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Bob Hall, LLC Lit Up the Streets in National Harbor and North Beach With the Budweiser Clydesdales, Washington Commanders Command Force and Folds of Honor Scholarship Recipients

Thousands of people attended events, bringing friends and families together, and creating joy for the community during the holiday season

By PRESS OFFICER
Bob Hall, LLC

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Dec. 19, 2023)—Bob Hall, LLC, a 90-year-old family-owned beer and beverage distributor serving Prince George's, Calvert and Charles Counties, brought the world famous Budweiser Clydesdales to two local parades this past week to celebrate the holidays with the communities they love and serve. Joining the Clydesdales were members of the Washington Commanders Command Force performance team and special presentations were given to Folds of Honor scholarship recipients from each area.

"We've been a proud member and supporter of our local community for more than 90 years, while the Clydesdales have brought joy and entertain-

ment for that same amount of time," said Dan Hoose, General Manager of Bob Hall, LLC. "These events were a great way to honor our military and first responder families through the Folds of Honor scholarships and highlight our ongoing commitment to the communities we serve. And what fun to celebrate the holiday season with thousands of smiling friends and neighbors, many of whom followed the entire parade route to cheer and take photos."

Local Support

During each parade, Bob Hall team members stopped at restaurant locations to deliver a ceremonial case of Budweiser beer from the top of the wagon hitch to local customers. The company

See CLYDESDALES Page A2



PHOTO CREDIT: CHARDAE LEE

The Budweiser Clydesdales made their way through National Harbor, MD with Bob Hall, LLC team members meeting customers along the route.

NPS to Conduct Deer Population Reduction Operations at Fort Dupont, Fort Washington and Greenbelt Parks

By PRESS OFFICER
National Park Service

WASHINGTON (Dec. 20, 2023)—To protect and restore native plants and promote healthy and diverse forests, the National Park Service (NPS) will reduce deer populations between January 2 and April 15, 2024, at Fort Dupont, Fort Washington and Greenbelt parks. These national parks in Washington, D.C. and Maryland are managed by National Capital Parks - East.

Extensive safety measures will be in place to protect park visitors and neighbors during operations. Under the direction of NPS resource management specialists and in coordination with U.S. Park Police and local law enforcement, highly trained firearms experts experienced in conducting wildlife reduction operations will work at night when the parks are closed to the public in a manner proven safe and effective.

NPS staff will be posted during temporary night-time road and trail closures for visitor and employee safety during reduction activities. Commenters, including cyclists, are advised to plan alternate routes. Visitors and area residents are encouraged to check their local national park's website for the most up-to-date information and are reminded to respect posted closures. Hunting is illegal in these Maryland and D.C. national parks.

Over the past 20 years, an overabundant white-tailed deer population has damaged forest regeneration in areas across Maryland and D.C. in-

cluding at NACE parks. The NPS initiated a public process to create a plan, finalized in 2022, which calls for reducing the deer populations to support long-term protection and restoration of native plants and promote a healthy and diverse forest. The park's Management Plan / Environmental Assessment includes the following parks:

Maryland: Fort Washington Park, Fort Foote, Piscataway Park, Oxon Cove Park, Harmony Hall, Greenbelt Park, Baltimore-Washington Parkway and Suitland Parkway.

Washington, D.C.: Anacostia Park, Kenilworth Park and Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Fort Mahan, Fort Dupont, Fort Davis, Fort Chaplin, Fort Stanton, Fort Ricketts, Fort Greble, Battery Carroll and Shepherd Parkway.

Research has shown that vegetation damage occurs when deer populations exceed 20 per square mile. Without long-term management, deer populations would quickly rebound and again eat tree seedlings and other young plants. The NPS will monitor how well plants are growing with fewer deer, and the findings will help inform ongoing deer management actions.

Whenever possible, the NPS will donate all suitable meat from reduction activities to local food banks, consistent with NPS public health guidelines.

For further information including a list of sites managed by National Capital Parks - East visit: go.nps.gov/NACEdeermgmt.

Bowie Celebrates Superintendent's Recommendation on Pointer Ridge Elementary School; Names Police Chief

By UNA COOPER
City of Bowie

The City of Bowie commends Prince George's County School Superintendent Millard House II's recommendation to keep Pointer Ridge Elementary School open for the 2024-2025 school year. His proposal includes operating an autism program at the school that is anticipated to increase enrollment to 80-85%. This regional program would be in addition to those programs that already exist around the County.

Led by Mayor Tim Adams, the City Council has strongly supported keeping the elementary school open. "We worked hard to ensure that Pointer Ridge's doors could remain open for students in the City of Bowie, especially those residing in District 4. We believe in neighborhood schools and are extremely grateful to Superintendent Millard House and our Board member Dr. Zipporah Miller for arriving at a solution that will benefit everyone and keep the school community intact."

Pointer Ridge Elementary School is in City Council District 4. Roxy Ndebumadu, who represents the district on the City Council and lobbied hard alongside the school community to keep it open, is extremely pleased by the announcement: "I want to say a heartfelt thank

you to the community for trusting my advocacy for education in the City of Bowie," Ndebumadu added. "Thanks to the community, we did it! We kept our school open and put our children first. It's an amazing day for District 4 residents."

Superintendent House will present this recommendation to the School Board during its meeting on January 11, 2024. Implementation is contingent upon the Board's approval.

Bowie City Manager Alfred Lott Names Dwayne Preston as Chief of Police

The City of Bowie has selected a new Chief of Police to replace John Nesky, who retired in September after 12 years in the position. Dwayne Preston has served as Acting Chief of Police for the City since Nesky's departure. The appointment is effective immediately.

Mr. Preston is a 30-year veteran of law enforcement, serving as Deputy Chief before assuming the position of Acting Chief. In this position, he oversaw the department's daily operations and internal investigations, served as the primary author of the department's strategic plan, and implemented the department's body-worn camera program. He also served on Prince George's County's Police Reform Taskforce convened by County Executive Angela Alsobrooks, a role

that provided him an opportunity to offer recommendations that would improve the County's Police Department and the policing profession overall.

Before joining the City's Police Department, Preston served as the Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Administration for the Prince George's County Police Department. He is a proud graduate of DeMatha Catholic High School. He earned an Accounting degree from Bowie State University and holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland, University College.

City Manager Alfred Lott said, "After an exhaustive, nationwide search, I am proud to say that Dwayne Preston is the best person to head up the Bowie Police Department. He understands Bowie, he has built strong bridges between City and County Police Departments, and I know he will continue the fine tradition of service with integrity and community policing that the Bowie Police Department has been known for."

The Chief of Police manages the City of Bowie's Police Department, whose role is to protect and serve City residents and visitors, and their property. There will be a swearing in ceremony for Chief Preston at the next City Council meeting on January 2, 2024.

Lawmakers May Revisit Issue of Drivers Smelling of Marijuana

By LUCY HUBBARD
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 8, 2023)—When leaving a meeting at Prince George's Community College Monday night, the Rev. Robert L. Screen and his wife were shocked when a car drove past them smelling so strongly of marijuana that they both noticed it even with their windows rolled up.

The couple had just left the MD Route 210 Traffic Safety Committee, an organization that Screen founded, when the car drove past. Screen carefully put some distance between him and the other car, as it sped off down the road.

"My wife and I were just taken aback and said, 'This is the landscape of what we're going to be dealing with for the future,'" Screen said.

