

# The Prince George's Post



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## Office of Storm Drain Maintenance Supports Green Cleaning With Soybean Funding

By PRESS OFFICER  
Department of Public Works and Transportation

LARGO, Md. (April 1, 2025)—The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) Office of Storm Drain Maintenance, in partnership with the Office of Central Services (OCS) Fleet Division, has secured funding from the Maryland Soybean Board (MSB) to support the use of soy-based cleaning products in the maintenance and upkeep of service vehicles in the County.

Soybeans, which are commonly used in food products, livestock feed and biodiesel fuel, are also used as a more sustainable and less toxic alternative to common cleaners. The investment will be used by the OCS Fleet division for cleaning solutions, oil products, concrete remediation, and adhesive removal.

"By replacing petroleum-based products with soy-based alternatives, we hope to protect the health of our staff and the residents of Prince George's County," said Office of Storm Drain Maintenance Associate Director Joanna Smith, adding, "We are on track to meet our goals for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit related to Green Housekeeping, and look forward to a positive outcome. Furthermore,



PHOTO COURTESY DPW&T

**Office of Central Services (OCS) Fleet Division, has secured funding from the Maryland Soybean Board (MSB) to support the use of soy-based cleaning products in the maintenance and upkeep of service vehicles in the County.**

transitioning to soy-based bio-products, will significantly reduce reliance on petroleum-based materials and promoting environmental sustainability."

The United Soybean Board (USB) was established to foster collaboration between farmers and various businesses, organizations, and community groups. The USB prioritizes partnerships that enhance infrastructure and connectivity, health and nutrition, and innovation and technology.

Prince George's County plans to use these soy-based products to improve the overall health of the community and the environment. Grant recipients must meet specific criteria, including adhering to the Green Housekeeping standards.

The County looks forward to taking the next steps toward a greener and cleaner future. For more information about the Maryland Soybean Board, please visit their website at <https://unitedsoybean.org>.

## Maryland Passes Long-Awaited Organized Retail Crime Law to Combat Rising Theft

By PRESS OFFICER  
Maryland Retailers Alliance

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 2, 2025)—After nearly a decade of advocacy, the Maryland General Assembly has officially passed a landmark Organized Retail Crime (ORC) law, equipping law enforcement and retailers with the tools needed to combat sophisticated retail theft operations. The new law creates a clear definition of organized retail crime, enables statewide data collection, and allows theft to be aggregated across jurisdictions—closing a critical loophole long exploited by criminals.

For years, organized retail crime has plagued Maryland businesses, with criminals strategically jumping from jurisdiction to jurisdiction to stay below the state's \$1,500 felony theft threshold and evade serious charges. This legislation, SB11/HB179, sponsored by Senator Ron Watson (D-Prince George's) and Delegate Karen Toles (D-Prince George's), ensures that law enforcement and prosecutors can track repeat offenders, combine offenses across counties, and pursue stronger penalties against those orchestrating these crimes.

"Retailers across Maryland have been sounding the alarm on

organized retail crime for years," said Cailey Locklair, President of the Maryland Retailers Alliance. "This law is a game-changer. It finally gives law enforcement the ability to treat organized retail theft as the serious crime it is, rather than a series of unrelated incidents."

Organized retail crime has become a growing threat nationwide, impacting large chains, small businesses, and consumers alike. Stolen goods often end up being resold in illicit markets, fueling larger criminal enterprises. By defining organized retail crime in state law and enhancing tracking capabilities, Maryland joins a growing number of states taking decisive action to protect businesses, employees, and communities.

"This is a major victory for public safety and economic stability in Maryland," said House sponsor Delegate Karen Toles. "With this new law, we're sending a clear and concise message: organized retail crime will no longer go unchecked in our state."

The passage of this law marks a significant step forward in Maryland's fight against retail theft, ensuring stronger accountability for repeat offenders and greater protections for businesses and consumers.

## National Park Service Celebrating the Reopening of the Oxon Cove Trail and Reconnecting With Forest Heights

By PRESS OFFICER  
National Park Service

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (April 4, 2025)—Join us as we celebrate the reopening of the Oxon Cove Trail with a special ribbon-cutting ceremony on **April 26** at 11:30 a.m.! The National Park Service, the Town of Forest Heights and Potomac Riverkeeper invite you to gather at the bridge along the Oxon Cove Trail—designed to connect the community of Forest Heights to the trail and provide a smoother, more scenic experience for all. "This ribbon cutting celebrates more than a bridge—we are strengthening connectivity through the power of human-focused transportation networks. Thanks to our partnership with the National Park Service, the Potomac Riverkeeper, and Congressman Glenn Ivey's office, Forest Heights residents once again have access to some of the most breathtaking views in the capital region. This project strengthens our community, enhances mobility, and reflects our commitment to a more connected future," said Mayor Troy Barrington Lilly of Forest Heights.

As part of this rehabilitation, the trail has been repaved, a brand-new bridge now links Oxon Cove Trail to Forest Heights, and new stormwater runoff features help protect the environment. The event will feature inspiring remarks from government and National Park Service leaders and a special performance by the Forest

Heights Elementary School choir. "We are eager to celebrate not only reopening the Oxon Cove Trail, but also the renewed connection between the community of Forest Heights and Oxon Cove Park. The enhancements to the trail reflect the National Park Service's efforts to preserve the nation's public lands while also providing a serene space for recreation," said Tara D. Morrison, Superintendent of National Capital Parks—East.

After the ceremony, you can continue the celebration by giving back to nature! Potomac Riverkeeper is hosting an Earth Day clean-up at Oxon Cove Park that same day. Want to volunteer? Sign up at [Volunteer.gov](https://Volunteer.gov). "Potomac Riverkeeper is grateful for the opportunity to celebrate the reopening of the greenway with the National Park Service, our partners and Mayor Lilly's Green Team during our Earth Day river cleanup at Oxon Cove! We welcome people to join us," said Dean Naujoks, Executive Director of Potomac Riverkeeper.

Nestled in Prince George's County, Maryland, Oxon Cove Park is home to Oxon Hill Farm, where visitors can meet farm animals and enjoy hands-on programs. The Oxon Cove Trail offers a beautiful space for walking, biking, and fishing, all while connecting the community to Washington, D.C. and beyond.

Come be part of this exciting moment and enjoy the great outdoors!

## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PART SIX

### Schools Face a Shortage of Social Workers—but Howard University Has a Plan That Helps

By ELA JALIL  
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (March 31, 2025)—Jaden Smith, a second-year master's student in social work at Howard University, is already doing something not enough people do. He's working in a public high school, offering what he calls "big brother love" to his students.

Smith, who started work at Bard High School Early College DC in Southeast Washington last fall while completing his degree, said he's now doing the same "noble" work that his mother did: serving as a school social worker.

And thanks to a Howard program that aims to place social work students in schools in hopes that they'll work there full-time when they graduate, others are doing similar work. In the program's first two years, 22 second-year master's students have been placed in schools in the nation's capital to increase and diversify the school social work labor force, especially where they are needed the most.

It's called Project PRESS, which stands for Preparing Responsive and Effective School Social Workers. And the pilot program addresses a pressing need: a shortage of social workers in schools both in D.C. and nationwide.

