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Free Housing Resource Fair to Deliver Expert Support and Solutions to Prince George's County Residents

By PRESS OFFICER

United Communities Against Poverty, Inc. (UCAP)

CAPITOL HEIGHTS, Md. (June 11, 2026)—To help local residents navigate an increasingly complex housing market, United Communities Against Poverty (UCAP) has partnered with Marvel Truesdale – The Real Estate Educator of The Home Team Realty Group to host a massive Housing Resource Fair on **Wednesday, July 15, 2026**.

The free, county-wide event will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at United Communities Against Poverty, located at 1400 Doewood Lane, Capitol Heights, MD 20743. All residents from across Prince George's County are welcome to attend.

Designed to provide families and individuals with the knowledge, resources, and direction needed to move forward with financial confidence, the fair will feature lively panel discussions, real solutions from trusted professionals, and an interactive Q&A session where attendees can get their specific housing questions answered live on the spot.



The Housing Resource Fair will cover a wide array of vital county and community programs, including:

- First-Time Home Buyer & Downpayment Assistance Programs
- Affordable Apartments & Low Income Senior Community Options
- Housing & Credit Counseling
- Expert guidance from Realtors, Loan Officers, Home Inspectors, and Title Companies
- Foreclosure & Mortgage Assistance
- Employment Resources & Financial Literacy
- Legal Assistance & Estate Planning

• Energy and Utility Assistance

In addition to invaluable resources, the event features exciting raffles and giveaways. Both entry and parking are completely free, and bilingual assistance and walk-ins are warmly welcome.

While walk-ins are permitted, attendees are encouraged to pre-register. For more information or to register for the event, please contact Jennifer Glover (UCAP) at 301-322-5700 Ext. 172 or Marvel Truesdale at 301-283-1601.

Come get the knowledge, resources, and direction you need to move forward with confidence.

Fashion for a Cause Raises More Than \$300K for Community Health Programs

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (June 10, 2026)— Hospice of the Chesapeake's annual Fashion for a Cause event drew a sold-out crowd ready to celebrate community, style and families who depend on the nonprofit's services. When the night was over, more than \$300,000 had been raised for community health programs.

The event, held June 4 at the Fluegel Alumni Center, Annapolis, Maryland, is one of the area's most anticipated evenings. Guests were treated to a red-carpet experience complete with bites from local restaurants, food trucks and a moving celebration of compassion and community care.

For the fifth consecutive year, WBAL NewsRadio's Bryan Nehman, cohost of C4 and Bryan Nehman, served as emcee, keeping the evening moving with warmth and wit. The milestone didn't go unnoticed. Hospice of the Chesapeake marked the occasion by inducting Nehman into its "five-timers' club," presenting him with a branded jacket and commemorative pin. The moment took on deeper meaning when event committee member April Boera—whose late husband was Nehman's college roommate—helped him into the jacket.

The highlight of the evening was a runway show featuring dozens of looks from 15 Annapolis-area retailers and designers. Returning to the runway for a second year were the high-fashion styles of Craig Coates Couture, whose designs have been featured at both New York and Los Angeles Fashion Week.

Professional models were joined by community members who took the stage with purpose and flair, showcasing everything from casual coastal wear to elegant evening attire.

Women's fashions were modeled by Jaedyn Archinard, Heather Atcherson, Flora Bartek, April Boera, Ashley Calo, Cintia Castaneda, Jacqueline Coche, Megan Cooper, Liz Gillette, Terri Hussman, Alice Lao, Cierra Ploof, Challie Samaras, Caroline Shoults, Dana Smith, Rose Walker and Amy Wise.



PHOTO BY MIKE B. PHOTOGRAPHY

A model showcases a striking outfit from Craig Coates Couture. Known for fashions featured at New York and Los Angeles Fashion Week, Coates returned to Fashion for a Cause for a second year, once again delighting the audience with his collection.

Men's fashions were modeled by: Mike Baldwin, Jeremiah Batucan, Doug Beaver, Brian Berger, Joseph Calo, Aaron Gaskins, John Hussman, Craig Johnson, Mike Mayfield, Jarret Simpson, Alex Strachan and Patrick Wergin.

Fashion for a Cause was made possible at the Haute Couture level by John & Cathy Belcher and the Brian & Patricia Giese Foundation.