Opponents of a law prohibiting police

from using the odor of marijuana as probable cause to stop and search a vehicle or person said these problems are just as they predicted when the law went into effect July 1. Now some of those critics plan to return to the legislature in January to ask that it be changed. At the same time, police are trying to figure out exactly what they can do to marijuana-impaired drivers to keep them off the roads.

The Fines for Smoking in Public, Stops, and Searches law was approved during the final minutes of the 2023 session. Several Republicans wanted to explain their votes but House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones, D-Baltimore, seeing that the General Assembly session's time was about to expire, pushed the vote through. Jones' decision prompted an outburst from Del. Nicholas R. Kipke, R-Anne Arundel, and caused most Republicans to walk off the House floor in protest.

The controversy over the law continues and on Nov. 14, when Maryland's Joint Republican Caucus announced its 2024 Public Safety Agenda for the upcoming legislative session, included was a provision to overturn the smell search law.

House Minority Whip Jesse Pippy, R-Frederick, said the law limits officers' ability to police impaired driving.

"When the smell of cannabis smoke is billowing out of a moving vehicle, it is very likely that that driver is under the influence," Pippy said. "Prohibiting law enforcement from stopping said vehicle is like prohibiting an officer from stopping someone who's chugging a beer while driving."

But getting the Democratic majority General Assembly to overturn the provision will be difficult. It was approved because it addressed inequality in traffic stops, which disproportionately impact Black Marylanders.

Del. Jheanelle Wilkins, D-Montgomery,

See MARIJUANA Page A4

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

With Mary McHale, will return next week!

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

2024 CIAA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Every February, we come together, we create memories, and we build the legacy of the nation's oldest historically Black conference, the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA). February is our month to showcase our rich history. HBCU championship basketball, sports, and culture.

Bowie State University is the host once again for the CIAA Tournament. Bulldog fans are encouraged to stay connected to the Office of Alumni Engagement & Stewardship to be among the first to know about all CIAA events. Grab your family and friends and meet us February 26–March 3, 2024, in Baltimore, Maryland. ciaatournament.org.

WOMEN'S HISTORY AND NUTRITION

The Henry A. Wise Wellness Center at Bowie State University invites you to celebrate Women's History Month at our special tabling event in the Nutrition Lounge, located on the ground floor of the Thurgood Marshall Library. Join us for an enlightening experience focused on the significance of healthy eating.

Discover the art of nourishing your body, grab free recipe bags to kickstart your culinary journey, and explore empowering books authored by incredible women. Let us come together to honor Women's History Month in a truly enriching way.

Location: Thurgood Marshall Library, 14000 Jericho Park Road, Bowie, Maryland, 20715. Contact Shanelle O'Connor, email: soconnor@bowiestate.edu, phone: 301-860-4178. Categories health and wellness.

THANK YOU

Bowie State University Office of Alumni Engagement and Stewardship thank you from the bottom of our hearts, we are grateful for your support this year. Thank you and have a wonderful holiday season. Join the Virtual BSU Alumni Community. Facebook: @BSUOAE, Instagram: @BowieAlum, X: @BSUAlumniOffice. #BSU4LIFE Questions? Email alumni@bowiestate.edu.

BSU WINTER COMMENCEMENT

Bowie State University Winter Commencement was held Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 9 a.m. in the Leonidas S. James Physical Education Complex. The Keynote Speaker was Abby Phillip, Anchor, CNN Newsnight with Abby Phillip. Abby Phillip delivered remarks to over four hundred graduates at Bowie State University's Winter Commencement. She attended Bowie High School and graduated from Harvard University with a Bachelor of Arts in Government.

Phillip was previously CNN's senior political correspondent and anchor of Inside Politics Sunday. She joined the network in 2017 to cover the Trump Administration and served as a White House Correspondent through 2019. Prior to CNN, Phillip previ-

ously worked at the Washington Post, ABC News and Politico. Throughout her career she has covered multiple presidents, campaign finance, lobbying, and several presidential campaigns. Phillip is currently writing a book about Reverend Jesse Jackson's 1988 campaign to become the Democratic presidential nominee and his legacy in American politics.

MEDIA CONTACT: David Thompson, dthompson@bowiestate.edu, 301-860-4311. Bowie State University (1865) 14000 Jericho Park Road Bowie, Maryland 20715-9465. A University System of Maryland Member Institution. Contact webmaster@bowiestate.edu.

CONGRATULATIONS BRENDAN

Congratulations Brendan Johnson on passing one thousand career points for Calvert Hall. Brendan is the son of James and Vera Johnson, grandson of the late Earnest Johnson and late Brenda Turner Johnson. Great grandson of the late Rev. Ernest and Elizabeth Johnson, and great grandson of the late James Garnell and the late Ruth Turner.

A NOVICE TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER

(Book Overview) From a somewhat disadvantaged upbringing, the author shares basic tried and true tips used during his career to successful progress from an entry level government position to the Senior Executive Service (SES), the highest level of management in the US Government.

These tried-and-true tips are provided so that the reader does not have to "rediscover the wheel." These basic tips will jumpstart a career and help climb the promotion ladder. The author attributes much of his success to hard work and the advice, guidance, and encouragement from his spiritual parents.

Paul is the son of share-cropper parents and the third of six children. He was educated in segregated public elementary and secondary schools in North Carolina in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He is the first male in his family to graduate from college, a BS degree with honors from Elizabeth City State University, and a MS degree from George Washington University. ORDER NOW. Available at: WWW.PAULJONESAUTHOR.COM, Amazon, Barnes and Noble and Xlibris. Paul Jones the author gave me permission to put this information in my Newspaper Article.

THE BRASS TAP NATIONAL HARBOR'S ROARING 20s

Bring in the New Year with a Roaring 20s Party, live DJ, fun crowd, food, and a champagne toast! Date and time are December 31 from 9 p.m.–January 1, 2024, 1:30 a.m. Location is The Brass Tap, 164 Fleet Street, Oxon Hill, Maryland 20745. Event is four hours and 30 minutes. Mobile e Ticket. Ticket can be purchased on eventbrite.com. General admission \$78.00. Come dressed in your roaring twenties attire and celebrate the New Year at the Brass Tap National Harbor.

Kettering Homeowners Call for HOA Legislation

By PRESS OFFICER
Concerned Kettering Homeowner

Homeowners of HOAs in Prince George's County do not have legislation to address disputes between homeowners, their Board of Directors and their Management Company. Montgomery County enacted such legislation earlier this year. The need was never more apparent than in recent incidents experienced by the homeowners of the Kettering Community.

The conflict initiated from the refusal of the Board President to allow a "Candidates Forum" at the Kettering Community Center after it was properly acquired and paid for by a homeowner. The Office of Community Relations was asked to intervene. The forum was subsequently held that evening at a facility provided by Community Relations. Afterwards, the first townhall meeting between Kettering homeowners and the Office of Community Relations was held several days after the Annual Election in November 2023, in which homeowners voiced their concerns and dissatisfaction with the illegal actions of the Board of Directors.

