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Breakfast Honors First Responders at Tribute at Melford in Bowie

By PRESS OFFICER
Tribute at Melford

Local first Responders were treated to breakfast on April 10 in Bowie in order to thank them and recognize all they do for the community. Tribute at Melford, a senior living residence, invited nearby police, fire and EMS departments along with local 911 call center employees to dine in or take meals to go. The culinary team at Tribute at Melford prepared breakfast for 150, which included waffles, bacon, sausage, yogurt, bagels, fruit, assorted muffins and juice.

Bowie Police Chief Dwayne Preston, who

attended, expressed appreciation for the breakfast and commented that it makes it easy to do their job when they have support from community members.

"We were thrilled to recognize our local First Responders by providing them with breakfast," said Rita Chapman, executive director at Tribute at Melford. "We are grateful to them for all they do for the community and wanted to show them in this simple way."

The senior living community has held this event for the past few years, serving nearly 100 First Responders breakfast in the past.

The breakfast comes at a time when First Responders are recognized



PHOTO COURTESY TRIBUTE AT MELFORD

To go meals for local 911 Call Center. Left to right: Wilson Anhar, Regional Vice President of Operations at Cogir, Howard Ewing, Assistant Operations Manager at the 911 Call Center, and Rita Chapman, Executive Director at Tribute at Melford.



PHOTO COURTESY TRIBUTE AT MELFORD

Members of the Bowie Police department at breakfast. From left to right: Cpl. Redmond, Chaplain Johnny Hodge, Chief Dwayne Preston, Cpl. Simms, and Captain Robert Liberati Jr.

nationally with the following: April is Emergency Communications Month, April 14–20 is National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, May 4 is International Firefighters' Day, and May 15–21 is

both National Police Week and National EMS Week.

Tribute at Melford is located at 17300 Melford Blvd in Bowie, Maryland.

Reeling From Bridge Collapse, State Lawmakers Still Got Other Business Done

By LYDIA HURLEY
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 9, 2024)—A tragedy in the Port of Baltimore threatened to overwhelm their best-laid plans at the end of this spring's legislative session, but Maryland state lawmakers still managed to pass several key measures that look beyond the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge and ahead to the future.

Passing the state spending plan is never an easy feat, but the General Assembly burned the midnight oil to dispatch help for the communities affected by the collapse. The bridge crumbled into the Patapsco River after one of its pillars was struck by a giant cargo ship attempting to pass beneath.

As one of its last acts before adjournment, the legislature passed an emergency aid bill that would provide emergency funding to individuals and businesses affected by the debacle in the Port of Baltimore, set to be closed for several weeks. The bill will also assist those affected who do not qualify for unemployment benefits.

Known as the PORT Act, the bill dips into the state's Rainy Day Fund to provide this emergency funding. After lengthy discussions about the bill and its amendments, the bill passed unanimously in the Senate as one of the last pieces of business before Monday's midnight deadline.

"Democrats and Republicans (are) collectively standing together and saying that in this moment Maryland is going to do its part. But we have to understand what happened two weeks ago was not a Maryland catastrophe. This was a national catastrophe. And today, I will proudly sign the PORT Act



PHOTO CREDIT: KIERSTEN HACKER/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Lawmakers in the Senate chamber celebrate as confetti and balloons scatter down from the balcony at midnight, marking the end of the legislative session.

collapse of the Key Bridge. The General Assembly burned the midnight oil to dispatch help for the communities affected by the collapse. The bridge crumbled into the Patapsco River after one of its pillars was struck by a giant cargo ship attempting to pass beneath.

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"Democrats and Republicans (are) collectively standing together and saying that in this moment Maryland is going to do its part. But we have to understand what happened two weeks ago was not a Maryland catastrophe. This was a national catastrophe. And today, I will proudly sign the PORT Act

into law," Gov. Moore said at the bill signing on Tuesday.

Moore signed dozens of measures into law on Tuesday, and many others are on his desk for consideration now. Here are some notable bills from the 2024 legislative session:

Juvenile Justice

Lawmakers started the session with a strong focus on juvenile justice, leading to months of hearings and negotiations. In the end, among other things, the legislature expanded the list of crimes that can land children between 10 and 12 years of age in court.

Authors of the bill hope it will strengthen the state's ability to link children with rehabilitative services, but critics worry it simply cracks down on young people responsible for a small sliver of Maryland crimes.

The final version of the bill adds third-degree sex offenses, aggravated animal cruelty and various firearms offenses to the crimes where the courts have jurisdiction over those children. It doubles the maximum length of probation for misdemeanors to one year and

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The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County Announces \$200,000 Available in Community Impact Grants for County Community-Based Organizations

By PRESS OFFICER
Housing & Redevelopment,
Prince George's County

LARGO, Md. (April 15, 2024)—The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County has \$200,000 in Community Impact Grants to award to County civic/neighborhood associations or community-based organizations that are incorporated as 501(c)3 entities. Community Impact Grants provide small capital grants to community-based organizations to help implement innovative projects within the County. Eligible applicants must be located within Prince George's County and be in good standing with the State of Maryland. The application submission deadline is Wednesday, May 29, 2024 by 12 p.m.

"Together, through collaborative efforts and strategic funding, we can support the communities of Prince George's County by supple-

menting organizations which serve as the lifeblood of community revitalization projects, channeling resources where they are most needed and supporting the efforts in shaping vibrant, resilient communities for generations to come," says Jacqueline West-Spencer, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County.

A Community Impact Grant pre-application virtual webinar will be held on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 11 a.m. Interested participants should RSVP for the webinar by 5 p.m. on Monday, April 22 to receive the Zoom link and passcode to attend.

Grants can only be used for capital expenses related to the implementation of a community-based project and must be used for capital purposes such as the purchase of equip-

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Prince George's County to Spearhead Environmental Justice Initiative With Launch of B100 Transit Pilot

By PRESS OFFICER
Department of Public Works and
Transportation

LARGO, Md. (April 15, 2024)—On January 31, 2024, Prince George's County teamed up with Optimus Technologies and Chevron REG to announce the launch of an exciting new transit project, the 100% Biodiesel (B100) Transit Pilot Program. This initiative, made possible by support from the Maryland Energy Administration's (MEA) OPEN grant program, is a major step forward for environmental justice, emission reductions, and decarbonization in underserved communities in our region.

The program aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions right away. It uses the Optimus Vector System, an advanced fuel system upgrade, to power buses with B100 biodiesel. This system can also cut CO2 emissions by over 90%. In addition to biodiesel buses, electric buses will be used for certain routes. Instead of relying solely on diesel for longer routes, Prince George's County views the use of B100 biodiesel as an opportunity to achieve significant carbon emissions reductions, with

a minimum reduction of 75% per gallon compared to diesel.

The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) and Office of Central Services (OCS) are leading Prince George's County's B100 pilot effort. Prince George's County operates 3,500 vehicles, and the success of this pilot has the opportunity to lead to the County transitioning 375 current diesels to B100. Since these vehicles are currently operating on diesel fuel, the use of B100 will reduce their carbon emissions by over 75% immediately.

Potentially, the County could reduce its direct carbon emissions by 44,858 metric tons annually and about 450,000 metric tons over the course of 10 years.

