

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SINCE 1932

Vol. 92, No. 17 April 25 — May 1, 2024

Prince George's County, Maryland

Newspaper of Record

Phone: 301-627-0900

25 cents

After Two Deadly Work Zone Crashes, Maryland Officials Press for Change

By SAPNA BANSIL
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 17, 2024)—After a pair of deadly work zone incidents cast attention on the dangers of road work, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore enacted a set of protections for workers and their families that his administration describes as “a moral imperative.”

Hours after the state's legislature adjourned, a bill increasing fines for work zone speed violations and another covering educational costs for families of fallen workers were among the first measures from the 2024 session that Moore signed into law.

At a bill signing ceremony, Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller, a former transportation engineer, invoked two fatal crashes that inspired the new legislation. In March 2023, six highway workers died when a car careened into a work zone on Interstate 695. Nearly a year later, six construction workers

repairing potholes atop the Francis Scott Key Bridge were killed when a container ship struck the bridge, causing it to collapse.

“The men and women in the construction industry place themselves in harm's way every day on the frontline of service,” Miller said. “We saw it happen on March 22, 2023. And we saw it happen again on March 26, 2024. It's a moral imperative that we protect workers who provide critical service, public service for all of us.”

Among the measures to receive Moore's signature was the Maryland Road Worker Protection Act, which Miller championed throughout the legislative session and touted Tuesday, during an event overlooking the site of the I-695 crash to mark National Work Zone Awareness Week.

Effective June 1, the new law permits the installation of

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PHOTO CREDIT SAPNA BANSIL/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

State Highway Administrator William Pines (right) speaks on April 16, 2024, at an event in Woodlawn marking National Work Zone Awareness Week. The event was held on an overpass near the site of a 2023 crash that killed six road workers.

Ebenezer AME Church to Feature 2024 Youth Poet Laureate, Saniya Pearson, at Free 2024 National Poetry Month Celebration With Open Mic

Theme: “African Americans & The Art of Poetry”
Friday, April 26, 2024 from 6:30–8:30 p.m.

By J. JOY “SISTAH JOY” MATTHEWS ALFORD
Ebenezer AME Church Poetry Ministry

You are Invited!
Please SAVE THE DATE and join the Ebenezer Poetry Ministry at our 2024 National Poetry Month Celebration from 6:30–8:30 p.m., **Friday, April 26** at Ebenezer AME Church, 7707 Allentown Road, Rms. 203 & 204, Fort Washington, Maryland 20744. This free in-person Poetry & Praise celebration, which includes an Open Mic, will feature Prince George's

County 2024 Youth Poet Laureate, Saniya Pearson; with presentations by Ebenezer Poetry Ministry member poets who are known as The Anointed P.E.N.S., and musical presentations by Djembe Drummer, Doc Powell, and Psalmists of Solomon Musical Director, Christine Jenkins. Light refreshments will be served and a free-will offering will be accepted. All ages are welcome.

Prince George's County Host Groundbreaking Ceremony for Eagle Harbor Stream Restoration and Community Resiliency Project

By PRESS OFFICER

Prince George's County Department of the Environment

LARGO, Md. (April 23, 2024)—On Monday, April 22, in celebration of Earth Day, the Prince George's County Department of the Environment (DoE) held a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Eagle Harbor Stream Restoration and Community Resiliency Project on the construction site at 23600 Patuxent Blvd., in Eagle Harbor, MD.

The Eagle Harbor Stream Restoration and Community Resiliency Project will restore and stabilize 3,100 feet of Coleman Creek and two headwater tributaries, replacing existing undersized roadway culverts. The project addresses erosion and sedimentation that causes nuisance flooding and shoreline property damage. Construction is to be completed by the end of November 2024.

Upon successful project implementation, the stream restoration improvements will be reported with the Impervious Surface Restoration (ISR) goals under the Maryland Department of the Environment issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit.

“We are excited to bring the Eagle Harbor Stream Restoration and Community Resiliency Project to Eagle Harbor. The project is the culmination of strong partnerships between the Town of Eagle Harbor, Prince George's County, DoE, the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and GreenVest-Petro Joint Venture, LLC,” said DoE Director Andrea Crooms. “And while it combines environmental stewardship, flood control, and drainage improvements to benefit Coleman Creek and the Patuxent River, this project will uplift the residents of Eagle Harbor for many years to come.”

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Government Infrastructure, Technology, and Environmental Services Floyd Holt extended greetings and an Earth Day proclamation on behalf of Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks and noted how fitting it was to celebrate the project's groundbreaking today, on Earth Day.

In 2017, Eagle Harbor received its first stormwater grant of \$100,000 to help address its erosion and flooding problems. With today's groundbreaking, it has grown to a \$5.4 million restoration project.

Eagle Harbor is rich in history and remains a quaint riverfront town with fewer than 60 homes. It is also one of the oldest African American towns still in existence. Located on the banks of Coleman Creek, which flows into the Patuxent River, Eagle Harbor was designed and developed during segregation as a retreat for African Americans. It remains one of the last vestiges of a predominantly African American waterfront community.

“Eagle Harbor, Maryland, yesterday, today, and tomorrow, is a place for restoration, preservation, and relaxation,” said Mayor Noah Waters. “It was founded on the dreams of slave descendants but is now a treasure of Maryland heritage and American pride.” Mayor Waters thanked Eagle Harbor Sanitation Commissioner Linda Moore-Garoute for her steadfast advocacy and support in ensuring this project came to fruition. Visit <https://townofeagleharborincmd.org/pgcmls.php>.



PHOTO COURTESY PSI EPSILON OMEGA CHAPTER ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC.

(From L to R)—PEO sorors support suicide prevention with Out of Darkness Walk.

Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Raises Nearly \$15,000 While Advocating for Suicide Prevention

By DARLENE SPEARS-REED
Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

LAUREL, Md. (April 19, 2024)—The Psi Epsilon Omega (PEO) Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® raised nearly \$15,000 in support of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)'s Out of the Darkness Walk. The Campus Walk was held at Bowie State University on April 18 and had 200 walkers and supporters in attendance.

Out of the Darkness Walks take place in cities nationwide and serve as an introduction to AFSP. Through the walks, those affected by suicide and those who support them raise awareness and much-needed funds while

sending the message that suicide can be preventable and that no one is alone.

“The increasing number of suicides across the country is impacting our community at alarming rates,” said Karen S. Hicks, PEO President. “We are glad to have another opportunity to participate in this walk to support the mission of AFSP and help prevent suicide.”

In addition to supporting the walk with monetary donations, members of the chapter's Community and Social Action (CASA) Committee shared information on House Resolution 7265, a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives, aligned with the organization's legislative policy initiative to address Black Youth Suicide.