Additional support was provided by:
Red Carpet Sponsors: Genesis of Annapolis and MHE Foundation

Fashionista Sponsors: Gene Deems: Helping Chesapeake Kids turn sorrow into strength; Collet Guerard; The Hussman Foundation; Shirley Ip; Russ Jones; Merrill Lynch – Murray, McGehrin & Shiery; The Michael Stanley Foundation; Nancy Smit & Julien Hecht; and Laura Westervelt

Supermodel Sponsors: Campion Hruby Landscape Architects; Dr. Maria Colucciello; The Davies Family Foundation; First Citizens Bank; and Sullivan Surgery & Spa

Celebrity Sponsors: Vanessa Aburn, Annapolitan Investment Group; Mike & Gina Baldwin; Georgie Clark; Curio Wealth; En-

grained Design Works; M&T Bank; Patient First; Speight Cook Studio; and Temple Annapolis, Paul Mitchell Partner School.

The organization also thanks its event underwriters, including Bar Sponsor Georgie Clark and Entertainment Sponsor The Jennifer Wells & Taylor Wells Family Trust.

Proceeds from the event directly benefit the organization's comprehensive community care offerings, with special emphasis on grief support services that ensure no child or family has to walk the journey of serious illness or loss alone.

Hospice of the Chesapeake provides expert, compassionate care for individuals and families navigating serious advanced illness and loss. For more than 45 years, we have had the privilege of caring for more than 65,000 patients and more than 100,000 family members across the communities we serve. Hospice of the Chesapeake is proud to be a part of Chesapeake Health Partners, an organization focused on strengthening community-based care and support services across the region.

Prince George's County Transit Surpasses 3 Million Riders as Historic Sunday Service Debuts

Milestone marks expanded access to transit for County residents

By PRESS OFFICER

Department of Public Works and Transportation

LARGO, Md. (June 15, 2026)—The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) is proud to announce that TheBus surpassed 3 million riders on Sunday, June 14, underscoring the vital role public transit plays in connecting residents to jobs, schools, healthcare, shopping, and critical services throughout Prince George's County.

This major milestone came on the first day of spring service changes, which included the introduction of Sunday service on five TheBus routes: P86, P43, P88, P64, and P22, marking the first time in the transit system's 35-year history that these routes will operate on Sundays. The addition of Sunday service provides residents with greater flexibility for weekend travel to work, worship services, family activities, and other important destinations.

"Reaching 3 million riders is a testament to the dedication of our transit team and the trust our riders place in our system each

day," said DPW&T Director Michael Johnson. "Every trip represents someone getting to work, making it to an appointment, attending school, or accessing opportunities that improve their quality of life. We are proud to offer a service that elevates transit access and opportunity countywide."

As ridership continues to grow, the Department of Public Works & Transportation remains focused on enhancing service, improving the customer experience, advancing accessibility, and responding to the evolving transportation needs of the communities it serves.

DPW&T encourages customers to download the Transit App and visit TheBus website to view updated schedules and route information to familiarize themselves with the Spring Service Changes. For more information, updated schedules, and route maps, visit www.dpwt.mypgc.us or email pgctransit@co.pg.md.us

Questions Linger About Jet Fuel Leak Into Potomac Tributary

By TIMOTHY B. WHEELER
Chesapeake Bay Journal (bayjournal.com)

Two months after jet fuel contaminated Piscataway Creek at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, questions remain. It is still unclear how at least 22,000 gallons of the toxic liquid leaked from the sprawling air base near the District of Columbia, why it wasn't caught sooner and where it may have gone.

Maryland officials, including the state's congressional delegation, are pressing for answers. Its two U.S. senators and seven of its eight House members wrote to Air Force Secretary Troy Meink complaining of a lack of transparency about the incident. They contended there had been a "critical delay" by the base in providing full information to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

"The Air Force only came clean about [the] fuel spill at Joint Base Andrews after it was detected in and around Piscataway Creek," said Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), "and even then they failed to inform state officials of the full extent of the spill's impact until ... weeks later."

The base reported the jet fuel leak to federal and state authorities on March 23 after someone driving by the creek, which has its headwaters inside the base's fence line, smelled fuel and spotted an oily sheen on the water. The tidal portion of the 18.6-mile Potomac River tributary is popular for fishing and boating.

It wasn't until April 8, though, that the base provided regulators an estimate of how much had escaped from its underground fuel storage and dispensing system.

Even then, there were conflicting figures. An April 13 news release by MDE—the first public disclosure of the problem—said "roughly" 32,000 gallons had leaked. The base then issued its own release, saying 22,000 gallons had been lost.

MDE is still investigating the incident but has faulted the base for not reporting the leak sooner and for not doing enough early on to stop or contain it.

The leak has cast a harsh spotlight on the 7,400-acre airbase in Prince George's County, which is home to the presidential plane, Air Force One.

