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Wilkins of Bowie State Named 2021 Harlon Hill Trophy Finalist

By JOLISA WILLIAMS
Bowie State University Athletics

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Dec. 1, 2021)—Bowie State University senior running back Calil Wilkins was announced Wednesday morning as one of eight national finalists for the 2021 Harlon Hill Trophy presented annually by the Little Rock Touchdown Club to the Division II National Player of the Year.

Wilkins becomes just the second Bulldog to reach the final eight finalists in program history led by former standout Amir Hall in both 2017 and 2018.

The Super Region Two stud will be joined on the national ballot with West Florida's quarterback Austin Reed, Slippery Rock's wide receiver Henry Litwin, Nebraska-Kearney's quarterback TJ Davis, Northwest Missouri State's running back Al McKeller, Bemidji State's quarterback Brandon Alt and Colorado School of Mines running back Michael Zeman. All eight of the finalists come from teams that made the NCAA Playoffs.

The 5-foot-8, 210-pound running back has rushed for a CIAA-leading 1,260 yards so far this season with nine rushing touchdowns. He has also caught 12 balls for 141 yards and a score. This fall, Wilkins has already picked up numerous accolades, including First Team All-Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), CIAA Most Valuable Player during the 2021 CIAA championship game and a plethora CIAA Weekly Honors and DC Touchdown Washington Metro Football Player of the Week honor roll nods. Most likely, Wilkins will be locked in for another All-Region accolade and the All-America Team.

The Temple Hills, Md., native helped the nationally ranked Bowie State Bulldogs to three straight CIAA Northern Division titles, three trips to conference championship game and three-consecutive CIAA championship titles to go along with NCAA first and second round victories and a trip to the NCAA DII Quarterfinals—for the first time in school history.

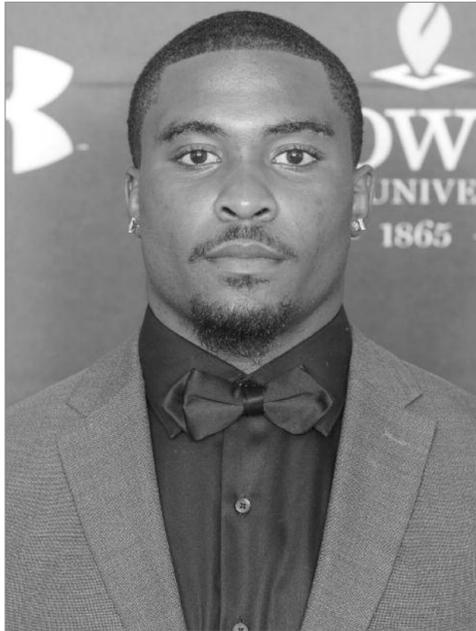


PHOTO COURTESY BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Calil Wilkins

The Bulldogs went a perfect 7-0 against CIAA opponents, extending its win-streak to 18-games total dating back to 2018. This season also marked the third straight year Bowie State has averaged 10 wins per season.

See TROPHY FINALIST Page A2

Council Unanimously Adopts Legislation Approving Countywide Sectional Map Amendment

First Update to County's Zoning Ordinance in 50 Years

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

The Prince George's County Council, convening in the final session of Legislative Year 2021, on Monday, November 29, 2021, unanimously adopted CR-136-2021, approving the Countywide Sectional Map Amendment (CMA).

The CMA is the second and final phase of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project to modernize the County's current 50-year-old Zoning Ordinance. Final adoption of the CMA now implements the County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations by updating the current zone on each property in the County with a similar new zone that is closest in use and purpose.

Under CR-136-2021, the County's new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations become effective on April 1, 2022.

Council Chair Calvin S. Hawkins, II, says Prince George's County is now positioned to expand and better capitalize on economic development opportunities to benefit County residents and communities.

"This process has been a huge undertaking and it has been a long journey, but the end result is a new and modern Zoning Ordinance, the first in 50 years for Prince George's County, and it will

reap great economic reward for Prince Georgians now and in the future. This is a game-changer for our County, and I want to thank this Council and our staff, the Planning Board, County Executive Angela Alsobrooks, the State Delegation, and our residents and stakeholders for their hard work and commitment to participating in this process and bringing us to this defining moment. Prince George's County is now in a posture to successfully compete in our region and seize opportunities for smart growth, economic development and improved quality of life for its residents."

The CMA is required to implement the updated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances approved by the Council in 2018 after more than four years of review. The County's new Zoning Ordinance will streamline procedures and enhance user-friendliness; pave the way for achieving the economic goals of Plan 2035, the County's Adopted General Plan; encourage increased public input in the development review process; consolidate and simplify zones and use; and incentivize development at targeted growth locations, particularly in our 15 transit-oriented communities.

District 4 Council Member Todd M. Turner, who served in Council leadership

See AMENDMENT Page A2

County Library to Offer Free COVID-19 Self-Test Kits

By NICHOLAS BROWN
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 1, 2021)—Prince George's County residents will temporarily have access to free COVID-19 Rapid Self-Test kits through the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS). Part of a statewide effort to make 500,000 free kits available to the public to reduce COVID-19 rates, PGCMLS is partnering with the Maryland Department of Health and Prince George's County Health Department to launch this new public health service.

Test kits are available as of Wednesday, December 1 at PGCMLS' branch libraries (see map of branches at <https://www.pgcmls.info/map-of-branches>). These tests are Ab-

bott BinaxNOW AG At-Home COVID-19 Test Kits (2 tests per kit). The Library will receive approximately 1,700 kits per week (subject to change) that will be available to the public at all open branch libraries until further notice. The supply at each location is limited and available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Customers are asked to limit to one kit per person so that the supply can serve as many Prince Georgians as possible. The kits will be replenished on a weekly basis as supplies allow through the state of Maryland's program. Availability is subject to change.

"Testing continues to be one of the most important tools we have to keep people safe, and we have now conducted nearly 15 million tests statewide," said Governor Larry Hogan in his November 24 announcement.

"By making these at-home test kits available through local health departments, we are giving Marylanders more options and more peace of mind as we head into the holiday season. Of course, the single most important thing you can do, if you haven't already, is get vaccinated or get your booster shot."

Tests must not be completed at the Library. Individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms should have someone retrieve a test on their behalf in order to minimize the risk of exposure to PGCMLS staff and customers. Face masks are required indoors at all PGCMLS facilities. Kits are available for free; no identification or proof of insurance are required.

Test kit instructions are available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Korean,

Please do not conduct the test at the Library.
Por favor no haga la prueba de COVID-19 en la biblioteca.

COVID-19 Rapid Self-Test Kits
GRAB-AND-GO

Available while supplies last at all branches.
Las pruebas de COVID-19 estarán disponibles semanalmente.

Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese. These test kits do not meet Centers for Disease Control and Prevention requirements for entry to the U.S. from international travel. Customers may contact Ask a Librarian with questions at 240-455-5451 or askalibrarian@pgcmls.info with questions.

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) helps customers discover and define opportunities that shape their lives. The Library serves the 967,000+ residents of Prince George's County, Maryland through 19 branch libraries, a 24/7 online library, and pop-up

services throughout the community. PGCMLS is a responsive and trusted community-driven organization. Programs, services, and outreach activities serve booklovers, immigrants and refugees, job seekers, children, young professionals, seniors, and families alike. Learn more at pgcmls.info/about-us.

Governor Hogan Announces \$10,000 in Rideshare Credits During Holiday Season

Federal and State Agencies Partner With Uber to Provide Safe Ride Options for Marylanders

By SHAREESE CHURCHILL
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 24, 2021)—Governor Larry Hogan announced that a new partnership is launching today between the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's (MDOT MVA) Highway Safety Office and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) to provide 1,000 Uber ride credits worth \$10 each to Marylanders for a sober ride home. Maryland is one of five states to be awarded this grant.

"No one should ever get behind the wheel of a car and drive impaired, and we hope that this creative new initiative will encourage more Marylanders to make better choices," said Governor Hogan. "This holiday season, it's critical that we work together to protect our families, friends, and neighbors."