If passed, the bill would make federal

funds available to community programs that would allow health professional schools to integrate content about suicide prevention strategies and interventions into their curricula. Funds would also make secure gun storage or safety devices available to residences with an individual under the age of 26 who is at risk of suicide.

Donations collected will help bring AFSP one step closer to achieving its goal of reducing the suicide rate by 20% by the year 2025.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated®, Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter was chartered in 2007. Since its founding, the chapter has implemented its service programs in Laurel, Bowie, and Greenbelt, Maryland.

Council Member Edward Burroughs Announces Credit-Builder Program

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Council Media

District 8 Council Member Edward Burroughs III has partnered with Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union (PGFCU) and the Financial Empowerment Center at PGCC to launch a program

to help residents boost their credit scores and secure a healthier financial future.

This credit-builder loan program allows District 8 residents to make \$44 monthly deposits for a year and receive a \$500 match at the end of the year. Past participants in a similar program have seen, on average, a 20- to 67-point jump in their credit scores

after making consistent payments.

“April is Financial Literacy Month, and it's a fact that Black and Brown people generally have lower credit scores and less access to financial services,” said Council Member Burroughs. “This program aims to break the cycle by educating citizens about how improving their credit score can be life-changing, and, more importantly, allowing them to make that change.”

ing, and, more importantly, allowing them to make that change.”

“We are honored to facilitate this unique opportunity for District 8 residents,” said PGFCU Pres-

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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

The Town of Morningside turns 75 and they're celebrating!

Morningside—the name—probably dates back to the late 1930s, but the Town was incorporated as Morningside in 1949, and the first election was held.

Morningside voters chose June Stocklin-ski to serve as their first Mayor and, for the Town Council, Duncan Fleming, Thomas S. Austin, Mr. C. W. Mueller, and R. C. Stevenson. They took office in June 1949 and immediately created a Volunteer Police Department of three Navy veterans: Charles J. Kiker, Gerald A. Glaubitz, and Donald R. Michelson.

On Saturday, April 27, 2024, Morningside celebrates its 75th Anniversary. The revelry begins at 6 p.m. and will continue until 9 at the Municipal Center (which I always like to call the Town Hall).

There will be something for everyone, including a Moon Bounce, games, food trucks, 360 photo booth, raffles, and a movie after dark. And there'll be music!

The Town's "Fabulous Morningside Seniors" had an Anniversary celebration of their own on Tuesday, April 23—they were invited to Topolino Italian Cuisine for luncheon and to "enjoy friendly conversation."

It'll be a great celebration! And you can easily imagine what it'll be like in 25 years when The Town of Morningside turns 100 in 2049.

More from Morningside: Election and Circuit Rider

The annual Town election will be Monday, May 6, when two current Council Members, John Anthony Sr. and Sharon Fowler, will be running to, hopefully, serve another term. The polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The Town has a new officer, Clayton Anderson, a Circuit Rider whom they are sharing with Upper Marlboro and Eagle Harbor. Circuit Riders help assist small towns and city governments with building their administrative capacity.

The Town Hall meeting room is available for rent. It's a very nice, large room with an attached kitchen. Great for receptions, birthday parties, and they've even had a wedding. Call 301-736-2300 to reserve, or for more information.

Neighbors & other good people

Elaine Chao, 4th-grader at Colin Powell Academy, Fort Washington, has won National 1st Place with her acrylic "Guardians of the Earth" in a NASA Langley Student Art Contest. You can see it for yourself in an exhibition of student art works at Oxon Hill Library.

Father Martino I. Choi has been transferred from St. John the Evangelist parish in Clinton to administrator of St. Michael Parish, Baden, and St. Dominic Mission, Aquasco.

Youth Open House, April 27

District 8 youth are invited to an Open House Brunch event hosted by County Council Member Edward Burroughs and the 100 Black Men of Prince George's County.

During the event, they'll have the chance to meet dedicated mentors, discover various programs and initiatives and explore how they can get involved. The event will be at LeDetroit Baptist Church, 5306 Indian Head Highway in Oxon Hill. The time: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, call 301-952-3860.

Surratts-Clinton Library, open and busy

The new library held its Grand Opening on April 22, with Bibliobop for ages 0–5, Lighthouse Crafts for ages 5–12, and Maryland Trivia for all ages.

When I visited this week, I asked about meetings and activities. There are events for all ages so you should pick up a schedule. One popular event is Knitting and Crocheting for adults. I think it's a regular for Tuesdays. You can check <https://pgcmis.info/website/events>.

My trips to the library these days are to check on Large Print books. Just recently I read "Prince Charles" and because I enjoyed it, I read "Spare," about Prince Henry.

And speaking of libraries, Prince George's plans to open new libraries in Langley Park, Glenn Dale and Brandywine. Plus, a larger replacement for Hillcrest Heights.

Changing landscape

The Preakness is coming up May 17–18 at Pimlico in Baltimore. And then the race-track will be rebuilt "to create a permanent home worthy of the Preakness." I don't know

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

much about horse racing, but I watch the Preakness every year.

Dunkin Donuts is opening soon on Wood-yard Road in Clinton.

The Nationals' season is underway but there have been changes. You can still bring single-serving food items and a sealed water bottle into the ballpark, but if you're willing to splurge, some of the concessions are worth a visit: Ssong's Hotdog, Los Cinco Tacos, Eli's Crepes, Rita's Italian Ice, and Emerald Amor Café.

Can anyone tell me what's being built at the corner of Allentown Road & Temple Hill Road?

A home at 6811 Pickett Drive, in Morningside, has just sold for \$299,900.

Places to go & things to do

Maryland Choral Society Concert is performing "In My End Is My Beginning" on April 28, 4 p.m. at Mount Calvary Catholic Church, 6700 Marlboro Pike in Forestville. Among the selections will be Haydn's "The Creation." There'll also be a pre-concert talk by Dr. Douglas Buchanan, Artistic Director, who is retiring.

Ed's Plant World, in Brandywine, has announced the imminent arrival of a vast selection of flora, ranging from vibrant annuals to enduring perennials, majestic trees to ornamental shrubs, and everything in between.

"Unapologetic" featuring the works of renowned African American artist Marcel Taylor, is running through Saturday, June 8, at Harmony Hall Arts Center, in Fort Washington. The artist depicts liberated African Americans through diverse narratives. Harmony Hall is at 10701 Livingston Rd. For more information: (301) 203-6040.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Cathy Miller and Hazel Ball, Beverly Gotshall Marquis, DJ Fowler and Jessica Phipps, April 28; Lael McCune and Todd Mullins, April 30; Kathryn Deaver, May 1; Ann Lacey, Ernestine Taylor Wood, Dante Ross Jr. and Janet Booth Kaye, May 2; my daughter Sheila (McHale) Mudd and Lori Williams, May 3; India Goodall and Ruby Haines, May 4.