Earlier in the year, the majority of the Board removed four members from the Board of Directors and the Board President

selected their replacements and refused to hold a special election to allow the homeowners to permanently fill the vacated positions per the By-Laws. A new Board, which includes the replacements selected by the Board President, was elected in November 2023. The Board of Directors has not presented a budget to the homeowners and has taken a winter recess through February 2024. The Community Center has been closed since October 2023 and is scheduled to remain closed through February 2024 per the Management Company. The Board of Directors do not use consistent policies when awarding contracts. The Office of Community Relations documented the homeowners' concerns and scheduled a second townhall meeting on December 13, 2023. In the interim, Community Relations officials planned to meet with and discuss the homeowners' issues with the Board of Directors. However, the Board of Directors did not meet with officials of the Office of Community Relations.

At the December 13th meeting, three members of the Commission on Common Ownership Communities and two attorneys from the Office of Prince George's County State's Attorney were in attendance and offered brief comments and answered ques-

tions from the homeowners. Ms. Euniesha Davis, Director of the Office of Community Relations, informed the homeowners that the Law Office of Prince George's County informed her that a lawsuit was pending concerning the Kettering Board of Directors, the Management Company and the homeowners who were removed from the Board of Directors earlier this year; therefore, Community Relations can not proceed with any further actions until the lawsuit is resolved. This leaves Kettering homeowners in the precarious position of not being able to prevent the Board from any further abuses of power and with no legal recourse.

The Office of Community Relations of Prince George's County acts only as a mediator in disputes of this nature. They do not have any enforcement power. This is why legislation is greatly needed, not only for Kettering, but for other HOAs that may be experiencing abuses of power by their Board of Directors and their Management Company. Several Prince George's County Councilpersons are aware of the need for enforceable legislation. Homeowners of HOAs who are experiencing similar incidents as Kettering are urged to contact their County Councilperson to expedite legislation.

Suspected Rabid Fox Alert in Prince George's County

Health Department seeks public's help to identify others who may have been exposed

By LAUREN MOSES
Office of the Health Officer

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 21, 2023)—The Prince George's County Health Department is alerting community members that a suspected rabid fox was recently found in the **9900 block of Elm St., Lanham, MD**. On or around Dec. 11, 2023, a fox attacked an individual. The fox is described as big, reddish-brown in color, with blood on the mouth and

some other parts of the body. The fox remains uncaptured and may be on the loose within the neighborhood.

Due to the risk of rabies exposure, the Health Department seeks the public's help in finding persons who may have had contact with the fox in the identified area. If you know of any persons or animals that may have had contact with the above fox **between Nov. 26 and Dec. 21**, contact the Health Department immediately

at 301-583-3751.

When a person is bitten or exposed to the saliva of a rabid animal, the disease is prevented by administering four doses of rabies vaccine over a 14-day period and a dose of rabies immunoglobulin given at the beginning of treatment. Each year, approximately 900 Marylanders receive preventive treatment after exposure to a rabid or potentially rabid animal.

To prevent your exposure to rabies:

- Do not approach, handle, or feed stray dogs and cats, and enforce leash laws.
- Teach your children not to approach any unfamiliar animals.
- Have your dogs, cats, and ferrets vaccinated against rabies and keep the vaccinations up-to-date.
- Do not leave pets outside unattended or allow them to roam free.
- Cover garbage cans tightly and do not leave pet food outside; this may attract wild and stray

Clydesdales from A1

works with nearly 1000 customers in its three-county area providing beer, wine, spirits and non-alcoholic beverages.

"This was such a fun and magical night for our community with thousands of North Beach and Calvert County residents lining the streets and patronizing our businesses," said Dawn Richardson, North Beach Public Relations Administrator. "Despite having to reschedule due to weather, it didn't hinder people from coming out to proudly welcome the Budweiser Clydesdales to our town. Having Bob Hall, LLC select North Beach as a parade location allowed us to bring community members together while making a meaningful contribution to economic development."

Folds of Honor Scholarship Winners

Bob Hall joins Anheuser-Busch in supporting the Folds of Honor mission to help those in need. Over the last 13 years, Anheuser-Busch, its brands and wholesaler partners have donated \$21.7 million which has contributed to Folds of Honor's delivery of 44,000 scholarships since the non-profit's founding. This year, Bob Hall doubled the number of scholarships it sponsors by donating \$20,000 that will help:

Calvert County Scholarship Recipient:

- Camile Nobles - Daughter of U.S. Army First Sergeant Thomas J. Nobles and U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Tia Nobles

Prince George's County Scholarship Recipients:

- April, Gabriela and Isaiah Fox - Spouse, daughter and son of U.S. Army Private First Class Charles R. Fox

Folds of Honor is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides educational scholarships to the spouses and children of military members who have fallen or been disabled while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Beginning in 2022, it expanded its mission to include first responders. Our educational scholarships support private school tuition or tutoring in grades K-12, tuition for college, technical or trade school and post-graduate work, including a master's degree, doctorate, or professional program. Funds for a second bachelor's degree or trade/technical program certification are also available. Since its inception in 2007, Folds of Honor has awarded about 44,000 scholarships totaling about \$200 million in all 50 states. Among the students served, 41 percent are minorities. It is rated a four-star charity by Charity Navigator and Platinum on GuideStar. It was founded by Lt Col Dan Rooney, the only-ever F-16 fighter pilot (with three combat tours in Iraq) and PGA Professional. He is currently stationed at Headquarters Air Force Recruiting Service Detachment 1, at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. For more information or to donate in support of a Folds of Honor scholarship visit FoldsOfHonor.org.

Bob Hall, LLC was founded in 1933, the same year as the repeal of Prohibition. Since then, the 90-year-old family-owned beer and beverage wholesale distribution company has been a consistent supporter of Prince George's, Calvert and Charles County communities. The company's portfolio is composed of the Anheuser-Busch InBev family of beers, Constellation family of beers, high-quality craft beers and non-alcoholic beverages. Bob Hall has a long history of corporate social responsibility, environment preservation and making a difference in the communities where its retail customers, consumers and team members live and work. Go to www.bobhallbeverage.com for more information.

Marietta House Museum "African Arrival on Colonial Maryland Shores", a Hybrid Presentation

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta House Museum

Coming up at Marietta House Museum on **Thursday, January 25, 6:30–8 p.m.** is a not-to-be-missed hybrid talk: "African Arrival on Colonial Maryland Shores"

Scholar-in-residence Kat Wilmot will present her research on the enslaved population held by Gabriel Duvall's great-grandfather, the 17th century merchant-planter and enslaver Mareen Duvall of Middle Plantation in Anne Arundel County. Wilmot will discuss the early slave trade in colonial Maryland as the background to Mareen Duvall's rise in society and his impact on slavery plantations and commerce systems in early Maryland. Her research highlights the long-silenced history of the eighteen enslaved individuals responsible for the wealth of Mareen Duvall. Learn their names and find out how they lived on Middle Plantation.

\$5/person. Recommended for ages 8 & up, under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required for online guests to receive the Teams link. Please register at this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/2u8m8hsh>, or call 301-395-9541, or email mariettahouse@pgparks.com.

Marietta House Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD. 20769, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

- animals.
- Teach children to stay away from wild animals or animals they do not know.
- Prevent bats from entering your home by using window screens and chimney caps and closing openings greater than ¼ inch by ½ inch. Bats found in the home should be safely collected, if possible, and tested for rabies.
- Wear gloves when handling an animal if it has been in a fight with another animal. Keep it away from people and other animals, and call your veterinarian or local health department

- to report the animal exposure. If you are bitten by or exposed to an animal that may be rabid, take the following steps:
- If it is a wild animal, contact animal management.
- If it is an owned animal, get the animal owner's name, address, and telephone number.
- Immediately wash the wound well with soap and water; use a disinfectant to flush the wound if available.
- Get prompt medical attention.
- Immediately report the exposure to your local animal services division, health department, or police.