When Project PRESS started in 2023, there were 95 school social worker vacancies in D.C. public schools, said Sandra Jeter, an assistant professor of social work at Howard, at a panel about the project in December. And according to the School Social Work Association of America, no state in the union meets the recommended benchmark of one social worker for every 250 students.

Jeter, who launched Project PRESS with a five-year, \$2.6 million federal grant, said social work programs at other universities could establish similar efforts to address the nationwide shortage of school social workers.

"I think PRESS can definitely be a model or just be an organization that offers this training to different universities that



GIUSEPPI LOPICCOLO/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

**In his second year at Howard University's School of Social Work, Jaden Smith is already working in a Washington, D.C., high school.**

are developing social workers, whether they have a school social work focus or not," Jeter said. "I think any university can adopt this model or work with me on expanding the model."

#### Intensive training

Project PRESS aims to motivate social work students to do something many of their predecessors have decided not to do: work in schools.

"The Project PRESS program is a really exciting thing to see to get students excited about the school social work profession," said Allie Perez, a representative of the School Social Work Association of D.C.

This yearlong program puts Howard social work students through two weeks of intensive training before they are placed at one of 11 participating schools. Students in the program receive a \$10,000 stipend to ease some of the financial stresses of placement in a city school.

School social workers have different responsibilities than counselors and school psychologists. School social workers tend to work with specific students for long periods of time and create treatment or action

plans.

"We do the mental health support, but we also take a more systemic view and we really focus on connecting people to resources and helping them remove barriers to those resources," Perez said.

School counselors are more likely to focus on academic and career development compared to school social workers that are helping students with socio-emotional challenges.

A school psychologist has the ability to diagnose students and perform psychosocial assessments, Jeter said.

The services that a school social worker provides, especially to underserved students, have a trickle-down effect on how a student performs, said Gloria Cain, an assistant professor at Howard's School of Social Work and a faculty member with Project PRESS.

"Social work is a discipline that really focuses on individuals within the context of their environment," Cain said.

#### The need

Project PRESS focuses on sending students to D.C.'s Wards 7 and 8, historically Black and low-income areas located south of the Anacostia River.

Jeter said she believes these areas not only lack investment from the city but lack support rooted in the Black perspective that focuses on issues and trauma people often experience in majority Black and low-income communities.

The program focuses on culturally responsive training, which prepares program participants to engage with different student populations. It also teaches trauma-informed training, which promotes awareness of the systemic and individual trauma students carry with them so the student is not retraumatized.

Racist incidents, poverty, food insecurity and homelessness are just some of the traumas students can carry with them that impact their performance in school. A

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To Be Equal:  
Defend the Department of Education—Our Children's Future Depends on It

The Department of Education is far from perfect, but it remains the only federal agency solely focused on ensuring every child...receives a quality education. We should strengthen it, not abolish it. **Commentary, Page A4**

M&T Bank, FSC First Launch Prince George's County Small Business Accelerator Program

REALTORS® Recognize Excellence in Sales Production and Service

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

### Breakfast with the Bunny?

Morningside is celebrating with the Easter Bunny on Saturday, April 12, 9 a.m., at the Town Hall, 6901 Ames Street.

There'll be a Pancake-and-Fruit Breakfast, and an Easter Egg Hunt. And, of course, a visit from the Easter Bunny. As for the Egg Hunt, there'll be prizes for Gold and Silver Egg winners!

Admission is \$7. Children under one are free with paying adult (lap seating only).

Bring your Easter Basket. So, you can fill it with the eggs you find.

Reservations and pre-payment are required. This announcement may be too late, but you can call 301-736-2301 and see if you can still reserve.

### Town of Morningside: upcoming election

Morningside is holding an election on May 5, to vote for Mayor and two Council Members.

However, two who were expected to run for their current offices have decided not to. Mayor Bennard Cann has decided not to seek a 4th term. Council Member Bradley Wade has also withdrawn his petition and is running for Mayor. More information as it develops.

By the way, Morningside has three new police cars. Slow down!

### Morningside: Stop-sign cameras

The Town has installed stop-sign cameras at 6 locations. They mean a full-wheel stop! Tickets are \$40. And \$40 more if you don't pay the first time. Among the worst offenders are mailmen and school buses.

### Fatal crash

A tragic vehicle crash in District Heights resulted in the death of 62-year-old Tyrone Eugene Perry, of Washington. The accident

occurred on Silver Hill Road, prompting a temporary road closure. Authorities are seeking information from the public to aid their investigation.

### Historic Preservation

The Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission meetings will be held virtually on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be April 15, beginning at 6:30.

The County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has been appointed by the County Executive and administers the provisions of the county's historic preservation ordinance and preservation tax credit program. The HPC's responsibility is to protect the properties listed in the County Inventory of Historic Resources.

As a result of the protection afforded by the ordinance, today there are 461 historic sites and four locally designated historic districts. 102 individual properties and 20 historic districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

If I were younger and healthy, I would love to attend these meetings. The next will be Tuesday, April 15 at 6:30. For details, go to <https://www.pgplanning.org/county-wide-planning> or call 301-952-3680.

### Changing landscape

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. The store—which advertises “tires and alignment” did not reopen and is now being torn down.

Six new homes will be built at the corner of Suitland Road and Randolph Street, in the area that once was woods, adjacent to the VFW. All six will be built on the Suitland Road side (not Randolph). Means, six more reasons to slow down.

A home at 6708 Pine Grove Drive, in Morningside, has sold for \$130,000.

### Golf Tournament 2025

The Forestville Pregnancy Center has their annual Golf Tournament coming up September 8th at Oak Creek Golf Course. They are now accepting registrations and hole sponsorships.

You can register your foursome online through PayPal, by mail, or by phone. The \$150 fee covers breakfast, snacks, refreshments during the day, lunch, door prizes, and more. For more information, call 301-423-0042.

### Happy Birthday, Darlie

You may not know it, but Darlie Norton put us on the map. Many, many years ago she wrote a wonderful history of Suitland. In doing so, she wrote about Suitland Road (how it came to be and where it got its name) and mentioned Morningside.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Darlie Fay Norton, and Donald Brown Jr., April 13; Jean Osterkamp, Donald Brown Sr., Sarah Shipman, Autumn Williams and Fr. Jeffrey Samaha, April 14; Bill Ward, Eva Hay and Les Bornman, April 15; Tara Destiny Proctor, Edna Ducote and Wanda Brooke, April 16; Eloise Carnes, Ruby Cunningham and Veronica Frostbutter, April 17; Cameron Trexler, April 19; and Devaughn Branham, April 20.

Happy Anniversary to Jim and Pat Conlon, their 51st on April 20; Tex and Rickie Beardmore, their 61st on April 11; and Larry and Jody (Bowman) Nyers, their 45th on April 18.

## Plan from A1

main goal of the program is to interrupt these factors and use education as a gateway to success, Cain said.

Kyaus Washington, a 2024 graduate of Howard's master's of social work program, said it's important for social workers to know when students have experienced such traumas.

“Traumatic events happen to people and whenever you kind of understand that and try to understand from the person's perspective, then you're able to kind of tailor your modality to be effective based on the traumatic experience,” Washington said.

