

# The Prince George's Post



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## Process for Picking Greenbelt as new FBI Headquarters Was Flawed, IG Report Says

By MENNATALLA IBRAHIM, DARANEE BALACHANDAR and COLIN MCNAMARA  
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Feb. 4, 2025)—A federal inspector general found that a couple of the reasons cited for picking Greenbelt, Maryland, as the new FBI headquarters site were unjustified, according to a report released by the General Services Administration Monday.

The IG's report stopped short of recommending a new site selection process, although Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Virginia, charged that "GSA cooked the books."

"GSA provided inaccurate information to guide the site selection process and we may never know the full extent of missteps," he said.

Maryland officials, including Gov. Wes Moore, said in a joint statement that "nothing in this report disputes the GSA's selection of Greenbelt as the future home of the FBI."

It was unclear Tuesday whether the controversy will generate new efforts to contest the Greenbelt site.

Based on five criteria, a three-member panel from the GSA and the FBI evaluated GSA-compiled data to choose from three sites: Springfield, Virginia; Greenbelt, Maryland; and Landover, Maryland.

The GSA announced it chose Green-



BRIDGET BYRNE/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON—The FBI's headquarters in the nation's capital is aging and outdated. A Greenbelt, Maryland, site was selected in November 2023 for a new headquarters, despite objections by Virginia lawmakers.

belt as the new site for the FBI headquarters campus, which is currently in downtown Washington, in November 2023. The selection panel unanimously chose Springfield, but senior GSA official Nina Albert overruled that decision.

The inspector general's report said that the GSA overestimated relocation costs for the Springfield, Virginia, site and failed to provide specific equity data, such as racial and socioeconomic

factors, for each location. Instead, the agency presented county-level data, which showed a greater need for support in Prince George's County than in Fairfax County.

The report dismissed conflict-of-interest concerns over Albert, who previously served as the vice president of real estate and parking at Washington

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## James Stephen Terrell's "Transcendence: Beyond the Terrestrial Plane" Brings a Bold Vision of Collage Art to the Modern Era

By PRESS OFFICER  
Harmony Hall Arts Center

FORT WASHINGTON, Md. (Feb. 4, 2025)—Harmony Hall Arts Center is proud to present "Transcendence: Beyond the Terrestrial Plane", a striking new exhibition by acclaimed artist James Stephen Terrell. This vibrant collection redefines collage art, merging the legacy of the Washington Color School with dynamic layers of fabric, paint, and paper. Terrell's work is an immersive visual experience, interweaving bold patterns and intricate line work.

Terrell extends the legacy of the Washington Color School, infusing it with a fresh and contemporary approach to the art of collage. Drawing inspiration from pioneering artists David Driskell and Romare Bearden, his works unfold in layers, rewarding those who take the time to engage deeply. Each piece reveals hidden dimensions, much like the stained-glass windows of the Black Church and the



IMAGE CREDIT: AMANDA BOHN

"Father Time" by James Stephen Terrell

"Transcendence: Beyond the Terrestrial Plane" Monday, February 3 until Saturday, March 8, 2025 Location: Harmony Hall Arts Center Main Gallery 10701 Livingston Road Fort Washington, MD 20744

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## Prince George's County Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® Chapters Work Side-by-Side to Serve the Community in a Postponed Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

By PRESS OFFICER  
Psi Epsilon Omega (PEO) Chapter

**WHO:** Seven Prince George's County Chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Iota Gamma Omega (IGO) Chapter, Upsilon Tau Omega (UTO) Chapter, Psi Epsilon Omega (PEO) Chapter, Alpha Alpha Sigma Omega (AASO) Chapter, Eta (H) Chapter, Theta Nu (TN) Chapter, and the Proud Pearls of Prince George's Interest Group.

**WHAT:** The Prince George's County Chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service was rescheduled to **February 17, 2025**, due to inclement weather. Local

AKA chapters will host the "We Are One" AKA Service Day under the sorority's initiatives, Strengthen Our Sisterhood and Uplift Our Local Community. This is a unique opportunity for members to join together, volunteer, and make a meaningful impact in our community. Community members that are interested in providing much needed resources are encouraged to make donations via the "We Are One" AKA Service Day Amazon Wish List which will remain open through February 13. **Donations also may be made on the day of the event.**

**WHEN:** Monday, February 17, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**WHERE:** Hillcrest Heights Community Center, 2300 Oxon Run Dr., Oxon

Hill, MD 20748

**WHY:** In honor of the unwavering support and service that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. unselfishly gave to the global community, four graduate chapters, one interest group, and two undergraduate chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority, Incorporated® are partnering to collect new, and gently used clean coats (for children and adults), new hats, gloves, scarves and socks as well as non-perishable food and toiletry items. Members of AKA, along with their Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) scholars, will assist in distributing these essential items to members of the local community.

This event is free and open to the public. Community members will re-

ceive basic necessities while also engaging with local chapters of AKA and learning about the valuable services that they offer to Prince George's County residents. "We are committed to serving our community," said Kristi L. Matthews, IGO President. "Dr. King's legacy of love, equality and uplift remains our focus and our intention. Service is joy!" UTO President Quindella Fletcher added, "Collectively we are striving to make an impact in the Prince George's County community with a unified service initiative while honoring the legacy of Dr. King."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for oth-

ers?'" In response to his call to do more to uplift local communities, these AKA chapters will collectively provide needed resources in Prince George's County.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, an international service organization, was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1908, and has more than 360,000 initiated members in graduate and undergraduate chapters located in 12 nations and territories. Since its founding, the sorority has implemented its service programs to uplift our local communities in Prince George's County by providing needed resources.

—February 6, 2025

## Lawmakers Debate the Sentencing of Youth as Adults

By PAUL KIEFER  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 6, 2025)—Maryland lawmakers are once again debating whether to scale back the state's practice of automatically placing teenage defendants in adult court if they are accused of serious crimes.

After more than a decade of deadlock on the subject, advocates for the reforms had begun to worry that the moment for rethinking automatic sentencing had passed, while Maryland's state's attorneys remained steadfastly opposed. However, a key Senate Democrat kept the debate alive this session by introducing a pared-down version of the proposal that maintains automatic

charging as an adult for the most serious crimes.

"We're paying more money, getting worse outcomes, and taking a longer time to get there," said Sen. William Smith, a Democrat representing Montgomery County and the chair of the Senate's Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Smith argues that even his pared-down version of the bill would spare some juvenile defendants from spending weeks or months in the adult system before their charges are dismissed or dropped. Reform advocates say that exposure increases their risk of committing a new, more serious crime in the future.

Maryland prosecutors, however, contend that lawmakers should be more



SAPNA BANSIL/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Sen. Will Smith, D-Montgomery, (left) sits next to Sen. Guy Guzzone, D-Howard, while the Maryland Senate is in session on Jan. 18, 2024.

skeptical of the state's Department of Juvenile Services, which is responsible for housing and providing services to those in the juvenile justice system.

"It's unwise to send more juveniles

with more complex problems and challenges to a system that has been shrinking for the past three years," said Wicomico County State's Attorney Jamie Dykes, alluding to real and

planned closures of juvenile detention and treatment facilities.

Now, Senate lawmakers are once again weighing whether the costs of treating some teenage defendants as adults pencil out for the public's safety.