The governor first announced the initiative at the annual Maryland Remembers ceremony, which honors the victims of impaired driving.

These \$10 rideshare credits are available as of Nov. 24 at 4 p.m. through 11:59 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 1. To redeem the \$10 credit, Marylanders can

open the Uber app, choose Wallet from the menu on the top left corner, and scroll to the Promo Codes section. Marylanders can use the code "MAKEAPLAN2021" and \$10 will be applied to their account. Each rider is limited to two \$10 credits during the campaign while the supplies last.

Last year, 120 people died and more than 2,600 were injured on Maryland roadways due to impaired driving. Even though 2020 saw substantially lower traffic volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic, 14,170 people were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs—1,345 of

those arrests occurring between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

"There are already too many families that will have empty chairs at the dinner table this holiday season because of the pandemic," said GHSA Executive Director Jonathan Adkins. "It's tragic and frustrating to see even more lives lost on our roads from completely preventable drunk and drug-impaired driving crashes. GHSA is proud to partner with Uber to help Maryland provide drivers a safe and convenient alternative to getting behind the wheel impaired."

Throughout the holiday season, the Highway Safety Office will promote Be the SOBER Driver and Be the MAKE A PLAN Driver messaging on advertising platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Waze, iHeartRadio, and Pandora.

For more information, visit Uber.com/Safety. For more information about GHSA, go to ghsa.org or visit the Facebook and Twitter accounts.

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The application portal will close on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 3 p.m.
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In this upcoming legislative session, bike advocates across Maryland are currently supporting three bills meant to make roads safer
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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Sam Wilson, Gatekeeper of Suitland Road Baptist Church, dies at 78

Samuel Wilson, Jr., a Morningside resident for more than 35 years, beloved trustee of Suitland Road Baptist (formerly, Morningside Baptist) Church for more than 20 years, died Nov. 1.

He graduated from Spingarn High School in Washington, served in the U.S. Navy and had a long career with Giant Food, Inc., working with the Data Processing Dept. for 26 years.

He was the Gatekeeper of Suitland Road Baptist Church, Dr. Kelvin McCune, pastor. Sam wore many hats as Trustee; whatever had to be done, he was there. And he had a way of always bringing laughter or a big smile.

Survivors include Sharron, his wife of 48 years, son Samuel "Sammy," daughter Robin, son-in-law Jonathan and granddaughter Moriah. Burial will be later at Maryland Veterans Cemetery, Cheltenham.

Sam is remembered fondly for his love of model cars, tools and Western movies.

Town of Morningside: Santa's coming

Morningside has invited Santa to attend two events this Christmas season: Breakfast with Santa (8 a.m. to 10 a.m.) and Lunch with Santa (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.). Both events are on Saturday, Dec. 18, at the Municipal Center, 6901 Ames Street.

Breakfast with Santa attendees will dine on a pastry, fruit cup and drink. Lunch with Santa offers hotdog, chips and drink. There'll be amazing entertainment at each session.

Due to social distancing, only 40 (including adults and infants) will be admitted at each session.

Admission: \$5 per person. For information or to make your reservation, call 301-736-2300.

New cross dedicated at St. Philip's

The new cross atop the roof of St. Philip's Church in Camp Springs was welcomed by the congregation on Nov. 21 and blessed by Fr. Patrick Lewis as he and Bill Hardy stood beside the cross, on the roof.

After Father announced the ceremony at the close of the 10 o'clock Mass, the congregation had headed outdoors to the

front of the church. They sang a hymn and worried a little about their pastor, up there on the roof.

But the cross stood triumphant as Father blessed it and blessed the crowd as they greeted their new cross with applause.

It was Bill Hardy's idea; he did the planning. Geary Deptula donated the mahogany. Javier Perez carved and waterproofed the cross. St. Philip's Sodality helped with expenditures.

The old cross, which blew off the roof a few weeks ago, was installed when the church was built in 1959. Some years later a metal circle of braces was added. Those original braces—now painted gold—stabilize the new cross. They are the only part of the first cross remaining, a reminder of St. Philip the Apostle Church's 62-years-long history.

By the way, Fr. Lewis made it okay getting down from the roof.

Neighbors & other good people

Former Morningside Council Member Russell Butler and his wife Carole have a new granddaughter, Remy Morgan Butler, born May 21, weighing in at 6 pounds, 1 ounce. Baby Remy is the daughter of Eric and Lindsey Butler and little sister of Rylee and Matthew.

Rita Beall, of Morningside, was the winner in the annual Thanksgiving Raffle sponsored by St. Philip's Sodality. She won the Gift Basket and a gift certificate.

Susan Marie Seidman, 68, sister of my son-in-law Luke Seidman, of Crownsville, died Nov. 19. She lived in New Jersey and, as the obit says: she loved "walking, biking, nature, hard work, children, reading, reading to children, Jennie the cat, podcasts, singing, master-level knitting, and above all else, her family." I'll miss her.

Celebrating the Holidays

One of the most popular holiday attractions is back in business—the model train display at the U. S. Botanic Garden. It has seven trains winding among 13 miniature scenes, including a cranberry bog in Massachusetts, an olive grove in Spain, a vineyard in Australia, and a terrace farm in Nepal growing rice and lentils. Trains will run through Jan. 2, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Christmas Day.

Free.

The 35th Annual Winter Festival of Lights continues at Watkins Regional Park in Upper Marlboro, daily from 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., until Sun. Jan. 2. Visit pgparksdirect.com and search keyword "Festival" under "Ticketing" to pay online. For cars, it's \$8 online or \$10 at the gate.

The 22nd annual Gingerbread House Contest and Show continues Saturday, Dec. 11, when visitors can vote in the Viewer's Choice Competition. Darnall's Chance Museum is at 14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive in Upper Marlboro, atop the hill overlooking Schoolhouse Pond. For information, call 301-952-8010.

Changing landscape

The Auth Road 7-Eleven, which was firebombed a year or so ago, is refurbished and open for business, 24 hours a day.

Dollar Tree is raising its prices to \$1.25.

The Air and Space Museum on the Mall will be closing in March for six months for renovation, which will be the most expensive capital project in Smithsonian history.

A home at 4107 Maple Road recently went for \$259,000.

Mary's COVID-19 report:

Word of the Year: Vaccine

Nursing students at the University of Maryland, due to graduate Dec. 23, have been allowed to leave a few weeks early and begin to work in the field. The move was motivated by a nursing shortage during the pandemic.

As of 5 p.m., Wed., Dec. 1, Maryland has had a total of 587,285 cases of COVID. Of these, 1,142 were the day before. Maryland lost 14 more. The number of Marylanders who've died of COVID is now at 11,220.

"Vaccine." Merriam-Webster (the Dictionary people) reports that lookups for the word "vaccine" surged 1,048 percent from 2019 to 2021.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Louise Lantz and

See **MORNINGSIDE** Page A7

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

GLIMPSES OF PROGRESS BY DECADES

In 1900–1909 the first decade of the century in the schools of Prince George's County was characterized by frequent requests for the construction of schools, of one-room type, in local communities. Delegation after delegation appeared before the Board requesting school buildings and sometimes offering to erect the school if the county would only provide the teacher. These schools were built for less than five hundred dollars and accommodated from ten to thirty pupils. Local trustees and local building committees assumed responsibility for planning the buildings and supervising the actual construction. When the schools were completed the Board of Education was invited to visit the premises and to formally accept each school as part of the county educational system. There were 110 schools reported in 1904 of which 108 were frame buildings and two were brick structures. The records reveal a constant struggle to maintain the attendance required by law to keep these small schools open. Teachers were continually being shifted from school to school. Salaries were low and were paid quarterly: November 15, February 1, April 15, and June 15. Salaries of white teachers ranged from \$325.00 to \$450.00 a year while all colored teachers received \$25.00 per year for a shorter term. If funds ran out, the school term was shortened, or a loan was negotiated to enable the schools to remain open. The petition of teachers for an improved salary brought forth the following statement from the board (October 1905), "In view of the financial condition of the school board was not expedient at this time to grant the petition of teachers for increased pay."