Washington works as a school-based expansion clinician at Lorraine H. Whitlock Elementary School in Ward 7. He noted negative experiences with therapists and the nation's long history of medical racism can lead to a sense of relief when a young Black student sees a Black social worker.

“People automatically have this shared sense of community with each other,” Washington said. “If they see, you know, me, a Black man walking into the school, my Black male students could automatically connect with me from that one shared identity.”

### Continued barriers

Washington keeps fidget toys and Play-Doh in his office to create a safe and fun place for students to come as a reward for good behavior.

“Students tend to like to come to my office because other people in the building are relatively hard on them,” he said. “And I'm like that safe space where you can always come in here and hang.”

Washington is among the 60% of program participants that were hired in D.C. public schools after their participation in Project PRESS. Many other students are looking to apply in schools but are facing issues with licensure, a barrier reflected across the country for Black social work students.

A 2022 report from the Association of Social Work Boards reported a 45% pass rate of the licensing exam for Black participants compared to 84% of white participants. Jeter said Project PRESS hopes to address this licensure gap through a prep course taught by Washington, along with other resources provided to students.

Social work students in Project PRESS are required to work at least 20 hours per week at their placement on top of their graduate coursework. Washington and Smith said this workload was manageable, but mentioned other students in their program felt burnout from the work.

In their students' training weeks, they were taught mindfulness exercises and yoga to find ways to relax and have been offered other resources of support.

While at their placements, program participants are able to complete case consultations with school students, parents and teachers to address the broader issues impacting a student's performance. They also act as sources of support for students in their caseload. Smith has helped his students find jobs or add others to his caseload if they regularly come to his office.

“When you consistently show up for them and invest in them truly, I feel like we're going to really reap the benefits of all that as a society,” Smith said.

Project PRESS solely focuses on master's degree students who are interested in school social work. Jeter only selects second-year graduate students for this program as she said they know where they want to be.

“We can't just go there and get this experience and leave. It's important for us to become a part of the community,” Jeter said. “Our students should become a part of the community even after they graduate.”

While Smith entered the master's program unsure of becoming a school social worker, he is now planning on working in D.C. public schools after he graduates.

He sees the pipeline between Howard and D.C. public schools as necessary to give students the services that they need.

“There's so much negative stuff, like spewing the news and stuff like that, about what was going on with the youth and everything, but there hasn't been a lot of people who've been willing to offer solutions and be action-oriented,” Smith said.

### Next steps

One major roadblock could stand in the way of Project PRESS, however: the Trump administration's ban on funding for programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Jeter said she hasn't heard anything about the program's federal grant being suspended. And while a federal lawsuit has temporarily put the DEI ban on hold, she remains worried.

“If funding cuts continue, we will have even fewer resources for vulnerable and marginalized populations, less supportive programs like Project PRESS that aim to support students pursuing careers in the helping profession like social work and education, and more strain on an already overwhelmed social services system,” Jeter said.

Faculty and students alike hope for the continuation of this program.

“For you to have something stable and consistent structured, it kind of puts your mind at peace when you have all this other school stuff to worry about,” Smith said.

A survey completed by the first-year cohort revealed 100% of respondents reported the training effectively prepared them for the hiring process and their work in schools, Jeter said. She said she believes this is a clear demonstration of how the program is accomplishing one of its goals: supporting students.

Another goal of Project PRESS is to see if the work students are doing in their placements is having a trickle-down effect on issues like tardiness or school suspensions, Cain said.

This program is close to Jeter's heart, not only for her attachment to D.C. public schools but for what the program can mean for future generations.

“My nephews and nieces are being educated in D.C. schools now, and so I know when I was younger and experienced anxiety and depression I didn't have a social worker,” Jeter said. “I'm happy that I'm a part of the process to get at least my niece and nephew support if they would ever need it.”

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

### BOARD OF REGENTS AWARD

The University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents has selected Dr. Rosemary Shumba, chair of Bowie State University's Department of Computer Science as a recipient of a 2025 USM Regents Faculty Award for Excellence in Mentoring. The award represents the highest honor the board confers to recognize exemplary faculty achievements and outstanding contributions. Since joining Bowie State in 2019, Dr. Shumba has worked tirelessly to boost enrollment in computer science majors while offering steadfast guidance and mentorship to students.

“I am deeply honored to receive the 2025 USM Regents Faculty Award for Excellence in Mentoring,” said Dr. Rosemary Shumba, Ph.D., chair and professor of the Department of Computer Science. “This recognition reflects my belief that mentoring is about creating spaces where students can discover their unique potential and gain the confidence to pursue their dreams. I am grateful to the remarkable students who have entrusted me with their academic journeys; their growth and achievements are the true reward of mentorship. I look forward to continuing this meaningful work within our university community. Dr. Shumba will be honored at a special breakfast ceremony and during the public session of the full board meeting on Friday, April 11, at Towson University. MEDIA CONTACT: David Thompson, [dthompson@bowiestate.edu](mailto:dthompson@bowiestate.edu), 301-860-4311.

### KYLE JACKSON FOOTBALL CAMPS

Bowie State University head football coach Kyle Jackson has announced a series of football camps this summer, offering student-athletes the chance to train with one of the top programs in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Conference.

The Football Camps will feature three events, all held at Bulldog Stadium: May 31: Mega Camp, June 21: DMV Elite Camp, July 19: 7-on-7 Tournament Big Man Camp. Each camp is designed to provide high school athletes with elite instruction, skill development, and competition in a high-energy environment. Players will have the opportunity to learn from Coach Jackson, his staff, and other experienced coaches as they refine their techniques and showcase their talents.

Registration details, camp locations, and additional information will be available on the Bowie State University Athletics website ([bsubulldogs.com](http://bsubulldogs.com)). For the most up-to-date information on Bowie State University Athletics and its 13 varsity sports teams, please visit Bowie State University Athletics.

### FREE CONE DAY

BEN & JERRY'S FREE CONE DAY. Head to Ben & Jerry's for their annual Free Cone Day! Enjoy a free scoop from Noon–8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 138 National Plaza. Donations benefit The Child & Family Network Center.

### SUMMER BREAK

Kids to Camp Registration 2025 is underway! Parks and Recreation Foundation's Kids to Camp Scholarship allows Prince George's County residents with financial hardship the opportunity to send their kids to camp. Apply today!

### APRIL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Alvin Pinkett, Glenna Graves, Cosmus Samuel, Barron Neal, Elisha Magdalene, Samuel Bell, Lindsey

Joiner, Audrey Johnson, Claudette Oghogho, Nadia Long, Eric Knight, Charmaine Grant, Amina Hinton, Harris Tay, Sarita Georges, William Stroman, III, Zahara Hakim Hinton, Jerre Kauffman, Aiden Josiah Adeyemo, Zora Oghogho, Liyah Carpenter, Mmachi Helen, William Stroman IV, Mallory Tay who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in April. Happy Birthday to CUMC secretary Pinkney who is celebrating her birthday in April.

### APRIL WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations and Happy Wedding Anniversary to Ron and Beth Davis, Lloyd and Shirley Brown Trevor and Denise Bourne, Norman and Jean Noel, Clarence and Dorothy Glasgow Reid, George and Karen Taylor, Cosmus and Stephanie Samuel who are celebrating wedding anniversaries in April.