COMMUNITY

Chesapeake Life Center Adds Vision Board and Men's Workshops to its 2024 Calendar

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Dec. 19, 2023)—Chesapeake Life Center has added two new grief support workshops to its winter program. Both will take place on Hospice of the Chesapeake's John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland.

• **Navigating Grief through Vision Boards**—Whether you're grieving the loss of a loved one, a relationship, or going through a life transition, this workshop offers a safe and supportive space for you. In the New Year, come together with other who are navigating grief, share stories and honor your loss or loved one in a creative way. Bring in any special pictures, letter, words, poems of your loss or special person to help create a meaningful vision board to understand the power of visualization. This workshop will take place from noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 27. The cost is \$10.

• **Men's Grief Workshop**—Tailored to the unique experiences of men, this workshop creates a supportive environment to process grief through action. Processing emotions through physical activity can help alleviate distress and isolation as well as enhance insight and awareness. Facilitators will lead participants through a series of hands-on activities focusing on "breaking" and "rebuilding," followed by guided reflection on these two central themes of the grieving process. This workshop will take place from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 9. The cost is \$10.

Registration is required for both programs and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org. Visit www.hospicechesapeake.org for a complete listing of in-person and virtual groups and workshops for adults and children.

Maryland Humanities Awards \$950,000 in General Operating Grants to Cultural Organizations Through Program Honoring Late Staff Member

By SARAH WEISSMAN
Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (Dec. 19, 2023)—Maryland Humanities announces a total of \$950,000 in general operating funding for 95 Maryland nonprofit organizations (\$10,000 per organization) through the Hatza Memorial SHINE (Strengthening the Humanities Investment in Nonprofits for Equity) Grant Program. Over a quarter of this year's grantees applied for a Maryland Humanities grant for the first time this year.

SHINE Grant recipients include museums, historic sites, preservation & historical societies, and community & cultural organizations. Awarded organizations reside in twenty-three Maryland counties and Baltimore City.

General operating expenses include salaries, rent, utilities, supplies, equipment, programs, and other expenses. The grants provide full flexibility to nonprofits, allowing them to determine where funds are most needed.

"I am excited to award nearly twice as many SHINE Grants as our original round, and I think



Marilyn Hatza

the number of first-time applicants honors Marilyn's legacy well, especially her work around racial equity," says Lindsey Baker, Executive Director at

Maryland Humanities

These grants are funded by the State of Maryland via the Maryland Historical Trust. Grantees are listed below. Learn

more about our SHINE Grants at www.mdhumanities.org/grants/.

Fall 2024 SHINE Grant Awards for Prince George's County

Bold Beautiful Brilliant Girls
Youth Empowerment Group
Coalition for African Americans
in the Performing Arts
EducArte
Fuel Incorporated
National Capital Radio and Television Museum
National Museum of Language

Maryland Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that creates and supports educational experiences in the humanities that inspire all Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. For more information, visit www.mdhumanities.org. Maryland Humanities is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities; the State of Maryland; the Citizens of Baltimore County; private foundations; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with Maryland Humanities on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

Problems Persist in Juvenile Services Schooling 2 Years After Transfer From Education Department

By STEPH QUINN
Capital News Service

SABILLASVILLE, Md.—The graduate's mom, peers and teachers knew he was going to reach his goal, though his principal, Todd Rasher, said the other students incarcerated at the Victor Cullen Center in rural northern Frederick County didn't see "all the footwork" it took to earn his GED.

"This diploma ain't really too much because I knew that I was going to get it," the 17-year-old said to his graduation audience on Oct. 18, wearing a cap and gown, kente stole and black wristband adorned with, "Don't give up."

The graduate, whose identity CNS is shielding because he is a minor, was charged as an adult before his case was transferred to juvenile court. Rasher said he passed the tests necessary to earn his GED on the first try, inspiring his fellow students to take the tests themselves.

The graduate's mom, TaNeya Anderson, said that services she and her son received since her son was locked up, including family therapy and regular updates from Cullen staff, have helped her family.

"It might seem like it was a bad thing that he ended up having to get incarcerated, but I'm always trying to get the good out of it, and I believe it was meant for this to happen this way," Anderson said.

Not all incarcerated young people are able to continue their education, much less attain a degree. Two years after the Maryland General Assembly transferred responsibility for incarcerated students' education from the state Education Department to an independent school board within the Juvenile Services Department, students confined in Maryland's secure youth facilities continue to face multiple longstanding challenges, according to experts and state audit reports.

• Teacher vacancy rates of 30% in the most populous Juvenile Services schools have led to reliance on streaming instruction



PHOTO CREDIT DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES/ERIC SOLOMON
Principal Todd Rasher congratulates a graduate at the Victor Cullen Center, a youth committed placement center run by Maryland's Juvenile Services Department in Sabillasville, on Oct. 18, 2023.

in subjects such as math and science.

• Incarcerated students were late to class hundreds of times in 2023 due to the security requirements—especially a state Juvenile Services policy mandating that staff supervise and escort youth while maintaining a minimum staff-to-youth ratio.

• A lack of guidance from the State Board of Education has allowed local school boards charged with various offenses, including those who have been in detention, arguing they are a threat—even when Juvenile Services and the courts have decided it's safe to release them.

Two of the state's three most populous youth detention centers and its only long-term placement facility, Cullen, operated with teacher vacancy rates around 30% as of early October, according to documents discussed in public meetings of the Juvenile Services Education Program Board. The

Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center, which served 301 students that year, had eight vacancies. The Charles H. Hickey Jr. School, which served 245 students, had seven. Cullen, which served 76 students, had four.

When facilities lack subject experts to teach in person, students take classes livestreamed by juvenile services teachers from the Garrett Children's Center, a former youth committed placement center in Garrett County.

Three of the nine Juvenile Services schools, including Hickey and Cullen, had no math teacher as of October, while four, including Hickey and the Baltimore center, lacked a science teacher. Baltimore's Juvenile Justice Center was looking for a second math teacher to serve its large population.

David Domenici, director of education and senior adviser to the Juvenile Services secretary, said streaming instruction is "not ideal" for the "vast majority" of students but better than packets

of photocopied activities.

Juvenile Services teacher vacancies have persisted through tensions between Maryland's education and Juvenile Services agencies over the past decade about who bears responsibility for educating incarcerated young people and how best to do so. Those vacancies continue through teachers' lack of summer and winter breaks and low pay relative to teachers employed by local school districts.

Lawmakers voted in 2004 to stage the Education Department's takeover of Juvenile Services schools over eight years but repeatedly extended the timeline as Education protested inadequate funding. Bills seeking pay parity and summer breaks for juvenile services teachers failed in 2016, 2019 and 2020, often pitting experts from Education and Juvenile Services against each other. The General Assembly established a statewide education board within Juvenile Services in 2021 in response to monitors' and advocacy groups' repeated findings of high staff turnover and vacancies, inadequate services for learning disabled students and a lack of support for students returning to community schools. But the law did not require pay parity or align facilities' teaching calendar more closely with local schools.