At the turn of the century only one public high school existed in the entire county. Secondary education had been available to students of the county only as they were financially able to attend the academies. In one of the early State Reports (1904) the enrollment of the high school (Laurel) was given as fifty-nine students; four teachers comprised the staff; the first principal was Mr. Roger I Manning. The course of studies included the traditional academic subjects supplemental by commercial subjects and manual training. The curriculum for high schools at this time, as adopted by the State Board of Education (1901), had five areas: Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, Conduct and Art.

The second public high school (Surrattsville) appeared in 1906. At first one teacher, the principal, Mr. E.S. Burroughs, taught all the high school subjects. This school came through the horse and buggy days as indicated by the following excerpt

from the minutes of the Board of Education, dated August 4, 1908: "Ordered that \$100 or so much thereof as may be needed, be appropriated for shed for horses at the Surrattsville High School."

This decade also saw the Marlboro Academy converted to a public high school (1908). The academy had served the county since its organization in 1835. The names of many outstanding citizens appear on its roster.

The Superintendent in his letter to the State Superintendent of Schools (1904) states that: "The teaching standard ought to be raised. The percentage of experienced and practical teachers is too small, and the schools are suffering there by." The report for that year also indicated that only five percent of the teachers were college graduates; only 28 percent were normal school graduates; the remaining two-thirds held second or even third grade certificates issued on the basis of examinations held at stated times and conducted by the County Superintendent. To provide in-service training for these teachers a Maryland State Teachers' Reading Circle was organized. Such books as: The Method of the Recitation by McMurry and A Study of Prose Fiction by Bliss Perry and Botany All the Year Round by Andrews, appeared on the required list for one year (1904). Prince George's County reported twenty-nine teachers participating in this program that year. Information received from the Forty-Second Annual Report State Board of Education of Maryland 1908.

CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Happy Birthday to Charles Dorsett, Irena Stammer, Taylor Terry, Shawnee Hendricks, Nurbert Hughes, Anthony Bell, Elvin Falby, Valentine Grant II, Ronald Crawford, Sr., Somoto Mbakwe, Doris Mackall, Lilly Jalloh, John Stahl, Alaya Bell, Jahmayyah Dorsett, Elijah Kerrick, Carolyn Woodard, Donald Hill, B.Kent Maudlin, Theodore (Ted) Mosley, Carol Hughes, Juliette Mbakwe, Iyana Rojas, Kienel Peralta, Ikechi (Ike) Mbakwe, Latsha Bell, Betty Rivers, Joelle Robinson-Oghogho, Wendell Wallace, Luz Knight who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in December.

WEDDING CELEBRATIONS

Happy Wedding Anniversary to Ronald and Sandra Jones, Ikechi (Ike) and Chidinma (Chidi) Mbakwe who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating their Wedding Anniversaries in December.

Trophy Finalist from A1

The winner of the 2021 Harlon Hill Trophy will be announced Friday, Dec. 17 and the winner will be honored at the Little Rock Touchdown Club awards banquet Jan. 13, 2022.

The Hill Trophy is named for the late Harlon Hill, a former University of North Alabama standout who went on to fame in the National Football League with the Chicago Bears in the 1950s.

2021 HARLON HILL TROPHY FINALISTS

Henry Litwin, WR, Slippery Rock

Tyson Bagent, QB, Shepherd

Austin Reed, QB, West Florida

Calil Wilkins, RB, Bowie State

TJ Davis, QB, Nebraska-Kearney

Al McKeller, RB, Northwest Missouri State

Brandon Alt, QB, Bemidji State

Michael Zeman, RB, Colorado School of Mines

For the most up-to-date information on Bowie State University Athletics and its 13 varsity sports teams, please visit www.bsbulldogs.com.

Amendment from A1

during the implementation of the Council's Zoning Ordinance Rewrite, says Monday's Council action contributes significantly to the County's future growth and development.

"Today's Council action is a final step in the County's s over 7-year process that worked to ensure fairness, equity, transparency and inclusion countywide, with over 400 community meetings, thousands of written comments, and considerable Council review and public input. This process, which pro-

pels our County forward was necessary and long overdue. I look forward to its implementation over the next several years and to the many critical economic development opportunities that this new 21st Century Zoning Ordinance will present for our communities and residents."

In other Council action on Monday, Council Members also approved CR-137-2021, legislation extending the County's 15th Declaration of Emergency, in response to COVID-19.

Around the County

Glenn Dale Resident Inducted Into Alpha Eta Honor Society During a Ceremony at Quinnipiac University

HAMDEN, Conn. (Nov. 30, 2021)—Lydia Jones of Glenn Dale, a student in the Health Science Studies program in the School of Health Sciences at Quinnipiac University, was inducted into Alpha Eta, the national honor society for the allied health professions, during a recent on-campus ceremony.

To be eligible for induction, undergraduate students must have a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher and graduate students must have a GPA of 3.8 or higher and be in the top 20 percent of the graduating class. All inductees must show a capacity for leadership and achievement, show promise for their profession and be recommended by a faculty member or dean.

Quinnipiac is a private, coeducational, nonsectarian institution located 90 minutes north of New York City and two hours from Boston. The university enrolls 9,715 students in 110 degree programs through its Schools of Business, Communications, Education, Engineering, Health Sciences, Law, Medicine, Nursing and the College of Arts and Sciences. Quinnipiac is recognized by U.S. News & World Report and Princeton Review's "The Best 387 Colleges." For more information, please visit qu.edu. Connect with Quinnipiac on Facebook and follow Quinnipiac on Twitter @QuinnipiacU.

—John W. Morgan, Quinnipiac University

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County Announces Inaugural in the Water Basketball Battle

Experience the best of high school basketball in the region

RIVERDALE, Md. (Dec. 1, 2021)—The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County is bringing together some of the best basketball programs in the region. The inaugural In the Water Basketball Battle will be hosted at the prestigious Show Place Arena & Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, Md. Experience elite girls and boys high school basketball during this holiday season.

"We wanted to give our Prince George's County Public Schools an opportunity to play in an arena in their home county, not just at their school gyms or when they travel to a tournament," said Tommy Paolucci, Division Chief for the Youth Countywide Sports Division of M-NCPPC. "We have this great facility, we've done a lot of upgrades to it, but it hasn't been regularly utilized specifically for the sport of basketball, which it can be," said Paolucci.

Watch talented boys' and girls' basketball players from Prince George's County, Washington D.C., Howard County, and Anne Arundel County battle it out on the court. The tournament includes five games per day, starting at noon December 28, and 1:30 p.m. on December 29.

WHAT: In the Water Basketball Battle

WHEN: Tuesday, December 28–Wednesday, December 29

WHERE: The Show Place Arena, 14900 Pennsylvania Ave., Upper Marlboro, Maryland

COST: One-day adult general admission \$15. One day youth general admission \$5.

Two-day all tournament pass \$25.

High school students with youth tickets must show their student ID at the door. Purchase tickets in advance via Ticketmaster.

The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation *delivers an award-winning park system through progressive, innovative leadership and a commitment to the community and the environment in Prince George's County. For more on the Department of Parks and Recreation, visit www.pgpc.com and stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, PhotoShelter, and Instagram. The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities in all programs and services. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation.*

—Angel Waldron, Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

COMMUNITY

Holiday Happenings

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation Announces Seasons of Light Digital Program From Publick Playhouse

By ANGEL WALDRON

Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (Nov. 29, 2021)—Coming in December is Seasons of Light, the beloved holiday favorite that bridges communities and cultures the world over—virtually! Enjoy an adapted, filmed version of this enchanting, signature Discovery Theater show that will be available for digital viewing. Celebrate the history and customs of Diwali (Devali), Chanukah, Las Posadas, Ramadan, Sankta Lucia Day, Kwanzaa, Christmas, and the First Nations' tradition of the Winter Solstice.

December 13: A virtual field trip offering for Seasons of Light will be available to schools. Teachers will receive a unique access link that will be available for a two-week period. Grades K–8. Cost: \$25/per classroom.