Smith's bill would give Maryland's juvenile courts default jurisdiction over teenage defendants charged with some violent crimes, allowing prosecutors to request that a case be moved to circuit court to reflect the severity of a crime. That would effectively flip the current system, wherein circuit court automatically has jurisdiction over juvenile defendants charged with certain violent crimes, and defense attorneys can request to transfer cases to juvenile court.

But the bill would leave the most serious violent crimes, including first-degree murder, in the circuit court's juris-

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And let us remember that what is really at the heart of Black History Month is our people's commitment to making us truly one nation.

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

### Do you know a Prince George's centenarian?

Do you know any Prince George's County resident born in 1925 or earlier?

M-NCPPC (Department of Parks and Recreation) is hosting a luncheon for County residents born in 1925 or earlier (January 1, 1925, to December 31, 1925) to celebrate our centenarians.

The luncheon will be held Friday, May 9, 2025, at the Laurel-Beltsville Senior Activity Center, 7120 Contee Road in Laurel. This year's event will be limited to the Centenarian and up to five guests. The Centenarian must be present with their guests.

If you know someone born in 1925 or earlier, and resides in Prince George's County, please share this information or complete the online registration form at [pgparks.com/centenarian](http://pgparks.com/centenarian) no later than March 14, 2025.

For centenarian registration assistance, contact the staff at Laurel-Beltsville Senior Activity Center, 301-206-3351/3350, or send an email to [Seniors@pgparks.com](mailto:Seniors@pgparks.com).

### The crash into the Potomac

I can't get the Potomac River crash out of my head. It's so unbelievably sad.

All 67 victims (some so young!) have now been recovered, but only 66 of them had been positively identified by last weekend. Officials were waiting on testing results to positively identify the final victim.

The crashed planes were pulled from the Potomac by February 6, and over the following days, the salvage effort turned to smaller debris. Last Friday the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was using a plane to do low-altitude flight to scan the water for debris. The flight path includes parts of Old Town Alexandria and southern parts of Reagan National Airport.

The flight path includes parts of Old Town Alexandria, southern portions of Reagan National Airport and part of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling. There's been a lot of discussion about the flight pattern and how many aircraft arrive. The discussion continues.

Meanwhile, family and friends continue to gather at the waterside, watching, waiting and mourning.

### Fire closes tire store

M & E Auto Parts, a tire shop at 6711 Suitland Road—across the street from GI Liquors—caught fire Friday, Jan. 17, about 1:40 p.m. Stan Holmes called to let me know that Suitland Road was closed, and a fire was raging, with several fire departments fighting it.

Because of the snow, I didn't get over to check it out until last week. The store—which advertises "tires and alignment" hasn't reopened yet (if it's even able to do so).

### Town of Morningside

Morningside is holding an election on May 5, to vote for Mayor and two Council Members. Anyone interested in running for one of these offices must get their petition turned in by March 5 at 5 p.m.

Who can run for mayor? "Any person shall be eligible to the office of Mayor who shall have attained the age of 30 years and resided in the Town for at least one year, who shall not have been convicted of a felony..."

As to who can run for the Town Council, he or she must be at least 21.

The next Town Meeting will be Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. To contact the Town, call 301-736-2300 or email [generalmailbox@morningsidemd.gov](mailto:generalmailbox@morningsidemd.gov).

### VFW Blood Drive (correcting last week's column)

VFW Auxiliary and the Red Cross are hosting a blood drive and invite you to participate. It will be held at the VFW, 6527 Suitland Rd., on Saturday, March 16, 11 a.m. For more information, call 301-736-2301.

### Coming soon: the cherry blossoms

In 1912, First Lady Helen Herron Taft and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese ambassador to the United States, planted two Yoshino cherry trees on the northern bank of the Potomac River's Tidal Basin. They were part of the 3,000 such trees Japan gave the U.S. as a symbol of the two countries' friendship.

The trees blossom in brilliant pinks and reds each spring and draw more than 1 million visitors to Washington. I love to walk along the basin and enjoy seeing the amazing collection of other people who also do.

And I like visiting the memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King.

If you've never done the blossoms, this is the year.

### Changing Landscape

A new Patient First opened January 30 at 1670 Ritchie Station Court (in Ritchie Station Marketplace), Ritchie Marlboro Road and the Beltway.

From the Heart church, in Andrews Manor shopping center, is planning a renovation and addition. There's a photo posted outside which might show how it will look.

A home at 2613 Brooks Drive, in Suitland, has sold for \$436,600.

### The new McD

My daughter Sheila suggested we check-out the new McDonald's which opened last week after several years of construction.

We were greeted at the door by one of several greeters who could not only greet but also show how to order. Which we did, on a large electronic "page" (with the greeter looking over our shoulders to be sure we did it right). We were sent to a numbered table where our order was delivered. I got my usual, a chicken sandwich. Sheila ordered a burger and fries (her favorite thing). It was delivered to us shortly, tasted good as usual.

I wanted to interview the manager. Actually, there are several. But they were all busy interviewing or training future workers. They'll need every one of them. Their lobby hours are Monday-Saturday, 6-11, Sunday, 6-10. Drive Thru is open 24 hours.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Sarah Anderson and Dean Woods, Feb. 16; Charlene Holmes and

Danny Fowler, Feb. 18; Clifford Lantz, Feb. 19; Melissa Harnes and Paul Bornman, Feb. 20; and Ray Short Jr., Feb. 21.

Happy Anniversary to Wilda and Joe Cheseldine who were married February 16, 1958, at Mount Calvary Church in Forestville.

*Happy Valentine's Day to all my Readers!*

## 12 PGCPs Students Awarded Posse Scholarships

By PRESS OFFICER

Prince George's County Public Schools

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Feb. 7, 2025)—Twelve Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) high school seniors have been named 2024 Posse Scholars and will receive four-year, full-tuition college scholarships from The Posse Foundation's partnering schools.

"We are proud to see our students join the esteemed Posse network," said Superintendent Millard House II. "Their dedication, resilience, and academic excellence have paved the way for this opportunity, and we look forward to the impact they will make in their communities and beyond."

Students participating in the Posse program have a 90 percent college graduation rate, and have proven to make a difference on campus and in their professions. Since 2013, more than 70 PGCPs students have received Posse scholarships.

This year's recipients include:

### Bucknell University

**Kyra Lee**, Charles H. Flowers High School

**Jasmine Vong**, Bowie High School

**Kayden Wilkins**, Frederick Douglass High School

### Lafayette College

**Clovis Nkamga**, Frederick Douglass High School

### Lewis & Clark College

**Manhattan Doles**, Frederick Douglass High School

### Sewanee: The University of the South

**Emmanuel Bonojo**, Largo High School

**Nick Hernandez**, College Park Academy Public Charter School

**Jada Johnson**, Frederick Douglass High School

**Jesse Nwobike**, Charles H. Flowers High School

### University of Rochester

**Aisha Mbaye**, Chesapeake Math & IT Academy - North

**Abraham Omidiora**, Chesapeake Math & IT Academy - South

**Oscar Ramirez Soto**, Bowie High School

For more information, visit [www.posse.foundation.org](http://www.posse.foundation.org).

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), *one of the nation's 20th largest school districts, has 201 schools and centers, more than 133,000 students and nearly 20,000 employees. The school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities. PGCPs is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion.*

## FBI from A1

Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which owns the Greenbelt site. The GSA and its officials also failed to properly maintain text messages related to the relocation, according to the report.