Like most military bases, Andrews has a history of serious pollution problems. Petroleum and hazardous chemicals spilled or buried there have contaminated soil, groundwater and local streams. It has been on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund priority cleanup list since 1999.

"The base is taking this issue very seriously," said Air Force Col. Marie Harnly, who as civil engineer squadron commander for the 316th Wing oversees the base's environmental compliance efforts.

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'Just Give me a Job': Maryland Former Federal Workers' Stories of Survival

In the months since thousands of federal workers in Maryland were laid off or left their posts, many have had to find new ways to support themselves and their families.

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

MEN'S MINISTRY

Christ United Methodist Church Men's Ministry will have a Yard Sale on Saturday, June 27, 2026, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 22919 Christ Church Road, Aquasco, Maryland. Meet and Greet with Rev. Shemaiah Strickland, Pastor. Come shop, connect and support our community. Yard Sale Great Finds! Meet and Greet Building Community! Farmer's Market (Fresh & Local). We're giving away Hamburgers & Hot Dogs while supplies last. Reserve your table today. Yard table space 10' x 10' space \$10. Butch Adams 202-281-5920, DeSales, Sr. 301-399-9156.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Join Clinton United Methodist Church's Vacation Bible School July 13–July 17 at 9 a.m. at 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland 20735. Our theme this year is Snowball Mountain Challenge (FIND YOUR STRENGTH IN GOD). Ages PreK–5th Graders. Then join us for our 10:30 a.m. Service Sunday, July 18, 2026, for the Children's Church VBS summary presentation. Please register your child for VBS Registration on our website: <http://cumcmd.org/> or contact Audrey Johnson, VBS Director at 301-922-5384, or by email ajohnson12906@yahoo.com.

AN EVENING WITH JANELLE JAMES

Come join us for an evening with Janelle James at The Theater at MGM National Harbor, Oxon Hill, Maryland 20745 on Friday, July 10, 2026, at 8 p.m. As you make your plans to attend a show at The Theater at MGM National Harbor, we would like to share a few tips that may be useful. Box office hours on show days are 3 hours prior to ticketed event. Location: From the Hotel Valet, enter the hotel doors and proceed right, past the Lobby Bar, and down the escalators. The Theater will be immediately on your right from the Casino Valet.

HOMECOMING AFTER DARK 2026

2026 BSUNAA Homecoming After Dark Party. Bowie State Alumni, Get Ready Saturday, October 24, 2026, from 7 p.m.–12 a.m. Get ready for one of the HOTTEST HOMECOMING events of the year as Bowie State University National Alumni Association brings this ultimate AFTER PARTY experience to the city. Live entertainment by Scooby "DaGodSon" & Sirius Company-4x 2026 Go-Go Award Winner. Music by DJ Dirty Rico (Majic 102.3FM-2026 Go-Go Award Winner Spinning the BEST in Go-Go, Hip-Hop, House, Dancehall, Old School & Party Classics all night long.)

Cash Bar, Vendors, and Food Trucks. Tickets & VIP Tables are on sale now. Early Bird Special-only \$40 for the FIRST 100 tickets! Click Link to purchase Tickets/VIP Tables: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/homecoming-2026-4>. VIP Tables will go fast, so secure yours EARLY! Call your BSU crew and friends to make plans now. Share BSUNAA flyer with fellow Alum! #BSUHomecoming #Bowie State University #BSUNAA #DirtyRico#ScoobyDaGodSon #BulldogPride #BSUAlumni #Homecoming 2026.

Alumni, Greeks, classmates, DMV friends & supporters, this is the reunion vibe you don't want to miss! Come represent your

class, reconnect with old friends, dance all night, and celebrate Bulldog pride in style! Location: Boswell Hall, 6111 Columbian Way, Bowie, Maryland 20715.

MOVIES IN THE PARK

Join us at Watkins Regional Park for our Movies in the Park series. We have an amazing movie line-up this year and can't wait to enjoy the summer with you! 6–8:30 p.m. July 10-Shark Tale, July 17-Jurassic World Rebirth, July 24-The Princess Diaries, July 31-Goat. Ticket Price: Free. All ages. Free, Outdoor Performance, Special Event. Watkins Regional Park, 301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University in conjunction with Rev. Dr. Mark E. Whitlock presents a faith-based leadership training initiative for pastors, reverends and church leaders on Monday, July 20, 2026, from 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m. in the Bowie State University MLK Building, Room 1330, 14000 Jericho Park Road Bowie, Maryland, 20715. This partnership brings together academic support and mentorship to help faith leaders strengthen church operations, improve internal structures and expand community impact. This dynamic training will assist the church to become full partners in social change by strengthening the capacity of the church to engage in community development, business development, job creation, finance management, social justice work. These are essential tools in creating and sustaining transformed communities. Tickets in person are \$100, virtual tickets \$65.