### VBS ROAD TRIP

Clinton United Methodist Church Vacation Bible School will be July 14–July 18, 2025. Theme “ON THE ROAD TO GOD.” Ages: K–5th Graders. Time: 9 a.m.–Noon. REGISTER: Web: <http://cumcmd.org>. Church: 301-888-1281.

VBS stands for Vacation Bible School, and it is a summer church outreach focused on giving kids a fun and creative place to learn about the Bible and to build relationships with churches and other kids in the area.

### AN ALUMNI SOCIAL AFFAIR BRUNCH

Bowie State University Prince George's County Alumni Chapter will have their Annual Social Affair Brunch Sunday, June 22, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Martin's Crosswinds. Cash Bar, music, dancing, vendors. Tickets cost \$80.00 (\$20.00 tax deductible contribution funds to support the PGCAC Scholarship fund). [SPRINCEGEORGEAC.TREASURER@PGCAC.ORG](mailto:SPRINCEGEORGEAC.TREASURER@PGCAC.ORG) or any chapter member.

### BLACK & GOLD SNEAKER GALA

Bulldog Empowerment Alumni Chapter (BEAC) of Bowie State University National Alumni Association (BSUNAA) presents 8th Anniversary Black & Gold Sneaker Gala (Attire Black & Gold Semi-Formal). We are thrilled to invite you to an unforgettable evening that celebrates black excellence and HBCU/Bulldog pride, honoring the 8th anniversary of BEAC. Live Entertainment Performance (Push Play) & Saxophonist Eddie K, Jr. Join us as we recognize our significant achievements over the years in promoting the Bulldogs' legacy, fostering stewardship and fellowship, giving back through community service, and launching our inaugural \$25K Scholarship Endowment to inspire and support academic excellence. Bowie State Alumni, Family, & Friends. Do not miss this opportunity to be part of something truly impactful Sunday, May 18, 2025, from 5–9 p.m. (no door sales). Tickets \$65pp or \$120 (2tixs). Open Bar Cocktail Reception: 5–6 p.m. Event lasts 4 hours. Ages 21+. Free venue parking. Host: Asia (Majic 102.3 FM). Attire! Black & Gold Semi Formal. Buffet Dinner, recognition of achievements, honoree guest speakers and live entertainment. Business Ad & Sponsorship opportunities are available for BEAC celebratory opportunities. Location! Martin's Crosswinds, 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, Maryland 2770. Contact: Kenny (President) 301-237-1802, Niki (Vice President) 202-651-0999.



# COMMUNITY

## Maryland Reported 3 Measles Cases in March. Here's What you Need to Know.

By OLIVIA BORGULA  
Capital News Service

Maryland health officials confirmed three measles cases in Maryland in March, making the state one of 18 with reports of the disease in 2025.

In Maryland, the first measles case this year was confirmed by state health officials on March 9 from a Howard County resident who traveled internationally. The other two—confirmed March 20—stemmed from two Prince George's County residents who also traveled internationally, but were unrelated to the first case.

All three cases were connected to Washington Dulles International airport, according to the state health department. They were unrelated to the bigger outbreaks from around the country, officials said.

Here's what we know.

Measles is an airborne, highly contagious disease. Up to nine out of 10 people in close contact with a measles patient will develop the virus, according to the CDC.

There have been 378 measles cases in the U.S. this year across 18 states. Of those cases, 95% of affected people were unvaccinated or had an unknown vaccination status, according to CDC data.

A majority of the cases stem from outbreaks in Texas and New Mexico earlier this year. The CDC has confirmed two deaths—a school-aged child in Texas and an unvaccinated adult in New Mexico.

Most U.S. cases are among 5 to 19-year-olds, but a majority of hospitalizations have been people under 5. The disease can be more dangerous for children because they don't receive a full dose of the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine until they're 6, said Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at Johns Hopkins University who studies infectious diseases.

"On a global scale, in the last year over 100,000 people died of measles primarily in resource poor countries," Adalja said. "Even if it doesn't have death... it also has the ability to impair your immune function after an infection."

The measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, or MMR, was first licensed for public use in 1963 and an improved version distributed in 1968. After widespread vaccination efforts, the World Health Organization declared the disease eliminated in 2000.

In 2019, more than 1,200 people were infected with measles, marking the largest outbreak since 1992 that threatened the country's elimination status.

In the last decade, MMR vaccination rates have trended down in more than half of U.S. states, according to

CDC data. In 2019, global vaccination rates in children between 12 and 23 months began to drop for the first time after nearly 20 years of steady gains, according to the World Bank.

Public health experts warn increased vaccine hesitancy may put people at risk for preventable diseases, including measles. People who are vaccinated can still get the disease, but it's extremely rare, Adalja said.

"When you see these measles outbreaks occurring in places like the United States, this is all by choice," he said. "This is all preventable."

Mika Hamer, an assistant public health professor at the University of Maryland, said that because vaccinations are never completely risk free, fears about side effects can spread among communities.

"Vaccine hesitancy comes from a place of fear or concern and of not wanting to do something if you don't feel confident in what the outcomes will be," Hamer said. "[But] they're very well studied, and overwhelmingly, the benefits of vaccination outweighs the individual risk."

A critically flawed study—which was later retracted—in the late 1990s claiming that MMR vaccines cause autism received high public attention and caused rumors to proliferate, Hamer said.

Maryland has consistently had one of the highest MMR vaccination rates out of all U.S. states and has remained above the national average, according to CDC data.

A 95% or higher vaccination rate is considered herd immunity for measles, which protects people who can't get vaccinated such as infants or those with allergic reactions, according to WHO. Measles has a higher threshold than other preventable diseases—such as polio's 80% herd immunity indicator—because it's extremely contagious, according to the NIH.

"Herd immunity is the way that you make a community resilient to the virus," Adalja. "When herd immunity slips below that threshold, it becomes easier and easier for a virus as contagious as measles to find people."

Celebrating public health wins and increasing access to public health information are key steps that can increase vaccination rates, Hamer said. It's important to combat misinformation, especially online, to ensure public health safety, she said.

"We don't have to abandon strategies that we have and that we know work to prevent illness," Hamer said. "To me, it's a failure of our healthcare system, our public health system and really us as a country that in 2025 a child would die from a vaccine-preventable illness."

## Join us for the Out of the Darkness Walk to Raise Awareness & Funds for Suicide Prevention

By DARLENE SPEARS REED  
Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter (PEO) of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®

WHO: Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter (PEO) of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® and Bowie State University students in support of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

WHAT: Out of the Darkness Walks take place in cities nationwide and provide an opportunity for those affected by suicide and those who support them to raise awareness and funds.

WHY: Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth ages 15–24, and nearly every person is affected by this tragedy. Out of the Darkness Campus Walks are designed to engage youth and young adults in the fight to prevent suicide by reducing the stigma around mental health, providing a platform for open conversations, and encouraging others to ask for help.

"The increasing number of suicides across the country is impacting our community at alarming rates," said Karen S. Hicks, PEO President. "Partnering with students and community members for this walk sends the message that suicide can be preventable and that no one is alone."