Peter Leone, an emeritus University of Maryland education professor contracted by the Education Department to assess its work in Juvenile Services facilities between 2016 and 2018, said that educating incarcerated students was "a very low priority" for the Education department.

The Education Department declined to comment on its management of Juvenile Services education or on the current board.

While public school teachers earn salaries set by local school boards, Juvenile Services teachers are paid on a single, statewide pay scale. Juvenile services teachers experience the greatest pay disparities in jurisdictions where local school boards pay the most.

The Juvenile Services board has implemented hiring and re-

tention bonuses that board superintendent Kim Pogue said she hopes will improve recruitment.

Even with these bonuses, teachers in the state's largest youth detention centers, in Baltimore and Prince George's County, earn less per day than teachers working in local schools. A teacher at Hickey or Baltimore's Juvenile Justice Center makes 9.5% less daily than a teacher in neighboring Baltimore County. A teacher at Cheltenham makes 3.9% less than a Prince George's County teacher. In Washington County, teachers at the Western Maryland Children's Center make 10.2% less than county teachers.

Domenici said the board would have to decide whether to seek legislative or other changes to teacher pay and work schedules. Domenici, who is not a board member, said the legislature should have set 10- and 12-month employee categories, established a school calendar limiting when Juvenile Services teachers can take leave and creating a regional pay scale aligned with local districts.

But lost instructional time is greatest due to a lack of residential advisers, according to audits of Juvenile Services schools by the state Office of the Inspector General. Departmental policy requires that residential staff escort students from their living units to classrooms while maintaining a minimum staff-to-youth ratio. When there aren't enough residential staff, students don't move. Students were late to class 203 times across Juvenile Services facilities due to residential staff shortages between April and June alone, according to the audits. Teachers had to teach class inside the living units 43 times in the 90-day inspection period.

Getting students in the classroom, even if they are late, Domenici said, is better than class on the living units. The department is working toward a goal of 90% on-time attendance in school by shifting all onsite adults to escort students to school, he said.

Spending time in detention or committed placement hurts students' education in the longer term.

Legal experts and youth advocates say students who have been detained face obstacles returning to school due to overly broad state

laws and an absence of guidance to local school systems from the Department of Education.

Law enforcement is required to report to superintendents and principals when students are charged with certain "reportable offenses" outside of school, including rape, first degree assault and carjacking.

Experts say a 2022 state law limiting when local school systems can exclude students based on charges does not lay out a statewide standard to assess whether students present a threat nor outline procedures to protect students' and parents' rights.

Regulations that the State Board of Education has proposed to flesh out the law provide insufficient protections, according to comments submitted by the Public Defender's Office, Disability Rights Maryland and the Public Justice Center.

Alyssa Fieo, assistant public defender for education in the Juvenile Protection Division of the Maryland Public Defender's Office, said she has worked on a handful of cases involving reportable offenses in at least five counties since the passage of the 2022 law.

Schools failed to hold required meetings between parents and school officials before students' removal to establish whether students presented a threat, and schools don't invite students' attorneys when they do. In one case, the school system did not hold a required meeting to determine whether the alleged offense was a manifestation of a student's disability before removing the student. In most of the cases, students were recently released from detention.

"A handful of the cases I've represented, the family got a phone call saying, 'We understand your child has a charge. They're going to be put on virtual school. We're going to drop off the computer,'" Fieo said.

State law requires the state's attorney to promptly notify school officials of the ruling on a student's case, and the proposed regulations would require schools to then review the student's school assignment. The three organizations are asking the Education De-

COMMUNITY

NuLook Trucking & Mobile Fuel Revolutionizes Fueling Experience in Prince George's County, Alleviating Concerns About Gas Station Visits

By PRESS OFFICER
NuLook Trucking & Mobile Fuel

BOWIE, Md. (Dec. 13, 2023)—John Spalding, a visionary entrepreneur and the founder of NuLook Trucking & Mobile Fuel, is excited to announce the launch of their cutting-edge mobile fuel delivery service in Prince George's County. This innovative service not only transforms the fueling experience but also addresses growing concerns about the safety of visiting traditional gas stations in the area.

NuLook Trucking & Mobile Fuel, established in Prince George's County is set to revolutionize the fueling experience for residents and businesses in the area while ad-

ressing safety concerns associated with going to the gas station. This mobile fuel delivery service eliminates the need for time-consuming trips to gas stations, offering a convenient and efficient solution for fuel delivery directly to customers' doorsteps and businesses.

With NuLook Trucking & Mobile Fuel, customers can now enjoy the following benefits:

- **Convenience and time savings:** No more waiting in line at gas stations. Customers save valuable time by eliminating the need to travel to gas stations, enabling them to focus on their daily activities. Customers can schedule fuel deliveries at their preferred time and location.

- **Safety:** NuLook Trucking & Mobile Fuel keeps customers away from the increasing violence at gas stations, where car-jackings and robberies are rampant.

John Spalding, Founder of NuLook Trucking & Mobile Fuel, said, "We are thrilled to introduce this innovative mobile fuel delivery service to Prince George's County. Our mission is not only to provide a convenient and time-saving solution but also to address safety concerns associated with going to the pump. We envision making gas delivery as common as food delivery is these days."

Details: NuLook Trucking & Mobile Fuel offers services from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week, with comparable pricing and a reasonable delivery fee. 240-245-4069

Schooling from A3

partment to clarify that students should be allowed to return to school once the state's attorney, Juvenile Services and the courts have approved the student's return to the community. There is currently no limit on how long a "reportable offense" charge can be used as a reason to exclude a student from regular instruction.

At Cullen, Rasher said, he has access to any student's record, but he chooses not to look.

"I know everybody has a story," he said. "Some are pretty awful. But to me, that's not a thing."

The day the graduate walked up to the podium and moved his tassel from one side of his cap to the other, he focused on his future: He was set to start work on an occupational safety certification the next day.

The graduate said Cullen's walls enclose a complex reality that outsiders can't see, and that the youth of Cullen are just as complex.

"You can't just judge a book by its cover like they say, for real," he said. "If all of us in here, our cover is just what they show on the media or the news, you feel me, but they don't know what actually goes on inside of here. ...If you're on the outside looking in, you're not going to see what we see. Because we here."

"I'm proud of what I did," he said. "I'm definitely proud about it, but it's more to come, so."

Governor Moore Signs Executive Order Creating Maryland's Office of Overdose Response

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 15, 2023)— Governor Wes Moore yesterday signed an executive order establishing Maryland's Office of Overdose Response within the Maryland Department of Health. The office will coordinate and promote efforts across state agencies to address the overdose crisis in Maryland. The governor was joined by Lt. Governor Aruna Miller; Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Dr. Rahul Gupta; Maryland Department of Health Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health Alyssa Lord; and Special Secretary of Overdose Response Emily Keller.

"The opioid and overdose crisis is constantly evolving and it is imperative that our efforts to prevent overdoses and save lives remain nimble and reflect the challenges facing our communities," said Gov. Moore. "We are focused on expanding pathways to compassionate care for individuals, whether they are actively using drugs or are on the road to recovery. Building communities that can thrive requires ensuring that all Marylanders, regardless of where they come from or where they are, can access the support they need."