COUNTDOWN TO HOMECOMING

Homecoming: It's OFF THE CHAIN! October 18–25, 2026. Bowie State University is celebrating over 160 years of excellence and over 50 years of Homecoming tradition. This beloved annual gathering brings together students, alumni, employees, and community members near and far for a family-friendly celebration filled with pride, connection and Bulldog spirit. Homecoming is the perfect time for the Bowie State community to embrace the historic traditions and unforgettable energy of an HBCU homecoming.

From the rhythm of the Symphony of Soul at the parade, to the roar of the crowd in the Bulldog Stadium, to the joy of reconnecting with classmates and community. As we gather, let's honor Bowie State's proud history and bright beautiful campus. Together, we can make this Homecoming safe, fun and unforgettable.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Bowie State University alumna and entrepreneur Carolyn Alston ('26)! She won the \$5,000 grand prize at the inaugural HBCU Pitch Competition held in Times Square during New York Tech Week.

The groundbreaking event aimed to increase visibility, investment opportunities and access to resources for Black founders and student entrepreneurs, while showcasing innovation emerging from HBCU campuses nationwide.

Around the County

2026 PGCPS Summer Meals Program Announced

13 Open Meal Sites Across Prince George's County Will Provide Free Meals to Children and Teens This Summer UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 18, 2026)—The Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Department of Food and Nutrition Services will launch its annual Summer Meals Program on June 29, ensuring children and teens have access to nutritious meals while school is out of session.

Beginning June 29, free meals will be available for students enrolled in PGCPS summer programs at designated sites.

Starting July 1, all children and teens ages 18 and younger can receive free breakfast and lunch at five participating school-based open meal sites, regardless of enrollment in a summer program. Eight community-based open meal sites will begin serving free lunch on July 7.

No registration, identification, or proof of residency is required. Meals are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Meals must be consumed on site and cannot be taken home.

Program Schedule

- **June 29:** Free meal service begins for PGCPS students enrolled in summer programs at designated sites.
- **July 1–August 7:** Breakfast and lunch available to all children and teens ages 18 and younger at school-based open meal sites. Hot meals will be served.
- **July 7–August 6 (The Hillcrest Heights Library site will also serve lunch on August 7):** Lunch available to all children and teens ages 18 and younger at community-based open meal sites. Bagged meals will be served.

View a complete list of meal sites and service times here: <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/food-and-nutrition/summer-meals>. Additional free meal locations can be found through the Maryland Summer Meals Site Finder: https://mars.msde.maryland.gov/mars_sitesearch/

Drive-Up Pet Vaccination Clinic for Cats and Dogs

Sunday, July 19, 2026; 10 a.m.–2 p.m. • \$20 Fee (Cash Only) Includes Rabies Vaccinations and Microchipping Registration is Required • Rain or Shine • While supplies last! The Prince George's County Animal Shelter will host a Drive-Up Dog and Cat Vaccination Clinic on Sunday, July 19, 2026, from 10 a.m.–2 p.m., at 3750 Brown Station Road, Upper Marlboro, MD 20770.

County residents can receive rabies vaccinations and microchipping services for \$20 per pet (cash only). Please bring proof of residency. There is a limit of two pets per vehicle.

To register and for additional details, visit www.princegeorgespets4us.com.



MARYLAND DNR PHOTO

Funded by a previous grant, Anacostia Watershed Society partnered with Prince George's County Public Schools to engage middle and high school students in hands-on mussel restoration work and education. Students learned about local watershed health and mussel biology.

Watershed Education and Stewardship Grants Support Programming in Anne Arundel, Charles, and Prince George's Counties

Two Maryland organizations will receive support for education and stewardship programming to enhance environmental education in the state.

Outdoor education and stewardship funding is made possible from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant. Specific amounts will be contingent upon federal funding availability and approval.

The following organizations were awarded funding through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources:

- **Accokeek Foundation**—The project integrates traditional ecological knowledge, cultural heritage, and historical context into programs such as the Wild Rice Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience for seventh grade students in Prince George's County Public Schools and Charles County Public Schools. Students will engage in hands-on restoration activities, planting, collecting data, and maintaining wetland ecosystems.
- **Anne Arundel Community College Environmental Center**—This program will engage community members, Anne Arundel Community College students, high school students and local organizations to participate in field and lab research by collecting data, assessing horseshoe crab population, evaluating shoreline impacts, and fostering stewardship. Beginning in July, the Department of Natural Resources will accept applications for the next fiscal year through the department's online Grants Gateway.