* Free access is available for Title 1 Prince George's County Public Schools from generous support through the GEICO Philanthropic Foundation.

December 18: An on demand digital version of Seasons of Light will be available. For All Ages. Cost: \$3

The Seasons of Light Digital Program is made possible by a generous grant from the Nora Roberts Foundation and a partnership with the Smithsonian Discovery Theater. For more information, contact publick playhouse@pgparks.com or call 301-277-1710 (M-F, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.).

Since 1947, the historic Publick Playhouse continues to serve as a popular venue for music and modern dance, musical theater, historical drama, educational programs and monthly events for seniors. With its ornate sky scene and plush seating for 494, the theatre is one of the two surviving Art Deco theatres in Prince George's County. To learn more, visit <http://www.mncppc.org/2280/The-Prince-Georges-Publick-Playhouse>.

The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation delivers an award-winning park system through progressive, innovative leadership and a commitment to the community and the environment in Prince George's County. For more on the Department of Parks and Recreation, visit www.pgparks.com and stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, PhotoShelter, and Instagram. The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities in all programs and services. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation.

10x10 INVITATIONAL December 4–January 2

By KATE TAYLOR DAVIS
Pyramid Atlantic Art Center

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (Nov. 24, 2021)—Pyramid's gallery will be packed with over 200 pieces of original artwork donated to Pyramid by artists who love the nonprofit art center. This exhibition-slash-fundraiser has just two rules: all work must measure 10 x 10 inches and be priced at \$50. Buyers receive instant gratification, as they are able to take the art home immediately. 10x10 gets rearranged each week encouraging repeat visits.

10x10 opened to the public Saturday, December 4. After opening weekend, works are available to view online and visitors are welcome during gallery hours without appointment through January 2, 2022.

The exhibition is free, and gallery hours are Wed–Thu 10–8 p.m., Fri–Sat 10–6 p.m., and Sunday 12–5 p.m. Masks are required for entry and we are limiting the number of visitors to allow social distancing. Pyramid Atlantic is located at 4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville Maryland 20781. More info at pyramidatlantic.org or 301-608-9101.

Now in its 7th year, the 10x10 is a great opportunity for collectors of all levels to get interesting pieces by talented artists at a remarkable price. Prints, drawings, paintings, and mixed media will be on display and works can be taken home immediately.

Artists with studios, residencies, or exhibitions at Pyramid over the past year are invited to participate. Additional artists are nominated by a committee. This year's committee included Imar Hutchins, John Thomas Paradiso,

Risikat Okedeyi, Edgar Reyes, and Alec Simpson. Thanks to their work, the exhibition boasts an impressive roster of artists.

Confirmed Artists: Sasa Aakil, Sheena Ashun, Mariza June Avila, Jennifer Axner, Rushern Baker IV, Evelyn Bandoh, Maria Barbosa, Jessica Beels, Ronald Beverly, Rick Black, Chelsae Blackman, Elisabeth Boerwinkel, Michael Booker, Hannah Brancato, Laurie Breen, Vickie Brewster, Daniel Brooking, Antonius Bui, Jason Bullock, June Burden, Eric Burriss, Kimberley Bursic, Sharon Burton, Amy Callner, Roslyn Cambridge, Lyell Castonguay, Cindy Cheng, Wesley Clark, Eliza Clifford, Rafi Crocket, Jared Davis, Chase Deforest, Julee Dickerson-Thompson, Nehemiah Dixon, Eric Easter, Lauren Emeritz, Juan Esparza, Andrea Sherrill Evans, Melissa Ezelle, Jamila Zahra Felton, Jodi Ferrier, April Flanders, Dan Flounders, Jeana Foley, Erin Fostel, Kevin Franco, Helen C. Frederick, Marta Pérez García, Michele Godwin, Meghan Gordon, Maggie Gourlay, Deborah Grayson, Eoin Guidas, Megan Haidet, Holly Harris, Winston Harris, Melissa Harshman, Francine Haskins, Melissa Haviland, Shaymar Higgs, Tom Hill, Gabrielle Holder, Stephen Honiki, Li Howard, Imar Hutchins, Annie Immediata, Elisabeth Jacobsen, Rose Jaffe, Fleming Jeffries, Cynthia Farrell Johnson, Wayson R. Jones, Bronwyn King, Kristina King, Zofie King, Alice Kresse, Selene Lamarca, Caroline Lampinen, Pamela Harris Lawton, Jun Lee, Rob Lindsay, Bonnie Magness-Gardiner, Betsy Martin, Nick Martinez, Sarah Matthews, Matthew T McLaughlin, Anna Meyer Zachurski, Sally Middle-

brooks, Johanna Mueller, Daniella Napolitano, Tatiana Nelson-Joseph, Terence Nicholson, Kaisa Nichols-Russell, Sarah Noreen, Cory Oberndorfer, Risikat Okedeyi, Anisa Olufemi, Maya Ormsby, John Ortiz, Christina Osheim, John Thomas Paradiso, Nicole Parker, Bonnie Parry, Planta, Heather Polk, S.M. Prescott, Alanna Reeves, Deborah Remmers, Edgar Reyes, Sharon Robinson, Nan Roche, Linda Rollins, Nathalie Ryan, Sarah Hood Salomon, Gretchen Schermerhorn, Adi Segal, Gail Shaw-Clemons, Daniel Shay, Jen Sheckels, Jeanette Ibarra Shindell, Kathy Shollenberger, Alec Simpson, Steven Stichter, Kamala Subramanian, Shay Summers, Lynn Sylvester, Kim Thorpe, Susan Tuberville, Daniel Varillas, Denise Wamaling, Mark Wamaling, Gerald Watson, Lilibet Wenge, Ian White, Hadiya Williams, Reggie Williamson, Clare Winslow, Andrew Wodzianski, Nemesius Zambrano, and Karen Zens.

This exhibition is made possible in part through support from the Maryland State Arts Council (msac.org), The Morris & Gwendolyn Foundation, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County.

Founded in 1981, Pyramid Atlantic is a nonprofit contemporary art center fostering the creative disciplines of papermaking, printmaking, and book arts within a collaborative community. We equip, educate, and exhibit in our historic Hyattsville home. Our vision is to create an artistic hub in Hyattsville that inspires and enables local, national, and international artists to create and innovate in our core disciplines; elevates the local arts and small business scene; and enhances the quality of life for artists and neighbors. We value artistic excellence, infrastructure for artists, hands-on experiences, and collaboration.



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COMMENTARY

Hoyer, GSA Administrator Carnahan, Secretary Granholm, County Executive Alsobrooks, and Mayor Nembhard Highlight Climate and Job Investments in Build Back Better Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

By PRESS OFFICER
Congressman Steny Hoyer's Office

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (Dec. 1, 2021)—Today, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-05) joined GSA Administrator Robin Carnahan, Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm, County Executive Angela Alsobrooks, and New Carrollton Mayor Phelecia Nembhard for a tour and press availability at the IRS New Carrollton Headquarters to underscore how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Build Back Better Act will create jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in communities nationwide.

Extensive efficiency upgrades at the IRS New Carrollton Headquarters reduced energy use by more than 60%, cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20,000 metric tons annually, and saved \$2.5 million in annual operating costs. The project is an example of the kinds of investments that the Build Back Better Act will make possible in federal buildings across the country, contributing to the Biden-Harris administration's goal of net zero emissions nationwide by 2050.

"I was proud to stand with federal and local partners in front of the IRS New Carrollton Headquarters in Prince George's County today and draw attention to our efforts in Maryland to build innovative and sustainable infrastructure," said Congressman Hoyer. "Still, there is more to be done to make our state more climate resilient, more competitive, and provide more opportunities for hardworking Marylanders to get ahead. That is why President Biden and Congressional Democrats' Build Back Better Agenda is so important."

"This facility is a prime example of how the federal government can begin leading the way toward a clean energy future," said GSA

Administrator Carnahan. "Through the Build Back Better Act, we can deliver sustainable public buildings in communities across the country, creating thousands of good-paying jobs, saving taxpayers money, and spurring next-generation clean energy industries that will help cut greenhouse gas emissions."

