Florida, proposed an amendment to an appropriations bill to block the move.

While the amendment to the financial services and general government spending bill failed, the FBI headquarters decision was one of the reasons House Republican leaders pulled the overall bill from the floor, Roll Call reported.

The establishment of the FBI headquarters is poised to bring significant economic benefits to the region, including job creation and infrastructure improvements, local, state and federal officials said.

"After a long push from Team Maryland, the FBI Headquarters is officially coming to Prince George's County!" Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Maryland, tweeted. "This is the right decision—it's a win for the FBI's mission, for taxpayers, and for our goal of ensuring federal investments advance equity in our communities."

Elections Board Audit Finds Ineligible Voters, Security Issues

By TOMMY TUCKER
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 3, 2023)—An audit released Friday (Nov. 3) found that the Maryland Board of Elections did not report for more than a year its findings that people voted or tried to vote more than once in the 2020 general election—well after the results were certified, according to The Office of Legislative Audits.

The state elections board identified 134 voters who voted more than once and 1,371 voters who attempted to vote multiple times in the 2020 general election, but it did not report these individuals to the The Office of State Prosecutor until April 2022, the audit said. The audit is part of a routine physical compliance audit of the SBE conducted every three to four years.

"Definitely the (reports) for the 2020 general election were significantly late and I think they indicated that was due to staff turnover within their office," said Matthew

Streett, an assistant director for the Compliance and Performance Audit Division of the OLA. "They reported them after the election results were certified."

In the July 2022 primary election, the audit found, the elections board identified four individuals who successfully voted multiple times and 263 voters who attempted to vote multiple times, referring the information to the state prosecutors office in a "timely" manner.

Election integrity has become a high-profile issue with former President Donald Trump and his supporters repeatedly challenging the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.

The audit also noted that the elections board could enhance its procedures to fully identify deceased or duplicate voters. The audit identified 2,426 "potentially deceased individuals" whose voter registrations were active and 327 individuals with potential duplicate voter registrations.

"We're just pointing out areas where they can im-

prove," said Streett. "The information they're getting from the Maryland Department of Health was not fully complete and accurate, so they were missing out on a certain pocket of deceased individuals."

The Health Department could not be reached for comment on Friday (Nov. 3).

The audit also found deficiencies with the state elections board's security and control over its information systems, but did not go into detail for security reasons. The department's response to those concerns also was redacted from the report.

The elections board did agree to implement the recommendations, but disagreed with several findings.

The State Board of Elections could not be reached for comment on Friday. The current Elections Administrator Jared DeMarinis took the helm in June 2023 after longtime administrator Linda Lamone retired.

Morningside from A2

Oran Goodwin Jr., a Navy vet, who served with the State Dept. for 30 years, died Oct. 24. Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Naomi. Homecoming was held at Cornerstone Baptist Church, in Temple Hills, and he is buried at Cheltenham.

Julie Koch-Michael wrote with a question. She used to live at 305 Boxwood and wonders what type of heating system their house might have had years ago. Anyone have a suggestion? Email me at muddmm@gmail.com.

VFW Fish Fry, Nov. 18

All are welcome to a Fish Fry at the VFW in Morningside, on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2 to 6 p.m. Tickets, \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Information, 301-735-5290.

Changing landscape

It's been 60 years since Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy on October 22, 1963. The CIA is being urged to release its JFK assassination files. (Where were you on Oct. 22, 1963?)

The lack of a Metro station at National Harbor is becoming a major issue. Perhaps it'll soon be on the docket.

Rite Aid has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. CVS and Walgreens are also closing shops. What's going on?

A home at 5607 Auth Road, in Auth Village, has sold for \$368,000.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Tom Ferrell, Nov. 15; Herbert Hanson and Andrew Boone, Nov. 20; Linda Cullinan and Brea Sandy-Hanson, Nov. 21; Dolores Steinhilber, Stephanie White and Sharon McKlveen, Nov. 22; Leslie Greene, Nov. 23; Ben Gryskewicz and Mike Waby, Nov. 24; Avanna Williams and Andrew Gryskewicz, Nov. 25.

Happy anniversary to Paul and Sharon Locke on November 22.

