

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY *SINCE 1932*

Vol. 93, No. 41 October 9 — October 15, 2025 Prince George's County, Maryland Newspaper of Record Phone: 301-627-0900 25 cents

Affordable Housing Top Focus of DHCD Day Trip to Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (Sept. 30, 2025)—Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day spent two days in Prince George's County as part of DHCD's ongoing Day Trips tour, visiting housing developments, businesses and infrastructure projects directly supported by the department.

Created in 2023, the tour has provided Secretary Day and other senior staff the opportunity to see first-hand the positive effects the department has had on local communities across Maryland. The visits provided area leaders, business owners and residents the chance to connect with DHCD personally to learn about the department's key loan and grant programs.

From Fiscal Year 2020 to 2025, DHCD has provided Prince George's County with more than \$791 million in support for broadband, neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing and homelessness solutions projects.

This latest Day Trip was



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
(Left to right) Mayor of District Heights Cynthia Miller, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day, Commissioner, Ward 2 Pamela Janifer, and Commissioner, Ward 1 Anthony Tilghman

also unique because DHCD headquarters is located in Lanham, the only State of Maryland agency to be primarily based in Prince George's County.

"Prince George's County is our home and I was proud to see the impact of our work on the community up close on our visit," said Maryland Depart-

ment of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day. "The continuing collaboration with our county and municipal leaders to create more affordable housing and build strong businesses will ultimately elevate Prince George's County."

"Strong partnerships between our county and state

leadership are essential to ensuring that our residents thrive," said Aisha N. Braveboy, Prince George's County Executive. "I'm confident that by working together with our colleagues at the Maryland Department of Housing and Com-

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Hospice of the Chesapeake Announces Inaugural Sip & Savor: A Taste of Prince George's

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Oct. 1, 2025)—Hospice of the Chesapeake is excited to announce the inaugural Sip & Savor: A Taste of Prince George's, a unique culinary experience celebrating the flavors, culture and community of Prince George's County. The event will take place from 1 to 4 p.m. **Sunday, Nov. 9**, at the elegant Newton White Mansion, 2708 Enterprise Road, Mitchellville, Maryland.

Guests will enjoy a curated selection of savory and sweet dishes from local chefs and caterers, including Bennett Caterers and Plan It to the T Catering. There also will be refreshing cocktails and mocktails, music and interactive experiences that highlight the mission and impact of Hospice of the Chesapeake. Set against the mansion's picturesque gardens, the afternoon promises to be both a festive and meaningful celebration of community.

Sip & Savor is more than a tasting event. It is an opportunity to support compassionate care for neighbors in need. As the leading nonprofit provider of hospice and palliative care in the region, Hos-

pice of the Chesapeake cares for more than 200 patients and families each month in Prince George's County, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. The funds raised through the event will support medical care, emotional and spiritual support, grief counseling and specialized programs for veterans and children in Prince George's County.

For tickets, or to participate as a sponsor or underwriter, visit <https://www.hospicechesapeake.org/sip-savor-registration/>.

For details, contact Lauren Thurston at 443-837-1531 or events@hospicechesapeake.org.

At Hospice of the Chesapeake, we support individuals and families facing progressive, serious illness to reimagine hope—living each day with intention and peace—while ensuring our nonprofit organization remains a vital resource for future generations. We develop care plans to minimize symptoms and focus on what matters most for patients and families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties.

Capital Area Food Bank Announces Free Meals During the School Year for Children in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
Capital Area Food Bank

WASHINGTON (Oct. 5, 2025)—Capital Area Food Bank is serving afterschool meals for children in the District of Columbia, Prince George's County and Northern VA through the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

During the school year, The Capital Area Food Bank operates the afterschool program through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program fills meal gaps, supplementing school based federal free or reduced-price breakfasts, lunches, afterschool snacks and dinners for children 18 and under. Meal service is extended through the summertime, with sites offering daily breakfasts, lunches, snacks and suppers through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

Acceptance and participation requirements for the Program and all activities are the same for all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. Meals will be provided at the sites and time as follows, with additional sites added throughout the school year:

Central Gardens
13 Cindy Lane, Capitol Heights
Supper: 5–5:30 p.m.; Snack 2:30–3 p.m.; M–F

Legends EdVentures
9700 Philadelphia Court, Lanham
Supper: 3–3:45 p.m.; M–F

Millwood Townhouses
1418 Cindy Lane, Capitol Heights
Supper: 5–5:30 p.m.; Snack 2:30–3 p.m.; M–F

Pleasant Homes
6810 Greig Street, Capitol Heights
Supper: 5–5:30 p.m.; Snack 3–3:30 p.m.; M–F

Queenstown
3103 Queens Chapel Road, Mount Rainier
Supper: 5–5:30 p.m.; Snack 2:30–3 p.m.; M–F

Prince George's County Data Center Pause Underscores Local Concerns About Widespread Impacts

By PETER RICCIO and HOLLIDAY WOODARD
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Oct. 2, 2025)—A proposed data center project in Prince George's County, Maryland, was paused on Sept. 16 to give a task force time to evaluate potential impacts on public health, the environment and energy demand.

The Prince George's project is controversial, underscoring growing public concerns over the proliferation of data centers nationwide.

Data centers can range from massive warehouse-sized facilities to office buildings and are the physical backbone of everything digital.

The growth of these centers has surged, with 44 operational or planned data centers in Maryland, according to Data Center Map. Prince George's County is one of the latest battlegrounds where local opposition has slowed what data center supporters insist would be a major boom to the economy.

"The only reason the county is considering data centers is for money," Prince George's County Council Member Wala Blegay said in an interview with Capital News Service. "The reality is that our commercial tax base is very low. We're mostly relying on residential (taxes) because our residents are not able to get relief on the high property taxes that we have here. That is why we are looking at data centers."

Blegay's District 6 borders the District of Columbia and is mostly inside the Capital Beltway, encompassing communities including Suitland, District Heights, Marlow Heights, Camp Springs and Forestville.

The county council created the Qualified Data Center Task Force in April 2025. The council faced local protests at their three meetings in July from residents concerned about energy consumption, electric bills and environmental factors.

On Sept. 16, the council approved a resolution pausing the development of current and future data center projects until the task force has completed its work. The task force is expected to release its findings in November.

"There is no point in having a task force if all of these projects can move forward," Blegay said. "We're studying all of these infrastructure issues. So we're talking about the next three months, we're going to be passing legislation to address that... and we don't want people to rush out and expedite their process, so they'll get ahead of us."