"President Biden has set out the most ambitious climate goals of any administration—slashing our carbon pollution in half by the end of the decade, getting to 100% clean electricity by 2035, and reaching net zero by 2050," said Secretary Granholm. "This administration is moving at lightning speed to achieve those goals nationwide, but we also need to walk the walk ourselves. That's why we're using a whole-of-government approach to cut the carbon footprint of the government itself, and this site is a perfect example of what happens when we do."

"Prince George's County has been working to lead the way in clean energy, from investing in sustainable county buildings and vehicles to prioritizing transit-oriented development in our economic development strategy," said Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. "Areas like New Carrollton, where we are working to build a walkable, sustainable community with access to jobs, amenities and transit, are an excellent example of how we can improve the quality of life for our residents while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Build Back Better Act will help communities like ours further invest in clean energy, new jobs, and so much more for our residents."

The Build Back Better Act would be the single largest investment in combating climate change in U.S. history and would enable even more of America's public buildings to be sustainable and more cost-

efficient. The bill that passed the House of Representatives includes funding for GSA to purchase low-carbon materials and test next-generation clean energy technologies. The Build Back Better Act will also accelerate the move to electrify the federal fleet by allowing GSA to procure approximately 98,000 zero emission vehicles and install 49,000 charging stations across the country.

Secretary Granholm and Administrator Carnahan also highlighted their joint efforts to maximize the climate investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Build Back Better:

Green Proving Ground: GSA and DOE recently issued a Request for Information for the next-generation of emerging technologies that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from commercial buildings.

Grid-Interactive Buildings: Earlier this year, GSA, with support from, DOE's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) published a blueprint for integrating grid-interactive technologies into building renovation and improvement projects, particularly using federal energy savings performance contracts.

New Facility Standards: GSA also announced that it has updated its facility design standard (known as the P100) to require new and major renovations to be net zero ready, or designed to be ultra-efficient with the goal of achieving net-zero energy. P100 also requires climate resiliency, a careful look at embodied carbon, and an 80% reduction in fossil fuel.

DOE's fact sheet on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is available at https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-fact-sheet-bipartisan-infrastructure-deal-will-deliver-american-workers-families-and-0?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govDelivery.

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

The Montgomery Bus Boycott, 66 Years Ago This Week, Roused People Across the Nation to Demand Equal Rights

"There comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. There comes a time, my friends, when people get tired of being plunged across the abyss of humiliation, where they experience the bleakness of nagging despair. There comes a time when people get tired of being pushed out of the glittering sunlight of life's July and left standing amid the piercing chill of an alpine November. There comes a time."

—Martin Luther King, Jr., December 5 1955, Address to the first Montgomery Improvement Association Mass Meeting

This week marks the anniversary of the first of the Mass Meetings that drove the strategy and spirit of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a foundational event in the Civil Rights Movement.

My parents were active in the Civil Rights Movement in Louisiana at the time, and their experiences illustrate how the Montgomery protests reverberated throughout the South, and also how New Orleans' distinctive history shaped racial issues there.

Even during slavery, New Orleans was home to

a large community of free people of color, the gens de couleur libre—many of whom had never been enslaved. Many were refugees from Saint-Domingue—now Haiti—who fled the revolution.

As Jim Crow took over the south, many formerly enslaved people also flocked to Louisiana.

It was this class of free people of color who became the early civil rights activists, including Homer Plessy, whose parents were among those refugees from Haiti.

To quote my mother, Sybil Haydel Morial, in her memoir, Witness to Change: "In many instances, including the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, Louisiana initiated important changes in civil rights thinking and activism. The significance of these events was often obscured because of the unusual, often subtle, way in which they developed."

Many Louisianians, both white and Black, were accustomed to accommodation in a way that was not yet acceptable in other parts of the South.

This is not to say Louisiana did not have its share of racial violence. In the 1960s, Bogalusa, Louisiana, was thought to have the highest per-

capita Ku Klux Klan membership in America. But in certain parts of the state, overt violence was tempered because of the tradition of compromise that had developed between the races over the centuries.

Which may be why few people may aware that two years before the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a Baptist minister by the name of T.J. Jemison led a bus boycott in Baton Rouge.

In those days, the screens on buses proclaiming "For Colored Patrons Only" were placed in holes on the backs of seats and could be moved forward and back. Black riders had to sit behind the screens. Sometimes, "just for devilment," as my mother would say, a Black student would sit in front of the screen, prompting the driver to stop the bus and demand that the student move behind the screen. Often, the offending student would fling the sign out the window and be put off the bus.

Once, when he was a teenager, my father, Dutch, who was very light skinned, boarded the bus and sat directly behind the screen. A white passenger who assumed my father also was white, picked up the sign and moved it behind him so he was in the white section. Without saying a word, my father moved the screen back in front of him. Again, the white passenger moved the screen behind him, saying, "You belong in front of the screen."

Again, my father placed the screen in front of him and said, "I know where I belong."

My father began his career as a civil rights attorney in 1954, the year of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, but it took a detour when he was drafted into the Army. My parents spent the first year of their marriage in Maryland and returned to Louisiana in September of 1956. The Montgomery Bus Boycott had been underway for nine months by then.

Although *Brown v. Board of Education* had been decided two years earlier, the laws of "Separate But

Equal" had to be individually challenged in each Southern state. The layers of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund—including future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall—were traveling the country to assist local attorneys in arguing cases in each state.

My father, who was just 26 years old, was privileged to be a part of this team as they worked together on a strategy to challenge Louisiana's segregation laws.

They often worked late and because the team included both Black and white attorneys, they were not legally permitted to eat in a restaurant together. That's why Doekey Chase restaurant kept a separate upstairs room where the interracial group could meet over Leah Chase's hot gumbo and red beans and rice.

The state law requiring segregation on public transportation, the one that had been challenged with that boycott in Baton Rouge in 1953, finally was overturned by a federal judge in 1958. A biracial group of leaders decided the signs saying "For Colored Patrons Only" would be removed at midnight the day the decision went into effect, and no media alerted.

My parents laughed when my father told my mother that some of the white leaders had asked how, with no media attention, the Negroes would know they were free to sit anywhere on the buses and streetcars.

My father and his colleagues assured them that word would be quietly disseminated through our networks and people would begin to move freely on the buses. And of course, they did.

Rosa Parks' arrest served as a clarion call for people all across the nation. I'm proud of how my parents answered that call. I strive every day to carry on their legacy.

—December 3, 2021

Benjamin L. Cardin

United States Senator for Maryland



Cardin, Van Hollen, Brown and Trone Announce \$3 Million to Hire Law Enforcement Professionals to Reduce Crime in Prince George's and Allegany Counties

WASHINGTON (Nov. 22, 2021)—U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen and Congressmen Anthony G. Brown and David Trone (all D-Md.) today announced \$3 million in federal funding to hire 24 law enforcement professionals in Prince George's and Allegany Counties through the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program. This program seeks to reduce crime and advance public safety through community policing by providing direct funding for the hiring of career law enforcement officers, increasing their community policing capacity, and improving crime prevention efforts.

"Reducing persistent crime in our communities takes a full commitment from all levels of government. No community should face these threats to peace and security alone," the lawmakers said. "This infusion of federal funding will equip local police departments with the personnel and re-

sources they need to deter crime, while building trust between the officers and the communities they serve."

Funding comes from the Department of Justice's COPS Hiring Program (CHP). Awardees include:

- \$2,125,000 for the City of Seat Pleasant to hire 17 law enforcement officers
- \$500,000 for the Town of Forest Heights to hire 4 law enforcement officers
- \$375,000 for the City of Cumberland to hire 3 law enforcement officers

The COPS Hiring Program is a competitive award program. CHP provides funds directly to law enforcement agencies to hire new or rehire additional career law enforcement officers.

Previously, the lawmakers announced more than \$600,000 for Community Policing Development Programs.