Michael Johnson, Director of DPW&T, credits the B100 Pilot Project as part of the Transit Transformation Initiative. "The Department of Public Works and Transportation is committed to creating a comprehensive, integrated multi-modal transportation network accessible to everyone," said Johnson. "During

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To Be Equal:
Discriminatory Laws Have Driven Black Voters From the Polls. Reclaim Your Vote Aims to Bring Them Back.
Urban League staffers and volunteers will be taking to the streets, knocking on doors and visiting college campuses helping eligible citizens navigate these changes to state laws ...
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US Department of Labor Seeking Workers Owed Wages, Benefits Denied by Libertytown Plumbing Subcontractor After Investigation Recovers \$156K
Individuals employed by a Libertytown plumbing subcontractor who worked on a Woodyard Station construction project may be eligible to receive their share ...
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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

Bishop saves boy from fiery crash

There was a dangerous scene on the Beltway near Maryland Route 4 the morning of April 8. Just before 11 a.m., a dump truck had a flat tire, overturned and caught fire. An SUV trying to avoid the dump truck also overturned.

Bishop John Adonteng Boateng, of Divine Word International Ministries in Woodbridge, and his wife were driving to a meeting when they came on the crash scene, pulled over and seconds later there was a huge explosion. The Bishop saw a child in the wreckage and braved the fire to pull the boy to safety.

The Bishop is being heralded as a hero, and indeed he is.

Those of us in the neighborhood only knew that traffic was at a standstill. It took hours to get back to normal.

Old-time Skyline residents take a walk down memory lane

Kevin McMonigle, who lived on Good-fellow Drive, in Skyline, from 1963–1976, and attended Skyline School once it opened, was back in the neighborhood on Sunday, April 7, to take a nostalgic walk with former neighbors Kevin and Jim Reilly.

They walked Elmendorf Drive, Good-fellow Drive, Offutt Drive and Ladd Road.

There were lots of memories of delivering The Washington Post and The Evening Star. They all delivered one of the papers at some point. Jim Reilly says, "When you deliver the paper, you know the names of all your neighbors."

How many of these old Skyline names do you recognize: Capt. Perkins, Stitzer, Oxman, Pennfield, Gurtowski, Fisher, Webb, H.E. Reed (the plumber), Waby, Duffy, Minigoe, Gatz, Ostrander, Flarhety, Jurnigan, Farrar, Cray, Oppido, Mulraney,

Perriera, Law, Lambert, Neri, Busky, Homan, McGhee, Major Lewis, Owens, Ansell, McGrath, Krausman, Cazellet, Goldsmith, Vance, Thorpe, Crumm, Lutman, Slavin, and Weiss, just to name a few.

Kevin is currently living in Jonesboro, Arkansas, to be near his mother, Mary Jo McMonigle.

Town of Morningside: 75th anniversary!

The Town will celebrate its 75th Anniversary on Saturday, April 27, 6–9 p.m. Featured will be a Moon Bounce, games, food trucks, 360-photo booth, music, and raffles. And there'll be a movie after dark. I'll have more details in next week's column.

The annual Town election will be held Monday, May 6.

The Town Hall meeting room is available for rent. It's a very nice, large room with an attached kitchen. Call 301-736-2300 to reserve, or for more information.

Slow down! New speed cameras are headed to Suitland Road.

Morningside grew 30 years ago

In the spring of 1994, the Town of Morningside annexed the site occupied by two establishments, Silver Hill Florist and Suitland Beer and Wine, both right across from the Morningside Fire Department. The stores were owned by Alice Sussan.

This annexation was the second across Suitland Road. The first annexation involved VFW Post 9619 and the now-gone Village Barn. That was in about 1970.

Neighbors & other good people

The Knights of Columbus in Forestville honors Knights of the Month and Families of the Month which are always mentioned in their newsletter. Richard Peluzzo was

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Knight of the Month in November; Jonathan Hunter was Knight in December. Recent Families of the Month were The Weiler Family in November and The Richardson Family in December.

By the way, for information about K of C Bingo Night, call the chairman, George Hoehl, 301-599-0307.

Places to go and things to do

Are you interested in volunteering? Do you love history? The Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Society, in Waldorf, is seeking docents, Gift Shop salespeople and admission staff. A love of history and a willing heart is all you need. The Dr. Mudd House staff will welcome you and provide training. For information, call 301-645-6870.

The Fairytale Museum is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at 2935 Festival Way, in Waldorf. The museum offers interactive exhibits, birthday celebrations, literacy programs and etiquette activities. Admission is \$12, free for adults with paid child. Call 844-722-4642.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Jill (Gilmartin) Booth and Tiffany Jackson, April 21; Taylor Foster, April 22; Cindy Pitts, Jim Reilly, David Titus, Barbara Sparks and Margaret White, April 23;

Edna Lucas, April 24; Janet and Brian Spivey, Sue Stine McConkey-Mason, Daisy Young, Kenia Spivey and my grandson David McHale, April 25; Christy Miller (Cooper) and G.A. DeFelice, April 26; and Michael Call, April 27.

Happy Anniversary to John and Ruth Anthony, Jr., their 46th on April 22; and to Lewis and Trisha (Pitts) Woods, their 35th on April 22.

Around the County

New Senior Rental Assistance Pilot Program Now Accepting Applications

LANDOVER, Md. (April 11, 2024)—The Senior Rental Assistance Pilot Program (SRAP) is now accepting applications. Developed under County senior living assistance legislation and funded through a one-time investment by the State of Maryland, this program will provide eligible seniors with financial assistance to address a rental hardship.

"It is our goal to make sure every resident of Prince George's County has safe, stable housing that allows them to thrive, which is why we are so excited to launch this all-new program to help our seniors," said Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsbrooks.

SRAP is designed to benefit seniors ages 65 and above who have been Prince George's County residents for at least five years and are renters with a lease or sublease in their name. To qualify, applicants must demonstrate a tenant household income that is at or below 40% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Administered by the Department of Social Services, in collaboration with the Department of Family Services and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, SRAP offers assistance with covering one month's rental arrearage. Eligible seniors may apply twice within a 12-month period, with a maximum assistance limit of \$2,500.

Seniors who are interested in applying for SRAP should go to Social Services | Prince George's County (princegeorgescountymd.gov) to access the application and review all eligibility criteria. Seniors needing special assistance to complete an application should send an email to SRAP.PGC@maryland.gov and a representative will reach out to make the necessary arrangements.

The Prince George's County Department of Social Services *is in the business of providing opportunities for ALL residents of the County to become independent, responsible and stable members of the community. We do this by providing intervention services that strengthen families, protect children and vulnerable adults, encourage self-sufficiency and promote personal responsibility. The Senior Rental Assistance Pilot (SRAP) Program provides opportunities for self-sufficiency within our Prince George's County senior community.*

The Town of Cheverly Lower Beaverdam Creek Watershed Project Awarded \$500,000 in State Funding

CHEVERLY, Md. (April 9, 2024)—The Town of Cheverly is excited to announce the allocation of \$500,000 in critical funding from the State of Maryland for the Lower Beaverdam Creek Watershed Project. This award provides a grant to the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Cheverly for the acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, site improvement, and capital equipping of the stream valley, including flood mitigation.