Prince George's County Executive Aisha Braveboy told Washington's WTOP radio that the county council's 2021 decision to speed up the data center approval process "was a huge mistake because the residents have a stake in where these data centers are located."

"I'm in support generally of data centers," Braveboy said. "I do believe it's a really good economic tool in the right locations."



PHOTO CREDIT PETER RICCIO/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

COLLEGE PARK, Md.—An 8,000-square foot data center in the A.V. Williams Building at the University of Maryland is operated by the school's Division of Technology to support colleges and departments and their researchers.

"I think we gotta look at what the land use implications are and be really thorough in these decisions," Del. Ashanti F. Martinez, D-Prince George's, said in a Sept. 18 Instagram post. "You know, at the state level we try to provide as much oversight as possible, and I'm really concerned that we are moving a little fast on the data center conversation."

Access to electricity and the price residents pay are critics' primary concerns, as the average monthly electric bill for Maryland, according to poweroutage.us, stands at \$167.55. Electric bills are expected to slightly rise with the anticipated new data centers, according to a letter from the Office of People's Counsel for the State of Maryland.

"What we know is that no data center is going to be turned on, especially with high gigawatts, not within the next four to five years, because of all the issues with electricity and energy sourcing," Blegay said.

Maryland currently does not produce enough electricity on its own, so it relies on importing the shortfall from outside the state.

"Historically, Maryland has imported about 40% of its annual electric

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTERS

Live more, play more at M-NCPPC parks and recreation facilities throughout Prince George’s County. Change the way you age. Senior activity centers are Camp Springs Senior Activity Center, 6420 Allentown Road, Camp Springs, Maryland 20748, 301-449-0490; Evelyn Cole Senior Activity Center, 5720 Addison Road, Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743, 301-386-5525; Gwendolyn Britt Senior Activity Center, 4009 Wallace Road, North Brentwood, Maryland 20722 301-699-1238; John E. Howard Senior Activity Center, 4400 Shell Street, Capitol Heights, Maryland 20743, 301-735-2400; Langley Park Senior Activity Center, 1500 Merrimac Drive, Hyattsville, Maryland 20783, 301-408-4343; Laurel-Beltsville Senior Activity Center, 7120 Contee Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707, 301-206-3350. New Senior Program located at Southern Area Aquatics and Recreation Complex (SAARC), 13601 Missouri Avenue, Brandywine, Maryland 20613, 301-782-1455.

FREE COMMUNITY CENTER/FITNESS ID CARDS

Free community center/fitness room ID cards are available for Prince George’s County seniors 60 and better. These ID cards are valid for use at all M-NCPPC community centers and senior activity centers in Prince George’s County. To find out where the 40+ community centers are located, to learn more about opening an account, and to get information about ID cards and Fitness Room cards, visitpgparks.com or call the Customer Service Help Desk at 301-699-CALL (2255); TTY 301-699-2544.

SENIOR MEAL HOME DELIVERY SERVICES

Moms Meals Website/E-mail momsmeals.com, Telephone 877-508-6667, delivered to home. The meals will last up to 14 days from delivery. Call in or online orders. Homestyle Direct, info@homestyledirect.com 866-735-0921 ext. 2, call in orders. Silver Cuisine, silvercuisine.com, Silver@Bistromd.com telephone 844-404-3663 delivered to the door via FedEx. Magic Kitchen, magickitchen.com, telephone 877-516-2442, offers an auto-ship meal program for weekly, biweekly or month. Call in orders.

GROCERY DELIVERY SERVICES VIA INSTACART

Grocery delivery services via Instacart are Aldi, BJ’s, Giant, Price Rite (Marketplace), Costco Wholesale, Shoppers, Safeway, Wegmans. Other grocery stores that deliver are Target, Lidl, Fresh Direct, Weis Markets, Harris Teeter, Peapod by Giant, and Whole Foods (delivery through Amazon).

113TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

Join us as we celebrate our 113th Church Anniversary on Sunday, October 19 at 10 a.m. service. Guest Speaker Pastor Tiffany Hampton. First Baptist Church of Fairmount Heights, Maryland, 806 58th Avenue, Fairmount Heights, Maryland. Wednesday 7 p.m. Pastor Vernon Miller, Thurs-

day 7 p.m. Pastor Tyrone Johnson October 16, 2025, Friday 7 p.m. Pastor Carlton Barnes October 17, 2025.

NOTABLE ALUMNI OF BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University is 2428th in the world, 844th in North America, and 798th in the United States by aggregated alumni prominence. Several notable alumni from Bowie State University are Toni Braxton who is an American singer, songwriter and television personality. She has sold over 70 million records worldwide and is one of the best-selling female artists in history. Braxton has won seven Grammy Awards, nine Billboard Music Awards, seven American Music Awards, and numerous other accolades. In 2011, Braxton was inducted onto the Georgia Music Hall of Fame. In 2017, she was honored with the Legend Award at the Soul Train Music Awards.

Christa McAuliffe was an American teacher and astronaut from Concord, New Hampshire who died on the Space Shuttle Challenger on mission STS-51-L where she was serving as a payload specialist.

Joanne Claybon Benson is an American politician who represents District 24 in the Maryland State Senate. She formerly represented District 24 in the Maryland House of Delegates.

James Edward Proctor Jr. was an American politician who represented District 27A in the Maryland House of Delegates.

Khari Lee is an American former professional football tight end. He played college football at Bowie State University.

Isaac Redman is a former American football running back. He was signed by the Pittsburgh Steelers as an undrafted free agent in 2009. He played college football at Bowie State University.

Myles Frost is an American actor, singer, songwriter, music producer, and dancer. He won the 2022 Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical for his portrayal of Michael Jackson in the Broadway production of “MJ the Musical” and received a Grammy Award nomination for the cast recording.

Jovan Adepo is a British American actor. He made his feature film debut in the period drama “Fences” (2016), which was followed by roles in the psychological horror film “Mother!” (2017), the action horror film “Overlord” (2018), the period comedy-drama “Babylon” (2022), and the drama “His Three Daughters (2023).

Patrick S. Ryder is an American military officer and United States Air Force Major General who served as the Pentagon Press Secretary appointed August 4, 2022.

Kevin Broadus is an American college basketball coach. He is the former head coach at Binghamton University where he resigned after an NCAA Investigation.

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

Speed camera on Allentown Road catch 600 first day

There’s a new speed camera on Allentown Road. It was installed this past summer and, after a trial phase, began issuing tickets August 19.

The first day of the trial phase alone caught 600 violations. The speed limit is 35 mph for the portion of Allentown Road that runs past From the Heart Christian School.

In a related story, in accordance with a new state ordinance, starting October 1, speed camera tickets have tiered fines, depending on how much over the limit the vehicle is going.