Donations collected will help bring AFSP one step closer to achieving its goal of reducing the suicide rate. PEO raised over \$15,000 in support of AFSP

*Out of the Darkness*  
**CAMPUS WALK**  
Wednesday, April 23, 2025  
**BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
REGISTRATION AND PRE-WALK EVENTS AT 4:30 PM  
PROGRAM STARTS AT 6:30 PM  
The members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter are joining *Out of the Darkness and Bowie State University* to highlight the impact of suicide on people of color in our communities. You can walk or donate to support our team at <https://afspwalks.donordrive.com/team/PEO>.  
**WALK. DONATE. STOP SUICIDE.**  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
OUT OF THE DARKNESS

during the 2024 Campus Walk.

WHEN: **Wednesday, April 23, 2025** at 5:30 p.m.

WHERE: Bowie State University, 14000 Jericho Park Road, Bowie, Maryland 20715

REGISTER: <https://bit.ly/BowieStateWalk2025>

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

## Prince George's County Hosts Spring 2025 'Growing Green With Pride' Litter Cleanup Event

Residents and Communities Encouraged to Join Countywide Beautification Effort and the 1 Percent Challenge

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation



LARGO, Md. (April 7, 2025)—Prince George's County hosts its biannual Spring 'Growing Green with Pride' cleanup event on **Saturday, April 26, 2025**, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. This countywide initiative, led by the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), supports the County's ongoing beautification efforts to reduce litter and create more vibrant communities.

Growing Green with Pride is the County's signature beautification initiative and a Prince George's Proud Priority. This year, the County is spotlighting the event with a bold new goal: The 1 Percent Challenge. The challenge calls on at least 10,000 residents—1% of Prince George's County's nearly 1 million people—to step up, clean up, and take part in the fight against litter.

"We want County residents to be proud of where they live," said Acting County Executive Tara Jackson. "It is important that our neighborhoods are clean and welcoming to residents and visitors, so they accurately reflect who

we are as a community. Every piece of litter we pick up helps create a cleaner environment and sets an example for others to do the same. I encourage residents to roll up their sleeves, join the challenge, and help our communities shine!"

Registered participants and organizations, will receive supplies from DPW&T, including provide plastic gloves, trash bags, safety vests, litter grabbers, and up to six bags of mulch. **Growing Green with Pride registration closes Friday, April 18, 2025.** Students who join the effort will earn community service hours, with verification forms available at their schools. Growing Green with Pride will take place rain or shine.

"Growing Green with Pride is one of the department's premier community events and we look forward to hosting again this year," said DPW&T Director Michael Johnson. "Litter is a persistent

challenge, but coming together as a community to address it fosters a sense of shared pride in our public spaces. We look forward to a great day."

For additional information, please contact the DPW&T Office of Highway Maintenance at (301) 499-8641 or e-mail [Tonya.Hairston@growinggreenwithpride.co.pg.md.us](mailto:Tonya.Hairston@growinggreenwithpride.co.pg.md.us). Register at <http://MyPGC.us/GrowingGreen> to join this Countywide event.

WHAT: Growing Green with Pride—Spring 2025

WHEN: Saturday, April 26, 2025, 8 a.m.

WHERE: Prince George's County Communities

WHO: Prince George's County Government Neighborhood Design Center Prince George's County Public Schools

Keep Prince George's County Beautiful

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)

Residents

Community Organizations

Volunteers

## Caring for the Community Wins at Hospice of the Chesapeake's new Night of Bingo

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (April 2, 2025)—Thanks to the incredible generosity of businesses and individuals from the four counties it serves, Hospice of the Chesapeake's new fundraiser, Bubbles and Bingo, raised \$360,000 to support the patients and families who turn to them during life's most challenging moments.

The black-tie affair was held Saturday evening at the Atreem at Soar Timbers in Annapolis, Maryland, and included gourmet fare and bubbly. After a cocktail hour, guests watched a video featuring three Hospice of the Chesapeake clinical team members. Each shared their experience as family members whose loved

ones were cared for by hospice. These moments changed their lives, inspiring them as they care for patients living with progressive illness and their families every day.

After a standing ovation to honor and thank these professionals, guests rallied to raise their paddles to offer donations. Then the bingo games began, with 5 guests walking away with prize packages ranging in value from \$2,500 to \$8,500.

The organization wishes to thank its sponsors, including John & Cathy Belcher, The Jim and Linda Humphrey Foundation, The John T. Baldwin Family; Dorothy Goodson, Bill and Arlene Baldwin; Medicine with a Mission; Nancy Smit & Julien Hecht; Amy Castleberry; Davies

Family Foundation; John and Terri Hussman; Janis Kramer and Maria Colucciello; Maryland Oncology and Hematology; Shore United Bank; University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center; and Zachary's Jewelers. Also, Anne Arundel Dermatology; The Baldwin Corporation; FreeState Title Services; Idea Solutions; Sturbridge Homes; University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center; and What's Up? Media.

Gratitude also goes to the event's underwriters, including Barcraft Construction, LLC; Merrill Lynch Wealth Management—Murray, McGehrin & Shieri; Mullen, Sondberg, Wimbish and Stone, P.A.; Brightview Senior Living Annapolis and Severna

Park; Milestones Financial Services; and Peggy McKelly.

"Because of this amazing support, we can continue providing compassionate hospice, supportive, and bereavement care for those facing serious illness and loss," Executive Director Christine Wilson said. "This generosity ensures dignity, comfort, and unwavering support for every patient and family in our community."

Fundraising is an important role in the organization. As Maryland's largest independent not-for-profit hospice, the philanthropy of businesses, organizations and individuals means people are never turned away from care, regardless of their inability to pay.

Two more events are planned this spring—Boots and Bling: A Culinary Experience will take



PHOTO CREDIT ALISON HARBAUGH, SUGAR FARM PRODUCTIONS  
**March 29, 2025—Pictured from left, Kimberlee Shaw, Michelle Henderson and Karen Crosby. Crosby was featured in a video played during the event to highlight three clinical Hospice of the Chesapeake team members whose own experience with hospice care inspires her work as a registered nurse every day. Crosby has worked for the nonprofit for nearly 24 years.**

place from 6 to 10 p.m. May 9 at the Rod 'N' Reel Resort in Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, and Fashion for a Cause returns 6 to 9:30 p.m. June 5 to the U. S. Naval Academy's Fluegel Alumni Center in Annapolis. For tickets

or sponsorship and underwriting opportunities, contact the events team at 443-837-1531 or [events@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:events@hospicechesapeake.org), or visit <https://www.hospicechesapeake.org/giving/attend-an-event>.



# COMMENTARY

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## Defend the Department of Education —Our Children's Future Depends on It

*"Today's signing fulfills a longstanding personal commitment on my part. My first public office was as a county school board member. As a state senator and governor, I devoted much of my time to education issues. I remain convinced that education is one of the noblest enterprises a person or a society can undertake."*

—President Jimmy Carter

President Carter's words, upon signing the bill to create the U.S. Department of Education in 1979, ring louder today than ever before.

In a stunning act of political retribution and

ideological extremism, the Trump campaign and its allies have launched a crusade to dismantle the Department of Education. The attacks are not just symbolic—they are existential. Executive orders, lawsuits, and budgetary sabotage aim to gut the Department's authority, revoke billions in funding, and leave America's students—especially our most vulnerable—without the federal oversight and protection they deserve.