Many homes along Forest Road, adjacent to Lower Beaverdam Creek and the John Hanson Highway have been severely impacted by flooding and erosion. The allocation of \$500,000 will empower the Town of Cheverly to accelerate its efforts to develop comprehensive solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change and safeguard the community against future damage.

"We extend our deepest gratitude to the State of Maryland and Delegate Julian Ivey for his unwavering dedication to our community's well-being," stated Dylan Galloway, Town Administrator of the Town of Cheverly. "This funding represents a significant boost to our ongoing efforts to address the pressing issues of flooding and erosion in the Lower Beaverdam Creek Watershed."

The Lower Beaverdam Creek Watershed will also have a positive ripple effect on environmental sustainability, aligning with the objectives of the County's Stormwater MS4 Permit. By enhancing stormwater management practices, the project will contribute to improved water quality and ecosystem resilience in the region.

The State of Maryland and Delegate Julian Ivey's steadfast support underscores the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing community challenges and ensuring the safety and well-being of residents. The Town of Cheverly remains committed to delivering tangible results for the community.

—Tonya Jones, Town of Cheverly, Maryland

Maryland Choral Society Concert: In My End Is My Beginning on April 28, 2024

Sunday, April 28 • 4 p.m.
Mount Calvary Catholic Church
6700 Marlboro Pike, Forestville, MD 20747

Join us Sunday afternoon, April 28, for this special farewell concert for Artistic Director Douglas Buchanan as we reprise our 2018 premiere of his *Altus Prosator*—a work blending ancient and modern sounds, ethereal melodies and exciting rhythms—complete with professional orchestra and award-winning soloists, three of whom performed the premiere.

Also included are selections from Franz Joseph Haydn's *The Creation*.

And be sure to attend a pre-concert talk by Dr. Buchanan about his work—and his reflections on his nine years with MCS. Tenor Ben Hawker, one of the original *Altus Prosator* soloists and great friend of MCS, will join in this discussion.

Use code MCS2024 at checkout to save \$5 on advance tickets.

Tickets: https://maryland-choral-society.ticketleap.com/in-my-end-is-my-beginning/dates/Apr-28-2024_at_0400PM

Have a Maryland State Independence Card? No ticket necessary! Just show your card at the door for free admission for you and your family.

—Maryland Choral Society

Brandywine-Aquasco

MOTHER'S DAY SPRING FLING

Join us for an evening of Hand Dancing, Line Dancing, and Bop Friday, May 10, 2024, from 7–11 p.m. at Show Place Arena. Featuring: DJ Lady D. Tickets include a light fare buffet. Please dress to impress. Tickets: \$40 in advance, \$45 at the door. This is a 21 and over show. Tickets can be purchased online at Universe.com or at The Show Place Arena box office. For information on reserving a table of six, email us at showplacearena@pgparks.com, or call us at 301-952-7900. The Show Place Arena: 14900 Pennsylvania Ave, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772.

This program is brought to you by Parks & Recreation M-NCPPC, live more, play more ppparks.com. Connect with us, facebook.com/artspgparks.com. Arts programs of the M-NCPPC are supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council (msac.org). The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities. Register a minimum of two weeks prior to the program start date to request and receive disability modification. Customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please call Maryland Relay 7-1-1. Language interpretation is available at all facility front desks. Please ask for assistance.

STEP IT UP

Step It Up II is more than just a walk. It is a Movement toward a healthier and happier community. Coordinated by the Prince George's County Health Department, in collaboration with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation. This program brings together individuals, families, schools, sports teams, and community organizations to prioritize health and well-being. Join us for Step It Up II: Family Fitness Walk May 4, 2024, from 10 a.m.–12 p.m. at Watkins Regional Park, 301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20774.

PGCPS-SEAS

Prince George's County Public School Student Environment Alliance Summit will be held on April 29, 2024, from 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m. Bowie State University is proud to host the second part of the summit which exposes PGCPS high schools to career options, leadership and advocacy activities and contemporary environmental research. The event will be a full day of presentations, interactive rotations around the campus, dynamic speakers and fun, enriching experiences. Cost is free.

The Summit will be in the Student Center Ballrooms, Multi-room event, 14000 Jericho Park Road, Bowie, Maryland. Contact Jabari Walker, Email: jswalker@bowiestate.edu, Telephone number is 301-832-4590. Categories: Earth Week, Sustainability.

BULLDOG GOLF CLASSIC

Save the date 13th Annual Bulldog Golf Classic October 8,

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

2024. Proceeds from the Bulldog Golf Classic provide scholarship funding for student-athletes and help to meet the growing needs of the Bowie State University Department of Athletics.

We look forward to seeing you at the 13th Annual Bulldog Golf Classic. More details will be coming soon. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please contact: Jennifer Coke, Executive Director of Philanthropy, 301-860-4778, jcoke@bowiestate.edu.

LOVE CONQUERS ALL THE STAGE PLAY

Love Conquers All the Stage Play is a heartwarming stage play about love overcoming all obstacles and triumphing in the end. Saturday, May 18 from 3–5 p.m. Eventbrite.com/ttd/md-fort-washington/ Tickets cost \$35–\$45. Location: Harmony Hall Regional Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland 20744. Refund policy: no refunds.

Come join us for a night of romance, drama, and laughter at Harmony Hall Regional Center. Witness the powerful story of love overcoming all obstacles in this captivating stage play. Get ready to be moved by the talented actors and actresses as they bring this heartwarming tale to life on stage. Do not miss this unforgettable evening filled with love and inspiration.

LAKE ARBOR JAZZ FESTIVAL

The Lake Arbor Jazz Festival returns to the beautiful Lake Arbor community in Central Prince George's County. Come out for a day of Jam packed with dynamic jazz talent in a carefree setting Saturday, July 20, 2024. Gates open at 12 Noon. Performances start at 1 p.m. at the Lake Arbor Community Center, 10100 Lake Arbor Way, Mitchellville, Maryland 20721.

The festival features top-flight contemporary and traditional jazz and R&B artists from across the nation and the Washington D.C. area. Richard Elliott, Rick Braun, Jazz Funk Soul Paul Jackson, Jr., Jeff Lorber, and Everette Harp. Queen of Soul Jazz Althea Rene, Jeanette Harris, Brass Attack Willie Bradley, Rob Zinn and Johnny Britt. Let it flow Band. Host Tony Richards.

Free parking, over 40 food and merchandise vendors, on site beer and wine lounge, two covered VIP tents, two covered VIP tents, and live music all day. \$175.00-VIP Reserved Seating, covered tent, food and refreshments, private cash bar. \$150.00 Private Tent for 8. Sold by the tent (10X10 Private Tent) includes a cooler of ice and water. \$95.00 General Admission lawn seating. \$75.00 Group sales (minimum group of 20). \$110.00 General admission same day Advance ticket sale end Friday, July 19, 2024. Get your ticket on Eventbrite!

Proceeds from this event will benefit the Prince George's Cultural Arts Foundation Scholarship Fund. The Prince George's Cultural Arts Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Save the Date: BSU Athletics to Host Inaugural 5K Walk/Run on May 19

By PRESS OFFICER
Bowie State University Athletics

BOWIE, Md. (April 9, 2024)—The Department of Athletics at Bowie State University has announced its inaugural Bulldog 5K Walk/Run on Sunday, May 19, 2024.