The fine tiers are:
12–15 mph over = \$40 fine
16–19 mph over = \$70 fine
20–29 mph over = \$120 fine
30–39 mph over = \$230 fine
40+ mph over = \$425 fine

Halloween in Morningside

Morningside hosts a haunted excursion in the woods on October 25, 6–9 p.m., harking back to the haunted hayrides of past years. The event will include games and fun. There’ll be a small fee.

I’ll list Halloween trick-or-treat hours in next week’s column.

Years ago, I was one of the costume

judges. And we often got great costumes. I don’t know if Morningside still does that.

The Town will hold a Senior Thanksgiving a week before Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 20 at the Town Hall. Details later.

The Morningside officers’ work session will be October 14, 7 p.m. Town Hall Meeting, October 21, 7 p.m.

Model Home may open soon

Construction workers have been busy with the model home for the new housing development on Suitland Road. After several weeks of interior work, they moved back outside, adding siding, shutters, and trim.

I like to tour model homes. I’ll keep you informed.

Convenience store reopens

Suitland Convenience Store on Suitland Road, across from the Morningside Fire Department, seems to be open again. Signs in the window offer coffee any size for \$1 and promise that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program EBT-payment acceptance and lottery are both “coming soon.”

Andrew’s Auto Towing closes

Andrew’s Auto Towing & Recovery

of District Heights, long-time partner for official Morningside towing needs, went out of business as of Sept. 15 on Ritchie Road. The town’s vehicle removals now will be handled by Ryon’s Towing in Upper Marlboro.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Linda Holbart Van Meter, Karen Rooker, Teresa Kessler, Sept. 22; Elizabeth Long, Mary Kilbride, Raymond Short, Sept. 23; Dottie Arehringer, Amy Schlor and Peg Richardson, Sept. 24; Alice Lucke and Judy Hansel Waby, Sept. 27; Marshall Carson and Tim Ward, Sept. 28; my brother Tom Mudd and Janice Diggs, former Morningside Town clerk, Sept. 29; Peggy Nanney and Jessica (Williams) Proctor, Sept. 30; Jasmine Wade, Nola Thomas and my grandson Sam Mudd, Oct. 2; John Ihrig, Oct. 3; Marlene Titus, Oct. 4; Sue Gilmore and Muriel Ireson, Oct. 5; Rory Lohman, Carmen Buffington and George Nixon, Oct. 6; Dr. Alvin Thornton, Oct. 7 and Kam’Ron Blade, Oct. 7; Greta Chambers, Oct. 9; and Mary Deans, Oct. 11.

Happy Anniversary to Happy Anniversary Ken and Janet Kaye, Sept. 25; André and Cynthia Jordan, Sept. 28; (1963), and Bill & Terry Ratliff, Oct. 4.

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County Provides Free and Low-Cost Recreation During Federal Government Shutdown

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (Oct. 3, 2025)—The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County is supporting the community during the federal government shutdown by offering free and low-cost recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

With many families and individuals impacted by the shutdown, the Department

is committed to ensuring the community has access to spaces and programs that promote wellness, reflection, family connection, and community. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of:

- **Free access to parks, trails, and nature centers**—Enjoy more than 28,000 acres of parkland, over 160 miles of paved and natural surface area trails, 245 playgrounds, and scenic outdoor spaces.
- **Low-cost and free fitness opportunities**—Stay active with affordable passes for indoor aquatic facilities, weight and fitness rooms at community

centers, along with FREE health and wellness classes.

- **Mental Health Awareness Week (October 5–11)**—Learn about mental health resources and discover ways to take care of your well-being through FREE workshops, trainings, and fitness classes.
- **Community events and family activities**—Enjoy engaging programs for all ages throughout Prince George’s

Around the County

The 30th Anniversary of the Million Man March: A Summit on the State of Black America “Where We Were, Where We Are, Where We Are Going”

Please join Calvin S. Hawkins, II, Council Member At-Large, M-NCPPC Planning Board Chairman Darryl Barnes, TJC Inc., and residents, leaders, and activists from all walks of life for a very special event, the 30th Anniversary of the Million Man March, a Summit on the State of Black America: “Where We Were, Where We Are, Where We Are Going.” Join us for reflections and solutions-oriented conversations about the successes and setbacks since the original Million Man March in 1995 and the path forward for future progress.

Saturday, October 18, 2025, 8 a.m.–2 p.m.

Fairmont Heights High School Auditorium,
6501 Columbia Park Rd, Landover, MD 20785

This event is free and open to the public, but please register by clicking this link: <https://tinyurl.com/millionmanmarch30>

I AM NOT YOUR LITERATURE Book Launch

Date: **Saturday, October 18, 2025, 4–6 p.m.**

Location: Arts’tination, 162 Waterfront St., National Harbor, MD

Celebrate the book launch for Saniya Pearson, the 2024 Prince George’s County Youth Poet Laureate. Immerse yourself in an inspiring afternoon filled with evocative poetry, boundless creativity, and heartfelt connections as we explore the transformative power of language and expression. Free, RSVP on Eventbrite or <https://www.pgahc.org/events/i-am-not-your-literature-book-launch>

Maryland Choral Society: Third Annual Afternoon Tea Party & Silent Auction

Saturday, November 1, 2–4 p.m.

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

8710 Old Branch Ave., Clinton, MD 20735

Join us **Saturday afternoon, Nov. 1**, for our third annual Afternoon Tea Party fundraiser. In addition to tea and pastries on dainty china, enjoy show tunes and cabaret with singer Valerie Holt and pianist David Lécuyer. And you can jump start your holiday shopping at our silent auction! Purchase tickets at marylandchoralsociety.org. Hats are encouraged.

M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Board Updates Speaker Registration for Weekly Meetings

Advance Online Registration Required for In-person Meetings
LARGO, Md. (Sept. 25, 2025)—The Prince George’s County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announces updates to speaker registration for its weekly meetings. Beginning on Thursday, October 2, 2025, all individuals wishing to speak virtually or in person at Planning Board meetings **must register online by noon the Tuesday, two days prior to the Planning Board meeting**. Walk-in speaker sign-up will no longer be permitted for in-person Planning Board meetings.

The Prince George’s County Planning Board meets on Thursdays to consider planning, zoning, subdivision, and other matters within its jurisdiction. There are multiple ways to participate in Planning Board meetings:

Watch Planning Board Meetings

Individuals may watch the Planning Board meetings in person at the M-NCPPC Largo Headquarters, via live stream on www.pgplanning-board.org, or via the video archives on the website and YouTube.