Special Secretary Keller will oversee the office, which was formerly known as the Opioid Operational Command Center. The executive order also establishes the Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council, which will take the place of the former Inter-Agency Heroin and Opioid Coordinating Council. The council will be chaired by Lt. Gov. Miller and will include participation from

18 state government agencies and offices to promote data sharing and develop strategic guidance for increasing access to substance use care and addressing disparities in overdose outcomes.

"We are approaching this crisis first and foremost as a public health issue and we recognize that we need everyone to have a seat at the table," said Lt. Gov. Miller. "Substance use affects nearly all aspects of a person's life, and we need partners—from public health to public safety, education, and social services—to be a part of the solution so that we can reach people who are at risk of overdose wherever they may be in their lives."

Five key policy pillars will guide the Moore-Miller Administration's approach to reducing overdoses: prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and public safety. Maryland's Office of Overdose Response will create a comprehensive strategic plan to advance policies and programs addressing the state's most pressing needs. The process will include collecting feedback from subject matter experts with state and local agencies, the research community, community partners, and the general public.

"President Biden made beating the overdose epidemic a key pillar of his Unity Agenda because it's an issue where all Americans—including leaders at every level of government—can come together and make progress for the nation. Strong partnerships between state and federal government are critical in our efforts to address this crisis, and I am grateful for the leadership of Governor Moore and Lieutenant Governor Miller as they work to strengthen both public health and public safety efforts in Maryland with the new Office of Overdose Response," said Director of National Drug

Control Policy Dr. Rahul Gupta. "This issue is a top priority of the Biden-Harris Administration, and we will continue working tirelessly to ensure that states have the resources and tools they need to address the overdose epidemic and save lives."

"Maryland has been a national leader in building a framework to address the overdose crisis, and we have to make sure we stay ahead of the curve," said Special Secretary of Overdose Response Emily Keller. "Our office is working to increase collaboration across all state and local agencies to advance the most effective strategies that can save lives and promote success in recovery. The administration's priorities ensure that we are working to address substance use from all angles."

Marylanders are encouraged to visit StopOverdose.maryland.gov to learn more about how the state is addressing the overdose crisis and find resources that can help support individuals who may be struggling with substance use, including information about fentanyl, how to find the overdose-reversing medicine naloxone, and information about Maryland's Good Samaritan law, which protects individuals who call 911 for help responding to an overdose.

"Yesterday's announcement advances the Moore-Miller administration's commitment to leaving no one behind and providing the necessary services and care to those who need it," said Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration Deputy Secretary Alyssa Lord. "These changes strengthen the cooperation and communication required to provide better outcomes for more Marylanders. We look forward to working with our federal and state partners to continue expanding our efforts to save lives together."

Marylanders who are struggling with substance use are encouraged to call or text 988 to reach the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and get connected to substance use and behavioral health resources.

Marijuana from A1

chair of Maryland's Legislative Black Caucus, and a sponsor of the bill, HB1071, that became the marijuana smell law said the law is essential to protecting the constitutional rights of Marylanders and "it's unfortunate that our Maryland Republicans will be advocating for warrantless searches of American residents."

"Passage of HB1071 in 2023 was a top priority for the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland," Wilkins said. "And so we will vigorously defend this bill and push back against any effort to reverse or weaken it."

According to the analysis of the bill at the time, Maryland traffic stop data dating back to 2018 revealed that Black drivers made up at least 60% of traffic stops, while representing just 29% of the state's population. Black drivers in Maryland were also more than four times as likely to be subject to a warrantless vehicle search than white drivers.

"Cannabis is legal in the state, so someone simply smelling like cannabis, whether they're just walking down the street or whether it's the smell in their car, it should not trigger a warrantless search," Wilkins said. "So, protecting Americans from unreasonable searches and seizures is really a foundational aspect of our constitution in our state."

Another issue with conducting searches over the odor of marijuana is that hemp, which also derives from the cannabis plant but contains a negligible amount of the psychoactive ingredient THC, smells the same when it is burned. Hemp is not a controlled substance in the United States and is often used in CBD products.

Michael Beach, district public defender for Montgomery County, found while working as a public defender in multiple Maryland jurisdictions that in his experience "the use of the odor of marijuana to search vehicles was disproportionately utilized against Black and brown Marylanders."

"And I would often only see the cases where they found something," Beach said. "I can only imagine how many cases there would be where they found nothing and the driver had to suffer the indignity of having their car searched out in public in front of everybody on whatever road they're on."

According to Yanet Amanuel, public policy director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, police used the alleged scent of marijuana as a cover to racially profile Black and brown drivers.

"They'll racially profile somebody and they'll say, 'Oh, I smell marijuana,' and then suddenly... (they) are allowed to conduct a search," Amanuel said. "And the thing is, you can't take the odor to court and prove it, it's just based on whatever the officer says."

As of Dec. 8, there have been over 100 roadway fatalities, of 571 total road deaths, in Maryland this year where the driver was impaired, according to the Maryland Department of Transportation's Crash Data Dashboard. Maryland is projected to exceed 600 roadway deaths this year for the first time since 2007. Of the roadway fatalities recorded in 2023, nearly 18% were the result of crashes where a driver was impaired by alcohol or drugs.

As of Nov. 16, there have been 4,620 drug-related DUI citations statewide this year, according to law enforcement figures captured through E-Tix Software. It's unclear how many were marijuana related.

John Seng, founder of the Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, said the legalization of recreational marijuana creates new concerns over impaired driving in Maryland.

"I wished the Maryland General Assembly, when it was dealing with the pressure from the public to approve marijuana for recreational purposes, said not, 'No,' but, 'Not now,'" Seng said. "Not now until we figure the science out so we can police marijuana use and vehicles."

It is too early to see the change in fatal crashes caused by the legalization of recreational marijuana, Screen said.

"I think it's an impending storm that has yet to reveal itself," Screen said.

A 2022 study in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs found that Colorado, Washington, Oregon, California and Nevada saw changes in the rate of injuries and fatalities due to car crashes after legalizing recreational marijuana and the start of retail sales. Across five states, there was a 5.8% increase in the rate of traffic crash injuries and a 4.1% increase in the rate of fatal crashes.

There are challenges in even determining marijuana intoxication among drivers. With drivers who are under the influence of alcohol, police can administer a Breathalyzer test, but there is no similar test for determining marijuana impairment. One option is a drug recognition expert — a police officer trained to recognize drug impairment.

"DRE may be requested and they will conduct additional testing sequences to determine... what category drug they may be impaired with," said Ron Snyder, a spokesperson for the Maryland State Police.

Drug recognition experts have been a part of police departments in Maryland since 1990. There are nearly 190 DREs in Maryland in over 30 agencies. According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the agency that coordinates the National Drug Evaluation and Classification Program, there is a 12-step process to determine drug impairment. The process includes interviewing the suspect and the arresting officer, sobriety tests analyzing suspects' movement and eye convergence, assessing the suspect's behavior, checking suspects' vital signs and a toxicological examination.

DREs can request a blood test to determine if the driver is under the influence of drugs. According to Snyder, a blood test is only mandatory if a driver has caused bodily injury or fatality, but refusing a test could mean a suspended license.

There is also no legal limit in Maryland for the amount of marijuana in a driver's blood, as there is with alcohol, and the substance is detectable longer, making charges difficult.

"(Marijuana) can also be stored in the fatty deposits and released later," Belgin Palaz, an assistant public defender in the forensics division said. "And so... the struggle right now hopefully for the legislature... is how do you assess potential impairment given the

way that our bodies process delta-9 THC?"