Albert's government-issued phone was cleared of all data by the GSA as part of an automatic off-boarding procedure for employees leaving the agency. Some officials created federal records by discussing the relocation on their personal cell phone, but failed to report these records until they were asked by the agency, months after the statutory deadline had passed.

Responding to the IG's report, then-GSA Administrator Robin Carnahan wrote in a letter dated six days before the end of the Biden administration that "while these findings are worth careful consideration, in my view none of them undermine the overall integrity of the process, the Site Selection Panel's recommendation, or the Site Selection Authority's (Albert's) decision."

Carnahan added that "all those involved did their best to recommend and ultimately select a site that would provide the best value for the FBI and the public."

CNS did not receive responses from the GSA, Virginia Democratic Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine or Fairfax County Supervisor Pat Herrity about possible next steps.

The FBI's press office wrote in an email that officials "don't have any comment at this time."

Greenbelt Mayor Emmett V. Jordan told CNS that the city "remains the most cost-effective location for the FBI headquarters." He also emphasized that Greenbelt adequately meets all the FBI's security requirements and transportation accessibility needs.

With the site selection process already through many rounds of planning and vetting, Jordan said he hopes that "the GSA is able to move ahead to find a place, hopefully in Greenbelt, for the FBI," especially with federal employees concerned about their jobs under the new administration.

The joint statement by Maryland officials, which also included Democratic Sens. Angela Alsobrooks and Chris Van Hollen and Democratic Reps. Steny Hoyer and Glenn Ivey, said "the Greenbelt site continues to offer the lowest cost to the American taxpayer, the greatest transit accessibility and the most certain construction schedule."

## Collage from A1

Roman Catholic Church that influence his aesthetic. The result is an experience that is both visually captivating and thought-provoking.

A native of Washington, D.C., Terrell was raised in Ward 7. He is the son of Rev. Dr. James E. Terrell, Pastor of the historic Second Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., and Retired Superior Court Associate Judge Mary A. Terrell. His academic credentials include a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Howard University, a Master of Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design, and a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary with a concentration in Theology and the Fine Arts.

With over 15 years of experience teaching art in D.C. Public Schools and Public Charter Schools, Terrell has exhibited his work nationwide, including solo shows at the prestigious Saginaw Art Museum and the Smithsonian.

James Stephen Terrell's "Transcendence: Beyond the Terrestrial Plane" runs from Monday, February 3 until Saturday, March 8, 2025.

## Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### FAMILY DAY DUELING PIANO SHOW

Join Bobby McKey's (<https://www.bobbymckeyes.com/kids-teen-show-tickets>) as we open up our all-request live music show to a monthly family friendly event February 22, 2025, from 3:30-6 p.m. Teams of pianists takes your song requests and perform with a blend of improvisational humor. This show will have everyone engaged, singing, clapping and dancing the afternoon away. Littles won't be expected to sit still and are encouraged to wiggle in their seats and get up and move. The high energy performance appeals to guests of all ages, because the show is run by your song selections. The ticketing for this afternoon soiree includes a buffet meal and non-alcoholic beverages. A great option for celebrating Birthdays, Team events, or Scouting parties. The bar will be open for guests 21+. Best for ages 1-101. Address is 172 Fleet St., National Harbor, Maryland. Upcoming dates are Saturday, March 29, Saturday, April 26, Saturday, May 31, Saturday, June 28, Saturday, July 26, Saturday, August 23 and Saturday, September 27, 2025.

### CELEBRATING BULLDOG LOVE

The Office of Alumni Engagement and Stewardship is celebrating Bulldog Love the entire month of February. Did you meet on the BSU, fall in love and marry? Maybe you met each other years after leaving BSU and found a love connection. Please share and submit your love story! Visit the website to view our BSU Couples and read their love stories! Join the Virtual BSU Alumni Community. Facebook:@BSUOAE, Instagram: @BowieAlum X: @BSU Alumni Office. Questions? Email [alumni@bowiestate.edu](mailto:alumni@bowiestate.edu).

### KAYLA WRIGHT ('20) & MICHAEL BRISCOE, JR. ('18)

Kayla and Michael met in 2016 at Bowie State University where they were both student-athletes. Kayla ran track and cross country, and Michael played basketball. Studying computer technology, they shared a passion for tech and earned their Bachelor of Science degrees, Michael in December 2018 and Kayla in May 2020 during COVID. They began dating in 2017, and on May 13, 2023, Michael proposed. They tied the knot in a beautiful Mexico wedding on December 8, 2024.

### BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Former women's basketball player, coach and administrator, Arlene Creek ('70), will be inducted into the CIAA John B. McLendon Hall of Fame during the 2025 CIAA Basketball Tournament.

### 2025 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The CIAA will kick off its fifth year in Charm City for the 2025 CIAA Basketball Tournament February 25-March 1, 2025 CFG Bank ARENA I Baltimore, MD [ciaatournament.org](http://ciaatournament.org). 2025

is truly a celebration of legacy for the conference as it marks the 80th Annual CIAA Basketball Tournament, and the 50th Anniversary of the CIAA Women's Basketball Tournament.

Bowie State University is the host institution once again for the CIAA Basketball Tournament. Bulldog fans are encouraged to stay connected to the Office of Alumni Engagement & Stewardship to be among the first to know about CIAA events, hotel reservations, and so much more.

### A TRIBUTE TO JAMES GARNELL TURNER

My father James Garnell Turner will always be remembered for the wonderful memories that he left, and the values that he instilled in us. He always advised us on every aspect of life. The positive lessons that he taught us will be passed on for generations to come. Like the scripture says, the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and be delighted in His ways. We admired him for his endurance and strength. Our father was a man with a kind and loving heart and taught us how to be strong women. Love Audrey, Patricia, Joyce and Cleo.

### TRIBUTE TO MARVIN GAYE

Shelton Cornelius Price, a phenomenal male artist, hails from Washington, DC. As a dedicated healthcare provider and military veteran, he discovered his passion for singing during active duty. Inspired by Motown legends like Marvin Gaye, Shelton's silky-smooth voice has taken him worldwide. His sold-out shows, including performances at the Blue Dolphin Seafood Bar & Grill, Bethesda Blues, and Jazz Supper Club, and City Winery Philadelphia, offer an unforgettable "REMEMBERING MARVIN" experience. With a unique ability to captivate audiences, especially the ladies, Shelton's artistry ensures lasting memories. Remembering Marvin Gaye- Park and Recreation-Prince George's County, Maryland.

### FEBRUARY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Wendell and Florella Wallace who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating wedding anniversaries in February. May you share many more happy memories together.

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to Brandon Freeman, Vincent Woodard, Darion Smalling, Joachin Neckere, Janice Patterson, Rachel Cain, Lauren Crawford, Marvies Davies, Gloria Garrett, Fern Green, Emmanuel Oghogho, Ronald Davis, Jean Noel, Anthony Davis, Matthew Oghogho, Isabella Oghogho, Karmalita Contee, Maleke Glee, Lynn Harper, Lawrence Oghogho and Romonia Pinkney who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in February.



# HEALTH *and* WELLNESS

## St. Philip's Little Chapel Food Pantry Distribution Sunday February 16, 9–noon

The 3rd Sunday of the month distribution of the St. Philip's Little Chapel Food Pantry will be Sunday, February 16, 2025, from 9–noon, while supplies last. We will have fresh produce as well as non-perishables and a limited supply of frozen items. We are located at the corner of 6th and Prince George Street in Laurel behind the church sanctuary on Main Street, next to the playground. Pantry clients are encouraged to bring their own reusable shopping bags for the client choice items, while supplies last.