The 5K walk/run will start from parking Lot J with registration starting at \$40 and day of \$50. Registration will take place at 1 p.m. with a cutoff time at 3:30 p.m.

The race will begin at 2 p.m. from parking lot J and all participants are asked to meet there prior to the start of the race

which will run through the beautiful campus of Bowie State University. To register, please visit <https://community.bowiestate.edu/s/1266/bp18/interior.aspx?sid=1266&gid=1&pgid=2002&cid=0&calpgid=514&calcid=1319>

All proceeds of the 5K will support Bowie State Athletics.

For the most up-to-date information on Bowie State Athletics and its 13 varsity sport teams, visit bsubulldogs.com.

COMMUNITY

Marietta House Museum Presents Award-Winning Play “A MATTER OF WORTH”

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (April 11, 2024)—Marietta House Museum, part of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County, is proud to present its annual Giving Voice Initiative event on **April 20** from 1–3 p.m. This year the museum is pleased to present the award-winning play, “A Matter of Worth” written and directed by D.C. resident Marcia E. Coles.

Cole was inspired to write “A Matter of Worth” after finding a historical newspaper slave sale ad from the 1800s. The ad described the sale of a mule for five-dollars and a seventy-year-old enslaved woman for one-dollar. Cole wrote this moving play about Hannah, an enslaved woman who reflects on her place in the world and her humanity. The play, set in 1855 Maryland, is performed by a six-person cast who help Hannah contemplate her personhood. “A Matter of Worth” has been performed in several Washington D.C. venues to rave reviews.

Marcia E. Cole is a native Washingtonian, writer, and poet. She received her BA in Early Childhood Education from the University of the District of Columbia. She has won the College Language Association Creative Writing contests across three genres: Drama, Poetry, and Short Story. Cole is the author of “Light in Dark Places: History in Verse” that explores aspects of American history. Cole says about her play and the upcoming production at Marietta House Museum, “A Matter of Worth gives memory to all those who labored unsung. This is for the anonymous ancestors. Gone but not forgotten.” \$10/person; ages 12 & up. To register, visit tinyurl.com/bddzmk97.

Built in 1813, Marietta House Museum is a late Federal-style brick house and past tobacco plantation, the former home of Gabriel Duvall and generations of his family, and the enforced home of many enslaved men, women, and children. Duvall was a lawyer, Maryland legislator, U.S. Congressman, U.S. Comptroller, and U.S. Supreme Court Justice. The Duvall family enslaved anywhere from nine to 40 people at Marietta during any given year between 1783 and 1864. The Duvalls enslaved multiple generations of the Duckett, Butler, Jackson, and Brown families. Marietta is a nationally recognized historic site which includes a cemetery, original root cellar, and Duvall law office, as well as 25 acres where visitors can walk to see the former locations of outbuildings and slave dwellings. To learn more, visit pgparks.com/facilities/marietta-house-museum.

With over 28,000 acres of parkland, trails, athletic fields, playgrounds and more, the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County provides an award-winning park system through progressive, quality, innovative leadership and a commitment to its community and environment. The Department delivers first-class recreational activities and programs for people of all ages and ability levels. It strives to improve the quality of life for residents in Prince George's County and the communities in which they live, work, and raise families. The Department's Formula 2040 Plan establishes a framework that will assure the Department can meet future parks and recreation programmatic and facility needs, fulfilling its mission to determine the combination of land, facilities and programs that will provide appropriate experiences for Prince Georgians in the future. To learn more, visit pgparks.com.

Governor Moore Launches Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse Response Website

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 11, 2024)—Governor Wes Moore today launched the Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse Response Website, which serves as a central hub for Marylanders in search of federal, state, and local resources and programs related to the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. The website includes information on relief programs for impacted workers and businesses, major traffic updates for commuters, and guidance on in-person resources available through Maryland Business Recovery Centers.

“My administration wants to make it as simple as possible for Marylanders to navigate the resources available to them to mitigate impacts of the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge,” said Gov. Moore. “During the time of unimaginable tragedy, we have also seen our community rally around one another and lift each other up. I am committed to making sure

those who are impacted know how to get the supports they need while we reopen the channel and get the Port fully operational.”

The website provides Marylanders with updates based on Governor Moore's four directives for recovery, which include: giving closure to the victim's families, clearing the channel and open vessel traffic to the Port of Baltimore, taking care of all those affected by this crisis, and rebuilding the Key Bridge. Additional resources on the website include direct links to information on the salvage and response operations from the Unified Command, up-to-date traffic and road closure alerts from the Maryland Department of Transportation, and Maryland's official 511 Traveler Information service.

The website will be updated regularly as additional programs become available through federal, state and local resources. To view the Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse Response Website, visit

<https://response.maryland.gov/bridge>

Pilot from A1

the project's implementation, we will continue to work with our critical regional partner, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA). In addition to pursuits with local transit systems, TheBus and Call-A-Bus, the Transit Transformation initiative is projected to prioritize transit performance, enhance accessibility to jobs, schools, and essential services, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

Colin Huwyler, the CEO of Optimus Technologies, the manufacturer of the Vector System, expressed enthusiasm stating “I am thrilled to see

the expansion of our Vector System Technology to use B100 in Prince George's County's transit fleet. This demonstrates the practicality and success of using biodiesel to drive positive change in local communities. Prince George's is the first County government using the technology for transit bus applications and is setting the standard for other transit fleets to follow.”

Jon Scharingson, Director of Strategic Initiatives for Chevron Renewable Energy Group, highlighted the pivotal role of forward-thinking

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FedChoice Supports the 51st Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run

By PRESS OFFICER
FedChoice Federal Credit Union

WASHINGTON (April 6, 2024)—FedChoice Federal Credit Union supported the 51st Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run in Washington, DC on April 5 and 6, with a financial contribution as well as staff volunteers. Presented by America's Credit Unions, the event raises funds for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. FedChoice was proud to play a small part in the event that raised over \$550,000 for a wonderful organization.

FedChoice President/CEO Brett Noll ran in the 10-mile event on Sunday. “My first Credit Union Cherry Blossom couldn't have been better,” said Noll. “It

was incredible to run with thousands of people through our beautiful Nation's capital while joining so many credit union members, volunteers, and staff in raising over half a million dollars for an extraordinary cause.”

FedChoice employees also volunteered at water stops and handed out race packets before the run. FedChoice Business Development Manager Marcia Lynch said, “The Annual Cherry Blossom Run gives me a chance to connect with so many other credit union volunteers and to encourage the runners. FedChoice is proud to continue to support this event and honestly, it's just fun!”

FedChoice Federal Credit Union was char-

tered in 1935 when a group of Bureau of Internal Revenue employees established a credit union to meet their financial needs. FedChoice has grown stronger every year since by serving federal employees, contractors, retirees, and their families in the Washington and Philadelphia metro areas. With access to over 60,000 surcharge-free ATMs, more than 5,000 CO-OP Shared Branches, and comprehensive online and mobile banking facilities, members can conveniently manage their accounts at any time, 365 days a year. FedChoice has over 24,000 members and \$432 million in assets as of April 2024.