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

Suitland Duckpin Alley closing by July 31

After 73 years, Suitland Bowl is closing its doors. Owners Megan Adkins and Thomas Osbourne, a married couple who took over the 24-lane duckpin bowling alley in 2015, announced in a May 31 Facebook post that their building has been sold, and they will need to vacate by July 31.

Duckpin bowling, with its short, squat pins and hole-free wooden balls about an inch larger than a softball, has been a tradition in the Mid-Atlantic. While it might not have been invented in Baltimore, the city long has been a major center for duckpin bowling. In the years after World War II, its popularity spread across Maryland.

Sadly, those days are over. According to the National Duckpin Bowling Congress, in 1963, there were nearly 450 duckpin alleys in America. By 2016, that number had fallen to 41. No doubt, it has shrunk even further in the ten years since then, and the loss of Suitland Bowl will make it even harder to enjoy this regional tradition.

Suitland Bowl is planning to have one final farewell event this month. You might call them at 301-893-4160 to get details.

Once they're gone, it looks like Harbor Social sports bar at National Harbor has a handful of duckpin lanes tucked in the back. But I think your closest option for a proper duckpin alley is going to be White Oak Duckpin Lanes in Silver Spring, which dates back to 1959. You'd better hurry and get in a game there while it's still around.

Former Fire Chief Groom dies

The Morningside Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD) draped its firehouse in black bunting to mark the passing of beloved former fire chief and president, life member Thomas "Thumper" Groom, who died on June 1, the day before his 70th birthday.

Born in Washington, Tommy moved to Morningside as a child. He grew up in a home at the corner of Morgan Road and

Marianne Drive, attended Benjamin D. Foulis, and graduated from Crossland High School.

He joined the MVFD in 1973, which began a life devoted to fire service. He volunteered with the MVFD for more than fifty years and is remembered as someone who "consistently demonstrated his willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty."

Chief Groom was active in a variety of area fire-fighting associations and even did a stint as a federal firefighter at what is now the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda.

In recognition of his decades of dedicated work, he was inducted into the Prince George's County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association Hall of Fame.

He is survived by his sisters, Mary Elizabeth Parks and Ann Marie Groom. His funeral will be private, but the family is planning a public celebration of his life. If I get the details in time, I'll be sure to share them.

Exxon Station Closes For Renovation

The Exxon gas station at the corner of Suitland Road and Skyline Drive, a half block from me, is closed for a month-long renovation. You can still buy gas there during the day, though in the evenings the screens on the pumps say, "Dispenser Has Stopped," so the pumps seemed to be turned off overnight.

Apparently, in the last couple of days before the closure, they were handing out free pies and snacks to customers, just to help clear off the shelves. Too bad I missed out.

They are replacing the refrigerator cabinets and soda fountain and giving the entire shop an upgrade. But you won't have to wait much longer to grab your chips or milk or lottery tickets. They expect to reopen on July 8.

Morningside's 4th of July Parade coming up

The parade steps off at 11:30 and

marches to the VFW. It will be followed by a day of fun in Patterson Park. There'll be food, a DJ, games and prizes, and more. It's all free, but you might want to get there early. The free coupons for the food trucks are first-come, and when they're gone, you will need money to get a snack from the trucks.

The Patterson Park event wraps up at 3. And then at dusk, the big show starts, as Morningside presents its always-impressive fireworks display.

I hope to be watching the parade from my usual spot under the tree at Suitland Road Baptist Church. Stop by and say hi. And who knows, maybe I'll make it to the fireworks, too. It takes a little more effort at 97, but I went with my grandson Michael Gallegos last year, and we had a great time!

Morningside Meeting was moved to June 23

The general town meeting was rescheduled from June 16 to June 23, to allow Morningside officials to attend the Maryland Municipal League convention in Ocean City. The meeting was also moved from the regular 7 p.m. to 6 p.m. to make time for a tax-rate hearing and budget meeting.

Included in the budget was a new, separate public works building that will be added to the Town Hall grounds, to give them their own space for storage and work. Morningside has received a \$350,000 grant for this project, to which they are planning to contribute an additional \$500,000 to build the much-needed facility.

Also, Morningside is allotting \$200,000 for road repairs on Lou Lane and Pickett Drive. In particular, the town will fix the sections that do not have curbs or gutters, installing uniform aprons and improving drainage.