## Chesapeake Life Center Offers Healing for Those Experiencing Loss After DCA Tragedy

By PRESS OFFICER  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Feb. 10, 2025)—The Chesapeake Life Center will offer "Healing Our Community: Navigating Grief in the Aftermath of the DCA Tragedy" to support those affected by the Jan. 29 tragedy at Reagan National Airport.

Chesapeake Life Center's trauma-informed grief counselors will lead this healing workshop from 2 to 3:30 p.m. **Saturday, Feb. 22**, at Hospice of the Chesapeake's center at 2505 Davis Road, Waldorf, Maryland.

The session offers a supportive space for community members to connect with others who share in their loss. Together, they can learn about grief and healthy coping strategies,

participate in activities to express and process emotions and create a remembrance keepsake.

Adults will meet separately from the children and teens to ensure age-appropriate conversations.

This is a free program open to adults and children ages 6 and older. Registration is required and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing [griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org](mailto:griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org).

*Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities to enhance the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For details, visit [www.chesapeakelifecenter.org](http://www.chesapeakelifecenter.org).*

## Governor Moore Names Dr. Meena Seshamani as Maryland Department of Health Secretary

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 6, 2025)—Governor Wes Moore today announced the appointment of Dr. Meena Seshamani as Maryland Department of Health Secretary. Pending Maryland Senate confirmation, Dr. Seshamani will assume the post as secretary on April 8.

Dr. Laura Herrera Scott will depart from her role as Maryland Department of Health Secretary with a remarkable record of achievement on Feb. 28. Maryland Department of Health Deputy Secretary for Health Care Financing Ryan B. Moran, Dr.P.H., will serve as acting secretary during the transition.

"Dr. Meena Seshamani is among the nation's top health leaders—with an extraordinary career spanning expertise in public service, medical practice, economics, academia, and advocacy. She has made our nation's health care system fairer, more affordable, and more accessible to all—including our most vulnerable, from families in poverty to communities with disabilities. We thank her for raising her hand to serve in this new role," said Gov. Moore. "Dr. Laura Herrera Scott has laid a strong foundation at the Maryland Department of Health over the last two years and is to be commended for her service. My friend and fellow veteran has done this administration and her state proud."

Dr. Herrera Scott transitions from her role as secretary of Maryland Department of Health with a meaningful record of service and accomplishment.

Under her leadership, the department ensured thousands of Marylanders remained eligible for health care coverage through the Medicaid program following the COVID-19 pandemic. She led negotiations that resulted in Maryland's historic, first-in-the-nation entry into the AHEAD model, which will not only improve population health but also lower health care costs for Marylanders. She implemented programs to address infectious and chronic disease threats across the state. She also assembled a dedicated team to strengthen the department's operations to better serve some of the state's most vulnerable populations.

Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., is an accomplished strategic leader with a deep understanding of health care policy and operations and a heart-felt commitment to outstanding patient care. She most recently led the Medicare program and was deputy administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, where she stood up the historic Medicare Drug Price Negotiation program and implemented initiatives to improve Medicare's prescription drug coverage. She was also instrumental in transforming Medicare to provide more holistic care and enhanced support for individuals with disabilities—including first-ever payments

for community health services, care navigation, training for family caregivers, and bundled payments for primary care.

Prior to joining the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Dr. Seshamani was vice president of clinical care transformation at MedStar Health, where she conceptualized, designed and implemented population health initiatives. While serving with MedStar, Dr. Seshamani collaborated to advise the Maryland National Guard and Maryland Department of Health on the state's COVID-19 response. She also served on the Total Cost of Care and care transformation steering committees for the Maryland All-Payer Model.

Prior to her role at MedStar, Dr. Seshamani served as director of the Office of Health Reform in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where she led implementation of the Affordable Care Act. She set policy priorities, led regulatory development, and oversaw programs around insurance coverage, prevention and public health, and delivery system reform—all in service of increasing access to health care coverage for millions of Americans.

Dr. Seshamani is a Hopkins-trained surgeon and Oxford-trained Ph.D. economist, where she was a Marshall Scholar. She cared for patients as a head and neck surgeon at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and at Kaiser Permanente.

# ENVIRONMENT

## Lawmakers Hope to Cut Utility Bills, Expand Maryland Power Grid

By RACHEL MCCREA  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 5, 2025)—Democratic leaders have unveiled a sweeping new energy plan for Maryland that would make it easier to build new energy plants and other power projects in Maryland.

If passed, the legislation could mean more renewable energy, nuclear power and potentially natural gas in the state.

"We need to consider alternative sources of energy generation to alleviate stress on our power system," House Speaker Adrienne Jones, a Democrat from Baltimore County, said at a press conference. "It is this work that will protect Maryland

energy consumers, that will drive down energy costs, and that will ensure that our families keep the lights on."

The legislation comes amid high and rising utility bills, and as the state tries to meet its clean energy goals and keep electricity affordable for Marylanders. Lawmakers backing these bills want to produce more energy in Maryland instead of relying on imports from other states, but Republicans are dubious that the plan would lower Marylanders' utility bills.

"I was extremely overwhelmed by the package of bills that they discussed today," Senate Minority Leader Stephen Hershey, a Republican

from Caroline, Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties, told Capital News Service after the press conference. "I think that if you are a Marylander that is concerned about high utility rates ... there's nothing that was discussed today that is going to help that situation."

The legislation focuses too much on long-term solutions, he said, and puts too much faith in solar, wind and battery storage. He said he had hoped that there would be a push to bring new gas-fired power plants into the state to make up for energy losses from recent power plant closures.

"I didn't hear anything specifically that would make me believe that there's any ur-

gency in addressing Maryland's energy crisis," he said.

But the lawmakers behind the legislation are hopeful it will help lower utility bills, boost energy production in Maryland and promote cleaner energy.

"Together, we will secure greater affordability, greater reliability and greater predictability of Maryland's energy grid," said Senate President Bill Ferguson, a Democrat from Baltimore City.

Under the Next Generation Energy Act, Ferguson said, the state's regulatory commission would be required to solicit bids for and approve new energy projects in Maryland. The bill would streamline permitting and siting for these projects to get them up and running quickly.

Natural gas plants are on the table for these energy projects, he said, though renewables like

solar and wind are the top priority. The bill could also expand nuclear energy in the state.

"Natural gas has to be considered," Ferguson said.

New natural gas plants would have to be designed to be convertible to clean fuels, like hydrogen, and to use carbon capture, as soon as the technology allows. Lawmakers want to see energy projects in the pipeline "as quickly as possible," Ferguson said, setting a target for the end of this year.

The package would also add standards and consumer protections for rooftop solar and build new solar and battery storage projects in the state. It would require utilities to plan how they will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions without causing rates to skyrocket or running into a reliability crisis. It would also revive a government office dedicated to analyzing and predict-

ing the future of energy in Maryland. Bill co-sponsor Sen. Katie Fry Hester, a Democrat from Howard and Montgomery counties, said the office can support the state through its transition to clean energy.