The Prince George's Post

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Contents © 2023, The Prince George's Post

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Legal Advertising Assistant Robin Boerckel	Web Manager Kyler Quesenberry

Prince George's County, Md. Member National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia Press Association. The Prince George's Post (ISSN 10532226) is published every Thursday by the New Prince George's Post Inc., 15207 Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20772-3151. Subscription rate: 25 cents per single copy; \$15 per year; \$7.50 senior citizens and students; out of county add \$1; out of state add \$2. Periodical postage paid at Southern Md. 20790. Postmaster, send address changes to Prince George's Post, P.O. Box 1001, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20773.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Supreme Court from A3

and our high school students to witness Maryland's highest court in action," said Dr. Megan Ross, PGCPSS Social Studies Supervisor. "This marks a profound moment of learning and inspiration for our future legal minds. Collaborating with the Maryland Judiciary has been a wonderful experience, and I wholeheartedly believe that this experience will leave a lasting impact on our students, empowering them to become informed, active, and engaged citizens in their communities."

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in two cases—Motor Vehicle Administration v. Rahq Deika Montana Usan and In the Matter of Mark McCloy. These cases involved appeals from state administrative agencies, the Mo-

tor Vehicle Administration in the first case and the Maryland State Police in the second case. An archived recording of the oral arguments can be found on the Supreme Court Webcast Archive web page.

The Supreme Court of Maryland now joins the Appellate Court of Maryland in hosting oral arguments outside of Annapolis. Under Maryland law, the Appellate Court of Maryland sits only in Annapolis with one exception: the court's chief judge can set arguments at either of Maryland's law schools. The appellate court has traditionally held one day of oral arguments at University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in the fall and at University of Baltimore School of Law in the spring.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Social Security Disability vs. Spouse Benefits vs. Survivor Benefits (and COLA)

By RUSSELL GLOOR,

National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty: I retired from working in June but will not sign up for Social Security until age 70 and, to do that, I plan to draw from my IRA for the next 3 years. My wife is receiving Social Security disability benefits and will reach her full retirement age in March of next year. I know that my wife simply reaching her full retirement age will not mean an increase to her benefit—except for COLA. What I'm wondering is, can my wife get spousal benefits of any sort based on my Social Security benefits—either before I draw or after I am drawing—apart from her benefits at my death? Her Social Security disability amount is only a fraction of my maximum benefit. **Signed: Baffled Husband**

Dear Baffled: Looks like you're confused about your wife's Social Security disability benefits, retirement benefits, spousal benefits, and survivor benefits. Here's what you need to know:

When your wife reaches her full retirement age (FRA) next year, her current Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefit will automatically convert to become her regular SS retirement benefit at the same amount she was receiving on SSDI (disability). The amount stays the same because your wife's SSDI amount is based on her FRA entitlement.

Your wife cannot get any spousal benefits from you until you claim your own Social Security retirement benefit. Since you plan to delay claiming until you are 70 several years from now, after your wife's SSDI converts to become her regular retirement benefit at her FRA next year, she will continue to receive her own SS retirement benefit until you claim. At that point your wife will get a "spousal boost" added to her own SS retirement benefit. The amount of her spousal boost will be the difference between her FRA entitlement (same as her SSDI amount), and 50% of your FRA entitlement (not half of your age 70 amount—spouse benefits are always calculated using FRA amounts, regardless of when Social Security is actually claimed).

Your wife cannot get a spousal benefit from you until you start your Social Security, but after you claim she will receive her higher spousal benefit (her own SS retirement benefit plus a spousal boost) for the rest of her life, or until you predecease her. If you die first, your wife will get 100% of the amount you were receiving at your death (e.g., your age 70 amount), instead of the smaller amount she was receiving as your spouse while you are both living.

Regarding COLA, after becoming eligible for benefits, everyone gets the annually awarded COLA increase whether they are already collecting SS benefits or not. The next annual COLA increase will be added to your wife's SSDI at the end of this year and added to her SS retirement amount each year thereafter, and then to her higher amount as your spouse after you claim. And even though you are waiting until age 70 to claim, the annual COLA will still be added to your Primary Insurance Amount (PIA) each year, and you will receive that past COLA in your monthly payments after you later claim.

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] www.amac.us is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (www.AmacFoundation.org) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at www.amac.us/join-amac.

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Maryland Judiciary Launches E-rent Program in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Judiciary

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Nov. 7, 2023)—The District Court in Prince George's County began accepting failure to pay rent filings electronically into Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC). The use of electronic filing (e-filing) technology provides a fast and convenient method of filing documents while allowing the courts to operate more efficiently. Users may e-

file multiple cases at one time using certified bulk filing service providers. A list of certified providers is available on the Judiciary's e-filing and landlord-tenant web page.

"This program proved effective in Baltimore County over the last year, and we are pleased to offer this service to Prince George's County now that they are online with MDEC," said Chief Judge John P. Morrissey, District Court of Maryland. "The goal remains to advance technology-

based improvements to all jurisdictions, and we look forward to launching this program statewide in 2024."