On June 28 at 3 p.m., the Recreation Committee will hold its last planning meeting for the 4th of July. The next work ses-

COMMUNITY

Bowie State University Earns 2026–2027 Military Friendly® School and Spouse Designation

By PRESS OFFICER
Bowie State University



BOWIE, Md. (June 10, 2026)—Bowie State University has been named a 2026–2027 Military Friendly® School and Military Spouse Friendly School, continuing a designation it has held since 2019 and 2025, respectively. The recognition highlights the university's commitment to supporting veterans, active-duty service members and their families.

"Bowie State University is honored to be recognized as a Military Friendly® School, a distinction that underscores our sustained commitment to those who have served and continue to serve our nation," said Andre A. Clayton, director of the Military Resource Center. "We are intentional in delivering comprehensive, high-quality support that enables veterans, active-duty service members and their families to achieve academic excellence and long-term success. These recognitions affirm our responsibility to foster an environment where military-connected students and their spouses are empowered, supported and positioned to thrive."

The Military Friendly® Schools and Military Spouse Friendly Schools® lists are compiled annually using public data and responses to a proprietary survey. Institutions are evaluated on factors such as graduation and career outcomes, services for military-connected students and their families, and culture and commitment.

Bowie State continues to expand its support for military-connected students through enhanced services and a growing network of resources. During the spring 2026 semester, the university served 503 military-affiliated students, including 415 using GI Bill benefits and 88 students serving on active duty, in the Reserve and in the National Guard.

To meet the needs of this popu-

lation, Bowie State's Military Resource Center has launched targeted initiatives that align military experience with academic and career pathways. Through partnerships with academic departments, the university has expanded practicum and internship opportunities tailored to veterans, strengthening career readiness and post-graduation outcomes.

The university has also introduced faculty development workshops that equip instructors with strategies to support students transitioning from military service to the classroom. In addition, the Green Zone Expansion Program has trained faculty and staff across campus to better serve military-connected students, creating a broader network of informed support.

Together, these efforts strengthen Bowie State's capacity to provide an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that prepares military-connected students for long-term professional success.

In addition to the Military Resource Center, Bowie State University provides dedicated support for veterans and military-affiliated students through its Office of Veteran Services. The university offers flexible course scheduling and assists students in utilizing GI Bill® benefits and other military education programs. Bowie State is also proud to participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program, helping make higher education more accessible and affordable for eligible veterans and their families.



COURTESY PHOTO

Piscataway Creek containment: Multiple booms were deployed on Maryland's Piscataway Creek inside Joint Base Andrews to keep leaked jet fuel from being carried downstream.

Leak from A1

The Air Force is working closely with MDE and the EPA to address the fuel release, she added.

Testing is to begin in early June to find and fix the suspected leak, she said. And work is already under way to track down where fuel has contaminated soil and groundwater so that it can be cleaned up.

About 37,000 gallons of fuel-tainted water have been pumped out of a stormwater outfall along the creek and taken off base to be properly disposed of, Hamly said. It isn't known yet, she added, what fraction of that removed liquid was jet fuel.

Meanwhile, the question remains: Could the leak have been spotted sooner and prevented or at least minimized?

In December, according to MDE, the base's fuel system failed a "tightness test"—a procedure for checking the underground storage tanks and pipelines that's usually capable of detecting even minor seepage.

State law requires facilities that store fuel to report promptly any indication of a release, the agency said, including failed system tests, inventory losses and any evidence of fuel in the soil or surrounding water.

That pressure test failure raised no alarms, though, Hamly said, because base officials knew they had a faulty valve in the fuel system.

See LEAK Page A6

'Paws, Poses and Peace' Combines Yoga and Therapy Dogs for All-Ages Wellness

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (June 11, 2026)—Chesapeake Life Center, the organization behind wellness programs like Hope After Hours and All-Ages Grief Karaoke, is introducing another creative approach to wellness and healing. "Paws, Poses and Peace" combines the healing benefits of gentle yoga with the comforting presence of certified therapy dogs.

Two summer evening sessions will be offered from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on **July 14** and **Aug. 20** at the Center for Hope & Healing on Hospice of the Chesapeake's John & Cathy Belcher Campus in Pasadena.

Whether you're navigating grief, seeking stress relief, looking for a nurturing space to recharge, or simply love dogs and yoga, this event is open to everyone in the community. No experience, special ability or specific reason is required.