The National Urban League categorically condemns this reckless and unlawful effort. In our most recent statement, we made it plain: eliminating the Department of Education would not only

be a disastrous policy, but a direct assault on educational equity, civil rights, and the future of economic mobility in this country.

Just this month, the Department abruptly halted nearly \$3 billion in pandemic-era recovery funds meant to help districts recover learning loss, support mental health, and stabilize staffing. This sudden move, reportedly linked to political efforts to weaken the agency's power, puts millions of students at risk—disproportionately Black, Brown, and low-income children.

Meanwhile, educators and civil rights organizations—including the NAACP and the nation's largest teachers' unions—have taken to the courts to block an executive order that would strip the Department of its core responsibilities. In Congress, senators are demanding answers after reports surfaced that Trump-era officials may have engaged in illegal mass firings to gut the Department from the inside.

Let's be clear: these are not isolated incidents. They are part of a coordinated campaign to roll back hard-won progress in American education—progress that has been essential to Black economic empowerment for more than a century.

From the creation of Freedmen's schools during Reconstruction to the expansion of historically Black colleges and universities, access to education has been central to the Black freedom struggle.

Teaching was one of the first professional careers open to Black Americans, and education remains one of the clearest pathways to upward mobility. Pell Grants, desegregation rulings, Title I funding, and affirmative action—all of these federal tools have been critical in expanding access to opportunity.

The National Urban League has long championed these tools. Through our "Equitable Education for All" pillar and local affiliate programs, we are fighting to improve literacy rates, close achievement gaps, increase Black teacher representation, and ensure fair access to postsecondary success. Our Urban Youth Empowerment Program, Project Ready, and Community Schools initiatives all depend on a functioning Department of Education that works in partnership with communities, not against them.

The Department of Education is far from perfect, but it remains the only federal agency solely focused on ensuring every child, regardless of zip code, receives a quality education. We should strengthen it, not abolish it.

Education is not a political bargaining chip. It is a moral obligation and a constitutional right. Any effort to dismantle the Department of Education is an attack on our children, our communities, and the promise of America itself.

We will not stand idly by.

## Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita, Children's Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## Dark Enough to See the Stars

The night before he was assassinated, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his prophetic final speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop," in Memphis, Tennessee. It was a speech he almost didn't give. He had returned to Memphis on the morning of April 3, 1968, to continue his support of the city's striking Black sanitation workers, but as the day went on he was exhausted and running a fever and the weather was stormy. There were fears the storm warnings would also affect the crowd turnout at the mass meeting planned that night at the Mason Temple Church of God in Christ, and

Dr. King initially asked Rev. Ralph Abernathy to speak in his place. But when Rev. Abernathy saw the hundreds of people and the press contingent who had arrived, he called Dr. King at the Lorraine Motel and encouraged him to change his mind.

As Dr. King took the podium, he began that extraordinary speech by telling the crowd that if he had been given the divine opportunity to stand at the beginning of the world with a view of the panorama of human history and choose his time to be alive, after sweeping through all of the grand possibilities, from ancient Greece and Rome to

the Renaissance to the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, he would have chosen to live even "just a few years" at that very moment.

Dr. King said: "Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land; confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding."

We are in such a moment now. Yet when it is dark enough, we can still see the stars. How are women, men, and young people responding today?

Just three days before the Memphis speech, Dr. King was in the nation's capital for the last time to deliver the March 31 sermon at the National Cathedral. "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution" was a title Dr. King took from the old story of Rip Van Winkle, who fell asleep for twenty years and slept right through the American Revolution, and whenever he retold that story Dr. King used it as a warning that during upheaval in our own times we must not do the same. In that

last Sunday sermon he refuted one more time the "myth" that patience and time would ultimately solve the problem of injustice. Once again, as we honor and remember Dr. King today, listen to his words:

"I am sorry to say this morning that I am absolutely convinced that the forces of ill will in our nation, the extreme rightists of our nation—the people on the wrong side—have used time much more effectively than the forces of goodwill. It may well be that we will have to repent in this generation, not merely for the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit around and say, 'Wait on time.' Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God. And without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. So we must help time and realize that the time is always ripe to do right."

—April 4, 2025

## It's a Tough Year, but Maryland Lawmakers Are Moving Toward a Budget Plan

By EMMA TUFO  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 3, 2025)—Both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly have passed their versions of a new state budget for the next fiscal year, setting the stage for a potential agreement in the coming days.

During months of negotiations, lawmakers have tried to balance protecting key services like healthcare and education while responding to fiscal hardship and shifting factors at the federal level. Through a combination of spending cuts and tax hikes, officials appear on track to pass something before the scheduled end of session on Monday.

Senate Vice Chair of the Budget and Taxation Committee

Jim Rosapepe, a Democrat representing Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties, defended the Democratic spending plan.

"It shows that we're not rolling over. We're not rolling over for the attacks on Maryland," Rosapepe said. "We're protecting health care, we're protecting education, we're protecting public safety, we're protecting transportation... we're making the tax system more fair."

But Senate Minority Leader Stephen Hershey Jr., a Republican representing Caroline, Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties, criticized the tax hikes on higher earners and blamed Maryland's dependence on government employment and funding.

"People that do well aren't just born well. They're not just doing

well because I have a certain job. People that do well, do well because they work hard," he said. "And the governor's saying, well, you're fortunate, so we're going to tax you a little bit more."

The state was facing a \$3 billion deficit when the budget process began in January, a gap that grew as President Donald Trump's federal budget cuts and workforce reductions started to affect Maryland. Since then, debates have arisen over some of the key actions that would make this deficit smaller.

One option is tax increases, including a proposed hike in income tax rates on individual earnings. Specifically, rates for those earning above \$500,000 could increase by up to .75%. These proposed increases are expected to

help close the state's budget gap.

Senate President Bill Ferguson, a Democrat representing Baltimore City, stressed the urgency of making difficult decisions.

"At the end of the day, unlike the federal government, the state of Maryland must balance its budget," Ferguson said. "We don't have the luxury of printing our own money and pushing problems down the line. We have to make hard choices to get through this year to balance the budget."

After Trump announced new tariffs for imported vehicles and auto parts, the Senate moved to trim back the tax increase Democratic officials had been weighing for vehicles.

But they didn't propose doing away with the hike, and some lawmakers are voicing concern

over the long-term effects of new taxes on Maryland businesses. The budget includes a 3% sales tax on data and IT services—an area critics say is crucial for economic growth.

Sen. Justin Ready, a Republican representing Carroll and Frederick County, criticized the approach and said it would cause businesses and information tech professionals to leave the state.

"We still have the largest combined tax increase in the history of the state, including a new tax on computer and IT services, which is the very industry we're trying to get more of in the state," Ready said. "There's an income tax increase on the so-called high earners, and yeah, they are high earners, but they also are incredibly mobile that we've seen in our state's history. It doesn't take

much for folks to just transport themselves when they're making several \$100,000 or over a million dollars a year."

Despite criticism, Democratic lawmakers defended the tax increases as essential for Maryland's long-term stability. Senate Budget and Taxation Chair Guy Guzzone, a Democrat from Howard County, said the focus must remain on lasting investments.