Credit Union Cherry Blossom is a 501(c)(3) organization that supports the Children's Miracle Network of non-profit children's hospitals across North America. The first runs took place in 1995, and in 2002 many credit unions became the main sponsors of the event. The organization has donated over \$9 million to Children's Miracle Network since its inception.

“Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum” Name Change Bill Officially Signed by Governor Wes Moore

By PRESS OFFICER
Banneker-Douglass Museum

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 11, 2024)—On Tuesday, April 9, 2024, Governor Wes Moore signed bills HB390/ SB341 into law, actualizing a historic change in the name of Maryland's official museum on African American heritage. The Banneker-Douglass Museum will now be known as the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum. The name change honors the legacy of Harriet Tubman, the iconic abolitionist, suffragist, and humanitarian, alongside Benjamin Banneker and Frederick Douglass.

The museum's new name will officially take effect starting July 1, 2024 with the new fiscal year. The name change process will involve updating marketing materials, signage, and eventually the building's facade over the coming year to reflect the museum's new identity.

The decision reflects the museum's commitment to inclusivity and recognition of the contributions of Tubman to the state of Maryland and beyond. Dr. Edwin T. Johnson, Chair of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC), expressed his thoughts on the historic moment: “The addition of Harriet Tubman's name to the museum signifies a pivotal step forward in our acknowledgment of the dynamic history of African American women in Maryland. Tubman's unparalleled courage and dedication to freedom resonates deeply with our work to pre-



PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK SIEBERT/JOE ANDRUCYK, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
MCAAHC & BDM staff, MCAAHC commissioners, and partners with Gov. Wes Moore and supporting officials and legislators.

serve and document African American history in the state, and her story must be told. We are proud to honor her alongside Banneker and Douglass.”

Chanel C. Johnson, Executive Director of the commission and museum, shared her sentiments on the name change: “As we embark on this journey to transition to the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, we are filled with a sense of reverence and responsibility. Harriet Tubman's legacy embodies resilience and activism, which are at the core of our institution. We are committed to ensuring that her name and contributions are celebrated and remembered for generations to come.”

The Banneker-Douglass Museum is the State of Maryland's official museum of African American heritage. It is operated by the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. It serves to document, interpret, and promote African American history and culture through exhibitions, programs, and projects in order to improve the understanding and appreciation of America's rich cultural diversity for all. The museum is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.—4 p.m. Admission is free. Visit <http://bdmuseum.maryland.gov>. Follow us on social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Protect the Local Waterways and the Chesapeake Bay— Follow Maryland's Lawn Fertilizer Law

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of Agriculture

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 11, 2024)—The Maryland Department of Agriculture is reminding homeowners and lawn care professionals to follow Maryland's Lawn Fertilizer Law when caring for lawns this spring. The law, which has been in effect for more than a dozen years, aims to protect local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay from excessive nutrients contained in fertilizer products applied to non-agricultural land, including golf courses, parks, recreation areas, athletic fields, businesses, and hundreds of thousands of urban and suburban lawns.

“Helping to restore the health of local streams and our Chesapeake Bay is a top priority at MDA,” said Maryland Agriculture Secretary Kevin Atticks. “Everyone—from farmers to lawn care professionals to homeowners—needs to do their part if we are to restore the health and vitality of our Chesapeake Bay.”

If you hire a lawn care professional to fertilize your lawn, be sure that they are certified by the department's Turfgrass Nu-

trient Management Program or work under the supervision of a certified professional. The department's website has a list of certified lawn care professionals. These individuals have been trained in proper fertilizer application techniques and bay-friendly fertilizer practices.

If you prefer to take care of your lawn yourself:

- Consider skipping the spring fertilizer, especially if your lawn is healthy. Fall is the best time to fertilize cool-season grasses like fescues and Kentucky bluegrass.
- Sharpen lawnmower blades in the spring to avoid tearing and weakening the grass.
- Mow the grass high to shade out weeds and conserve moisture. Three inches is an ideal height for most lawns.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn. They provide free fertilizer all season long.
- If you decide to fertilize:
- Get your soil tested to see if your grass will benefit from additional nutrients or lime. The University of Maryland Extension has information on soil testing.
- Read and follow all label directions on

the fertilizer bag.

- Follow the University of Maryland Extension's lawn fertilizer schedule.
- Do not apply phosphorus (indicated by the middle number on the fertilizer bag) to lawns unless a soil test shows that it is needed.
- If fertilizer lands on sidewalks or driveways, sweep it back onto the grass or clean it up.
- Keep fertilizer applications 10 to 15 feet away from waterways.
- Do not apply fertilizer if heavy rain is predicted.
- Observe fertilizer blackout dates between November 16 and March 1.

For a helpful video with lawn care tips for the experts, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjSM-skOK6zg>. Additional information on Maryland's Lawn Fertilizer Law and fertilizer best management practices is available on the department's website. You can also visit the University of Maryland Extension for lawn fertilizer recommendations and additional tips.

Follow Maryland Department of Agriculture on Facebook @MdAgDept

Grants from A1

ment and materials. Grants cannot be used for operations, program costs, salaries, or personnel. Proposed projects can include:

- Streetscape, street furniture, pedestrian enhancements, and recreational improvements;
- Signage, banners, way-finding systems;

- Commercial façade improvements; and more.

Total funding for FY 2024 for this program will not exceed \$200,000 and the maximum grant amount is \$50,000. Successful applicants shall have up to one year from the date of the executed grant agreement to complete the project and expend the grant funds. The Community Impact

Grant Program requires a match from non-Prince George's County Government sources, which can include both in-kind and cash contributions.

For more information, contact Andrea Anderson at ADAnderson@co.pg.md.us or visit the Redevelopment Authority website to review the application.

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Discriminatory Laws Have Driven Black Voters From the Polls. Reclaim Your Vote Aims to Bring Them Back.

"If the United States wants to make good on its foundational claims of a democratic system of governance open to all citizens, it must find ways to close the racial turnout gap. Wider now than at any point in at least the past 16 years, the gap costs millions of votes from Americans of color all around the country. Perhaps most worrisome of all, the gap is growing most quickly in parts of the country that were previously covered under the preclearance regime of the 1965 Voting Rights Act until the disastrous Shelby County ruling."

—Brennan Center For Justice

Driven in part by restrictive laws enacted since the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act, the racial voting gap has exploded and grows wider by the year.

The National Urban League is fighting back. Reclaim Your Vote is a national effort to promote voter registration, voter education, and voter activation with the power of the Urban League Affiliate and Volunteer movement and our strategic partners.

Each year, we engage millions of voters across the country to increase voter turnout and empower our communities to make their voices heard to

drive change where they live and across America. But until the Voting Rights Act is restored, we're fighting an uphill battle.

While the racial voting gap has grown across the country, an analysis by the Brennan Center for Justice found, it has grown twice as quickly in jurisdictions that had been covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act until the Supreme Court struck it down with its decision in *Shelby v. Holder* in 2013.

Just the year before the decision, with President Obama's reelection at stake, overall Black voter participation reached near-parity with whites. In the 2008 presidential election, the participation among young Black voters and Black women exceeded every other racial, gender and ethnic group.

The Shelby decision took a sledgehammer to that progress. Since 2013, at least 29 states have passed nearly 100 laws making it harder for eligible citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

As the Brennan Center notes, "Many of these new laws are racially discriminatory. There is ample evidence that these kinds of laws fall hardest on communities of color, and a number have been struck down by courts as racially discriminatory."