Participants will enjoy guided meditation, calming breathing exercises, gentle yoga and dedicated cuddle time with four certified therapy dogs: Aggie, Gator, Venture and Chance. Together, these elements create a restorative experience that supports both physical well-being and emotional healing.

The sessions will be led by Naomi Hurley, a certified yoga instructor since 2019, with specialized training in trauma-informed yoga. Hurley has taught in schools, community settings, inpatient



PHOTO BY ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN, HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

(Aug. 9, 2024) Therapy dog Gator gets scratches and cuddles from children participating in Camp Nabi Grief Camp. Gator is one of four therapy dogs scheduled to participate in Paws, Poses and Peace.

treatment centers and the Baltimore City Jail, bringing a welcoming and inclusive approach to participants of all backgrounds and life experiences.

"We believe wellness is for everyone," said Christa Martin, a licensed master social worker and counselor at Chesapeake Life Center. "'Paws, Poses and Peace' is a judgment-free space where people can show up exactly as they are and experience connection, comfort and calm."

Participants should take their own yoga mats, though a few will be available for those who may not have one. All ages and abilities are welcome.

This free event is open to the community. While walk-ins are welcome, advance registration is encouraged to help organizers prepare the best possible experience. To register or learn more, call 888-501-7077 or email griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org.

Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For more information, visit www.chesapeakelifecenter.org.

A Capitol Fourth: 250th Weekend Celebration Kicks Off Nation's Semiquincentennial Birthday Party Live From the U.S. Capitol on July 3

Country Music Icon Trace Adkins to Debut New Song "American Made" on National TV Featuring a Spectacular Live Fireworks Show from George Washington's Mount Vernon

By PRESS OFFICER
A Capitol Fourth

**A Capitol Fourth:
250th Weekend Celebration**
Friday, July 3, 8 p.m.
Broadcast Live from the
West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol, FREE

WASHINGTON (May 14, 2026)—Kicking off the historic Independence Day weekend's festivities for the nation's Semiquincentennial, A CAPITOL FOURTH: 250th WEEKEND CELEBRATION will be broadcast live and streamed nationwide from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol on Friday, July 3 from 8 to 9:30 p.m. ET.

Joining the birthday bash is multi-platinum hitmaker and country music icon Trace Adkins. Celebrating 30 years in music this year, Adkins will make the exclusive television debut of his brand-new song "American Made," an uplifting anthem honoring the patriotism, ideals and contributions of generations of Americans.

"I have been fortunate enough to have played a small part in several of the A CAPITOL FOURTH celebrations over my career," reflects Adkins. "But to be invited to join the 250th birthday of our great country is an honor beyond all others."

This beloved 46-year holiday tradition is America's annual birthday party at the U.S. Capitol, with all-star musical and patriotic performances by pop, country, R&B, Broadway, classical and gospel artists along with the National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of top pops conductor Jack Everly. Stay tuned for exciting talent announcements and updates coming soon!

In honor of the nation's 250 birthday, the concert finale will feature a spectacular live fireworks show over George Washington's Mount Vernon. The fireworks will be the biggest display ever at the iconic home of America's first president.

"We are excited to be the first live nationally televised celebration for the nation's 250th birthday," said Michael Colbert, Executive Producer. "Every year, Americans look forward to watching A CAPITOL FOURTH as part of their annual Independence Day tradition, and this year they will be able to start the



PHOTO COURTESY A CAPITOL FOURTH

Celebrating 30 years in music this year, Trace Adkins will make the exclusive television debut of his brand-new song "American Made," an uplifting anthem honoring the patriotism, ideals and contributions of generations of Americans.

party one night early on July 3 for this big and historic anniversary weekend."

A CAPITOL FOURTH: 250th WEEKEND CELEBRATION premieres live Friday, July 3, 2026 from 8 to 9:30 p.m. on public television stations nationwide (check local listings), and is seen by our service members around the world on American Forces Network. The concert will also be streaming on YouTube and available as Video on Demand for a limited time only, July 3 to July 17, 2026.

A CAPITOL FOURTH: 250th WEEKEND CELEBRATION is made possible by grants from The Boeing Company, the National Park Service, and the Department of the Army. Air travel is provided by American Airlines.

The program is a production of Capital Concerts Inc.

Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, is owned and operated by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, the oldest national historic preservation organization in the United States. The estate is open to visitors and includes the Mansion, a museum and education center, gardens, tombs, a working farm, a functioning distillery, and a gristmill, as well as the George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon. Learn more at www.mountvernon.org.