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Prince George's County Emergency Rental Assistance Program to Stop Accepting New Applications

New Application Deadline **December 15**

By ALEXIS REVIS YEOMAN
Department of Housing and Community Development

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 2, 2021)—The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will close the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) application portal on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 3 p.m. The ERAP will continue to review and process remaining applications after the application portal closes. Closing the application portal will ensure that DHCD

has the funding needed for the open applications that still need to be processed for payment, including applications received between now and December 15.

The Prince George's County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) has assisted over 5,200 households, making over \$42 million in rent and utility payments to landlords on behalf of tenants since March 2021. These payments have enabled tenants to stay housed during the COVID-19 pandemic while assisting landlords in maintaining their mortgage obligations. To date,

Prince George's County has been leading the State in the deployment of rental assistance funds, and in collaboration with our non-profit community partners, Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, the Office of the Sheriff, and the Office of Community Relations, we continue to work in diverting evictions and in keeping families safely housed.

DHCD is pleased to be a recipient of the State of Maryland's ERA 1 supplemental assistance. With these funds, DHCD will be able to finalize the award-

ing of an additional \$20 million to County residents affected by the pandemic.

Working with its community service providers, DHCD will ensure that the remaining ERAP funds will be used to provide assistance for eligible pending applications. Low-income households facing eviction and residents with addresses in a census tract of greatest vulnerability will continue to be prioritized. Applicants will be contacted by their assigned reviewers to finalize all necessary information. Residents with pending

eviction cases should continue to reach out to DHCD and call the ERAP Hotline at 301-883-6504 and press 9.

The submission of an application does not guarantee approval for ERAP assistance. All applications are carefully reviewed and subject to state and federal eligibility requirements. Applications are also subject to the availability of funding at the time of processing.

Calls and questions can be made to the ERAP Hotline customer service representatives on 301-883-6504 or by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/pgERAP>.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Should I Take My Widower Benefit Now?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty: I lost my wife 7 years ago. I was told that I could possibly collect 30 to 35% of her benefit as a widower benefit when I turned 60. I will be 61 soon. Would it make sense to pursue this if it is true? I am still working full time. Would this affect my ability to collect Social Security on my own account once I retire? **Signed: Working Survivor**

Dear Working: Survivor benefits for a widower can be paid as early as age 60 if you have not remarried prior to that. But collecting a survivor benefit before you have reached your full retirement age (your "FRA", which is age 67) creates some other considerations you should be aware of:

- Your survivor benefit will be based upon the SS benefit your wife was entitled to at her death. Taken at your FRA you'd get 100% of the SS amount your wife was entitled to at her death, but if taken any earlier than your FRA the survivor benefit will be reduced.
- Taken before your FRA, your survivor benefit will be actuarially reduced according to the number of months prior to your FRA it is claimed. The reduction amount is 4.75% less per full year earlier than your FRA, and that is a permanent reduction. If you take your survivor benefit at age 61, you'll get 71.5% of the SS benefit your wife had earned up to her death.
- Since you're not yet receiving your own SS retirement benefit, you can take your survivor benefit first and allow your personal SS retirement benefit to grow. Assuming your personal SS retirement benefit will be more than your survivor benefit, you can switch from your survivor benefit to your SS retirement benefit at any time after you are age-eligible to do so (age 62). You can also, if you wish, choose to continue your survivor benefit up until your personal SS retirement benefit reaches maximum at age 70. At age 70 your own benefit will be 24% more than your FRA benefit amount.
- If you claim the survivor benefit before your FRA and you are still working, you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn before SS takes away some of your benefit. The earnings limit for 2021 is \$18,960 (the 2022 limit is \$19,560) and if your earnings from work exceed that amount, SS will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit.

So, although you can claim a survivor benefit from your deceased wife now (and allow your own SS benefit to grow), practically speaking you may not be able to get a survivor benefit if you are working full time and earning considerably more than the annual earnings limit. In other words, the penalty for exceeding the earnings limit may entirely offset the survivor benefit you are entitled to. If you're over the earnings limit by only a small amount, you'll only lose benefits for the number of months needed to repay what you owe. And for clarity, in the year you attain FRA the earnings limit goes up by about 2.5 times and the penalty is less (\$1 for every \$3 you are over the limit), and once you reach your full retirement age there is no longer a limit to how much you can earn. To avoid the earnings test, you could also choose to wait until your FRA to maximize your survivor benefit and then wait until age 70 to claim your maximum SS retirement benefit.

Regardless of when you claim your survivor benefit, your own SS retirement benefit won't be affected. Your SS retirement benefit, which will replace your smaller survivor benefit, will be based solely on your lifetime earnings history and the age at which you claim it.

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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Prince George's County Announces New \$15 Million ROFR Preservation Fund

Additional \$1 Million for the Home Ownership Preservation Program

By ALEXIS REVIS YEOMAN
Department of Housing and Community Development

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 29, 2021)—Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks announced on Nov. 29 the launch of the Right of First Refusal (ROFR) Preservation Fund and committed \$15 million from the American Rescue Plan Act over a three-year period. The announcement took place at Hamilton Manor, 3342 Lancer Drive, Hyattsville, MD at 1 p.m. The County recently exercised its Right of First Refusal (ROFR) on Hamilton Manor, a 245-unit multi-family apartment building.

"Prince George's County is committed to preserving housing affordability and we are working hard to diversify the County's housing stock. We cannot have quality economic development without affordable housing. Our key economic development goals for growing jobs and the commercial tax base must be anchored by infrastructure that serves a range of household incomes, especially around transit-oriented development opportunities," said County Executive Alsobrooks. "Our community is growing, and it is up to us to make the right choices now. This year, our administration has exercised our Right of First Refusal (ROFR) program for the first time.

The ROFR Preservation Fund is helping us to preserve, protect and expand quality, safe homes that residents of all incomes can afford."

The fund will support the preservation of existing naturally occurring affordable housing in the County. It will be used to strengthen the implementation of the existing ROFR program and will assist in preserving the affordability in properties located in Qualified Census Tracts, particularly in transit-oriented areas as well as targeted areas of economic development growth. The fund will help to ensure that low and moderate County renters can maintain residency as the County grows and prospers.

In December 2020, the County relaunched the ROFR program, then exercised it on two multi-family properties in the County. According to Resolution CR-51-2015, the County can exercise its Right of First Refusal where the owner of a multi-family rental property of 20 units or more intends to sell the apartment building. The Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has the authority to purchase the property or assign its rights to a third party developer in an effort to stabilize, preserve and expand housing opportunities for low and moderate income households and increase the availability of quality affordable

rental housing in designated areas of the County.

In addition to launching the ROFR Preservation Fund, County Executive Alsobrooks also launched the Home Ownership Preservation Program (HOPP) with a \$1 million investment. HOPP can provide up to \$30,000 to homeowners for health, safety, energy efficiency and accessibility repairs in qualified, owner-occupied homes. Households under 50% of the area median income (AMI) can receive up to \$50,000 in services. There are income, location, and eligibility requirements. DHCD has partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Metro Maryland to implement this program in the County's qualified census tract areas with special emphasis on homes within one mile of a future Purple Line transit stop.

Home preservation services may include the following: roofing and gutters, electrical repair, plumbing repair, tree removal, stairlift and accessibility equipment, HVAC replacement and repair, water heater replacement/repair and more.

For additional information on the ROFR Preservation Fund or HOPP, e-mail Pam Wilson, Housing Development Program Manager, Housing Development Division, Prince George's County Department of Housing & Community Development: pawilson@co.pg.md.us

Comcast Rise Announces Major Expansion to All Women-Owned Small Businesses Nationwide Starting in 2022

In its first year alone, Comcast RISE has provided over \$60 million in grants, marketing, and technology services to support more than 6,700 small businesses owned by people of color. With the expansion to all women-owned small businesses, the program is on track to support 13,000 business by the end of 2022.

By SANDY ARNETTE
Comcast

NEW YORK (Nov. 23, 2021)—Comcast Corporation announces today a major expansion of Comcast RISE to all women-owned businesses nationwide, furthering its efforts to advance digital equity and help provide underrepresented small business owners with access to the digital tools and funding they need to thrive.