Comment or Testify Virtually

To speak virtually at the Planning Board meetings, individuals must register online by noon on the Tuesday, two days prior to the Planning Board meeting. Registered speakers will be provided with a link and dial-in information from the Planning Board Office to access the meeting.

Comment or Testify In Person

To speak in person at the Planning Board meetings, individuals must register online by noon on the Tuesday, two days prior to the Planning Board meeting. Registered speakers will be able to address the Planning Board at the M-NCPPC Largo Headquarters, 1616 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774.

Written Comments

Written comments, documents, and exhibits must be received by the Planning Board Office via email, hand delivery, or mail by noon on the Tuesday before the Planning Board meeting.

Email: pgcpb@mncppc.org

Hand Delivery or U.S. Mail: Prince George’s County Planning Board, 1616 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774

Become a Person/Party of Record

Individuals may sign up as a person/party of record in a development application case to receive notification of upcoming meetings, actions, and decisions rendered at certain stages of the development application process and relevant appeals procedures.

Assistance:

M-NCPPC encourages the participation of persons with disabilities in all its programs and services. To request accommodation, contact the Planning Board Office at 301-952-3560 or Maryland Relay 711.

For more details, a list of meetings, agendas, and agenda packets, visit www.pgplanningboard.org. Events and meetings are subject to change. Questions may be directed to pgcpb@mncppc.org or 301-952-3560.

The Prince George’s County Planning Board, together with the Montgomery County Planning Board, make up The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission—a bi-county agency set up under State law in 1927 to acquire, develop, maintain, and administer a regional system of parks and administer a general plan for the physical development of both counties. In Prince George’s County, the agency also administers the public recreation program. Visit www.pgplanningboard.org for more information.

COMMUNITY

Day Trip from A1

munity Development (MD-DHCD), we can align our resources to advance our shared priority of increasing the number of affordable housing units that we need for families in Prince George’s County. I believe collaboration is good government—and that it will lead us to the solutions we need to serve county residents.”

DHCD’s 22nd Day Trip began Monday, with Secretary Day traveling to the District Heights Senior Center. The City of District Heights received funding by the department’s Local Government Infrastructure Finance program, which was used to construct a senior center and youth counseling center, as well as other renovations. The LGIF program issues bonds, on behalf of counties, municipalities or other entities, to finance projects that serve the community at large.

“The reimagining of Marlboro Pike is about more than bricks and mortar—it’s about creating a healthier, more sustainable future for our community,” said Cynthia Miller, Mayor of District Heights. “By anchoring new development with grocery options and innovative tools like hydroponic farming, we can ensure seniors and families alike have access to fresh, nutritious food right here at home. This transformation will not only strengthen local business and bring good jobs to our residents, but also improve the everyday quality of life in District Heights and beyond.”

Afterwards, the group traveled to College Park, where a Project Restore grant allowed the Li Chun Cafe to renovate its space and purchase additional equipment and furniture. The CHSW grant was awarded to the City of College Park, who in turn provided the funds to the cafe and other businesses.

Following the visit to Lin Chun Cafe, the group visited another site on Baltimore Avenue slated for redevelopment.

“Through DHCD’s assistance via Project Restore 2.0 and tax credits, we were able to secure the funding and resources to bring new businesses into vacant spaces as well as a brand-new affordable housing development to College Park,” said Kenny Young, City Manager for College Park.

In the evening, DHCD hosted a reception for local municipal officials, who learned more about Governor Wes Moore’s recent “Housing Starts Here” executive order and the department’s upcoming legislative agenda.

Tuesday’s tour started in Fairmount Heights and a tour of Net Zero Homes, an example of sustainable homeownership. The project used multiple state and county funding sources, including the Department’s National Capital Strategic Economic Development Fund (NED), which provides competitive funds in support of commercial and residential activities in areas targeted for revitalization.

The group then traveled to Riverdale Station Apartments in Riverdale and the Flats at College Park, as well as a stop in Bowie to visit Hill House at Beechfield, a senior housing development that received help from the department in several ways, including NED funding and gap funding through its Rental Housing Works program.

The tour closed in Largo, where Secretary Day had a roundtable discussion with elected officials and other community leaders on local issues and the solutions the department can provide.

Photos from the Prince George’s County Day Trip can be found at the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development’s Flickr account.

The Day Trips tour will make its final stop this fall in Cecil County.

Data Center from A1

needs from other states,” according to a 2024 fact sheet from PJM, a transmission organization that coordinates the use of wholesale electricity among 13 states and the District of Columbia.

As of last year, data centers accounted for about 4.4% of total U.S. electricity consumption, according to a report from the Department of Energy (DOE).

“(AI is) a much more significant data hog than any type of search you have today, and it’s something that is exponentially growing with the types of searches Americans are doing,” Michael Kratsios, director of the White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy, told a Sept. 10 hearing of the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee’s science, manufacturing, and competitiveness subcommittee.

The increased use of AI has provided an opening for Republicans who advocate a renewed reliance on traditional fuels to meet the energy demand. Sen. Bernie Moreno, R-Ohio, for example, wants “good, old-fashioned” coal and gas to provide U.S. power needs.

“When you had 94% of new power generation in America over the last four years, be it wind and solar, that probably isn’t nearly enough to produce the kind of energy that we need to power the AI revolution,” Moreno said at the subcommittee hearing.

But Sen. Edward Markey, D-Massachusetts, warned that “Americans’ electricity bills are going to rise by as much as 25% over the next four years—25% because of data center demand. It’s not just a future fear, it’s a present problem.”

“So, Mr. Kratsios, do you think it’s appropriate that the administration is forcing Americans to pay more on their electricity bills while using their taxpayer dollars to make the problem even worse by funding the unfettered growth of the AI industry?” Markey asked.

“I do not believe there’s been an administration in American history more committed to growing power generation for the American people and lowering energy costs for everyday Americans,” Kratsios responded. “And I’m proud to work for a president and administration that has that level of commitment.”

In October, Prince George’s County will host another public council meeting to continue discussions about the data center. By the end of November, the Prince George’s County Qualified Data Center Task Force will report its findings, giving the council six months to decide on next steps, according to the resolution.

Recreation from A2

- County, including special events like the Capital Challenge Horse Show.
- **Free senior programs**—Adults ages 60+ are eligible for a free Senior ID card, providing access to all senior centers. Adults 62+ can also enjoy the free senior nutrition program lunch at a Senior Activity Center.
 - **Historic sites and museums**—Visit 10 historic sites and museums, which share powerful stories of freedom and faith, labor of love, resistance and persistence, and wonder and joy.