"We can't do everything government can't, but we need to do what we can do to make this state a better place," Guzzone said. "Healthcare matters. Education matters. Those things matter, and we are sending the message that they continue to matter."

The House and Senate hope to finalize a compromise and send the budget to the governor by the end of the week.

## Earth Month Is Here: WSSC Water Releases 2024 Water Quality Report

Annual Report Highlights Utility's 107-Year Commitment to Water Quality Excellence

By PRESS OFFICER  
WSSC Water

LAUREL, Md. (April 1, 2025)—Earth Month is a reminder that protecting our planet starts with protecting our most essential resource—water. On the first day of Earth Month, WSSC Water today released its 2024 water quality report, which provides detailed testing results of the drinking water delivered to its 1.9 million customers in Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

WSSC Water's state-of-the-art laboratory performs more than 500,000 water quality tests each year. The report provides key water quality data to customers and covers the following topics:

- Where your water comes from

- The importance of source water protection
- Impacts on water quality
- How and why we test your drinking water
- Detailed water quality results

Thanks to the rigorous testing procedures and commitment to meeting strict federal standards, Maryland's largest water utility has proudly achieved 107 years without a single drinking water quality violation.

"Beyond meeting strict federal standards for safety and quality, we know that the taste, odor and visual appearance of our drinking water are very important to our customers," said WSSC Water General Manager and CEO Kishia L. Powell. "Our water is our brand, and our customers can trust the quality of every drop."

From fighting fires and washing laundry,

to filling swimming pools and caring for our beloved pets, the report also highlights the critical role safe, clean water plays in ensuring happy, healthy, thriving communities.

The 2024 Water Quality Report is available online at [wsscwater.com/wqr](http://wsscwater.com/wqr). Customers may also request a hard copy by calling WSSC Water's Communications Office at 301-206-8100 or emailing [communications@wsscwater.com](mailto:communications@wsscwater.com).

*WSSC Water is the proud provider of safe, seamless and satisfying water services, making the essential possible every day for our neighbors in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. We work to deliver our best because it's what our customers expect and deserve.*

## The Prince George's Post

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

### When Is the Best Time for me to Claim Social Security?

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

**Dear Rusty:** I will be 66-½ in June and would like to discuss when would be the best time for me to start taking my social security benefits. I am still employed full time and don't want to be penalized because of that. Please let me know what I need to do to set up an appointment with you. I got your information from the AMAC website, and I look forward to hearing from you. **Signed: Ready to Claim**

**Dear Ready:** You can certainly call us on 1.888.750.2622 during normal EST business hours for a personal conversation. But to facilitate that conversation, be aware that deciding when to claim your Social Security benefit normally depends on just a few factors, including your financial need, your health and expected longevity, and your marital status. A few things to be aware of:

- Born in 1958, your "full retirement age" is age 66 years and 8 months. If you were born in October 1958, you will reach your FRA in June 2025, and that is the point you can get 100% of the SS benefit you've earned from a lifetime of working.
- Once you reach your FRA in June, Social Security's "annual earnings test" no longer applies. Thus, you can continue working after you start your SS benefits and your earnings will not negatively affect your monthly benefit amount. If you claim any earlier than your FRA, you will get a smaller benefit and also be subject to Social Security's annual earnings test (which for you this year—your FRA year—is \$62,160, or \$5,180/month after you start your SS benefits). If you decide to claim before your FRA, your benefit will be reduced by .556% for each month early (a permanent reduction).
- You can also wait beyond your FRA to claim and earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) at the rate of .667% per month (8% per year of delay), in order to get an even higher benefit later. If financially feasible, you can delay up to the age of 70 when your monthly benefit will reach maximum—about 27% more than it will be in June of this year.
- If you are single and will not be eligible for a spousal benefit, then you should make your claiming decision based only on your own needs. If, however, you are married and your spouse's FRA benefit is more than twice your FRA amount, you may be entitled to a "spousal boost" (a supplemental amount added to your own SS benefit).
- Your life expectancy should be considered when deciding when to claim your SS retirement benefits. If you expect to enjoy at least "average" longevity (about 87 for a woman your current age), then you might also consider delaying your claim (if financially feasible) and that is often a prudent choice. If you don't expect to achieve a long life, or if you need the money sooner, or if you are entitled to spousal benefits, then claiming at your FRA of 66 years and 8 months is likely your best option.

In the end, only you can decide when you should claim your Social Security, but we're always here to answer any additional questions you may have. You can feel free to call us at any time (1.888.750.2622) during normal EST business hours to discuss your options directly with one of our certified Social Security advisors. Or you can also ask any additional questions via email, which we will be most happy to respond to promptly.

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

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).

## Bowie Business Innovation Center

### Franchising 101 Open Door

Friday, April 25, 2025 • 11 a.m.–2 p.m.  
rightnextdoor Hosted by Hallie Williams

Location: Online • Cost: Free Registration Required:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/franchising-101-open-door-tickets-1267523680449?aff=oddtcreator>

Take control of your future! This one-on-one session offers expert insights to help you succeed in franchising.

Welcome to Franchising 101. This one-on-one virtual session is designed to provide clarity, helping you understand how franchising works, what it takes to own and operate a franchise and how to find the right opportunity for you. Whether you're just exploring or ready to take the next step, this is your chance to get expert insights tailored to your goals.

Discover how franchising can open doors to financial freedom, career independence, and business success. Don't miss this opportunity!

## M&T Bank, FSC First Launch Prince George's County Small Business Accelerator Program

Register for free eight-week program by April 21 for \$10,000 Prize Awards

By PRESS OFFICER  
M&T Bank

LARGO, Md. (April 3, 2025)—M&T Bank and FSC First are looking for as many as 40 small business owners to participate in a business accelerator program designed to provide entrepreneurs with the guidance and skills needed to build strong companies, spur economic growth in Prince George's County, and help build generational wealth for their families.

The eight-week business accelerator program—a partnership between M&T Bank and FSC First—will focus on business planning, sourcing capital, managing financial statements, marketing, and branding.

The program launches May 6 and concludes June 24 with a pitch competition and opportunity to win grants totaling \$5,000 for first place, \$3,000 for second place and \$2,000 for third place—funded by M&T Bank.

Entrepreneurs interested in participating must complete an application by April 21, be based in Prince George's County, in operation for at least two years, generate a minimum of \$100,000 in revenue annu-

ally, and be in good standing. Qualified applicants will be enrolled in the free program on a first-come, first-served basis.

"We're proud to partner with Prince George's County to provide entrepreneurs with the tools and support needed to strengthen their businesses," said Jim Peterson, M&T Bank's VP and Small Business Ambassador. "This program offers practical guidance, access to capital, and expert mentorship to help small business owners grow and build lasting wealth for their families and communities."

M&T also offers similar accelerator programs in Montgomery, Howard, and Frederick counties as well as Baltimore City.

"We are excited about the unique partnership between M&T and FSC First," said Dawn Medley, FSC First President & CEO. "The program will equip local entrepreneurs with essential skills and access to valuable mentorship, fostering their increased business success. FSC First is committed to empowering entrepreneurs in underserved communities, and we see this accelerator program and partnership as another way to better serve our community."