In its first year alone, Comcast RISE has provided more than \$60 million in grants, marketing, and technology services to more than 6,700 small businesses owned by people of color—including Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Asian Americans. Of the 6,700 Comcast RISE recipients to date, nearly 70% have been businesses owned by women of color, spurring Comcast to take a deeper look into the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

According to a study by the National Association of Women Business Owners, 42% of businesses in the U.S. are owned by women, with more than 1,800 new businesses being started every day. That's nearly five times the national average. However, according to the same study, women-owned businesses are growing at only half the rate of those run by men, namely because women struggle to access capital and other resources to help them succeed.

Sarah Sommer, Co-Founder of iFund-

Women echoes this important point, "The data about how women, a rapidly increasing number of whom are small business owners, have fared during the pandemic is stark. Women business owners tend to have limited access to capital and debt-free funding options, yet they represent a tremendous opportunity. Women-owned businesses deliver two times higher revenue per dollar invested than those founded by men, making them great investments."

"As we continue to rebuild and emerge from the effects of the pandemic, small businesses will continue to be the backbone of our economy—and we must take every opportunity to help them thrive," said Teresa Ward-Maupin, Senior Vice President, Digital and Customer Experience, Comcast Business. "Looking forward, this expansion will enable Comcast RISE to further empower and strengthen even more small businesses that are the heart of our local communities across the country."

Comcast RISE, which stands for Representation, Investment, Strength, and Empowerment, is part of Project UP, Comcast's comprehensive initiative to advance digital equity and help provide underrepresented small business owners with access to the digital tools and funding they need to thrive. Over the next 10 years, Comcast has committed \$1 billion to programs, like Comcast RISE, and partnerships that will reach an estimated 50 million people with

the skills, opportunities, and resources they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world.

Comcast recently announced its fifth round of Comcast RISE recipients, which includes 1,400 small businesses owned by people of color, that will receive a TV campaign, production of a TV commercial or consulting services from Effectv or computer equipment, internet, voice or cybersecurity from Comcast Business. [NOTE: 39 of these small businesses are in Comcast's Beltway Region, which includes Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., and parts of Delaware, North Carolina and West Virginia.] In addition, as part of round two of the Comcast RISE Investment Fund, 600 additional small businesses in Houston, Miami, Oakland, Seattle, the Twin Cities, and Washington, D.C. will each receive \$10,000 grants, bringing the total Comcast RISE Investment Fund recipients to 1,100.

Comcast RISE, which just celebrated its one year anniversary, will continue to be open to racially and ethnically diverse small business owners and the expanded Comcast RISE eligibility to all women-owned businesses will be effective on January 16, 2022. More information and the applications to apply for either the grant program or marketing and technology services are available at www.ComcastRISE.com.

ENVIRONMENT

Bike Infrastructure Will Help Prevent Crashes and Fatalities, Advocates and Researchers Say

By JULIA ARBUTUS AND MOLLY CASTLE WORK
Capital News Service

There are 2,000 miles of road in Baltimore City. Only 10 of those miles include separated bike infrastructure that divides the road into distinct lanes for cars and bikes.

This is not unique to Baltimore City. Across the state, only fractions of county roadway systems include bike infrastructure, the markers, barriers and laws—like a reduced speed limit—that allow bicyclists to safely share the road with motorists.

A Capital News Service data analysis of Maryland Highway Safety Office crash data found that of the average of 813 crashes that occurred each year from 2016 to 2020, only 4.7% occurred in a bikeway, a road or street path designated for bicycle use. An overwhelming majority of crashes took place on roads without bike infrastructure.

“Many U.S. cities are very heavily designed around the car,” said Romie Aevaz, a policy analyst at the Eno Center for Transportation in Washington, D.C. “Having protected bike infrastructure is incredibly important because it gives you the opportunity to safely bike around your neighborhood or your city without fear of getting into a catastrophic crash with a motorist.”

While Maryland ranks 14 in the country as a bicycle-friendly state, according to a 2019 report from the League of American Bicyclists, bike advocacy groups across the state have pushed for infrastructure changes and legislative action to protect bicyclists. These concerns are well-founded, as there is an 81% chance a crash will result in an injury, according to Maryland crash records.

But rebuilding roads to accommodate bikes takes funding, something smaller, local jurisdictions may not have the capacity to apply for without additional state support.

Current Maryland state funding for bike infrastructure comes from the Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program, with additional federal funding from the Recreational Trails Program and the Transportation Alternatives Program, the latter of which will increase by 60% by 2026 due to the recently passed Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

It is with this funding that Governor Larry Hogan recently announced \$16.8 million in September for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

The MDOT State Highway Administration is planning to provide an additional \$118 million in funding for bike and pedestrian improvements between 2022 and 2027 and earlier this year implemented the latest update to the state’s five-year Strategic Highway Safety Plan, which places a “core emphasis” on bicycle and pedestrian improvements, said Sherry Christian, spokesperson for MDOT.

“Although the COVID pandemic has impacted all areas of our programs, the Maryland Department of Transportation is committed to continuing to invest in improving safety throughout the state and looks



PHOTO CREDIT MOLLY CASTLE WORK / UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

A separated bike lane in Montgomery County.

to add funding as it becomes available to areas where we have critical needs including our bicycle and pedestrian funds and Vision Zero efforts,” Christian said.

Across the state, Baltimore City has the highest number of crashes adjusted for population, and the highest overall.

In the city, where about one third of households don’t own a car according to the Baltimore City Department of Transportation, advocates say bikes could fill an obvious transportation need, but bike lanes don’t extend throughout the city.

This is especially dangerous for bicyclists crossing at intersections, where bike lanes rarely exist and the highest average percentage of crashes and injuries occurred over the past five years throughout the state.

A local advocacy group, Bikemore, is currently working on a plan to connect 85% of Baltimore neighborhoods with separated bike infrastructure. While the plan was approved under the former City Council, the group hopes the new council, under Mayor Brandon Scott, will be able to allocate financial support for the plan.

“If you build it, they will come,” said Jed Weeks, Bikemore’s interim executive director and policy director. “When you build that infrastructure the riders rapidly develop where they weren’t before.”

Researchers, like Aevaz and Daniel Rodriguez, associate director of the Institute for Transportation Studies at University of California, Berkeley, also said that adding bike infrastructure can help reconnect communities that have been torn apart by highways and road construction, making it difficult for people to travel to school or work.

“One of the key challenges of bicycle infrastructure in fact is that

it’s very sensitive precisely to those barriers,” Rodriguez said. “Think about a river without a bridge. That’s exactly what that highway looks like.”

This issue exists in Worcester County too, where Route 50, which connects Marylanders to Ocean City, a popular beach tourist destination, and other highways segment the county. MDOT recently constructed a shared use path along the final stretch of Route 50 across the bridge to Ocean City.

Complicating matters even more, Worcester County is unique in that it accommodates more than 300,000 visitors on a peak summer weekend to Ocean City, according to State Ventures LLC, pushing the population to look more like that of Howard County.

The state, however, only allocates funding to Worcester County based on its year-round population of 52,460, which does not take into account the county’s seasonal population surge, according to Patti Stevens, co-chair of the Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Coalition.

“It’s hard to do [bike] education and outreach when you don’t have a standard population,” Stevens said.

She said it’s also challenging for smaller jurisdictions in the county to implement large bike projects because they don’t have the bandwidth or the workforce of a larger county.

Stevens hopes the coalition, which was recently created in June 2020, will encourage increased collaboration across the Eastern Shore, so that they can organize more effectively as a regional unit for increased bicycle infrastructure.

According to Christian, MDOT continues to seek feedback from local program sponsors as they problem solve how to improve the administration of TAP funds. MDOT recently updated the TAP manual and application to streamline the process.

However, in order to build bike infrastructure, counties need legislative and financial support from the state and federal government.

In this upcoming legislative session, bike advocates across Maryland are currently supporting three bills meant to make roads safer that already have sponsors in the House of Delegates, according to the Washington Area Bicyclist Association’s board member Peter Gray.