“During this government shutdown, we know many of our residents are facing challenges and uncertainty. The Department of Parks and Recreation wants you to know—we stand with you,” said Darius A. Stanton, Director of M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County. “Whether you’re looking for a peaceful trail walk, fresh air with loved ones, or a safe space for your children, you can count on us to keep these spaces accessible.”

Imagine Andrews Public Charter School Celebrates Grand Opening of Renovated Library With Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

By PRESS OFFICER
Imagine Schools Mid-Atlantic Region

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. (Sept. 30, 2025)—Scholars, Team and Family (teachers), and community members will be gathering at Imagine Andrews Public Charter School located on Andrews Airforce Base on **Thursday, October 9, 2025** to celebrate the grand opening of the newly renovated Library dedicated to the schools’ founders—The Bakke Family—with a special ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The event marks the completion of months-long project to establish and modernize the library, transforming it into a 21st-century learning hub equipped with books, technology, flexible seating, collaborative workspaces, and an expanded collection of other resources.

The school’s principal, Principal Howard Rice and his leadership team will welcome guests and share the school’s vision for the newly established library. Principal Rice had this to say:

“On behalf of the Imagine Andrews

staff and leadership, we are elated to have been chosen for this rich opportunity for our scholars. This donation from the Bakke Family will enhance the love of reading for all children that attend Imagine Andrews and those who will attend in the future. I am grateful for The Bakke’s dedication to education, school choice and philanthropy. This library will be a solid resource for enriching minds.”

The ceremony will include remarks from the Bakke Family, Imagine Schools Mid-Atlantic Regional Team, a tour of the school and the library. Furthermore, a scholar-led demonstration of utilizing the library, the books and the new technology features. The Bakke family and a group of scholars will also participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony, symbolizing the central role scholars will play in shaping how the space is used.

Funding for the renovation was provided by Imagine Schools co-founders Dennis & Eileen Bakke, by virtue of a \$1 million investment over the course of five years to strengthen reading growth and inspire a passion for books across

Imagine Schools. The updated library will serve all grade levels and is designed to support both independent learning and group collaboration.

Mr. Shawn Toler, Executive Vice President of Imagine Schools Mid-Atlantic Region noted that, he is so honored to embark on this journey of learning with our scholars and the families that we serve. “I would like to celebrate and thank our founders, Dennis and Eileen Bakke for their love and commitment to our scholars. Your dedication to fostering a love of reading in our scholars and making it possible for each of them to experience new doors of opportunity through reading, will forever impact their lives positively. Additionally, reading unlocks so many doors for every scholar and their families.”

About Imagine Schools Mid-Atlantic Region: Tuition-free public charter schools where success means Developing Character and Enriching Minds as we graduate scholars well prepared for high school, college, career, and life.

Religious Leaders Say They See Strength in the Face of Deportation Fear

By ALINE BEHAR KADO
Capital News Service

LANDOVER HILLS, Md. (Oct. 1, 2025)—From the altar of Saint Mary’s Catholic Church during Mass each week, the change wasn’t very noticeable at first.

But now, as Father Mario Majano scans the congregation week by week, he sees it more clearly—more and more faces are missing.

Some parishioners say they are afraid to risk going to church due to immigration crackdowns and isolating themselves in fear.

Majano says he used to pass out “know your rights” cards and leave stacks of them at the back of the church. These days, with so much uncertainty around immigration policies and detentions, he doesn’t always know what to do.

“It’s hard to not be able to give them something tangible when we ourselves are not really sure what’s happening,” said Majano. He has noticed that, at least in his parish, many people are building a network around faith to seek comfort and a sense of community.

“As human beings we truly need to be connected to one another,” said Majano. “And that’s where we triumph. We get together, we remind ourselves of our dignity and solutions are found. We are creative and it’s pretty impressive what we do when we are together.”

Around Maryland, religious leaders are raising similar concerns. Approximately one in three people in Maryland identify as Hispanic or Latino, according to U.S. census data. And even though clergy members say they don’t see ICE targeting churches, they are well aware of ICE agents in the area and of raids going on.

So religious leaders in the Latino communities across the state are sharing feelings of overwhelm and concern.

Pastor José Arce Jr. from an evangelical church in Montgomery County said his predominantly Latino congregation has been dealing with detentions and fear



PHOTO CREDIT ALINE BEHAR KADO/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Father Mario Majano says his community has come together in faith to face tough times.

of detentions. Though he wants to help, he said, it can be difficult to comfort families.

“I want to be very cautious in the advice I give out,” said Arce. What he tells people, he said, is, “I don’t know, but give me time and I’ll try to find an answer for you.”

He wishes he had all the answers, he said, but of course he does not.

“There are moments where it’s frustrating,” said Arce. “However, what that does is it sends me back to the prayer closet and to ask God for wisdom and to give me the strength to be able to be supportive of our members and community.”

Reverend José López-Chapa says his congregation at the Fallston Presbyterian Church has not been directly affected by the immigration policy changes and threats, though he, as a child of immigrants and faith leader, has felt the tension.

“In times like this when things are really difficult, we often fall back to that spirituality we grew up with and look for support within that community,” said López-Chapa. “It’s tough to share a message of hope when we feel hopeless but

we have to rely on one another and we need to continue to do that.”

At the end of Mass, Majano stands by one of the exits of Saint Mary’s, shaking hands with parishioners and chatting briefly with some of them. He has noticed that recently, more people come up to him after the service and ask to schedule time to meet with him.

“There has been some uptick in people who want to talk,” said Majano. “It’s people who want to be heard and express what they are going through.”

He says he routinely asks the more active members of the congregation to look around to see who is missing and make sure they feel supported. Through Whatsapp groups and attending services, members of the church are organizing food drop-offs and visits with families who are deciding to stay home to strengthen the spirituality in the community.

“At least in this parish, in this community, we’ve seen a lot of people gather together with their faith,” said Majano. “It’s that comfort of something stable, something higher than everything that’s going on right now and something that is very rooted in their own experience.”

Honors for Local Students

Xinchen Yu Elected to Membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

BATON ROUGE, La. (Oct. 6, 2025)—Xinchen Yu of Hyattsville, Maryland, was recently elected to membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation’s oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society, at University of Maryland, College Park.

Yu is among approximately 20,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation

only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the

Society has chapters on more than 300 campuses in the United States and its territories. Its mission is to “cultivate a community that celebrates and advances the love of learning.”