Wilkins said the law should not impact police officers' ability to police impaired driving.

"When it comes to the DUI issues that people might be concerned about, if someone's driving erratically and there's a smell of cannabis, then this law would not apply," Wilkins said. "I want to be clear, this bill is saying that cannabis alone does not equate to a warrantless search."

Critics of the law say it also impacts other crime-fighting measures. Pippy cited concerns about the number of illegal guns that were uncovered during traffic stops where the odor of cannabis was the pretext to a search.

"It is more than the safety of the motoring public that is at stake, now that vehicles cannot be stopped and searched due to the smell of cannabis," Pippy said. "This prohibition also makes it more difficult to get illegal guns off the streets."

Wilkins disagreed.

"(The law is) based only on the smell of cannabis. That doesn't prevent a police officer who witnesses criminal activity from doing their job," Wilkins said. "But what they cannot do is just smell cannabis and, based on that odor, conduct a warrantless search."

The Prince George's Post

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ENVIRONMENT

EarthTalk® Q&A



IMAGE CREDIT: KARI GREER/USFS.

This home survived the otherwise devastating Wolverine Fire outside of Chelan, Washington in 2015 thanks to firescaping with native plants.

Native Plants: The Heroes of Firescaping

Dear EarthTalk:

What is firescaping and what's the connection with native plants?
—J.T., via email

Firescaping involves designing a landscape to fireproof a property while maintaining aesthetic appeal. By thoughtfully choosing and arranging plants and construction materials, the likelihood of igniting a fire, along with its potential severity and the speed at which it spreads, can be significantly reduced.

A firescape design often involves multiple zones. Zone 0, also known as a 'noncombustible zone,' is the perimeter region zero to five feet away from the home. Anything within this region should be incombustible. This most frequently means putting pavement, bricks or rocks around the border of the home to prevent any groundfires from being able to make direct contact. In addition, avoid planting vegetation beneath decks or balconies as fire and heat tends to climb upward.

All vegetation should be kept at least 10 feet away from homes for optimal fireproofing, and trees should always be kept at least 15 feet away from chimneys and powerlines. When choosing the placement of trees, consider their size at maturity versus their size at the time of planting. Additionally, the crowns of trees should be kept at least 10 feet apart via pruning. This helps avoid fire laddering, whereby flames ignite lower branches or shrubs, initiating upward movement before spreading to adjacent trees.

Zone 1 is the 'lean, clean, green' area within 30 feet of a home. Certain plants, such as junipers, conifers and other evergreens should not be planted in this region because they contain oils, resins and waxes that make them flammable. Other characteristics of incendiary plants include those containing dry or dead twigs and needles and those having strongly aromatic terpenoid leaves.

Instead, choose plants that are less 'woody,' have higher moisture content, and are ground covers. Deciduous trees and shrubs, as well as succulents and some perennials, are better-suited options. Furthermore, many native plants possess evolutionary adaptations, such as deep root systems and fire-resistant bark, which make them resilient to wildfires. Incorporating a variety of native plants fosters biodiversity, which in turn promotes plant health. Diverse and healthy native ecosystems create natural firebreaks and slow the spread of fires.

The organization of vegetation and structures also play a vital role in firescaping. Incorporating materials like concrete, stone and brick in the construction of driveways, walkways, patios and fences establishes effective firebreaks while offering both functional and aesthetic value. Though bare dirt can also serve as a noncombustible fuel break, it is not recommended due to the potential of soil erosion. Buffering, or creating separation between distinct layers of ground covers, shrubs and trees, limits a fire's ability to climb and intensify. Adding water features in firescaping introduces a dynamic element that can act as a natural firebreak. Ponds, streams or other water sources can serve as barriers, hindering the progression of wildfires by creating a moisture-rich environment. Finally, removing dead vegetation is a critical component of firescaping as it eliminates potential fuel sources for fires, disrupting the continuity of combustible material.

CONTACTS: Q&A with the Authors of Firescaping Your Home: A Manual for Readiness in Wildfire Country, <https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/qa/timber-press-post-firescaping-qa/?lens=timber-press>; Firescaping, <https://firesafemarin.org/create-a-fire-smart-yard/firescaping/>.

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Eagle Harbor Activists Hope Federal Aid Will Help Boost Environmental Restoration

By SHIFRA DAYAK
Capital News Service

James Crudup has vivid memories of traveling to Seagull Beach in Charles County, Maryland, during his teenage years.

"I remember that water being just as clear as if we were in Florida...that's the way it was back then," Crudup said. "Now you cannot see. Now the water is so dark and dirty and is really filthy."

For Crudup, this type of degradation hasn't just been visible at Seagull Beach.

Air, water and soil contamination have also made their way across the Patuxent River, touching not only Charles County but also Eagle Harbor, the 70-person town where he served as mayor from 2011 to 2021.

The town has seen air pollution and subsequent disproportionate health impacts, increased stormwater runoff and other environmental impacts over many years.

Most of those impacts, according to Eagle Harbor's residents, have come from the Chalk Point Generating Station. The plant, formerly owned by NRG Energy, has been owned by GenOn Holdings since 2017. The plant sits on the banks of the Patuxent River in Aquasco, which surrounds Eagle Harbor, and until June 2021, it burned coal.

"It was a really, really a nasty situation in the air," Crudup told Capital News Service. "Eagle Harbor has been neglected for so long when it comes to environmental issues. We never had any interaction with the county or the state with regards to trying to improve environmental conditions."

Progress on the issues was further complicated by the town's small size and lack of economic clout compared with other Prince George's County localities, many of which are wealthy and packed with businesses.

But now, with a new federal grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, Eagle Harbor's activists are hopeful that they can forge ahead with community-led environmental monitoring and restoration.

The \$370,775 grant will aid Ridge to Reefs, an ecosystem restoration organization, in collecting data on water quality, heavy metals in soil and contaminants in local species like blue crabs. Despite impacts from the Chalk Point plant, not much formal monitoring has been done in Eagle Harbor thus far, according to Paul Sturm, the founder of Ridge to Reefs.

Ridge to Reefs will collect the data through a partnership with Green Mechanics Benefit, an ecological engineering startup based in Prince George's County. The grant comes from the EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program.

"I think we're really anxious to understand the challenges that the community has and then to really try to work together with the community to come up with a blueprint for improving conditions," Sturm said. "This is an opportunity for a kind of rebirth of this community."

That rebirth has been a long time coming, several Eagle Harbor community members said.

Potomac Electric Power Company opened the Chalk Point power plant in 1964, 35 years after Eagle Harbor became an incorporated town. The plant was the first coal-fired power plant built on a tidal waterway, according to Fred Tutman, the riverkeeper for the Patuxent River.

To many of the residents, the plant's operation represents a fate they've been subjected to for too long. Eagle Harbor is a historically Black town, and polluters have capitalized on that, Noah Waters, Eagle Harbor's current mayor, said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF EAGLE HARBOR

Coleman Creek flows into the Patuxent River near Eagle Harbor, Maryland.

"This is quite significant, what's been going on in this area," Waters said. "This plant was built in 1964. African Americans in Prince George's County didn't have political clout to stop anything."

In 2021, GenOn Energy Holdings shut down the plant's coal-fired units, citing unfavorable economic conditions.