Happy 52nd Anniversary to Jan and Cindy Smith who will celebrate that special day on April 28.

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

Brandywine-Aquasco

ST. PHILIP'S DAY

Join us Sunday, May 5, 2024, at our 9:30 a.m. Worship Service. Come and enjoy our service and learn about our history. Let us give praises to the Lord. Light refreshments will be served immediately following the worship service. St. Philip's Church Baden, 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613-8426.

MOTHER'S DAY SPRING FLING

Join us for an evening of Hand Dancing, Line Dancing, and Pop 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@artspgparks.com](https://www.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 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 GPCPS 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, 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, 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.

The Hotel at The University of Maryland and K-9 Lifesavers Are Connecting Dogs With Foster and Furever Homes

The AAA Four-Diamond Hotel is Hosting its Second Annual Dog Adoption Day on Saturday, April 27

By PRESS OFFICER

The Hotel at the University of Maryland

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (April 15, 2024)—The Hotel at the University of Maryland (7777 Baltimore Ave., College Park) is hosting its Dog Adoption Day on **Saturday, April 27**, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., to connect dogs in need with loving homes. Now in its second year, this event is a partnership with K-9 Lifesavers, a nonprofit dog-rescue organization dedicated to saving the lives of homeless and abandoned dogs from high-kill shelters.

"As a dog-friendly hotel, we can't think of a better partnership or cause," said Linda Westgate, complex general manager with The Hotel. "We're all dog lovers and want to help our four-legged friends in high-risk situations find the homes they deserve."

Potential adopters are encouraged to complete an adoption application at www.k-9lifesavers.org prior to the event, so that they can be preapproved. Potential adopters can bring pictures of and information about their homes and if they already have a pet, updated veterinary records for that pet are required for adoption approved at the event.

Adoption fees vary, and all dogs 7 months or older are spayed or neutered and up to date on vaccinations.

- Puppies up to 7 months - \$500 (includes the pet's spay or neuter)
- Dogs 7 months and older - \$400
- Senior dogs (8 years or older) - \$300
- Dogs of any age who have overcome heartworm disease - \$425

An all-volunteer organization, K-9 Lifesavers relies on foster parents to provide temporary homes for these dogs and will also be actively recruiting fosters at the event. Last year's Dog Adoption Day included a "foster fail," where the foster parents ended up adopting the dog permanently. Find that success story, plus fostering and adoption tips, here:

<https://www.thehotelumd.com/dog-adoption-story/>.

The organization will also be accepting donations of food, crates and other pet supplies at the event.

The adoption event will be held in front of Bagels 'n Grinds, a New York-style bagel house serving breakfast throughout the day, sandwiches and soups. Parking fees will be waived for attendees of the adoption event.

More information about the adoption event is available at <https://www.thehotelumd.com/neighborhood/dog-adoption-day/>.

Maryland Legal Aid's Tenants' Right to Counsel Project to Partner With the Prince George's County Memorial Library System to Host Legal Aid Clinics

By PRESS OFFICER

Maryland Legal Aid

BALTIMORE (April 17, 2024)—Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is partnering with the Prince George's County Memorial Library System to host Tenants' Rights & Housing Clinics from April through August, occurring on the first Wednesday of each month. The purpose of these clinics is to assist individuals in understanding and maneuvering through the legal landscape. Participants will be able to receive advice and begin the legal intake process with lawyers, aiding them in resolving their housing concerns.

While the primary focus of these walk-in sessions will be on issues related to housing, evictions, and tenants' rights, Maryland Legal Aid will also be prepared to assist with a range of other civil legal concerns. This includes criminal record expungement, family law, health, consumer rights, and employment issues, offering advice and legal support to those in need.

What: Tenants' Rights & Housing Clinics

Where & When:

- Oxon Hill Branch Library, Wednesday, **May 1, 2024** | 1–4:30 p.m.
- Laurel Branch Library, Wednesday, **June 5, 2024** | 1–4:30 p.m.
- Hyattsville Branch Library, Wednesday, **July 3, 2024** | 1–4:30 p.m.
- Fairmount Heights Branch Library, Wednesday, **August 7, 2024** | 1–4:30 p.m.

For general information about the Tenants' Rights & Housing Clinics, visit <https://www.mlab.org/free-legal-clinics/>.

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is a statewide private, nonprofit law firm that provides free, civil legal services to low-income and vulnerable people to address their most fundamental legal problems. From its 12 offices around the state and through its many community-based clinics, we help our clients preserve and access safe and affordable housing, maintain custody of their children, and be safe from domestic violence. MLA increases our clients' economic security by defending against consumer debt, including foreclosures and tax sales, removing barriers to employment, and accessing critical income supports such as unemployment, food stamps and other vital public benefits. Through special projects, we represent seniors, nursing home residents, children in alleged abuse and neglect cases, migrant farmworkers, and those in mental health institutions. In its advocacy, MLA seeks systemic change through impact litigation, policy advocacy, and storytelling.

COMMUNITY

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multiple speed cameras within a single work zone and raises the fine for speed camera violations to \$80. The current penalty in Maryland is \$40, among the lowest such fines in the country.

Beginning January 2025, fines shift to a tiered system ranging from \$60 to \$500 depending on the driver's speed. Fines will double if workers are present at the time of the violation.

While the law is viewed as a direct response to the I-695 crash, officials said it also acknowledges the dangers that road workers experience every day. In 2023, there were 1,287 work zone crashes across Maryland, an average of 3.5 per day.

Steven Cook, a field maintenance technician with the Maryland Department of Transportation who attended Tuesday's event, said highway work requires constant vigilance. He has witnessed drivers who ignore signs, take out traffic cones and slip into work zones. "It happens more often than what people really think about and notice," Cook told Capital News Service.

"You always got to have your head on a swivel with being out here on the highway ... We're sitting ducks when we're out here on the job," Cook added.

The new law is part of a larger effort to change driver behavior in work zones by strengthening enforcement methods and increasing education. Distracted driving, aggressive driving and speeding are the leading causes of work zone crashes, according to the State Highway Administration.

"Most crashes are not accidents," State Highway Administrator William Pines told Capital News Service. "In reality, they're very preventable. The majority of crashes that occur happen because of behaviors with drivers. So if we want to stop the root cause of most crashes, we've got to deal with driver behavior."