Driven by this relentless campaign of voter suppression, the racial voting gap in 2022 was the largest midterm gap since at least 2006, robbing the nation of a staggering 14 million votes.

In the presidential election of 2020, the racial

gap represented about nine million votes, far more than President Biden's 7 million vote margin of victory in the popular vote.

While many states rushed to pass restrictive laws immediately after the Shelby decision—Texas announced the very same day it would implement a strict voter ID law that had been denied preclearance—the onslaught hasn't relented. Last year, lawmakers introduced more than 350 restrictive bills in 47 states, with at least 17 of them in 14 states passed into law.

In the coming weeks, Urban League staffers and volunteers will be taking to the streets, knocking on doors and visiting college campuses helping eligible citizens navigate these changes to state laws and register to exercise their right to vote. We'll be text-banking and phone-banking, engaging face to face and on social media, making sure our communities are armed with accurate information and prepared to cast their ballots.

At the same time, we continue to fight on the state level for fair voting laws and on the national level for the passage of the Freedom to Vote Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and the Protecting Our Democracy Act.

"We need our democracy to work, we need poverty to end, we need disenfranchisement to be a thing of the past, because when people are suppressed or oppressed it rages," Stacy Abrams said. "It may be silent for some time but eventually it will come out."

—April 12, 2024

Maryland's Labor Shortage May Mean a Lack of Skilled Workers for the Key Bridge Rebuild

By EMMA TUFO
Capital News Service

Despite Maryland's low unemployment rates, employers are struggling to fill job vacancies and the workforce's blue-collar sector is especially stressed. Job seekers lack the specialized skills demanded by the market, which could make it challenging to find qualified local workers for the reconstruction of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, according to economists.

"We will see this play out as Baltimore works to reconstruct the bridge. There will be a visible lack of local skills," said Anirban Basu, an economist, chairman, and CEO of Baltimore-based Sage Policy Group.

In a press conference on Friday (April 5), President Biden addressed the public about the reconstruction of the Key Bridge after he took an aerial tour of the disaster site in Baltimore. He said the government will go to all lengths to ensure the bridge is reconstructed as fast as possible, and

they'll do so with "union labor and American steel."

The bridge collapse has halted all shipping traffic in the Port of Baltimore, a significant economic asset for Maryland and the United States. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced the port is projected to partially open by the end of April, and fully open by the end of May.

Over time, major urban centers central to Maryland's economy, like Baltimore, transitioned from predominantly blue-collar to white-collar cities, said Basu, highlighting the issue when most of the jobs that need to be filled are blue-collar, especially in a post-disaster era of rebuilding.

In Maryland, many businesses are grappling with a shortage of candidates, starkly contrasting the promising picture painted by the low unemployment rate.

In the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, employers reopened businesses and new businesses emerged, but large numbers of people didn't return to the workforce, resulting in a dip

in participation, one of the critical factors to Maryland's labor market woes.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that Maryland's labor force participation rate has yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels. It hovered at 65.3% as of October 2023, down from 69.3% in December 2019.

Maryland accumulated national attention in 2023 for its low unemployment rate, which hit a record low of 2.3 percent in September, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Today's unemployment rate in Maryland is around 2.4 percent, up 0.1 percent from 2023. This means people may be losing their jobs, according to Basu.

Due to demographic changes, the aging of the population, skill set mismatches, a lack of general workforce training, and both existing and projected labor shortages, finding competent workers is getting more challenging on a national level, according to the Maryland Governor's Workforce Investment Board in Maryland's Labor Force Conditions report.

The exit of workers from the job force leaves many businesses scrambling to find qualified individuals to meet their staffing needs. The less people actively looking for jobs, the lower unemployment will be.

Maryland had the most significant change in

the country's unemployment rate last year, with a 0.9 percent decrease.

"There's a lack of workers, of skilled workers and an overall shortage of the skill sets needed for these blue-collar jobs that are open," said Basu.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are an estimated 3.1 job openings for every job seeker in the state, compared to just 1.3 openings nationally. This highlights Maryland's labor market imbalance.

"...many Marylanders lack the basic education and skills necessary to succeed in the workforce.

Maryland's challenge is to maintain its highly educated and skilled workforce while creating opportunities for all Marylanders to participate and succeed in the 21st-century workplace," the labor force conditions report states.

Howard County has the highest workforce participation rate in Maryland, at 56 percent. Somerset County comes in last place, with only 36% of its population employed, or actively searching for work.

"It's important to remember this failure to fill jobs doesn't mean the market is loosening. It might be bifurcating as 2024 moves on and unemployment slowly rises," Basu said, "For this lack of skilled workers to fix itself, there needs to be more of a push to learn the skills needed."

Lawmakers from A1

felonies to two years, with the possibility of extension.

Sen. Will Smith, D-Montgomery, a co-sponsor of the bill, said the changes to the law are part of a "long-term, strategic outlook" to improve the juvenile justice system.

Energy and Environment

Legislators passed the EMPower Act, which requires gas and electric companies to create a plan to achieve specific energy efficiency and conservation goals. The bill aims to increase energy efficiency in low-income residences. In addition, the law creates a work group to study the effectiveness of these programs.

The legislature also voted in favor of the DRIVE Act, a bill that would create an electric vehicle (EV) charging program that connects charging vehicles to the state's electric distribution network. The bill creates a pilot program to expand the adoption of electric vehicles and incentivize EV users to charge their vehicles in off-peak hours, reducing electricity brownouts.

In addition, lawmakers passed a bill that builds upon Maryland's offshore wind energy goals established in last year's POWER Act. The bill would allow companies with plans for offshore wind to submit plans with revised schedules, sizes, or pricing, aiming to propel Maryland closer to its goal of 8.5 gigawatts of offshore wind energy capacity by 2031.

Housing

Housing was a top focus in Moore's legislative agenda this session. He even testified in committee on a package of three bills aimed at "making Maryland more affordable," one of his key goals. All of the bills passed by the deadline.

Maryland has a housing crisis, Moore said, and this legislation will invest in low-income communities, build more housing, incentivize high-density and transit-oriented development and provide more resources to renters.

Along with housing legislation, Moore pushed through the ENOUGH Act aimed at reducing childhood poverty. The measure provides grants targeted at communities with higher concentrations of poverty.

Fellow Democrats applauded the measure, even though some of them have raised questions about how the state is going to pay for such programs as it moves closer to the projected budget deficit.

Education

Lawmakers approved the Freedom to Read Act, which aims to protect library materials and other literary resources from censorship and "book banning." The bill acts as a safeguard for school and library employees and states that they may not be penalized for following state library standards.

Health and Safety

The legislature expanded the definition of "legally protected healthcare" in Maryland to in-

clude gender-affirming care practices and treatments. This bill expands on the legislature's Reproductive Health Act of 2023. If signed, it will allow gender-affirming care to be protected from out-of-state litigation the same way abortion is.

Lawmakers passed another healthcare measure known as the Access to Care Act, which would enable the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to permit undocumented residents to purchase individual health care plans from the state.