Laurel Resident Graduates from James Madison University

HARRISONBURG, Va. (Oct. 6, 2025)—Alexander Velez of Laurel graduated with a degree in Communication Studies - BS from James Madison University

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Government Shutdown Could End Today With a Commitment to Protect Americans’ Access to Health Care

“What is at the center of this fight? ... 20 million Americans are going to see their health care costs skyrocket. Fifteen million people are going to be jettisoned from Medicaid. They’re going to decimate Medicaid. This is historic. This has not happened in U.S. history. In addition, your hospitals were shut down. Nursing homes shut down, clinics.”

—U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro

If the Affordable Care Act’s enhanced premium tax credits are allowed to expire, premium payments for the more than 20 million Marketplace enrollees will more than double in 2026. At least 4 million Americans could lose health care coverage altogether.

If the healthcare cuts in the “Big Ugly Bill” are allowed to stand, 700 rural hospitals—one in three—could shut down, and another 15 million Americans could become uninsured.

Legislation pending in Congress could prevent this catastrophe and end the government shutdown that is devastating families and communities across the country.

It’s no wonder the Trump administration and its allies in Congress would rather fear-monger with lies about undocumented immigrants than confront the facts.

The fact is, as long as the shutdown continues, local communities are losing access to over \$60 billion in federal funding, jeopardizing essential services and infrastructure.

The fact is, veterans are being denied transition assistance, career counseling, and outreach. Families aren’t even able to place headstones at their loved ones’ graves in veterans cemeteries. Active-duty military families, many of whom already struggle to make ends meet, are working without pay, making it harder to cover basic living expenses.

The extremists in the White House and Congress are willing to deny nutrition assistance to mothers and children who rely on the WIC program ... to withhold surgeries and treatment from patients at military treatment facilities ... to delay progress on life-saving research and public health initiatives at the NIH and CDC ... to disrupt Social Security and Medicare services for seniors and

vulnerable populations ... to jeopardize the health and safety of our workforce while Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspections are ceased.

And all of this is happening in defense of a crusade to strip health insurance from millions of working-class Americans and leave vast swaths of the country without access to critical care.

To be clear: unauthorized immigrants are ineligible to purchase health insurance on government exchanges established by the Affordable Care Act. They are ineligible for Medicaid, Medicare and the Children’s Health Insurance Program. The legislation that could prevent the health care catastrophe and end the government shutdown does not make them eligible for these programs. Anyone who claims that it does is not telling the truth.

The government shutdown is not simply a conflict between conflicting political ideologies. It’s a conflict between fact and falsehood. It’s a conflict between responsible stewardship of public resources and a reckless grasp of those resources for billionaires. We can continue to fuel bitter partisan division while working Americans continue to lose ground to the wealthiest among us, or we can work together toward and equitable, stable, and healthy future.

—October 4, 2025

COMMUNITY

Hospice of the Chesapeake’s Popular Golf Tournament Raises More Than \$210K

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Sept. 29, 2025)—Thanks to an impressive lineup of sponsors, the dedication of volunteers and the hundreds of golfers who came out to play, Hospice of the Chesapeake’s annual Golf Tournament was another great success. The event raised more than \$210,000 in support of the non-profit’s mission to care for families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George’s counties.

Held Sept. 25 at Queenstown Harbor Golf Course, the day was filled with good cheer, delicious food and generous hospitality—from a made-to-order omelet bar at breakfast by Main & Market, a grilled lunch by Buddy’s Grill, and a gourmet awards banquet served by Two Rivers Steak & Fish House. Giveaways and camaraderie made the day even brighter.

This success would not have been possible without the businesses, organizations and individuals in the community who stepped up as sponsors, including Masters sponsor, Safford Brown Auto Group; U. S. Open sponsor, Greenberg Gibbons; Augusta sponsors, First National Bank and the Michael Stanley Foundation; and Heritage sponsors, Coastal Management Associates, LLC, Crescent Cities Charities, Inc., Flooring Partners, George W. Stone Family Foundation, Heinsohn Contracting, Inc., SMART, and Waterfront Engineering Design and Construction, Inc.

The organization also wishes to thank the event’s underwriters, including breakfast by The Davies Family Foundation, lunch at the turn by University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center, beverage carts



PHOTO BY ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN, HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Queenstown, Md. (Sept. 25, 2025)—Hospice of the Chesapeake’s Golf Committee stands on the putting green before the start of the tournament. Pictured from left are Brian Chisholm, Chris Wilson, Challie Samaras, Austin Shuttle, Jerray Slocum, Tom Hogan, Randy Pleasant, Brian Flynn, Scott Mielke, Chris Snyder, Mary Lombardi and Lauren Thurston. Not pictured are committee members Tony Toskov, Laura Toskov and John Warner Sr.

by University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center and National HME, craft beer by Flooring Partners, bourbon by Wes-Banco, and River Course hole-in-one by Sysco.

This event helps families experience moments of joy, dignity and connection at one of life’s hardest times. Special recognition goes to the Hospice of the Chesapeake Golf Committee, whose hard work and commitment year after year ensures this tournament is not only enjoyable but deeply impactful for the patients and families the organization serves.

At Hospice of the Chesapeake, we support individuals and families facing progressive, serious illness to reimagine hope—living each day with intention and peace—while ensuring our nonprofit organization remains a vital resource for future generations. We develop care plans to minimize symptoms and focus on what matters most for patients and families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George’s counties.

Students from A3

during commencement exercises in August 2025.

Velez was among 611 students who received undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Congratulations to all graduates and their families!

Sophia Monegro Graduates from The University of Texas at Austin

AUSTIN, Tex. (Sept. 30, 2025)—Sophia Monegro, of Bowie, graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a Doctor of Philosophy in African and African Diaspora Studies.

Monegro was one of more than 1,600 students who graduated in the summer and received an undergraduate, master’s or doctoral degree. Many summer graduates joined the university-wide commencement ceremonies in May, marking the occasion with the broader UT Austin community.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, which ended in August, UT conferred a record 16,036 degrees. The record is attributed to the University’s all-time highs for first-year student retention and four-year graduation rates.

Shenandoah University Announces Hornet Ambassadors for 2025–26

WINCHESTER, Va. (Sept. 26, 2025)—Shenandoah University is proud to announce the newest members of its Hornet Ambassadors program for 2025–26.

Gabriella Guadagno, of Fort Washington, was among the 30 students chosen to serve as a Hornet Ambassador in selections announced on Sept. 26. Each year, students are selected to represent the Shenandoah spirit through their commitment to leadership, community engagement, and school pride. As Hornet Ambassadors, they serve as representatives of SU to incoming students, families, community members, and beyond.