But the law offers no safety solutions for incidents like the collapse of the Key Bridge, which was unrelated to driver behavior. Maryland Transportation Secretary Paul Wiedefeld told Capital News Service on Tuesday that officials may consider structural solutions to bolster bridge safety but are awaiting the results of an investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board before making any specific policy proposals.

Instead, lawmakers responded to the bridge collapse by recognizing the toll that work zone crashes leave on workers' families.

In the final hours of the legislative session, the General Assembly passed the Protecting Opportunities and Regional Trade (PORT) Act, primarily aimed at providing emergency aid to workers and businesses affected by the closure of the Port of Baltimore. Moore's administration offered a successful amendment to the bill creating the Fallen Transportation Workers Scholarship Program, providing tuition assistance for five years of

full-time study or eight-years of part-time study to children and spouses of workers who have died on the job since 2022.

"What happened on the bridge is horrifically traumatic, and I think one of the things that we wanted to do is protect others who are in a similarly dangerous situation," said Maryland Senate President Bill Ferguson, D-Baltimore City, who co-sponsored the PORT Act.

"Certainly, we wish there were no one participating in that fund, but sadly, we know how dangerous this work is," he continued.

The scholarship reflected efforts by the state's Latino Caucus, which met with members of Moore's administration in the days after the bridge collapse and sought financial support for families of the victims. The six men who died were all immigrant construction workers from Latin America. Three of the workers killed in the I-695 crash were also of Latino origin.

"When someone passes, particularly as the breadwinner or primary breadwinner of their family, it trickles down," said Del. Ashanti Martinez, D-Prince George's, chair of the Latino Caucus. "It's not just about their immediate family, but those that they support in the community or back home."

Del. Deni Taveras, D-Prince George's, a member of the caucus' executive board, said she was pleased to see the scholarship included in the PORT Act but expressed concern about how families would meet immediate needs for rent, food and clothing.

"Something is definitely better than nothing," Taveras said. "I'm happy that they can have a secure future for themselves through access to college."

Another executive board member, Del. Joe Vogel, D-Montgomery, said he hopes the state will continue to acknowledge the workers' sacrifices and support their families' needs over the long term.

"I want the families to feel like the lives lost were not in vain and that the state appreciates and recognizes the immense value of those six individuals," Vogel said.

Beyond the legislative remedies, state officials have called the two work zone tragedies an opportunity for awareness. They've said the workers' deaths, as well as countless other close calls that happen each day, are a reminder that road workers take on labor that is essential and difficult but also overlooked. And that many are sacrificing their lives to do so.

"Our work zones are filled with mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, close friends and your neighbors," Pines said, standing atop an overpass for Tuesday's National Work Zone Awareness Week event as cars and trucks zipped underneath. "They're building a better, safer, world-class highway system to provide access and opportunity to every single user. The highway is their office. Protecting them must be a priority for us."

Angelique Gingras contributed reporting for this story.

Meet & Greet—Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Incorporated (Zeta Mu Chapter/Upper Marlboro, MD)

By LATRICE BROGSDALE-DAVIS
Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Incorporated

The ladies of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Incorporated (Zeta Mu Chapter/Upper Marlboro, MD), the first Black business and professional women's sorority, cordially invites you to our "meet and greet" event on **Sunday, April 28, 2024, 2-5 p.m.**, at The Green Turtle in Gambrills, MD. Get to know the ladies of Iota and learn how we are impacting the Prince George's County, MD community.

We would love to see you there!

*Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Incorporated—
"Professional Business Women Propelled by Ingenuity: Intentional Purpose"*

Learn more about the Zeta Mu Chapter of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Incorporated:

Events/Activities: <https://linktr.ee/IotaZetamu> | Web Address: iplzetamu.org | Email: iplzetamu@gmail.com | Mailing Address: PO Box 2111, Upper Marlboro, MD 20773



Good, Old-Fashioned Community Spaghetti Dinner Hosted May 16 by Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/ Silver Spring

Local Nonprofit Invites Community to 'Come as You Are' for its \$15 Per Plate Fundraiser

By PRESS OFFICER
Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring

TAKOMA PARK, Md. (April 16, 2024)—For the first time in its 53-year history, Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring is hosting a fundraiser May 16, 5-8 p.m., but consistent with its relaxed and congenial culture, the event will be a come-as-you-are, drop-in-when-you-want spaghetti dinner held at its kitchen location. Tickets can be purchased for \$15/person at: ourfundraiser.link/MOWSpaghettiDinnerAuction

"We're eager to celebrate our growth and invite people to see the beautiful renovations we've completed," said Ruth Masterson, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring. "We wanted to do something to celebrate the entire community. It's going to be a lot of fun, and it's going to be low key and casual."

Anyone interested in learning more about Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring—or just enjoy a tasty and inexpensive dinner out—are invited to bring neighbors, friends and family members of all ages to drop in any time between 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and enjoy spaghetti, garlic bread, salad, and dessert prepared right in the Meals on Wheels kitchen. Attendees will also be able to tour the office and kitchen space—where the magic of Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring happens. The cost is \$15 per person, with tickets expected to sell out. Additional beverages including wine will also be available.

The silent auction will be available for bids online and onsite

that evening and will help raise funds for the nonprofit that prepares and delivers delicious meals to homebound Marylanders every week. Attendees can bid on items like Washington Nationals tickets, a week at a lake house in Quebec, Kendra Scott jewelry, artwork, local restaurant gift certificates, and more. The organization is still accepting auction items and sponsors, all efforts to increase its general operating budget.

Founded in 1971, this local program serves residents in Takoma, Silver Spring, Langley Park, Chillum and Adelphi. People in these communities rely on Meals on Wheels' essential service to remain healthy and independent at home, now even more so after a lingering pandemic and high inflation. In addition to preparing and delivering nutritious hot and cold meals to homebound residents, Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring saves families thousands of dollars by allowing loved ones to remain in the comfort of their own home and still receive sustenance. One year of Meals on Wheels TPSS service costs less than just one overnight in a hospital or 10 days in an assisted living institution.

The spaghetti dinner takes place May 16. Diners are welcome any time between 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.—but come early to enjoy live music, with the auction closing at 8 p.m. The location is 7410 New Hampshire Ave. Takoma Park, MD, with the front door in the southern wing of the building. Cost is \$15 per person and all ages are welcome. For more information call 301-434-1922 or visit: ourfundraiser.link/MOWSpaghettiDinnerAuction

Free Cinco De Mayo Lyft Rides Offered Throughout Greater Washington to Prevent Drunk Driving

Over a Third of U.S. Traffic Deaths on Cinco De Mayo Involve Drunk Drivers

By PRESS OFFICER
Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP)

TYSONS, Va. (April 22, 2024)—Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, over a third (34%) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers,* a local nonprofit organization announced today that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during next month's Cinco de Mayo celebrations.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2024 Cinco de Mayo SoberRide® program will be in operation beginning at 12 p.m. Sunday, May 5 (Cinco de Mayo) and operate until 12 a.m. on Monday, May 6 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditional high-risk period.