In addition, lawmakers passed the Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act, after a judge was shot and killed in his driveway because he ruled against a man in a divorce and custody case. The measure will increase judicial security by prohibiting the publication of personal information and removing information like judges' home addresses, phone numbers and email addresses from the internet and social media.

Cannabis

A Republican-backed bill to repeal a law prohibiting law enforcement officers from stopping and searching vehicles based only on the odor of marijuana stalled in committee this session. Democrats expressed concerns that the legislation would lead to unwarranted search and seizure against people of color.

Consumer Protection

A bill intended to crack down on ticket scalping passed in the final hours of session after weeks of debate in both chambers. The

law will require the full ticket price be listed at each step of an online transaction. It also bans "speculative tickets," meaning third-party vendors cannot sell tickets they don't yet have in hand.

However, a proposed 10% price cap on tickets in the resale market did not make it through the legislative process.

"I'm thrilled to have championed a bill that makes Maryland one of the best places for concert-goers in the country," Sen. Dawn Gile, D-Anne Arundel, told Capital News Service. "While we've made major progress this year, I also look forward to working with stakeholders, including the Office of the Attorney General, to build on this work so that scalpers can no longer have safe harbor in our state."

Medical Aid-in Dying

The End-of-Life Option Act would have allowed terminally ill Maryland residents the right to die by self-administering lethal medication. While advocates expressed optimism the bill would pass after years of advocacy on the issue, it stalled when it did not garner enough support to pass out of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

"I'm incredibly disappointed that the bill is one vote short [from passing]," Senator Waldstreicher, D-Montgomery, told Capital News Service.

Cage-Free Eggs

Before session began, Sen. Karen Lewis Young, D-Fredrick, expressed high hopes of pas-

sage for her bill mandating that all eggs bought and sold in Maryland be cage-free by 2026.

But the idea encountered heavy pushback from the farming community, amid concerns that increased costs of the requirement could put them out of business. The bill did not make it out of committee in either chamber and it's unclear whether sponsors will take up the fight again next year.

Motorcycle Helmets

Yet again, the legislature heard a bill that would make wearing a helmet optional for

most motorcyclists. Yet again, it failed.

But the grassroots motorcycle group behind it is a hardy group. They've gotten such a bill introduced nearly every year since Maryland passed a mandatory helmet law in 1992.

"They're diehards for what they believe in," Del. Jay Jacobs, R-Caroline, Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's, told Capital News Service. "They don't let go of this stuff."

Steph Quinn, Kiersten Hacker, Tyrah Burris, Sapna Bansil and Angelique Gingras contributed to this story.

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

STATIONARY ENGINEER APPRENTICESHIP



Applications for the **IUOE Local 99 Apprenticeship Program** will be accepted during the period of May 6—10, 2024, inclusive. Applications must be completed in person by the applicant at Engineer Center 9315 Largo Drive West, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. \$35 application fee includes drug screen. For additional information scan the QR Code.



Equal Opportunity M/F



CASA Supports Recommendations of Prince George's County Rent Stabilization Workgroup Report

By NKESHI FREE
CASA

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (April 11, 2024)—In response to the recent report by the Prince George's County Rent Stabilization Workgroup, immigrant and working families advocacy group CASA and the Prince George's County Housing Justice Coalition fully support the recommendations put forth to address the pressing issue of housing instability in Prince George's County. The workgroup's recommendations for permanent rent stabilization represent a significant step towards creating a more equitable rental housing landscape in our county. By prioritizing stability and predictability, the workgroup has laid a foundation for a rent stabilization policy that can positively impact renters' lives and promote healthier communities.

"We applaud the Prince George's County Council for working with researchers to design these recommendations. This is a positive step forward in winning a permanent rent stabilization in the county," said Jorge Benitez Perez, CASA's Prince George's County lead organizer. "Rent stabilization is not just a policy; it is a lifeline for those members of the community that are disproportionately burdened by housing insecurity."

Moreover, the workgroup report underscores the pressing need for urgent legislative action in the county, as a staggering 52% of Prince George's County renters are burdened by housing costs, spending more than 30% of their income on rent.

"This statistic is not just a number; it represents the daily struggles of countless families who are forced to make difficult choices

between paying rent and meeting basic needs like food and health-care," said Eden Aaron, CASA's research and policy analyst.

Synester Scott, an 82-year-old renter from Upper Marlboro, said, "Landlords and developers are gambling with our lives, and it must stop now!"

CASA emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach to permanent rent stabilization and supports a 3% cap on rent increases. The organization also advocates for full vacancy control to prevent exploitation by landlords and ensure stability for tenants. Furthermore, CASA calls for regulations on fees to promote fairness and transparency in rental agreements, reflecting concerns raised in the workgroup's report.

"It is time for us to come to a

See SUPPORTS Page A6

US Department of Labor Seeking Workers Owed Wages, Benefits Denied by Libertytown Plumbing Subcontractor After Investigation Recovers \$156K

Day C Soul Mechanical shortchanged 48 workers on Woodyard Station project

By PRESS OFFICER
U.S. Department of Labor

LIBERTYTOWN, Md. (April 9, 2024)—Individuals employed by a Libertytown plumbing subcontractor who worked on a Woodyard Station construction project may be eligible to receive their share of \$156,495 in wages and fringe benefits recovered by a U.S. Department of Labor investigation.

The department's Wage and Hour Division determined that Day C Soul Mechanical Inc. denied full pay and fringe benefits to 48 workers they employed from April 8, 2022, through September 2023 to work on the federally funded affordable housing project in Clinton. Investigators found Day C Soul Mechanical did not pay the prevailing wage rates and fringe benefits, in violation of the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts, and failed to main-

tain accurate payroll records, violating the DBRA and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Air conditioning subcontractor Charles A. Klein & Sons Inc. of Sykesville, who hired Day C Soul, paid \$124,022 in back wages and \$32,473 in owed fringe benefits after the plumbing subcontractor refused to comply and pay the monies owed. In March 2024, the department debarred Day C Soul Mechanical and owner Oscar Jimenez-Medrano, forbidding them from bidding on federally funded construction projects for three years.

Day C Soul Mechanical employees who believe the company owes them money related to the period of this investigation should contact the division's district office in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, at 570-826-6316.

The U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development provided funding to Prince George's County, Maryland, for construction of Woodyard Station, a senior living housing project that opened in October 2023.

Day C Soul Mechanical Inc. provides commercial plumbing services in Maryland, Washington D.C. and Virginia.

Learn more about the Wage and Hour Division, including a search tool to use if you think you may be owed back wages collected by the division. Workers and employers can call the division confidentially with questions or concerns—regardless of where they are from—and the division can speak with callers in more than 200 languages. Help ensure hours worked and pay are accurate by downloading the department's Android and iOS Timesheet App for free in English or Spanish.

Christina L. Cornwell Chosen for the Leadership Maryland Emerging Leader Program Inaugural Class

By JOYCELYN JACKSON
City of Laurel

Leadership Maryland announced last week that Christina L. Cornwell, Director of the Department of Community Resources and Emergency Management at the City of Laurel, has been chosen to participate in their statewide professional development program as a member of the new Emerging Leader Program's Class of 2024.