The first, if passed, would mandate the SHA to investigate any crash involving a fatality and provide recommendations within six months of the crash regarding how to prevent it from happening in the future. The second would mandate the SHA spend a certain amount of money to fix road networks where crashes take place, and the third would enable localities to reduce speed limits on state roads.

While the state and federal government have programs in place to fund state bike projects, advocates say smaller jurisdictions need more support in applying for grants and implementing projects. Additionally, while advocates said they are appreciative that the government has allocated funds in support of bike infrastructure, they said the recent \$16.8 million allocation is only a drop in the bucket compared to what the state really needs to bolster its bike infrastructure.

“All of this is preventable with the right type of investment, not just in Baltimore City, but statewide,” Weeks said. “All that is preventable. But we’re not spending the money that way.”

Earth TALK™

How Are Florida’s Manatees Faring?

Dear EarthTalk:

How are Florida’s manatees faring lately and what has the government and/or conservationists been doing to protect them?

—JoAnne B., Sumter, SC

Indeed, Florida’s manatees have come back from where they stood on the brink of extinction in the late 1960s, when only a few hundred individuals remained in the wild. Today over 6,000 of the herbivorous “sea cows” swim the Indian River Lagoon and Florida’s other near-shore waterways. But newer threats including the die-off of their preferred browse (seagrass), habitat destruction due to shoreline development and runoff, an uptick in commercial and recreational activities and global warming have put Florida’s manatees back on the ropes, and conservationists are again ramping up efforts to protect them.

Given all we know about being respectful to wildlife and giving them space, it’s hard to believe that 2021 has been the worst year in recorded history for manatees, with Florida wildlife officials reporting a whopping 1003 manatee deaths in state waters so far this year. That’s a 37 percent increase in manatee deaths over 2020, when biologists recorded 637 kills.

More than half of 2021’s deaths have

been in the Indian River Lagoon, a 156-mile east central Florida coastal estuary that stretches across six counties. Manatees have long thrived in the Lagoon’s warm, brackish waters and consumed its abundant seagrass. Over the past 20 years, however, tens of thousands of acres of seagrass have vanished; the University of Florida estimates that up to 95 percent of seagrass is gone from some areas of the Lagoon. The main culprit is runoff from fertilizer and septic systems, which has polluted the water and promoted toxic algae blooms. These blooms deplete the water’s oxygen levels and cloud its surface, decreasing the amount of light available to seagrasses for photosynthesis.

While it is currently illegal in Florida to feed manatees in the wild, conservation groups like Save the Manatee Club are now considering taking matters into their own hands by providing “supplemental feedings” to halt the unprecedented starvations. Meanwhile, rescuing injured or starving manatees remains a top priority of the group, which has helped rescue upwards of 130 manatees in 2021 alone while also funding facilities to rehab injured manatees so they can return to the wild.

Meanwhile, biologists from the University of Florida, University of Central Florida and elsewhere are working to restore water-filtering oyster popula-

tions along the Lagoon. These bivalves consume and remove harmful contaminants from the water, nurturing otherwise dwindling seagrass communities that serve as the lifeblood and main nutrient of manatees.

Just four years ago, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) down-listed the manatee from endangered to threatened. In light of this year’s population plight, Florida Congressmen Vern Buchanan and Darren Soto are currently backing the Manatee Protection Act, which would place the manatee back into endangered status under the Endangered Species Act. An upgraded endangered status would require the FWS to accelerate action on manatee repopulation efforts.

CONTACTS: Save the Manatee Club, savethemanatee.org; Indian Riverkeeper: Our Waters, theindianriverkeeper.org/our-waters/; Manatee Mortality Event Along The East Coast: 2020–2021, myfwc.com/research/manatee/rescue-mortality-response/ume/.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

4 New Ways Agriculture Is Fighting Climate Change

(StatePoint) Agriculture contributes about 17 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, according to the United Nations. And while the sector is a key contributor to climate change, it is also vulnerable to its effects—with climate-related impacts such as droughts, flooding and longer fire seasons posing increasingly serious challenges to farmers and ranchers around the world.

The good news is there is a fast-growing sustainable agriculture movement, and it’s continuing to accelerate as the need becomes more urgent. Here are a few examples of new technologies and practices that agricultural entrepreneurs are developing to adapt to the challenges of climate change and become part of the solution.

1. California-based TerViva is commercializing a climate-resilient legume that can withstand harsh weather conditions. Its protein- and oil-rich seeds are a sustainable alternative to palm and soy.

2. Missouri’s Pluton Biosciences is developing a microbial product that can be applied at planting and harvest to scrub nearly two tons of carbon from the air per acre of farmland per year, while replenishing nutrients in the soil.

3. Indoor agriculture is an emerging solution that addresses the challenges of weather, pests, and limitations in space and water, but it also requires significant energy to supply light in place of the sun. Colorado startup SunPath addresses this problem by using fiber optic indoor lighting, delivering actual sunlight deep inside buildings. And Pennsylvania-based GrowFlux’s intelligent lighting systems provides 20–30% energy savings when used for indoor horticulture.

4. Nitrous oxide is a greenhouse gas released from agriculture fields that is nearly 300 times more potent

than carbon dioxide, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Tennessee-based startup mobius is developing the next generation of biodegradable plastics made from a byproduct of the agriculture and forestry industries that can be used to deliver nitrogen for plants in a controlled manner and in place of fossil-fuel based fertilizers, improving soil quality, minimizing harmful nitrogen runoff, and significantly reducing emissions.

Experts point out that the need for such solutions is urgent, and so is the support that will allow these emerging technologies to succeed.

“Accelerating climate-technology innovation is essential if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change,” said Trish Cozart, director of the Wells Fargo Innovation Incubator (IN2), a technology incubator that connects ag-tech startups to experts and facilities at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center. “In order for new technologies to make a true impact, they need to prove to investors that these products are truly capable of delivering what they promise. Through IN2, startups get the support they need to validate their technologies, including access to a network of on-farm sites to test products and solutions in a real-world setting.”

“The finance sector is increasingly seeing sustainable investment as both a responsibility and an opportunity,” said Wells Fargo’s Agribusiness Division executive, Jacquie Fredericks. “The importance of the agriculture sector to our livelihood cannot be understated, and we’re encouraged by this new wave of climate-smart technologies focused on securing our access to food and raw materials, while making meaningful contributions to the fight against climate change.”



CREDIT: NOAA, UNSPLASH

Florida’s manatees face a host of threats, not the least of which is boat strikes which have killed hundreds of them in the Indian River Lagoon alone this year.

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Happy 19th anniversary to Johnny and Helen Richardson on Dec. 14.

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Welcomes New General Surgeon Ryan W.F. Faught

Board-eligible physician joined hospital in October 2021

By CHERYL RICHARDSON
Medstar Health

CLINTON, Md. (Dec. 1, 2021)—MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is pleased to welcome its newest board-eligible general surgeon, Ryan W.F. Faught, MD, who joined the hospital in October 2021. Dr. Faught attended medical school at the Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA, and went on to complete his general surgery residency at Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell Health in New Hyde Park, NY. After residency, he joined the faculty there as an assistant professor of surgery, focusing on advanced robotic and minimally invasive techniques for repair of complex hernias.

Dr. Faught is a firm believer in presenting all options and treatments to his patients prior to proceeding with surgery. By utilizing a patient-centric approach, Dr. Faught is committed to providing

first-class surgical care and keeping patients well-informed.

"When medically possible, I'm a firm believer in the trial of non-operative care prior to proceeding with surgery. This patient-centric approach, in many instances, leads to relief in anxiety, symptoms and alleviates the need for surgery. My goal with every patient is to present all the options and treatments for their condition. As your surgeon, we'll develop a plan together with which you are comfortable. A well-informed patient and excellent communication, paired with first-class surgical care, results in unparalleled patient outcomes."

Dr. Faught offers care and treatment for a variety of medical conditions including benign and malignant skin lesions; diseases of the colon and rectum; as well as diseases of the stomach, small intestine, colon, gallbladder and appendix.

To make an appointment with Dr. Faught, call 301-877-7202.

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