To apply for the Prince George's Business Accelerator Program, visit [https://mtbank.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eX40LFZkubzOazk](https://mtbank.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eX40LFZkubzOazk).

M&T Bank Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, provides banking products and services in 12 states across the eastern U.S. from Maine to Virginia and Washington, D.C. Trust-related services are provided in select markets in the U.S. and abroad by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank. For more information on M&T Bank, visit [www.mtb.com](http://www.mtb.com).

Founded in 1978, FSC First provides flexible business financing solutions and technical assistance programs to established and emerging businesses in Prince George's County and the state of Maryland. FSC First stands apart as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) designated by the U.S. Treasury Department with a mission to stimulate the growth and development of the local economy. For more information about FSC First, visit [www.fscfirst.com](http://www.fscfirst.com).

## REALTORS® Recognize Excellence in Sales Production and Service

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCAR

LANDOVER, Md. (March 28, 2025)—On Thursday, March 26, 2025, the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR) recognized its "Top Producer" REALTOR® members for their 2024 sales production. The winners were honored at a gala event held at Martin's Crosswinds in Greenbelt, Maryland.

The 2025 Awards Showcase stands as the Association's foremost acknowledgment of exceptional agent performance throughout the entirety of 2024. Preceding the event were exclusive red-carpet interviews with attendees, broadcasted live on Facebook, adding an extra layer of excitement and anticipation: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/15LLTMhXJ/>

Approximately 140 County REALTORS® received awards recognizing their "personal best" in sales production.

Taking home the top prize of the evening, First Place Platinum Individual General Brokerage, was Hazel Shakur of REDFIN, with \$61.1 million in sales activity. Placing first in the Platinum Team Competition was G&P Properties with Keller Williams Preferred Properties with \$40.6 million in team sales production.

Megan (MJ) Sheckles of Samson Properties was named the 2024 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR for Highest Sales Volume at \$3.8 million.

Gene Sementilli, from CENTURY 21® New Millennium, was honored with the prestigious 2024 REALTOR OF THE YEAR title in recognition of his remarkable business achievements, unwavering commitment to the REALTOR® Code of Ethics, exemplary leadership, active engagement in civic and community affairs, and dedicated involvement at the local, state, and National Association level.

In acknowledgment of her decade's long dedication, expertise, and tireless efforts in chairing committees and rallying support for our political endeavors, REALTOR®



2025 President Arnita Greene with Gene Sementilli, from CENTURY 21® New Millennium, who was honored with the prestigious 2024 REALTOR OF THE YEAR.



John Brennan with Brennan Title Company (Center) was named Affiliate of the Year.



Megan (MJ) Sheckles (Left) of Samson Properties was named the 2024 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR.

Rachel Jefferies, of Keller Williams Preferred Properties, was honored with the esteemed 2024 Distinguished Service Award.

The prestigious title of Dis-

tinguished Sales Associate of the Year was awarded to Chazi Diggs of Capital Structures Real Estate LLC, in recognition of his leadership of PGCAR's Young Professionals

Network and other invaluable contributions to PGCAR.

John Brennan with Brennan Title Company was named Affiliate of the Year in recognition of his industry support, exceptional professional acumen, and many contributions to PGCAR in 2024.

PGCAR's REALTOR® Political Action Committee (RPAC) Hall of Fame inductees are 2017 President, Patricia Dowtin, and PGCAR Executive Vice President, Michael Graziano. They were honored for their cumulative RPAC contributions exceeding \$7500.

Host of the event, Leisel Taylor, Chairwoman of the Awards Committee was excited. "Despite the challenges of 2024, REALTORS triumphed, enthusiastically catering to their clients, and surpassing their goals. My heartfelt applause goes out to every one of them," said Taylor.

Thank you to our numerous sponsors who helped make the evening a resounding success.

### Top Winners Included:

Individual General Brokerage - Platinum (Over \$12 million):

- #1. Hazel Shakur - \$61.1 Million
- #2. Wemmy Collins - \$37.1 Million
- #3. Jeremiah Abu-Bakr - \$36.3 Million

Team General Brokerage - Platinum (Over \$15 million):

- #1. G & P Properties - \$40.6 Million
- #2. "Team Harper" The Carl Harper Team - \$32 Million
- #3. The Eze Way Team - \$30.1 Million

PGCAR is the voice for REALTORS® in Prince George's County, Maryland. Representing more than 3,500 real estate professionals in the national capital area, PGCAR is an affiliate of the Maryland and National Association of REALTORS®. We are proud to serve our members and our community, and work to ensure professionalism in the industry. Our volunteers and staff work to offer services to real estate professionals and to provide avenues for our members to become more successful. We proudly work to promote and protect homeownership and private property rights.



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E-mail: [FHBC@verizon.net](mailto:FHBC@verizon.net)  
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# EarthTalk® Q&A China Now Dominates Global Electric Vehicle (EV) Market

By Shashwat Mishra | March 28, 2025

Dear EarthTalk:

*Are the Chinese actually way ahead of U.S., European and Japanese automakers regarding EVs? And are we ever going to see Chinese cars on American roads?*

—P.L., via email

China has quickly become a dominant force in the global electric vehicle (EV) market, surpassing car makers in the U.S., Europe and Japan. Western car companies used to be the leaders in innovation, but Chinese car makers have surged ahead recently, producing affordable, high-tech EVs at record speed. This has raised concerns in the U.S. about whether Chinese automakers will soon enter the American market and how that could affect domestic car companies. With growing competition and trade tensions, the question remains: Are Chinese EVs really ahead? And will they ever make it onto American roads?

One of the main factors that brings China's EV success is robust government support. For years, China has offered substantial subsidies, tax incentives and infrastructure investments to enhance EV sales and manufacturing. China also has control over a large part of the worldwide battery supply chain, which provides

its car makers an edge regard to cost and access to crucial components. Firms such as BYD, Nio and XPeng have emerged as global leaders, providing EVs that are not only less expensive than Western options, but also equipped with advanced technology. These elements enable China to sell its EVs globally, surpassing American and European car makers in both production scale and cost-effectiveness.

Although they've achieved global success, Chinese EVs still face hurdles to enter the U.S. market. High tariffs increase the cost of export, and persistent geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China further complicate trade. Concerns also exist about cybersecurity and intellectual property. As some lawmakers suggest, vehicles made in China may pose a security threat due to their sophisticated data collection and connectivity capabilities. Additionally, American car makers and lawmakers have opposed permitting Chinese competition, worrying it might undermine local EV manufacturing and lead to job reductions.

Because of these barriers, some Chinese carmakers are looking at different ways to enter the market. One possible strategy is making EVs in Mexico, whereby they'd benefit from the

USMCA trade agreement and potentially avoid some tariffs. Others might partner with Western brands to supply batteries or technology, which would let them compete in a more indirect way. Many American EVs already have Chinese components, so even without full vehicle imports, China still plays a big role in the U.S. industry.

Competition between China and Western automakers is likely to get more intense. U.S. and European governments are giving more subsidies for domestic EV production, trying to close the gap. But if China keeps expanding its market, their influence on the global car industry can't be denied.

**CONTACTS:** How China's EV Industry Gained an Edge Over the West — World Economic Forum  
<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/06/china-electric-vehicle-advantage/>

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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