Ms. Cornwell is one of 40 individuals chosen for the Leadership Maryland Emerging Leader Program's first class, who will complete the six-month, hands-on learning program focused on leadership development. The program will run from June to November, consisting of monthly day-long sessions that will include both interactive training led by a facilitator and panel discussions featuring leaders from across the state as guest speakers. The program's curriculum offers a holistic approach to leadership development, designed to help each applicant increase their self-awareness and gain behaviors, skills, and tools to become more adaptive, inclusive, strategic, and impactful leaders.

"We are excited to announce the very first Emerging Leader class and welcome these motivated and forward-thinking individuals to our new program," said David Fike '16 (LM) president and CEO,



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF LAUREL
Christina L. Cornwell, City of Laurel's Director of the Department of Community Resources and Emergency Management

Leadership Maryland. "This year's class selection process was highly competitive, and after careful review of the applications, I am thrilled to share that the 40 members of the Class of 2024 represent a dynamic cross-section of ambitious and promising rising leaders. The knowledge, experience, and connections they will gain in our program will prepare them to become more adaptive and impactful leaders in their careers and communities."

Leadership Maryland's Emerging Leader Program is open to individuals who are advancing in their careers, are actively involved in their communities, and desire to become stronger leaders in both areas. Ideal Leadership Maryland

members have a desire to learn more about Maryland's most critical issues and a personal commitment to be a force for positive change in their organizations, their communities, and their state. For more information about Leadership Maryland, please visit leadershipmd.org, call 410-841-2101 or email info@leadershipmd.org.

Leadership Maryland is a statewide nonprofit offering professional development programs dedicated to building a better Maryland by harnessing the strength of its business and community leaders. Established in 1992, Leadership Maryland's Executive Program selects as many as 52 diverse and accomplished senior-level leaders from Maryland's public and private sectors each year to come together as a class for an eight-month learning program focused on the state's most vital social, economic and environmental issues. And new in 2024, Leadership Maryland's Emerging Leader Program brings together a class of the state's rising stars and gives them the skills and tools they need to advance in their careers. With an alumni network comprised of leaders from all industries and regions of the state, Leadership Maryland has established thousands of Marylanders on their career leadership path, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and connections needed to influence positive change. Visit leadershipmd.org.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Can I Claim Social Security and Still Work?

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 will be turning 63 soon. Can I apply for Social Security and continue to work? Would I be limited to how many hours or how much I could make? I know my monthly SS amount would be cut by 30%, or somewhere around there, but how would working affect me? I was trying to read up on this, but the \$1 and \$2 thing confused me. I have an offer to take a work-at-home position and need to decide soon, but it is a cut in income. The cut would be okay if I could draw my Social Security too. **Signed: Wanting Work at Home**

Dear Wanting: If you claim your Social Security to start in the month you turn 63, you'll be claiming 4 years before your full retirement age (FRA) of 67, which means your monthly benefit at 63 will be about 25% less than it would be if you claimed SS at age 67. And if you are working before your FRA, you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test."

The 2024 earnings limit for those collecting early Social Security benefits is \$22,320 (this limit changes annually). If your annual earnings exceed the limit, Social Security will assess a penalty of \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. They will recover that penalty amount by withholding future benefits until they recover what you owe. If your work earnings are under the annual limit, you will get all your monthly SS benefits. But if you exceed the limit, they will find that out after you submit your income tax return (the following year) and issue you an overpayment notice, telling you how much you owe for exceeding the limit last year. They will then withhold your benefits until they get back what you owe, or you can repay them in a lump sum. To avoid the overpayment notice, it is best to inform Social Security in advance that you will exceed the annual earnings limit, and they will simply withhold your monthly SS benefits during the year for enough months to avoid overpaying you.

So, what you should do depends largely on how much your earnings from your new work-at-home position will be. If your earnings are below the annual limit, no penalty will be assessed. If you only exceed the annual limit by a little bit, then you can still work and earn and simply repay

them what is owed for exceeding the limit (or have your SS benefit temporarily withheld). If you only exceed the earnings limit by a little, you'll still get benefits for most months of the year. But if you significantly exceed the annual earnings limit, you could even be ineligible to receive SS benefits until you either earn less or reach your full retirement age (the earnings limit goes away at your FRA).

So, what you should do depends on what "a cut in income" means in terms of your expected annual earnings amount. If your total annual earnings will be under the annual limit, your SS benefit won't be affected. If you only exceed the limit by a little bit, then you will get SS benefits for most months of the year. But if your annual earnings are significantly over each year's annual earnings limit, then you won't get SS benefits for most months of the year and may even be temporarily ineligible to receive benefits.

It now will have no effect on the survivor benefit she will get as your future widow.

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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PGC Economic Development Corporation

PGCEDC & University of Maryland Present A.I. Training For Small Business! ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SMALL BUSINESS WITH UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

In a first-of-its-kind partnership, the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) and the University of Maryland (UMD) are excited to introduce a specialized program tailored for small business owners keen on leveraging artificial intelligence for business growth.

This hybrid initiative features an online AI course, followed by an immersive in-person bootcamp at the UMD. The program offers a blend of AI-focused education, personalized coaching, and industry-relevant mentorship.

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- AI for Customer Relationship Management
 - Operational Efficiency with AI
 - Data-Driven Decision Making with AI
- Open Application Period: April 12–26, 2024
*Applicants will be informed of their successful enrollment in the program by May 10.

Register and More Information:
<https://www.pgcdec.com/events-calendar/2024/ai-small-business>

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Holy Communion 1st Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7-8p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service 8p.m.

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Upper Marlboro, MD

Church (301) 627-7389

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Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Reverend Twanda E. King, Pastor
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Worship Service - 11:00 A.M.
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Office (301) 839-1166
Fax (301) 839-1721
E-mail: FHBC@verizon.net
Pastor: Rev. Waymond B. Duke

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Pilot from A3

leaders and collaborative funding in propelling this initiative forward. "The expanded use of B100 in Prince George's County showcases the momentum of fleets recognizing that they must move toward reducing carbon emissions today rather than waiting for the electric vehicle technologies of tomorrow. This progress wouldn't have happened without the help of programs like Maryland Energy Administration's OPEN grant. Chevron REG is proud to be contributing to this effort."

The MEA's OPEN grant program has been instrumental in bringing this project to life. By supporting visionary leaders in Prince George's County, the grant enables the implementation of sustainable solutions tailored to Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. This investment not only reduces emissions but also promotes cleaner transit options, fostering a healthier and more equitable environment for all residents.

County officials have highlighted the environmental justice benefits of this grant, emphasizing its significance in emission reduction and equity advancement within underserved communities. The B100 Transit Project Stands as a testament to the County's commitment to addressing environmental challenges and leading the way towards a greener, more sustainable future.

For more information about the B100 transit pilot and the grant's impact, contact Efon Epanty at emepanty@co.pg.md.us.

Supports from A5

permanent solution for rent stabilization. With this workgroup, we wanted to hold space for both sides to come together and give their perspectives on what a permanent bill looks like. I am honored to lead this effort," closed Krystal Oriadha, Prince George's County Council Member, District 7.

With over 155,000 lifetime members across 46 US states, CASA is a national powerhouse organization building power and improving the quality of life in working-class: Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and Immigrant communities. CASA creates change with its powerbuilding model blending human services, community organizing, and advocacy in order to serve the full spectrum of the needs, dreams, and aspirations of members. www.werecasa.org

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