Summer 2025 Graduates Announced at UA

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (Sept. 18, 2025)—Over 1,300 degrees were awarded during The University of Alabama’s summer 2025 commencement at Coleman Coliseum on Aug. 2. The University provides numerous opportunities for service and growth through its educational, social and cultural experiences.

Local students include:
Miles Allen of Bowie received the following degree(s): Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics.
Noah Bliss of JB Andrews received the following degree: Master of Arts.

Nov. 17–24: Local Drop-Off Locations Opening Soon for Operation Christmas Child

By PRESS OFFICER
Samaritans Purse

MARYLAND (Oct. 13, 2025)—Volunteers are preparing to collect Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts during National Collection Week, Nov. 17–24. Nearly 5,000 drop-off locations will open across the country in November, and shoebox packers can find their local drop-off locations in Maryland.

Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has been collecting and delivering gift-filled shoeboxes to children including many who are suffering from war, poverty, disease and disaster. Operation Christmas Child hopes to reach another 12 million children in 2025 with the hope of Jesus.

Shoebox packing is fun for individuals, families and groups! Find a step-by-step guide on the How to Pack a Shoebox webpage. The project partners with local churches across the globe to deliver these tangible expressions of God’s love to children in need. Participants can donate \$10 per shoebox gift online through “Follow Your Box” and receive a tracking label to discover its destination.

“Samaritan’s Purse works around the world to help people in need, but it’s not about good works—it’s about the Gospel,” said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan’s Purse. “Please prayerfully consider packing a shoebox this year with Operation Christmas Child. These simple gifts open the door for us to share the true meaning

of Christmas.”

Participants can find the nearest drop-off location and hours of operation as they make plans to drop off their shoebox gifts. The online lookup tool is searchable by City or ZIP code. Signs at each location will identify the drop-off.

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan’s Purse, seeks to demonstrate God’s love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 232 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories.

The Prince George’s Post

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Contents © 2025, The Prince George’s Post

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Prince George’s County, Md. Member National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia Press Association.
The Prince George’s Post (ISSN 10532226) is published every Thursday by the New Prince George’s Post Inc., 15207 Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20772-3151.
Subscription rate: 25 cents per single copy; \$15 per year; \$7.50 senior citizens and students; out of county add \$1; out of state add \$2.
Periodical postage paid at Southern Md. 20790.
Postmaster, send address changes to Prince George’s Post, P.O. Box 1001, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20773.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Maryland Retailers Alliance Presents Annual Awards for Legislative Advocacy and Retail Theft Prevention

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Retailers Alliance

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Sept. 29, 2025)—The Maryland Retailers Alliance (MRA) last week presented its annual awards for legislative advocacy and retail theft prevention. The presentation occurred virtually and was streamed on YouTube. The awards celebrate individuals who exhibit outstanding public leadership, advocate for the success of the retail business community, and support the mission of the MRA.

The following awards were presented during the virtual stream:

- Maryland Retailers Alliance Legislator of the Year: Delegate Karen Toles, District 25
- **Maryland Association of Chain Drug Stores Advocate of the Year: Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, District 21**
- Louis L. Goldstein Service Award: Marshall Klein, Klein’s ShopRite
- Maryland Retailers Alliance Retail Theft Prevention Award: Kyle Graser, Target

“Thank you to every single elected official who listened to our concerns, worked with us, sponsored amendments, and supported us on these very important issues,” said Cailey Locklair, MRA President. “Thank you to our members, the retail industry and many businesses that are the backbone of our communities. Lifting your voices up and helping solve problems to ensure your businesses can thrive – it truly is an honor.”

The Annual Awards presentation also highlighted MRA’s Legislative All-Star Team, members of the legislature whose actions throughout the legislative session support the success of the organization.

The Maryland Retailers Alliance is a statewide membership association representing retail businesses of all shapes and sizes throughout Maryland. As the retail community’s major trade association, MRA is a diverse and broad-based organization covering all segments of the retail industry.

Local Aviation Program Receives New FAA Authorization, Reduces Required Flight Hours by 500 for Cost and Time Savings

By PRESS OFFICER
Capitol Technology University

LAUREL, Md. (Oct. 1, 2025)—Capitol Technology University announced that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has officially authorized their Aviation Professional Pilot Bachelor of Science program to certify graduates for a Restricted Airline Transport Pilot (R-ATP) certificate with reduced flight hour requirements.

This prestigious designation, effective September 12, 2025, allows qualified Capitol Tech graduates to apply for their R-ATP certificate with a total of 1,000 flight hours instead of 1,500-hours—a 500-hour reduction from the standard requirement.

For students interested in pursuing their commercial pilot license, this translates into an exciting opportunity for a more streamlined path to airline careers and significant cost and time savings within an industry-recognized program of excellence. This FAA authorization—along with the Part 141 pilot school certificate of Capitol Tech’s aviation curriculum—demonstrates the institution’s commitment to offering the finest ground and flight

training along with their FAA-approved Part 141 flight school partners.

How much do you save with 500 fewer hours? Upwards of an estimated \$120 per hour in plane rental fees, totaling \$60,000 or more. This is because most pilots “time-build” their required flight hours in a rental plane like a Cessna 152/172 or Piper Archer. Rental costs vary based on avionics and location, but recent rate cards and industry roundups show that similar single-engine rentals commonly cost \$120–\$200 per hour (national average), with many East Coast schools listing rates upward of \$185–\$205 per hour.

Reducing the number of required hours also means savings on other costs, too. While time-building does not usually incur additional certified flight instructor fees if done solo, student pilots still have to plan for expenses like fuel surcharges, transportation to and from the airport, landing/club fees, and occasional instructor checkouts.

The benefits of these time and cost savings add even more value to this dynamic program designed to train aviation professionals who can immediately fill today’s high-demand aviation roles, and seamlessly adapt as the technology and

requirements of this field continue to evolve.

“The R-ATP designation offers our students a tremendous opportunity to pursue their aviation careers more efficiently,” says Frank Turney, Chair of Aviation. “It accelerates their path to the flight deck without compromising the rigorous safety and training standards we uphold. Capitol Technology University is proud to be one of the few select institutions in Maryland and the DC metro area to offer this streamlined pathway.”

For more information, visit capl.ink/pilot.

Capitol Technology University is a leading STEM university located in Laurel, MD near the vibrant DC metropolitan area. Ranked #1 in Maryland for salary outcomes at all degree levels, the university’s mission is to educate students for successful professional careers in STEM research, engineering, management, and business by providing relevant learning experiences. Through industry-expert faculty, technical skills development, and innovative partnerships, Capitol Tech fosters career advancement opportunities for the evolving global community. Visit www.captechu.edu.