During this twelve-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide® code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2024 Cinco de Mayo Sober-

Ride® promo code will be posted at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 5 on www.SoberRide.com.

"Over a third of U.S. traffic fatalities during Cinco de Mayo involve drunk drivers according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," said Kurt Erickson, WRAP's President.

WRAP also offers its SoberRide® program on St. Patrick's Day, Independence Day, Halloween and the winter holidays through and including New Year's.

"Lyft is dedicated to providing access to reliable and responsible rides, and we're proud to partner with programs like WRAP to offer Lyft as an alternative to impaired driving," said Kamillah Wood, Director of Public Policy for Community Safety at Lyft. "Through our Roadway Safety Program and our partnerships with the public, we hope to empower our community with the tools to protect themselves and those around them this holiday season."

SoberRide® is offered throughout SoberRide® is offered throughout Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's and towns therein plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, District Heights, Gaithersburg, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Laurel, Mount Ranier, New Carrollton, Rockville, Seat Pleasant and Takoma Park; and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and towns therein plus the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2024 Cinco de Mayo SoberRide® campaign include the 395 Express Lanes, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, Diageo, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, En-

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



COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

January 6th and Black Lives Matter Cases Reveal Supreme Court Hypocrisy & Racial Hostility

“...it’s notable that the Court felt no urgency to [correct the Fifth Circuit’s error in Mckesson] while it spent the Fischer argument thinking about how to shut down some hypothetical future case where the government may not show adequate respect for First Amendment rights. The Mckesson case, moreover, involved a Black Lives Matter protest, while the Fischer case involved a pro-Trump insurrection. If nothing else, this is a terri-

ble look for the Supreme Court. And it suggests that many of the justices’ concerns about free speech depend on whether they agree with the political views of the speaker.”

—Ian Millhiser

Should protestors be held responsible for criminal acts committed during a protest?

According to the reactions of U.S. Supreme

Court justices, it may depend upon the protesters’ race or political views.

This week, the Court allowed to stand a lower court ruling that DeRay Mckesson, a Black Lives Matter activist, could be sued by a police officer who was injured during a protest, even though Mckesson did not commit the assault.

A day later, the justices “appeared skeptical” that members of the mob who attacked the U.S. Capitol on January 6th for the express purpose of stopping the electoral vote count could be charged with obstructing, influencing, or impeding an official proceeding.

In other words, if you organize a protest for racial justice—or any other issue toward which the reigning majority on the Supreme Court is hostile—you can be held responsible personally if a single attendee commits an illegal act.

But if you join in storming the U.S. Capitol with the explicit and obvious intent of disrupting an official proceeding, the outcome of which the reigning majority of the Supreme Court personally opposes, you can’t be charged with disrupting an official proceeding.

At least, legal observers believe the Court is leaning that way. A ruling is expected in late June. But the very fact that the Court agreed to hear ar-

guments in the case has led federal judges to release some convicted insurrectionists early.

The justices concern that charging violent criminals with violent crimes could stifle the free speech rights of non-violent protestors is especially hypocritical in light of the fact that it’s illegal even to stand in a protest in the Supreme Court Building or grounds.

The sad fact is, Donald Trump wants the January 6 insurrectionists released, so the Supreme Court will do what it can to release them. Trump wants racial justice protestors to suffer, so the Court will do what it can to compound their suffering.

Will the justices be concerned for First Amendment rights of peaceful protestors when they are shot in the legs or expelled from the country, as Trump has advocated? Will they defend the due process rights of the accused when Trump fulfills his vow to criminally prosecute political adversaries?

The question isn’t whether the Court will find a legal justification for doing Trump’s bidding, or whether it even will try. The question is how far will the Court go to appease his vengeful, authoritarian whims.

—April 19, 2024

Washington Church Marks 176th Anniversary of Greatest Attempted Slave Escape

By HAILEY CLOSSON
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (April 16, 2024)—Rev. Brian Hamilton tapped his microphone, signaling the beginning of his service at Westminster Presbyterian Church in honor of the 176th anniversary of the greatest attempted escape of enslaved people in American history—which happened in Washington.

“Resistance is a mandate then and now...you and I have a ton of work to do,” Hamilton told the eager Sunday crowd.

Seventy-seven enslaved men, women, and children made the abortive attempt on April 15, 1848, to flee the slave-holding District of Columbia for freedom in the North.

The church has been commemorating the event for four years.

It was a Saturday evening when the 77 enslaved people gathered to board a two-masted vessel called The Pearl. A formerly enslaved man named Daniel Bell drew up the escape plan after he and his wife lost a case to free their six children through the court system, according to the history YouTube channel CuriousPeople.

Bell contacted abolitionist

Capt. Daniel Drayton, who agreed to lead the ship’s journey and rounded up as many enslaved people as he could ahead of their departure. Full families snuck away from their plantations, beating Washington’s 10 p.m. curfew for all Black residents, and boarded the ship.

Drayton intended to sail down Washington’s southwest waterfront and down the Potomac River to the Chesapeake Bay and break north to freedom, according to The Pearl Initiative, a Washington community group dedicated to spreading awareness about the escape.

But meager winds prevented the ship from sailing away to safety. Without the cover of darkness, The Pearl was spotted the following morning by a slaveholder who noticed several of his slaves were missing and overtook the ship with a mob on his steamboat Salem, according to CuriousPeople.

The 77 escapees were shackled, returned to Washington, and resold by their owners to Southern plantations. Many families were separated during the tragedy. Records detail the lives of a few after their capture.