On June 6, 2022, Baltimore County was the first jurisdiction offering the e-rent program. Prince George's County is the second to launch this effort and the remainder of MDEC counties are scheduled to offer the same service beginning January 2, 2024; Baltimore City is scheduled for May 2024.

Hospice of the Chesapeake Announces the Resignation of President and CEO Mike Brady

By SANDRA DILLON
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Nov. 9, 2023)—Hospice of the Chesapeake announced today that President and CEO Michael Brady has submitted his resignation effective Jan. 30, 2024. Brady informed the Chair of the Board of Directors earlier this week that he has accepted a position at a not-for-profit continuing care retirement community in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Brady joined Hospice of the Chesapeake as Chief Financial Officer in December 2017 and was promoted to President and CEO in early 2021. "Mike has led the organization during a period of tremendous growth and expansion. We are incredibly grateful for his leadership during the acquisition of Hospice of the Charles County and Calvert Hospice, which secured Hospice of the Chesapeake's position as the largest independent not-for-profit hospice and palliative care organization in the state of Maryland," said Nancy Smit, Chair of the Hospice of the Chesapeake Board of Directors. "Mike also carefully navigated the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic while

ensuring patients and families received the care they needed and deserved."

The Board of Directors also announced they have appointed Rebecca Miller to serve as the Interim President and CEO. Miller currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer and joined Hospice of the Chesapeake in 2021. Miller joined the organization in the newly created role of Chief Clinical Officer and led the hospice clinical leadership team with a focus on quality patient care and innovative care solutions. Miller was promoted to Chief Operating Officer in December 2022. She has more than 25 years of hospice experience which includes serving as Chief Operating Officer for Rainbow Hospice and Palliative Care in Illinois and HopeHealth in Rhode Island and, most recently, Illinois Director of Hospice Operations with Advocate Aurora Health Care.

Miller, a licensed clinical social worker, earned both her Bachelor and Master of Social Work degrees from University of Illinois, Chicago. "I have full confidence that Becky Miller will provide strong leadership and bring valuable insight in this interim role," Smit said. The Board of Directors will begin a search for a permanent



PHOTO COURTESY
HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Rebecca Miller, MSW, newly appointed Interim CEO for Hospice of the Chesapeake

successor in early 2024.

For more information, please contact Sandra Dillon, Director of Communications, at 443-837-1554 or sdillon@hospicechesapeake.org.

NAREB's 2023 State of Housing in Black America Report Finds Shortage of Housing Inventory Adds to Systemic Barriers Limiting Black Homeownership

Among Factors Restricting Black Homeownership are Lower Wealth and Median Incomes, Unfavorable Housing Market Conditions, Shortage of Housing Stock, and Institutional Bias

By PRESS OFFICER
NAREB

WASHINGTON (Nov. 9, 2023)—Major barriers impede homeownership among African Americans, despite record-low Black unemployment and a higher labor force participation rate than Whites, according to the 2023 State of Housing in Black America (SHIBA) report released today by the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB).

The SHIBA report found that an inadequate supply of new homes is a major contributor to the growing housing crisis, particularly for potential Black buyers. Housing demand outpaces new home construction by roughly 100,000 units annually, creating the largest housing shortfall in nearly half a century. The lack of housing stock contributes to sustained high prices despite high interest rates. These are factors negatively impacting Black homeownership.

"Housing inventories must be increased across the country," said Dr. Courtney Johnson Rose, the NAREB president. "Families can't buy homes if they aren't available or if the market is so tight that prices are artificially high. Clearly, there is a connection between the lack of inventory and the inability to substantially increase Black homeownership. It's time for key components of the housing finance industry, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, facilitate new home construction, or even rehabilitation of existing homes."

Citing the most recent information available, including from the 2022 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, the SHIBA report noted the Black homeownership rate was 45% in 2022, nearly 30% lower than White households, with a wider gap than 50 years ago. SHIBA also determined that the Black-White wealth gap is so expansive that the 400 wealthiest Americans control the same amount of wealth as the 48 million Blacks living in the United States.

"This year's SHIBA report solidifies the connection between Black wealth and homeownership, details the obstacles that limit Black homeownership, and provides recommendations for creating more homebuying opportunities for Blacks," said Dr. Rose. She added that significant barriers to increasing Black homeownership exist in communities around the country, including lower wealth and median incomes, unfavorable housing market conditions, and institutional bias within the housing finance system.