"What we've seen in the last five years is the advancement of technology that is more energy-consuming than we could have ever imagined," Ferguson said. "We've seen electrification, which has been encouraged, but should be for many, many reasons, which has put additional strain on the grid ... That has led to a mismatch in supply and demand. That's the reason we're seeing these increased prices, and let me tell you, it's unacceptable."

"We have to act urgently to lower prices for Marylanders," he said. "That's what this package is about ... everyday Marylanders having lower bills."

## EarthTalk® Q&A

### Are Wood Pellets a "Green" Heat Source?

By Rachel Berliner | February 6, 2025

Dear EarthTalk:

*What's so bad about wood pellet biomass energy anyway? Isn't wood a renewable resource?*

—M. Wilson, Houston, TX

Inch-long, compressed pieces made from pine and hardwood trees are plentiful in the Southeastern region of the United States, which is home to many wood pellet manufacturing companies. According to the Dogwood Alliance, 75 percent of wood pellets produced in the U.S. are sent to be burned in the U.K.

Biomass took off in 2009, after the European Union (EU) created its Renewable Energy Directive, which deemed wood pellets a renewable energy source and, as such, an important

energy source. Seth Ginther, executive director of the United States Industrial Pellet Association, believes that wood pellet biomass is a "low-cost, low-carbon alternative," and "helps encourage forest owners to reforest and replant."

That said, many eco-advocates question just how sustainable producing and burning wood pellets really is. A recent report by Chatham House, a London-based think tank, estimates that 17.6 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) were released from burning wood pellets in the U.K in 2019. Also, gathering the wood requires clear cutting of forests, which releases CO2 that had been sequestered in the trees and soil. In the U.S., clear cutting and the making wood pellets produced

upwards of 88 million tons of CO2.

Besides the ecological impact, communities living near wood pellet manufacturing centers suffer from constant exposure to thick smoke and toxic pollutants. "Fourteen million people in the United States live within a few miles of bioenergy facilities and breathe potentially harmful toxins and pollutants," says Edi Huno of the National Wildlife Federation. And often, those living right outside these manufacturing centers are communities of color with the majority of residents living below the poverty line.

Added to all this, many don't consider wood pellets renewable resource, which is one that does not exhaust Earth's resources. Trees that are ideal for wood pellet

lets don't quickly regenerate. One idea has been to use fast-growing pine plantations, but they're less biodiverse and bad at capturing carbon. Burning wood with lower levels of carbon generates less heat, making pine an inefficient source of fuel.

The wood pellet biomass industry continues to grow. That said, many environmental organizations, such as Dogwood Alliance, offer virtual petitions to sign on their respective websites. These petitions will be sent to state senators. By signing your name, you can help save southern forests and communities and keep unsafe levels of carbon emissions out of the atmosphere.

**CONTACTS:** Groundbreaking report reveals harmful impacts of biomass wood pellet



PHOTO CREDIT: BY TOM BRUTON, PUBLIC DOMAIN.

**Just because wood pellets are made from wood doesn't mean they are necessarily carbon neutral.**

plants, <https://www.southernenvironment.org/press-release/groundbreaking-report-reveals-harmful-impacts-of-biomass-wood-pellet-plants/>

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# COMMENTARY

**Ben Jealous**

*Executive Director,  
Sierra Club*



## In Fire's Wake, a Community Comes Together to Prevent Future Disasters

"As we address the aftermath of the wildfires, let us resolve not just to build back better but also smarter, with a commitment to the environment and future generations. As a pastor, I am guided by the principle that caring for creation is an integral part of our faith. Let us take inspiration from the teachings of love and stewardship, embracing the role of being good caretakers of God's earth. Without a shadow of a doubt, community solidarity is crucial in the fight against climate change."

Those are the words of Rev. Dr. Larry E. Campbell, Senior Pastor of Pasadena, California's historic First African Methodist Episcopal Church. Forty-nine members of his congregation lost their homes to the Eaton Fire last month.

The Eaton Fire raged through the Pasadena area hitting the neighborhoods of Altadena especially hard. Altadena, where many of Pastor Campbell's congregants live, is an unincorporated part of Los Angeles County just north of Pasadena, nestled in the foothills up against Angeles National Forest. I grew up in a California community similarly on the edge of the wilderness. We were used to fires

happening out in the forests, but not in our neighborhoods. Thanks to extreme drought, climate whiplash, and the other effects of the climate crisis, the people in these communities now need to grapple with increased firestorm threats in their towns and cities.

Altadena lost at least 17 lives and thousands of homes to the flames—many more than the City of Pasadena which, while also devastated, lost just under 200 homes. And the city leaders and community activists of Pasadena have stepped up in a big way to help their neighbors.

"In this community we don't make very large distinctions between Altadena and Pasadena. We all grew up together, we all went to school together, and when families who lost their homes in Altadena reached out to family members for shelter it was their family and friends in Pasadena who opened their doors and welcomed them in. We really are one big community," Pasadena Councilmember Tyron Hampton told the Los Angeles Sentinel.

In the face of tragedy, community leaders are

also stepping up not only to rebuild, but to strengthen their communities—and all of ours—against future disasters by working to combat the cause of the fires: warming due to the continued burning of fossil fuels. In 2023, the Pasadena City Council passed a Climate Emergency Resolution, setting a goal for Pasadena to run on 100% carbon-free electricity by 2030. Now, in the wake of the fires, a broad coalition of local activists and advocates are pushing for Pasadena to hit that target.

Those of us who grew up in the Black Church understand Adam's commandment was to defend the Garden, protect the Garden, nurture the Garden. And the Garden right now is out of balance in a profound way. We should all take inspiration from how communities like Pasadena and Altadena are coming together to care for the Garden and take a stand for their future and ours.

This sort of resilience is a familiar part of Altadena's rich history—and its Black history, in particular.

Altadena was one of the first places in Southern California where a thriving Black middle class took root in the last century. It was home to such luminaries as: Octavia Estelle Butler, the celebrated African American author and first science fiction writer to receive a MacArthur Fellowship (also known as the "Genius Grant"); the writer, activist, and early Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver; Sidney Poitier, the Hollywood and civil rights pathbreaker who was the first Black actor to win the Academy Award for Best Actor; and Charles W. White, a local artist famous for his depictions of Black history.

Even Altadena's earlier history dating back to the 19th century held stories of both Black achievement and racial unity. Robert Owens was born

into slavery in 1806 and later became the wealthiest Black man in Los Angeles County. He made his home just above Altadena at El Prieto Canyon, which was named for him ("El Prieto" being Spanish for "the dark-skinned one"). Altadena is the final resting place of Ellen Garrison Jackson Clark, the abolitionist and civil rights pioneer. And it was the final home to Owen Brown, son of the abolitionist John Brown and the last surviving participant in his father's raid on Harper's Ferry. The younger Brown was celebrated locally among the area's mixed Black and white post-Civil War community.

But a UCLA study found Altadena's Black residents suffered disproportionately in the recent fires, due to past policies like redlining. Sixty-one percent of Black households were inside the Eaton Fire perimeter versus 50 percent of non-Black households. Nearly half of Altadena's Black residents had their homes destroyed or severely damaged. And 57% of Altadena's Black homeowners are over the age of 65, making them particularly vulnerable in the disaster's aftermath.

This, the first week of Black History Month, let us resolve not to let the climate crisis take away our history. And let us remember that what is really at the heart of Black History Month is our people's commitment to making us truly one nation. It should be a priority to prevent future disasters that would lay waste not only to homes and buildings but to rich local histories and precious generational wealth. The people of Altadena and Pasadena are showing us what that path forward looks like.

*Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.*

—February 3, 2025

## Governor Moore Announces Dramatic Decrease in Fatal Overdoses in Maryland in 2024

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 4, 2025)—Governor Wes Moore today announced that the number of fatal overdoses in Maryland decreased dramatically in 2024. According to preliminary data from Maryland's Overdose Data Dashboard, there were 1,553 fatal overdoses reported in Maryland last year—a 38% decrease than the 2,511 fatal overdoses reported in 2023.

"The decrease in fatal overdoses that we're seeing in Maryland is historic, and it's proof that our investments in behavioral health and substance use care and the incredible efforts of people all around our state are paying off," said Gov. Moore. "However, we still have work to do. We are still losing far too many of our loved ones and neighbors to preventable overdoses, and we will not let up in our efforts to meet people where they are and make connections to care."

"Substance use affects every community, and those struggling with addiction deserve quality care, no matter their background," said Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller. "The progress we've made in reducing overdoses is encouraging, but the data is clear—our work must continue to ensure that all communities have equitable access to care and the resources that they need to stay safe."

Fatal overdoses in Maryland and across the country reached historic highs following the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, 2,800 people died from a fatal overdose in Maryland—the most in the state's history. The last time fatal overdoses in Maryland fell below 2,000 was in 2015, when there were 1,259 fatal overdoses in the state.

"Maryland remains committed to ensuring access to substance use care whenever and wherever it is needed," said Maryland Department of Health Secretary Dr. Laura Herrera Scott. "The progress we have made would not be possible without the hard work of dedicated individuals across the state, from local health departments and local behavioral health authorities to our thriving mosaic of amazing community organizations that are working every day to provide supportive services."

Data from the dashboard show that overdose deaths decreased broadly across demographic and across all age groups. However, health department officials note that disparities in overdose are still present among minority communities in Maryland, and that work must continue to ensure all communities are connected to care.

Despite making up about 30% of Maryland's population, non-Hispanic Black people accounted for 44% of all overdose deaths in the state since 2022. Black men older than 55 years of age experienced the highest rate of increase. More than 1,050 non-Hispanic Black men over the age of 55 died from an overdose during this

time frame compared to 600 non-Hispanic white men. Since 2023, overdose deaths among Hispanic people in Maryland under the age of 25 were higher than both non-Hispanic white people and non-Hispanic Black people under the age of 25.

Final numbers in overdose data are pending the outcome of a small number of death investigations.

Last year, the Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council, chaired by Lt. Governor Miller, established a workgroup to study racial disparities in overdose. The council is currently working to assess the progress that state agencies have made to address overdose disparities and to formulate recommendations for additional actions.

Marylanders who are struggling with substance use or are experiencing a behavioral health crisis are encouraged to call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, to speak with someone who can help. Individuals can also visit the 988 webpage to find treatment providers in their areas.

"Collaboration has always been at the heart of Maryland's strategy for reducing overdoses and saving lives," said Maryland Special Secretary of Overdose Response Emily Keller. "Everyone has a role to play, from the highest level of government to community members in all parts of our state, and I believe this decrease reflects that collaboration. This crisis affects everyone, and all Marylanders can help save even more lives by learning to recognize the signs of an overdose and how to administer the overdose reversal medication, naloxone."

Information about how to respond to an overdose and how to find and use naloxone can be found at [StopOverdose.maryland.gov/naloxone](http://StopOverdose.maryland.gov/naloxone).

### Debate from A1

diction by default. That exception is adjustment from past reform bills intended to assuage critics.

"This issue has been studied and debated throughout three governors, multiple committee chairs," said Alice Wilkerson, executive director of Advance Maryland and a part of the coalition of advocacy groups backing the bill.

Ending automatic sentencing of juveniles as adults was that coalition's first policy goal, she added, and years later, it remains "unfinished business."

That coalition has seen victories on other fronts. In 2022, for instance, Maryland lawmakers voted to generally bar police from interrogating children until they have consulted an attorney.

Dayvon Love, director of public policy for the Baltimore-based think tank Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle and a vocal supporter of automatic sentencing reform, says pushback from law enforcement and prosecutors on recent criminal justice reforms, as well as critical media coverage, seemed to doom automatic sentencing reform.

"We are dealing with what I describe as a backlash," he told the Capital News Service.

Smith's emergence as the latest voice of automatic sentencing reform in the Senate, however, may change the reform movement's outlook. As chair of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, Smith is well-positioned to negotiate a path forward for a pared-down bill.

But the policy disagreements surrounding automatic sentencing have largely not budged.

Smith underscores that most teenagers charged as adults in the state eventually see their cases transferred down to juvenile

court—79% in 2023 alone, he told his committee on Tuesday.

Awaiting that transfer, he added, "when someone's languishing in the adult system, they get none of the services and attention that they would get in the juvenile system." Exposing teenagers to the adult court and prison system, he added, increases their chances of committing more serious crimes in the future.

"Based on my 24 years in both juvenile and adult criminal courts, there is a drastic difference in outcomes [between adult and juvenile court] that should be the elephant in the room," said retired Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Judge Philip Caroom, who testified in support of the bill on Tuesday.

The additional hearings and administrative costs involved in transferring hundreds of young defendants between the adult and juvenile systems, Smith added, cost the Department of Juvenile Services roughly \$12.3 million a year. "What if you have \$12.3 million to reinvest into services, into oversight?" he asked.

But Sen. William Folden, a Republican representing Frederick County and a frequent critic of criminal justice reform bills on the committee, was critical of the Department of Juvenile Services' ability to properly rehabilitate young people placed in its custody by the court system.

"DJS is a mess. DJS is a wreck. DJS has a secretary that spends money on all these shiny new ideas and documented zero of the outcomes," he said. "I don't know if that's someone that can be entrusted with such an important role in molding youth."

Catharine Rosenblatt, deputy chief of the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office juvenile division, echoed those concerns. She told lawmakers that her office regularly sees cases transferred from adult to juvenile court

on the pretense that the Department of Juvenile Services will provide secure housing or behavioral therapy, only for those services never to materialize.

"Unfortunately, what we've found time and time again is that the services available—they're in name only," she said.

But neither Rosenblatt nor any other prosecutor who spoke in opposition to the bill on Tuesday expressed enthusiasm for the services available to teenagers in the adult system. Charles County Deputy State's Attorney Karen Piper Mitchell, for instance, questioned why therapeutic services aren't available to teenage defendants tried in adult court, even while arguing against the proposed reforms.

The Department of Juvenile Services is supportive of the proposed reforms, and its legislative director testified in support of Smith's bill, arguing that their agency already serves the substantial share of Maryland's teenage defendants charged as adults who eventually transfer to juvenile court.

If lawmakers do finally implement the reforms, Baltimore County State's Attorney Scott Shellenberger asserted that the forecasted savings on court hearings might not materialize if prosecutors opted to request transfers to adult court in most cases, as public defenders do for transfers to juvenile court in most cases.

"I understand that 80% are being transferred down [to juvenile court]," he told CNS. "If they all started in juvenile, a vast majority of the State's Attorneys would try to waive many of them up, and I don't believe it would approach anything near 80% that would be granted." Nevertheless, he said, lawmakers should not assume that the costs of hearing cases in both adult and juvenile jurisdictions would disappear.