A woman named Grace Russell was among the captured. Her family saved her at an auction

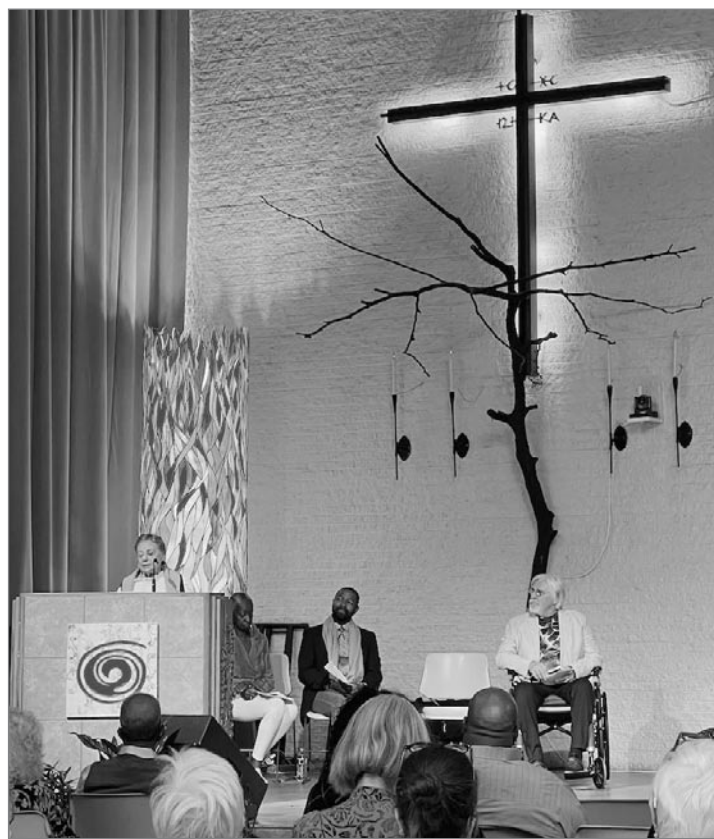


PHOTO CREDIT HAILEY CLOSSON/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON—The 176th anniversary of the attempted escape of enslaved persons on The Pearl is celebrated Sunday at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Washington. Dr. Marjorie Lightman, of the Southwest Community Foundation, is at the podium. Seated from left to right are Dr. Jackie L. Williams and Dr. Christopher Williams, both of The Pearl Initiative, and Rev. Brian Hamilton, pastor of the church.

in Richmond, Virginia, but could not afford to save her sister, Emily, when she was sold two

years later by the same person who enslaved Grace, according to The Pearl Initiative.

“Oh mother, my dear mother, come see your distressed and heartbroken daughter once more,” wrote Emily Russell to her mother from Bruin Jail in Alexandria, Virginia. Emily Russell died soon after on a coffin traveling to the South.

Westminster Presbyterian Church was founded in 1853, five years after The Pearl incident.

“This is extremely important for us because Westminster is totally committed to inclusion and diversity... So the Pearl project was a natural when we realized that this whole thing happened right in our backyard,” Hamilton said.

The institution of the church historically has served as a forum for social justice initiatives and community-building for African Americans. Churches have played an instrumental role in mobilizing political action, such as during the civil rights movement.

Washington native Sonia Adams brought her son Joseph to The Pearl remembrance so he could learn African American history. She had seen a brochure about the event at a local library.

“Social justice wouldn’t be what it is without the African American church because that

was our basis,” Adams said. “That was the framework for social justice here in America and continues to be...It plays a role because you have community and the community is working together to solve this problem.”

The story of The Pearl helped to fuel the abolitionist movement and inspired anti-slavery publications.

Author and renowned abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe began her 1852 novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin as a series of installments in a Washington newspaper.

While raising money to try to free members seized aboard The Pearl, Stowe produced a follow-up novel in 1854 called The Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin. The book told stories of enslaved people, including those on The Pearl, to dispel national skepticism of the conditions she described in her previous novel.

Hamilton and The Pearl Initiative held a procession on Monday at Washington’s southwest waterfront with community members to read the names of the passengers on The Pearl and toss flowers into the Potomac as a tribute.

See ANNIVERSARY Page A6

To Prod Congressional Action, Bill Would Cut Lawmakers’ Pay After Mass Shootings

By TORRENCE BANKS
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (April 18, 2024)—In February, Steve Kraske, a radio host at NPR’s Kansas City affiliate, was on air discussing the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl parade shooting that left one woman dead and more than 20 others injured.

Kraske mentioned that he surveyed his 25 students at the University of Missouri, asking them if they would attend another parade if the Chiefs won the Super Bowl next year.

All of them said no.

This caught the attention of Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Missouri, and led to him re-introducing the No Pay Until Peace Act in March. If the bill passes, members of Congress would have their pay reduced each time there is a mass shooting until lawmakers take action on gun safety reforms.

“Whenever there’s a mass shooting, the congressional action is swift,” Cleaver told Capital News Service. “We have somebody go down to the well of the House and say, ‘We offer our thoughts and prayers,’ and that is the congressional reaction to mass shootings no matter how many people get shot or how old they are.”

The bill was initially introduced in 2022, and Congress took no action on it. Cleaver believes that the recent lack of progress on federal gun legislation has left some Democrats discouraged.

“People are apprehensive just because (they believe) nothing good is going to happen,” said Cleaver. “So there’s no need of getting your heart broken again.”

Cleaver has received support from Democrats for trying to change congressional inertia when it comes to gun safety reforms. However, Republicans haven’t been as encouraging.

“I can’t say that I am surprised, as the vast majority of them have opposed any and all action in regard to reforming the nation’s gun laws,” Cleaver said in an email.

He added that while the bill currently has no sponsors, he could get 100 signatures without Republican support. The election season has halted his efforts.

“This is an election season so I’m not going to have some members try to respond, putting them in a tough spot where they say ‘I’m going to be a supporter’ and then all of a sudden the (National) Rifle Association will come after them,” Cleaver said.

Mark Pennak, president of the gun owners’ rights organization Maryland Shall Issue, believes Cleaver’s re-introduction of the bill is a “publicity stunt.” Pennak said that the bill assumes that gun control legislation favored by Cleaver is effective in stopping mass shootings.

While federal background checks are necessary, Pennak said, they don’t deter people who get weapons by illegal means.

“The criminals aren’t going through licensing to buy their firearms,” said Pennak, who spent 33 years as lawyer in the U.S. Department of Justice. “That just isn’t happening. They go to Baltimore on the street and they buy their firearms illegally. Most of these people are already disqualified people. Otherwise, they can’t legally possess firearms.”

From 2010 to 2019, Baltimore County had the fifth-highest gun death rate among Maryland counties and Baltimore City, according to the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence.

Baltimore City had the highest gun death rate.

While federal law requires background checks to buy firearms at any federally licensed gun dealer, only 40% of guns sold in the United States are through such dealers, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. That leaves firearms sales among private dealers unchecked in many states.

Gun theft in Maryland currently falls under the general theft statute, with the level of the crime and the penalty based on the value of the stolen item. As a result, stealing a firearm valued under \$1,500 is usually considered a misdemeanor.