Governor Moore Announces Appointment of Walter L. Simmons as Acting Secretary of the Maryland Department of Social and Economic Mobility

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Sept. 30, 2025)—Governor Wes Moore today announced the appointment of Walter L. Simmons as acting secretary of the newly-established Maryland Department of Social and Economic Mobility. Simmons will lead the agency’s work to support social equity programs across State government and streamline Maryland’s approach to supporting small and disadvantaged businesses. He will assume the post as acting secretary on October 20.

“In order to build a growing economy, we need to create an inclusive economy,” said Gov. Moore. “The new Department of Social and Economic Mobility will help ensure that all Marylanders have access to work, wages, and wealth—no matter their starting point or destination. Walter has the experience, wisdom, and vision to lead this critical agency. And under his leadership, we will continue our work to leave no one behind.”

Established by House Bill 1253—signed by the governor this year—the Maryland Department of Social and Economic Mobility is the first cabinet-level agency in the United States focused on removing structural barriers to upward mo-

bility. By combining the three existing offices focused on social equity programming—the Governor’s Office of Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Business Affairs, the Office of Social Equity, and the Office of Minority Business Enterprises in the Maryland Department of Transportation—the agency will allow state government to better integrate initiatives that promote economic opportunity for individuals and small businesses.

Walter L. Simmons is an accomplished nonprofit, government, and workforce development executive who is recognized as a national leader in public sector workforce development. In 2018, Simmons created Employ Prince George’s, Inc., the principal workforce development entity for Prince George’s County. Under his leadership, Employ Prince George’s has helped raise more than \$200 million, develop relationships with more than 400 partners, serve more than 100,000 job seekers, and assist more than 15,000 businesses, leading to the creation of tens of thousands of jobs throughout the D.C. metropolitan region.

“I am honored to be appointed to lead this historic agency under the Moore-Miller Administration,” said Walter L. Simmons. “Maryland’s resources are vast, and our moment is now—to align around a unified strat-

egy that opens doors to the middle class, strengthens our economy, and ensures our business community flourishes.”

Simmons holds several leadership roles outside of his work with Employ Prince George’s, serving as chair of both the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations and IMPACTdmv. He also serves as the vice chair of the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals and he serves on the board of directors for the Bi-County Business Roundtable, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Workforce Boards.

Simmons earned his undergraduate degree from Newberry College.

Governor’s Office of Small, Minority, and Women Owned Business Affairs Special Secretary Maria Martinez has chaired the Maryland Department of Social and Economic Mobility’s transition and will continue in her role as the agency assumes new leadership. After the transition, Secretary Martinez will assume a new position as special secretary for regulatory and permitting reform and will lead the State’s efforts to streamline and modernize permitting and regulatory processes pursuant to Governor Moore’s 2024 Strengthening Maryland’s Business Climate to Bolster Economic Competitiveness Executive Order.

Over 30,000 Customers Supported Through the BGE Customer Relief Fund This Summer

Administered through United Way of Central Maryland, the BGE Customer Relief Fund enhanced available assistance during a time of high usage and rising energy costs

By PRESS OFFICER
BGE

BALTIMORE (Sept. 30, 2025)—The BGE Customer Relief Fund provided \$15 million in financial assistance to customers in need throughout central Maryland this summer. Designed to support customers during a time of high usage and rising energy costs, the Customer Relief Fund expanded BGE’s commitment to assistance year-round.

The fund has had a meaningful impact on BGE customers:

- 30,955 households received direct financial assistance, representing customers across BGE’s service area (Baltimore City, as well as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Prince George’s Counties)
 - Credits ranging from \$250 to \$750 were issued
- BGE continues to provide assistance and relief through flexible payment plans

and energy efficiency programs that help customers understand, manage, and reduce their energy usage and costs, along with helping customers access other assistance options. BGE urges customers in need to take advantage of these programs and is dedicated to connecting customers with needed support.

The BGE Customer Relief Fund is part of a broader, ongoing effort to improve energy affordability. Rising electricity supply prices, among other factors, are contributing to rising energy costs, which are impacting customers already navigating higher living expenses. The Customer Relief Fund provided immediate relief as BGE continues to work with state and local officials on long-term solutions to enhance energy affordability for customers in central Maryland.

While the Fund is now closed, customers can visit bge.com/heretohelp for more ways to manage their bill, use energy more efficiently, or access energy assistance. This includes:

- BGE’s self-service Assistance Finder, which provides simple and personalized recommendations.
- Financial assistance through state programs and the Fuel Fund of Maryland.
- Payment arrangements and due-date extensions. For extenuating circumstances needing payment arrangements beyond 12 months, please call BGE at 800-685-0123. Budget billing information and online self-serve sign-up for customers who prefer a predictable monthly bill that spreads energy costs throughout the year.
- Eligible BGE customers also received a Legislative Energy Relief Refund bill credit in August or September this year. This is one of two credits for residential electric customers approved by the Maryland General Assembly as part of the Next Generation Energy Act (Senate Bill 937 and House Bill 1035). The second credit will be issued in February 2026.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

When Will My Disability Become My Regular 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 hope you can answer this question. I’m currently receiving Social Security Disability benefits, and I will be turning 65 in February 2026. I’m confused as to how Social Security Disability transitions to regular Social Security, and when. I assume it’s age 65 but maybe it’s my retirement date? Also, does the amount remain the same or will it change? I’m not working. I’ve been on SSDI for about 15 years. Thank you. **Signed: Disabled Senior**

Dear Disabled Senior: If you are collecting Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, those SSDI benefits will automatically convert to become your regular Social Security retirement benefit when you reach your SS full retirement age (FRA) which, in your case, is age 67. For information, FRA today is somewhere between age 66 and 67, depending on your year of birth, and the full retirement age for everyone born in 1960 or later is age 67.

The change from SSDI to your regular Social Security benefit will be transparent to you because your monthly benefit amount will remain the same. SSDI benefits were originally awarded to you based upon your full retirement age entitlement when you applied for SSDI (even though you hadn’t yet reached your FRA when you went on SSDI). Thus, the monthly benefit amount will not change because it is based on your lifetime earnings record, from before you became disabled.

FYI, although age 65 was once Social Security’s “retirement age,” full retirement age for Social Security today is based on the year you were born. So, your SSDI benefit will automatically switch to become your regular Social Security retirement benefit as soon as you reach age 67. Essentially, the only thing that will change is the Social Security Trust Fund from which your benefits will be paid.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] www.amac.us is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation’s capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (www.AmacFoundation.org) is the Association’s non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America’s Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members’ behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at www.amac.us/join-amac.