The Judicial Proceedings Committee has yet to vote on the bill.

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

### Why Was Social Security Money Moved to the General Treasury?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,

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

**Dear Rusty:** Why were the Social Security funds moved from the Social Security account to the General Fund with the government? Is it not then called a tax making it an entitlement? That then gives the government control of our retirement. Most of us feel that someone should be in charge and use the Social Security fund with investments that grow our savings.

I invested my 401K and savings, and the original amount made me money during the Trump years, and I'm now trying to catch up. I make this statement because I draw more from my investments than I receive from Social Security. **Signed: Questioning Senior Citizen**

**Dear Questioning Senior:** I'm afraid I must inform you that no Social Security funds have ever been moved from the Social Security account to the government's General Fund—this is a pervasive myth which we have refuted many times over the years. For information, here is one of many articles I have published on this topic, which I hope you find interesting: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-about-repaying-social-security-money-taken-by-politicians/>.

Someone actually is charged with monitoring our Social Security funds—a board of Social Security Trustees consisting of the Secretaries of Treasury, Labor, and Health & Human Services, as well as the Commissioner of Social Security plus two Public Trustees. Each year the Social Security Trustees do a complete analysis of the Social Security program, especially its financial status and outlook for the future. If you have interest in the Trustee's latest annual report, here is a link to the 2024 analysis: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/tr24summary.pdf>.

What you will find in the Trustees' report is that Social Security will run out of reserved funds in about 2033, necessitating an across the board cut of about 21% for everyone, unless Congress acts soon to reform the program and restore it to fiscal solvency. The Trustees have warned Congress about this problem for many years, but Congress has yet to find the bipartisan cooperation needed to fix the problem. AMAC (the Association of Mature American Citizens) has steadfastly offered proposals to Congress which would restore Social Security to solvency and will continue to do so with the new 119th Congress, which convened on January 3, 2025.

Please know that we appreciate your feedback and commend you for the wise use of your 401k investments, something that many of our members find necessary to supplement their Social Security. Remember, Social Security was never intended to provide all your retirement income, so earlier saving to supplement your retirement financial needs was a very wise move on your part.

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

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://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](http://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](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

## Maryland Small Business Development Center

### How To Write An Awesome Capability Statement

February 25, 2025 • 10–11:15 a.m.

Location: Online • Cost: No Fee-Registration Required:  
<https://mdsbdc.eccenterdirect.com/events/18099>

Does your Capabilities Statement clearly demonstrate the value you bring to government agencies? If the answer is "NO" then this workshop is for you. A Capability Statement is used as a marketing tool when you are networking and developing relationships with local, state and federal government agencies. The ability to effectively market your firm's strengths through a capabilities statement is one of the first steps in being successful with government contracting. A capability statement is a document which outlines your company's strengths, core competencies and especially successful past performance. It acts as your firm's "company resume". Primarily utilized in the government sector, a capabilities statement is recognized and expected by agencies and can also be a powerful tool for appropriately marketing your business to potential and existing customers as well as to teaming partners and Prime contractors. In this workshop you will learn the key elements of a capability statement and why you may need more than one capability statement for your company. Be prepared to create or improve your firms' capabilities statement and answer the question "WHY YOU" instead of the incumbent or competition. Presenter, Monica Randall, The Randall Group, LLC

Instructions: A log-on link will be sent to registrants the day/evening prior to the training.

## Bowie Business Innovation Center Ranked 6th Largest Incubator and Accelerator in the State of Maryland

By PRESS OFFICER

Bowie Business Innovation Center

BOWIE, Md. (Feb. 7, 2025)—The Baltimore Business Journal has ranked the Bowie Business Innovation Center (Bowie BIC) as the 6th largest incubator and accelerator in Maryland in its annual Incubator and Accelerator Ranking.

This prestigious ranking highlights Bowie BIC's role as a leading catalyst for minority business success in the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area. By fostering economic growth, driving innovation, and creating equitable opportunities, Bowie BIC continues to build thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems that empower businesses to achieve sustainable success.

Since its inception, Bowie BIC has been a vital resource for bridging the business knowledge gap. Through its flagship programs, the Center empowers minority-owned businesses in Prince George's County and the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area by providing expert guidance,

business education, and access to valuable resources. With a commitment to fostering sustainable growth and success, Bowie BIC continues to be a driving force for innovation and opportunity in the region.

"We are extremely proud of this ranking in the Baltimore Business Journal as it confirms our dedication to the meaningful and impactful work we do to elevate minority-owned businesses," said June Evans, Executive Director of Bowie BIC. "This recognition highlights our commitment to helping socially and economically disadvantaged businesses achieve their goals and thrive. We couldn't achieve this success without the unwavering support of our strategic partners. Their collaboration strengthens our mission to equip businesses with the tools to become bankable, secure government contracts, and excel in performance during periods of rapid growth and expansion."

One of Bowie BIC's many success stories is Donna Ragins-Wright, President of Aurora Technical Systems, who gained invaluable insights from the 8(a) Accelerator

Program. A key takeaway for her was understanding the legalities of joint venture and mentor-protégé agreements, which proved pivotal for her business growth. "The 8(a) Accelerator Program gave me invaluable resources to navigate challenges and achieve success," she said.

Ragins-Wright's journey reflects the transformative impact of Bowie BIC's programs, empowering entrepreneurs with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to thrive in competitive markets.

To date, Bowie has proudly served 1,789 entrepreneurs and welcomed over 200 participants into its transformative cohorts. The Center offers several award-winning programs including the 8(a) Accelerator, Capital Accelerator, InnovateBOWIE!, the Open Door Program, and its newest program, the Center of Excellence for 8(a) Government Contracting.

For more information about Bowie BIC, its programs, or to schedule a meeting, visit [www.bowiebic.com](http://www.bowiebic.com) or call 301-383-1550.

## Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union Refreshes Logo and Brand Identity to Reflect Commitment to County Residents

*The countywide credit union gives their brand a fresh new look and challenges the community to shed unhealthy financial and physical habits.*

By PRESS OFFICER

Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union

BOWIE, Md. (Feb. 3, 2025)—The Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union (PGCFCU) has unveiled a refreshed logo and brand identity, underscoring its dedication to serving the residents and business owners of Prince George's County. The updated design highlights "Prince George's" while retaining the credit union's signature purple and green color palette, along with new refined taglines. Key features of the design include a solid-colored tree icon and a heart-shaped leaf favicon, symbolizing the credit union's deep roots and heartfelt commitment to the community.

DMV-based branding and marketing agency Black Digital Group partnered with PGCFCU in early 2024 to provide strategic guidance and a fresh perspective on the rebranding process. Inspired by modern trends, the refresh aims to ensure the credit union remains relevant while refining its brand perception.

The previous logo, introduced during the transition from serving solely county employees to welcoming all county residents, emphasized the word "community." The new logo shifts focus to "Prince George's," reflecting the credit union's expanding reach and commitment to the entire county, beyond the areas surrounding

its four brick-and-mortar locations.

"This new brand refresh symbolizes our unwavering commitment to the residents and businesses of Prince George's County," said Diane Coleman Brown, President and CEO of PGCFCU. "Following a year of tremendous growth, including the opening of our Greenbelt branch in 2024, we wanted our brand to instantly communicate that we are a trusted financial institution of the county, always evolving to better serve our members."