On first and second offenses, gun theft is typically punished by probation, Pennak said. Consequently, prosecutors are hesitant to waste time on it, he said.

Earlier this year, Maryland State Sens. Justin Ready, Jack Bailey, Mary Beth Carozza, Paul Corderman and several others in-

roduced a bill to make gun theft a felony. However, it was not acted on during the legislative session.

Cleaver said that legislation strengthening gun theft penalties and other policies protecting communities from gun violence are worthy considerations.

He hopes that the legislation gets the public to be less supportive of lawmakers who “care more about their own pocketbooks and personal ambition” than the lives lost in shootings.

With the House controlled by a Republican majority that has opposed significant gun safety proposals, prospects for passage of Cleaver’s bill this year are very poor.

The Prince George’s Post

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Contents © 2023, The Prince George’s Post

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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

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Older Husband and Working Wife Seek Guidance

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 am 74 years old, retired and receiving Social Security. My wife will be 65 in January of 2025. Our hope was to start paying off some credit card expense by her receiving SS when she turns 65, however it appears there would be a substantial reduction to her benefits. Her work income is \$37,500 a year, and she wasn't planning on retiring from work at age 65. Because I am 11 years older, we felt it makes sense to use her Social Security as a means to lower our debt. We have \$27,000 in credit card debt, and I don't really want to use my 401(k) funds due to taxes. We pretty much live on my Social Security and pension. **Signed: Seeking Suggestions**

Dear Seeking: Your wife's full retirement age (FRA) for Social Security purposes is age 67. Because she will not yet have reached her FRA in January 2025 (when she is 65), if she claims SS to start at that time, not only will her monthly amount be reduced, but she will be subject to Social Security's annual earnings test. The earnings test sets a limit for how much can be earned by beneficiaries who claim SS before FRA.

The earnings limit for 2024 is \$22,320. The limit for next year is not yet published (it's based on changes to the national wage index) but will be a bit higher—likely about \$23,500. Thus, I can't provide the exact impact, but if your wife's 2025 earnings exceed next year's limit, Social Security will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 over the limit (half of the amount over the limit). So, if your wife earns \$37,500 per year, that will likely be about \$14,000 over the limit and Social Security will take back half of that (\$7,000). They "take back" by withholding future benefits, or you can repay them in a lump sum. So, you will have a choice—repay Social Security from your other assets, or they will withhold your wife's SS benefits for the number of months needed to offset her penalty for exceeding the earnings limit. The number of months they will withhold depends on how much is owed and what your wife's monthly SS benefit is. For example, if your wife's age-65 SS benefit is about average (\$1,900) and her penalty for exceeding the limit is \$7,000, Social Security would withhold your wife's benefit for 4 months to recover the penalty, but she would receive her full benefit for the remaining 8 months of the year.

Unless your wife tells them in advance that she will exceed the limit, Social Security will find out the following year (after you file your income taxes). But, in any case, your wife cannot avoid the annual earnings test for working before reaching her full retirement age. The earnings test goes away when your wife reaches her FRA of 67. Until that time, if she continues working she will have a choice to have her benefits withheld for a portion of the year, or simply repay Social Security in a lump sum (in which case her benefits would continue uninterrupted).

FYI, there is a silver lining in this, because if your wife has benefits withheld because she exceeds the earnings limit before her FRA, after she reaches her full retirement age Social Security will give her time credit for the months when benefits were withheld, which will result in her monthly Social Security payment amount increasing somewhat at her full retirement age. Thus, over time, your wife may recover the benefits which were withheld for exceeding the annual earnings limit. But to get 100% of the benefit she's earned from a lifetime of working, and be exempt from Social Security's earnings limit, she would need to wait until she reaches her FRA to 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.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Rides from A3

terprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association. WRAP's 2024 Public Partner SoberRide® sponsors include the District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure's Highway Safety Office, the Maryland Highway Safety Office/Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 89,725 free safe rides home to

would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Program (WRAP) is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with helping to keep the annual percentage of metro-Washington traffic deaths involving alcohol-impaired driving historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, SoberRide®.

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation Supports the Launch of Prince George's County Small Business Support Program

Small businesses to receive \$500,000 in grant opportunities powered by PNC Foundation and the Greater Washington Community Foundation

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCEDC

LARGO, Md. (April 17, 2024)—Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) leadership and staff supported the launch of the Prince George's County Small Business Support Program powered by PNC. The program provides small businesses in Prince George's County funding opportunities through their eligibility to apply for up to \$20,000 in available grants.

This new program will provide \$500,000 in grants and technical assistance to small businesses operating along the Blue and Purple Line corridors, giving them greater opportunities to harness the economic benefits of development in the region.

"The Prince George's County Small Business Support Program is yet another resource that provides county-based businesses with the tools for expansion," said Andre Plummer, Financial Services Programs Manager, PGCEDC. "This is an extension of the County's Strategic Plan that supports innovation and entrepreneurship across industry clusters connecting Prince George's County residents with economic opportunities."

The funds were provided by PNC Financial Services Group Inc.'s PNC Foundation, and the Greater Washington Community Foundation (GWCF) will administer the grant program. GWCF will award 25 grants of \$20,000 each plus technical assistance to businesses that apply



PHOTO COURTESY PGCEDC

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) leadership and staff supported the launch of the Prince George's County Small Business Support Program powered by PNC.

between April 15 and May 13. The funds can be used for payroll, rent, utilities, marketing, technology, relocation services, capital improvements, etc.

Businesses must have ten or fewer employees and have been operating in the target areas for at least three years to be eligible for the grants. To be approved, applicants must show financial need, compliance with regulations, prospects for growth, and a positive community impact.

Designed in conjunction with several leading business groups in the county, including LISC, Prince George's Chamber of Commerce, Purple Line Coalition, FSC First, Bowie BIC, and PGCEDC, it will

support the growth and sustainability of small businesses as key employers and economic drivers in the county.

The Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC)'s mission is to cultivate and promote a strong local economy that supports the growth and prosperity of entrepreneurs and businesses, dedicated to strengthening communities through business development and job creation. For more information about the services the Economic Development Corporation provides to local companies, visit www.pgcdec.com.

Moore Celebrates Bipartisan Wins in Second Session

By KIERSTEN HACKER
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 17, 2024)—Gov. Wes Moore bragged the other day about "going 26 for 26" in passing his bills through the General Assembly, a display of bipartisan achievement he called "Maryland's win."

With his second legislative session now in the rearview mirror, Moore has been touting bipartisan support for his agenda the past two sessions since he took office in 2023.