Obstacles to Black homeownership date back to the early 20th century, Dr. Rose said, when discriminatory public and private housing policies such as redlining were rampant. These policies systematically excluded Blacks from acquiring loans or purchasing homes in specific neighborhoods, resulting in severe racial disparities in homeownership rates and driving Black communities into economic wastelands.

"Narrowing the Black-White racial gaps in homeownership and wealth will require strong action at the federal level," said Dr. Rose, acknowledging that under President Biden, the government has taken steps in the right direction. "Federal government policies contributed to these racial gaps, and now the government must invest in fixing them so that the idea of a fair and just America can exist for all our citizens."

Further, the Black homeownership rate has not increased substantially even though the gap in labor force participation rates for Blacks and Whites is at a historic low, with Blacks now having a higher labor force participation rate than their White counterparts. This positive employment news might suggest an ability for Blacks to have attained major homeownership gains over the past year. However, significant obstacles continued to impede Black homeownership.

Among the findings in the SHIBA re-

port are that:

- Black applicants had a 21% mortgage loan denial rate at traditional banks compared to 8% among White applicants. At independent mortgage companies, Black denial rates were slightly lower at 15% compared to 6% for Whites.
- Changes to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac pricing grids and movement toward more accurate and reliable credit scoring models are steps forward. However, major gains in Black homeownership will require additional housing market interventions.
- Housing affordability is a challenge for Black homeownership. The 30-year fixed rate mortgage surpassed 7% in November of 2022, compared to a rate of less than half that (2.98%) twelve months earlier. Soaring mortgage interest rates were a response to rapid interest rate increases by the Federal Reserve Board in its efforts to lower inflation. Affordability fell steeply starting in the second quarter of 2022. By the fourth quarter, only 38% percent of new and existing homes sold were affordable to families with an annual income of \$90,000. This placed the median-priced new and existing home far out of reach for many Blacks, whose median household income is \$52,860.
- Investor home purchases accelerated during the 2020–2021 pandemic. By the first quarter of 2022, investor purchases of single-family homes peaked at 28% of market share. As of the first quarter of 2023, investors accounted for about 27% of single-family home purchases.
- Investor home purchases negatively impact the affordability and supply of homes for sale, particularly for lower-income households. Investors outbid typical homebuyers and pay cash for houses that don't require inspections or

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Defend from A3

The new facility will sit on an undeveloped 61-acre plot, directly across from the Greenbelt Metro Station. It is expected to be significantly cheaper than the Springfield site, the officials have said. Proximity to NASA, the University of Maryland, College Park and the NSA factored into the final decision.

At Friday's news conference, Maryland leadership expressed repeatedly that they are confident that the decision is final.

To illustrate why he is confident the process will proceed, Hoyer brought up Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz's attempt to restrict funding for the FBI's new headquarters which "lost overwhelmingly" in a vote on Wednesday. Van Hollen echoed this sentiment.

"I am confident that we will work with our colleagues to get it done because, as you heard in the House the other day, an effort to, I think, essentially claw back a lot of the monies that have already been there, lost," said Van Hollen.

Moore didn't touch on the Virginia officials' comments, instead focusing on the benefits this project will bring Maryland and how Maryland is the right choice for the FBI. He also reiterated that the decision is final and his attention is now directed at moving forward with the project.

"There's no more deliberation, there's no more questioning. It's over, the FBI building will be coming to Maryland and we could not be more excited," said Moore. "This is going to bring over 7,500 jobs to the state of Maryland, will generate over \$4 billion of economic activity and this is gonna solidify our state as the tech and the cyber capital of the United States."

Housing from A5

appraisals. Many investor-owned single-family homes are transformed into rental housing, removing it from the owner-occupied stock.

A large proportion of home mortgages to Black borrowers continue to be made in census tracts vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As climate-related severe weather increases in the coming decades, Black homeowners and renters in vulnerable areas will be the hardest hit, and face billions of dollars of losses.

Declaring an enormous need to increase the affordable housing stock, the report called for reforming the nation's housing finance system and including components to rehabilitate and produce housing stock. An efficient housing rehabilitation program could save 107,000 homes annually from obsolescence.

It also called for a reconfigured housing finance system to encourage responsible, safe, and sound financial innovation, such as requiring a restructured Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to form partnerships with the nation's largest financial institutions to enhance the promising special-purpose credit programs the banks launched to increase Black homeownership.

The National Association of Real Estate Brokers Inc. was formed in 1947 to secure the right to equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or color. NAREB has advocated for legislation and supported or instigated legal challenges that ensure fair housing, sustainable homeownership, and access to credit for Black Americans. Simultaneously, NAREB advocates for and promotes access to business opportunities for Black real estate professionals in each of the real estate disciplines.

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