While the updated branding introduces a modern "look and feel," it retains the original tree icon as a nod to being "rooted in the community." The heart-shaped leaves, also featured as a standalone favicon, represent PGCFCU's role as "the heart of the Prince George's County community."

In tandem with the brand refresh, PGCFCU is launching a yearlong financial and fitness challenge, [which began] on Monday, February 3, 2025. The 2025 PGCFCU Financial & Fitness Challenge aims to empower county residents to im-

prove both their financial and physical well-being through a series of engaging promotions, programs, and challenges.

For more information on the brand refresh or to learn about the 2025 PGCFCU Financial & Fitness Challenge, visit [www.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org/Financial-Fitness](http://www.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org/Financial-Fitness) and follow the #PGCFCUit25 hashtag on all social media platforms.

*Established in 1967, Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union (PGCFCU) was founded to provide financial services to employees of Prince George's County. Over the decades, we've grown to proudly serve more than 19,500 members across the county. With assets exceeding \$300 million, our community-focused credit union welcomes individuals who live, work, volunteer, worship, own a business, or attend school in Prince George's County to join. For more information about the organization or to become a member, please visit [www.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org](http://www.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org) or call 301.627.2666.*

## Prince George's County Appoints Adriana Caldarelli as Interim Director of the Department of the Environment

By PRESS OFFICER

Prince George's County

LARGO, Md. (Jan. 30, 2025)—Prince George's County is pleased to announce the appointment of Adriana Caldarelli as the Interim Director of the Department of the Environment (DoE), effective Monday, January 27, 2025. Ms. Caldarelli steps into this role following the departure of former Director Andrea L. Crooms.

Ms. Caldarelli brings a wealth of experience in environmental management and policy. Prior to joining Prince George's County, she served as the Director of the Stormwater Institute at the Water Environment Federation, where she also led the National Green Infrastructure Certification Program—a workforce development initiative focused on the proper maintenance, construction, and inspection of green infrastructure. Before that, she dedicated 17 years to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, work-

ing extensively on stormwater and water quality policy and permitting.

"We are thrilled to have Adriana Caldarelli step into this important leadership role," said Acting County Executive Jackson.

In her tenure with Prince George's County, Ms. Caldarelli has been instrumental in advancing key environmental initiatives. Notably, she played a pivotal role in the "Bag it Right" campaign, aimed at reducing single-use plastics and promoting the use of reusable bags. She emphasized the environmental impact of plastic bags, stating, "Single-use plastics, especially plastic bags, are pervasive in our environment. Plastic bags are the single-most common item found in clean-up efforts on our streets, waterways, and communities."

Ms. Caldarelli holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management from Rutgers University, a Master of Science in Environmental Policy from the

New Jersey Institute of Technology, and a Master of Business Administration from Virginia Tech.

The County extends its gratitude to Andrea L. Crooms for her dedicated service as Director of the DoE. Ms. Crooms, an attorney, economist, and climate scientist, led the department with distinction, bringing over 20 years of leadership experience in environmental regulation and climate change mitigation. Before her tenure with Prince George's County, she held multiple leadership roles at the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

As Interim Director, Ms. Caldarelli will continue to advance the Department's mission to ensure a healthy, beautiful, and sustainable environment for all residents of Prince George's County.

For more information, please contact the Office of the Director at 301-883-5810 or via email at [doecares@co.pg.md.us](mailto:doecares@co.pg.md.us).



# COUNTY CHURCH DIRECTORY

**UNITED METHODIST**

**WESTPHALIA Christian Community Church**

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9363 D'Arcy Road  
Upper Marlboro, MD

**Worship Service:**  
**9 a.m.**

**(301) 735-9373**  
**Fax: (301) 735-1844**

**Rev. Dr. Timothy West, Pastor**

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Web Site:  
[www.westphaliaum.org](http://www.westphaliaum.org)

**BAPTIST**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HIGHLAND PARK**

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6801 Sheriff Road Landover, MD  
20785 (301) 773-6655

Sunday Biblical Institute:  
9:30 a.m.

Sunday Worship:  
7:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.

Saturday Worship:  
6:30 p.m.

'WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS WITH JESUS':  
12 noon (The Power Hour) and 6:45 pm

"A Time of Prayer, Praise, Worship, & The Word"

**Dr. Henry P. Davis III, Pastor**  
[www.fbhp.org](http://www.fbhp.org)

**BAPTIST**

**First Baptist Church of College Park**

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Stephen L. Wright, Sr., Pastor

5018 Lakeland Road  
College Park, MD 20740  
**301-474-3995**  
[www.fbc-cp.org](http://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.

**COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY CHURCH**

"The Church Where Everybody is Somebody and Jesus is Lord"

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

**Have a Safe Weekend**

**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](http://www.uumchurch.com)

**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](mailto:FHBC@verizon.net)  
Pastor: Rev. Waymond B. Duke

## EarthTalk® Q&A Sequestering CO2 in Concrete: A Logical Climate Solution?

By Aadya Anand | January 29, 2025

**Dear EarthTalk:**  
*Is it really possible to store large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO2) in building materials like concrete and plastic? If so, why don't we do more of it already?*  
—P.L., via email

The construction industry, a major contributor to carbon emissions, has an untapped potential to become a powerful ally in fighting climate change. By incorporating carbon-storing materials like concrete, bio-based plastics and asphalt, it's possible to transform buildings into carbon "sinks" and work toward meeting the 1.5°C global warming target established in the Paris Agreement in 2015.

Concrete, the world's most-used building material, offers significant potential for carbon sequestration. Researchers are exploring "carbonated aggregates" which are materials infused with CO2 during production, that can enhance carbon storage. Professor Sabbie Miller of UC Davis says, "The potential is pretty large. If feasible, a little bit of storage in concrete could go a long way." Studies suggest including carbon-storing aggregates in just 10 percent of concrete could sequester up to a gigaton of CO2 annually.

Other materials, like bio-based plastics and wood, also show promise. Bio-based plastics, derived from biomass, can store CO2 during production, offering a green alternative to petroleum-based plastics. And sustainably sourced wood retains carbon absorbed during the tree's growth, providing a natural reservoir when used in construction. Asphalt innovations further contribute by including CO2 in road materials.

These advancements have both ecological and economic benefits. Carbon-storing solutions promote an economy that reuses resources and reduces waste by reducing emissions associated with traditional materials. They also promote green industries and jobs. Professor Miller notes, "These new processes would enhance material value, creating economic growth while promoting circular economy practices."

However, challenges remain. Scaling these solutions requires significant investment, and industry inertia and higher initial costs slow adoption. Ensuring the long-term stability of stored carbon also has technical hurdles. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that utilizing carbon-storing materials is crucial

for meeting the 1.5°C climate goal by actively removing CO2 from the atmosphere.

By integrating carbon-storing materials into construction, we can drastically reduce emissions, foster sustainable industries and create a greener future. To support this transition, advocate for policies promoting low-carbon materials and educate others about their benefits. Opt for sustainable materials in personal projects and encourage their use in local developments. And push for increased investment in technologies that make carbon sequestration feasible on a global scale. Together, these actions can transform the construction industry from a carbon emitter into a solution for climate change.

**CONTACTS:** Building Materials Could Help Tackle Climate Change - Science Daily, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/01/250109141128.htm>.

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](mailto:question@earthtalk.org)

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