Even though he and the General Assembly again failed to resolve the state's projected long-term fiscal imbalance, Moore is still laying claim to a measure of victory. He managed to achieve his legislative goals while also navigating a crisis in the Port of Baltimore and the back-and-forth budget negotiations that had put the General Assembly at risk of an extended session.

"At a moment when people seem to care more where'd the idea come from than it is a good idea, we in Maryland, we've just chosen to move differently," Moore said. "And it's the reason we're able to work together, that we're able to get big things done."

Moore celebrates his achievements as rooted in common ground, working all session to emphasize partnership and restore both bipartisanship in the legislature and cooperation with the executive—even as a rising star in national Democratic politics facing increasing divisiveness.

In January, Moore headed into the second year of his term with an extensive agenda of 16 bills and the goal of passing a state budget without raising taxes. However, in March, his plans were uprooted with just about two weeks left in the session when the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore collapsed, launching Moore and his leadership into the national spotlight.

Out of the first-year honeymoon period, Moore planned to address key issues such as public safety, affordable housing and education while facing a projected budget deficit expected to balloon to billions of dollars in the coming years. He proposed a \$63.1 million spending plan that closed an expected \$1.1 billion cash shortfall without a hike in taxes.

But budget negotiations shaped up to be no easy task in the General Assembly. The

House had hoped to pass a \$1.2 billion revenue package to address education and transportation funding needs. The Senate didn't think the time was right to impose new taxes on Marylanders.

While negotiations were underway, the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore suddenly collapsed after a container ship collided with the structure. Moore's attention immediately turned to Baltimore where he held daily press conferences, removing him from the public and daily wrangling of budget discussions in Annapolis.

"That's the thing about being governor, is you don't get to set the whole agenda," Sen. Jim Rosapepe, D-Prince George's and Anne Arundel said. "Real events set the agenda. And so it was his first crisis and I thought he rose to the occasion."

Even Republicans agreed with Moore's priorities in responding to the Key Bridge.

"He's rightly spending his time where the citizens of Maryland need him to be," said Senate Minority Leader Stephen Hershey, R-Caroline, Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's.

Lawmakers have repeatedly thanked Moore for his response to the crisis and his administration's actions to get emergency legislation passed providing relief to port workers and businesses. Despite being absent as budget negotiations got down to the wire, many lawmakers, including key Republicans, have said publicly that Moore was exactly where he needed to be.

Sen. Johnny Ray Salling, R-Baltimore County, said Moore has been "above and beyond," approachable and communicative about the next steps as a leader.

"I've always said we work together and we work across the aisle because it's the only thing we can do to get things done," Salling said. "But again, we might not agree with everything. But it doesn't mean that we can move forward in other areas."

Moore also put his weight behind the PORT Act, which will provide relief for port workers and businesses as well as establish a scholarship fund for families of transportation workers who died on the job. Sponsored by Senate President Bill Ferguson and Del. Luke Clippinger, both South Baltimore Democrats, the measure passed in the late hours of the final day of session.

Ferguson said he's known the governor personally for a while and he excels as a

leader of people as he did in combat. The law was the first of many to receive Moore's signature.

"The legislation will empower our administration to stay nimble in our response in the collapse," Moore. "Even though session is now over, it does not mean Maryland's response will cease."

Moore also racked up a win when the General Assembly responded to his pressure to reach a compromise on the budget. The spending plan they approved will increase taxes and fees on things like tobacco products and vehicle registration fees but does not include broader sales or income tax hikes. Revenues generated from these taxes and fees will be used to fund trauma resources, transportation projects and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future education reform plan.

However, the state faces a darker fiscal picture down the road and will need to come up with new solutions for funding programs and projects. Moore has repeatedly said he has a "high bar" for raising taxes, and he has told reporters in recent days that will continue throughout his term.

This session was a year for smaller steps toward resolving more long-term budget issues, said Rosapepe, vice chair of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee.

The House wanted to pass an aggressive increase in revenues to fund priorities like transportation, education and the environment, which Rosapepe said are needed. But the Senate and the governor wanted to take it "one step at a time," Rosapepe said, and they were able to work well with the House to reach a compromise.

"We made progress, we didn't solve all the problems in the world, we rarely do in one session, we never do in one session," Rosapepe said.

The budget ensures that "we're not going backwards" on transportation while funding the Blueprint for the next few years and making a down payment on climate change goals, Rosapepe said, but more steps will need to come in the future.

The rest of Moore's bills on his agenda passed by midnight on the final day of session, including his package of housing bills.

Moore emphasized working in partnership with the General Assembly as a main theme of this session, and many lawmakers saw that come to fruition on both sides of the aisle.

"Governor Moore totally has a partnership mindset," Rosapepe said. "And I hear my Republican colleagues speaking very highly of him too, in that regard."

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301-474-3995
www.fbc-cp.org

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Sunday Worship 11a.m.
Holy Communion 1st Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7-8p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service 8p.m.

UNITED METHODIST

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Church (301) 627-7389

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Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Reverend Twanda E. King,
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Office (301) 839-1166
Fax (301) 839-1721
E-mail: FHBC@verizon.net
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ident and CEO Diane Coleman Brown. "Good credit is vital to achieving financial success, and PGCFU has been committed to helping the community build the lives they desire for over 55 years. I look forward to supporting program participants as they take this next step toward financial freedom."

The program is funded through the MGM Local Impact Grant Fund, a portion of gaming and tax revenue dedicated to the community around the casino.

"As the recipient of this MGM Local Impact Grant, the Financial Empowerment Center at Prince George's Community College takes great pride in improving money management outcomes for county residents," said Heath Carelock, the center's program director. The 100% match not only changes financial behavior but also offers participants confidence beyond the program timeline, whether with home-buying or pursuing new credit."

Council Member Burroughs has long championed financial literacy and he helped create a Financial Literacy Pilot Program for PGCP's high school students as a school board member. Following the pilot, Financial Literacy became a graduation requirement this school year.

Burroughs and other program representatives are available for taped and live interviews about this initiative and the importance of establishing good credit.

For more information on signing up, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdEX8PIDv6nfjI-VUH-LevwCBMedvQ191ff8ofyQncZh2cncQ/viewform?pli=1>.

Anniversary from A4

Dr. Christopher Williams, a resident of the neighborhood and board member of The Pearl Initiative, said that during his time at the organization, people told him that they did not know the story of the escape attempt on the ship.

Williams said that the story of The Pearl invites Americans to "return to their origin story."

"We cannot be that kind of society where we fail to remember... Given how highly consequential The Pearl escape was, it would not be in our interest to forget and not be able to contextualize these historic figures," Williams said. "If we become ignorant of history, who are we really? Do we really know who we are? Do we really know ourselves?"

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