But the plant still burns natural gas and oil. According to Waters, there's a misconception that the coal fired units' closure remedied environmental issues that the town faced.

"It's out of sight, out of mind. People think it's okay because you obviously don't smell it and you don't see the particulate matter," Waters said. "But the burning of gas is many times more insidious, because you can't see it and it's more detrimental, probably, to the ozone."

Burning natural gas yields fewer greenhouse gas emissions than burning coal, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, but gas has its own hazards, including high emissions of methane, a potent climate pollutant.

Despite the end of the town's involvement in coal combustion, pollution has still persisted.

Eagle Harbor is in the 79th percentile for wastewater discharge, according to the EPA's environmental justice index, which combines environmental and socioeconomic factors.

Coleman Creek, an important natural resource, sits in a forested area in the southern section of the town. But the creek's role helping to manage stormwater is in limbo after wastewater discharge and runoff from the Chalk Point plant caused the creek to overflow in recent years, Crudup said.

Representatives from NRG Energy and GenOn did not respond to requests from CNS for comment about the Chalk Point plant.

Eagle Harbor's 2025 sustainability plan, created when Crudup was in office, outlines several proposals to improve environmental conditions in the town, including stabilizing Coleman Creek's banks and getting rid of failing septic systems across the town.

Pollution from the plant and from climate change has also impacted the Patuxent River, which the town has also aimed to address in its sustainability plan, with projects for riverbank cleanup and increasing river access for residents.

About 20 years ago, Crudup said, the river saw a buildup of sludge caused by pollution from the coal-fired plant, which made it difficult for boats to pass through and dangerous for people to swim.

Pollution impacts could also be affecting seafood—a central facet of Eagle Harbor's culture and economic aspirations. Sturm said Ridge to Reefs' data collection through the grant will aim to pinpoint how contamination in species could affect residents.

"We want to also understand the concerns for residents in terms of the fish and

oysters and crabs and things like that," he said. "We want to understand what people are eating from that local environment, and then also understand what should be tested."

NRG Energy has faced legal action for previous pollution violations at the Chalk Point plant.

After the Patuxent Riverkeeper organization and Maryland Department of the Environment brought a lawsuit in 2016, the energy corporation was ordered to pay \$1 million in penalties for exceeding air and water pollution limits between 2010 and 2013. NRG also committed to performing an additional \$1 million worth of environmental restoration projects, including improving its wastewater treatment technology.

"Power plants have a responsibility to keep Maryland's rivers, skies and lands clean as they strive to provide affordable and reliable energy," Ben Grumbles, who was Maryland's environment secretary from 2015 until 2022, said at the time of the settlement.

But such legal action hasn't been enough, according to Eagle Harbor residents.

And often, high-profile environmental successes in the community have led those who have lived in the town for years to feel overlooked and unheard, Tutman said.

"If there's an environmental success that Sierra Club or (Chesapeake Climate Action Network) or someone takes credit for, that they don't necessarily share credit with the people who actually live there, which I think denigrates and minimizes the voice, the ability and the capacity of people in those areas to speak on their own behalf," Tutman said.

Tutman said he has often run into people wanting to participate in Eagle Harbor's environmental restoration without taking time to learn about the town or its residents. It's important that restoration works stays community-centered, he added.

Ridge to Reefs and Green Mechanics Benefit hope their grant-funded data collection will do just that, Larry Davis, a lead consultant for Green Mechanics, said.

"We want to make sure that we are engaging with the community in such a way that the community provides a list of items that they're interested in," Davis said.

To Waters, the upcoming monitoring won't solve all the palpable issues that Eagle Harbor faces from Chalk Point's pollution. But he's excited that it's a step forward, he said.

Tutman echoed the same sentiment. He's hopeful that environmental work going forward can preserve the community's strong ties, he said—both to each other and to the natural resources that have defined their identities.

"It's very much a community. They pray together, they break bread together," Tutman said. "I just hope these people retain that organic sense of being connected both to the river and to each other."

Tips to Lower Your Energy Costs This Winter

(StatePoint) The U.S. Department of Energy reports that low-income households face an energy burden—the portion of income spent on home energy costs—three times higher than other households, leading to tough budgeting decisions for many Americans.

Energy efficiency is an important way to tackle home energy costs and can also support sustainability. Knowing that these issues are important to their customers and communities, Wells Fargo contributed more than \$19 million last year to nonprofits that aim to advance sustainability, including a \$500,000 grant to the Beneficial Electrification League.

Whether your motivations are economic, sustainability-related or both, Keith Dennis, president of the Beneficial Electrification

League, offers these smart tips to help you curb your energy consumption this winter:

1. **Give energy-efficient holiday gifts.** Leverage holiday spending on items that can help you save down the line by giving energy-efficient gifts to members of your household this holiday season. Look for gas alternative products like electric lawn tools, bikes and scooters, smart devices and appliances. Energy-efficient electric products offer good results, are often more cost efficient and support sustainability. Certain retrofits, updates and upgrades may even



PHOTO SOURCE: © IRINA TIUMENTSEVA / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

See ENERGY COSTS Page A6

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www.fhbp.org

BAPTIST

First Baptist Church of College Park

Welcomes You Where Jesus Christ Is Lord and King
Stephen L. Wright, Sr., Pastor

5018 Lakeland Road
College Park, MD 20740
301-474-3995
www.fbc-cp.org

Sunday School 9:30a.m.
Sunday Worship 11a.m.
Holy Communion 1st Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7-8p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service 8p.m.

UNITED METHODIST

Union United Methodist Church

14418 Old Marlboro Pike,
Upper Marlboro, MD

Church (301) 627-7389

Sunday School (Children/Adults) - 8:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Reverend Twanda E. King,
Pastor
www.uumchurch.com

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20785 • 301-490-2625

Rev. Ranesa Mayo, Pastor

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Matthew 28:19-20

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.

Soulful Thursdays
Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

BAPTIST

Forest Heights Baptist Church

We exist to strengthen your relationship with God.
6371 Oxon Hill Road
Oxon Hill, Maryland 20745

Sunday School (Adults & Children) - 9:30 A.M.
Worship Service - 11:00 A.M.
Wed. Prayer Service & Bible Study - 7:00 P.M.
Office (301) 839-1166
Fax (301) 839-1721
E-mail: FHBC@verizon.net
Pastor: Rev. Waymond B. Duke

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WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

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4109 Edmonston Road Bladensburg, MD
(301) 864-3437

Intercessory Prayer: Sundays - 8:30 a.m.
Church School: - 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship Celebration - 10:30 a.m.
Wed. Night Bible Study - 7:45 p.m.
Elder Willie W. Duvall, Pastor

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3. **Beat the peak.** Ask your utility provider about discounted rates. Some offer cheaper rates during parts of the day when general usage is down—think early in the day or late at night. Strategically tackle your energy bills by doing laundry and other energy-intensive chores at off-peak times.

4. **Take advantage of tax credits.** Making energy improvements to your home? The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 expanded the tax credit amounts and types of qualifying expenses available. Look for tax credits on items like new energy-efficient exterior doors, windows, central air conditioners, water heaters, furnaces, boilers and heat pumps.

5. **Utilize electric technology.** Consider installing a smart thermostat, smart switches, or smart home devices for energy-intensive household items like, lights and heating systems. Smart technology is designed to automatically adjust to your needs, helping you save energy and money.

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