Over the course of his three-decade reign in Country music, MULTI-PLATINUM hitmaker Trace Adkins has emerged as a full-fledged icon whose reach spans far beyond the genre's borders. A multiaward-winning singer and actor who's scored 40 hit singles on Country radio and sold 12 million albums to date, the Louisiana native is now nearing the 30th anniversary of his trailblazing full-length debut Dreamin' Out Loud. Adkins has reprised his role as MercyMe manager Scott Brickell in I Can Only Imagine 2 (released February 2026) after appearing as Big Buck in Day of Reckoning (a 2025 action film that featured his rousing revenge ballad "That Someday" in its closing credits). Also a devoted philanthropist with a deep-rooted passion for giving back to the military community, he's helped raise millions of dollars to support injured post-9/11 veterans as part of his work with the Wounded Warrior Project and received a multitude of honors for his humanitarian work, including the National Defense Industrial Association's Dwight D. Eisenhower Award. A true American legend whose powerhouse catalog includes 14 studio albums, Adkins continues to embody the fiery spirit of traditional Country while moving the genre forward with his ever-evolving sound.

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

The Obama Presidential Center Is a Model for Equitable Growth

"This is an economic engine, not just for the South Side of Chicago ... most certainly here, but it's going to be an engine for the city and the region. It's going to be a beacon of hope to the world at a time where I think we can all use a little hope."

—Valerie Jarrett

At a moment when a sitting president squanders resources on hollow symbols of personal aggrandizement, the Barack Obama Presidential Center stands as a transformative investment in community, economy, and civic life.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Obama Presidential Center—and I will attend the grand opening on Juneteenth—and I found it to be a powerful testament to leadership, community, and the ongoing mission to create opportunity.

Rooted in the values of service, democracy, and opportunity, this critical space reminds us what's possible when we invest in people, in hope, and in shared progress.

President Obama has called the Center "a living destination for people who refuse to accept the status quo". In a democracy that demands active participation, a space dedicated to inspiring civic

engagement is essential.

Economic projections tied to the Center estimate hundreds of thousands of annual visitors and billions in long-term economic activity, with thousands of jobs created during construction and ongoing operations. In communities that have endured decades of disinvestment, that level of economic investment represents opportunity for residents who have too often been left out of the wealth generated in their own neighborhoods.

Like Chicago, cities across the country are grappling with the challenge of attracting investment while protecting vulnerable communities from displacement. The Obama Presidential Center is unfolding in real time as an example that policymakers, advocates, and developers alike will study closely.

The Center has an opportunity to demonstrate that economic development and equity are not competing goals, but complementary ones. It can show that inclusive planning, community input, and enforceable protections can produce growth that benefits everyone.

Our own Urban League Empowerment Center was conceived in this very same spirit, with a projected economic impact of \$300 million right here in Harlem.

But the Center's mission, like our own, goes

beyond its own economic impact. As Chicago Tribune art critic Lori Waxman wrote, "Visiting the OPC felt like being in an alternate reality. One where people of diverse origin, ability, and belief co-exist peacefully and productively; the value of the environment, public space, human health, and the arts finds expression everywhere, for everyone; and the future appears collaborative and hopeful."

More than a traditional presidential library, the Center's Forum includes the Hadiya Pendleton Atrium, a media suite for recording music and podcasts, and the Elie Wiesel Auditorium for performances and lectures. There's a regulation-sized basketball court, a branch of the Chicago Public Library, the Eleanor Roosevelt Fruit and Vegetable Garden. The campus playground even includes a sledding hill; Michelle Obama had always wished for one when she was growing up in the largely-flat neighborhood.

The Obama Presidential Center is a reminder that development can be a catalyst for both growth and justice. When we center community, honor history, and invest with thoughtful intention, we can build institutions that uplift neighborhoods rather than displace them. At a time when our nation is searching for models of progress that are inclusive and sustainable, the Center offers a hopeful blueprint.

—June 13, 2026

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Educational Systems Federal Credit Union Wins 2026 Marketing Trailblazer Award

By PRESS OFFICER

Educational Systems Federal Credit Union

GREENBELT, Md. (June 15, 2026)—Educational Systems Federal Credit Union received the 2026 Marketing Trailblazer Award for Best Video Project from the MD|DC Credit Union Association at CONNECT 2026 for its 70th Anniversary video.

The recognition is especially meaningful as it marks the first time the Credit Union entered the Best Video Project category. The award-winning video was developed as part of the Credit Union's 70th Anniversary campaign, which celebrated seven decades of service to the education community while highlighting its mission, history and continued commitment to members and community partners.

"Our 70th Anniversary gave us an opportunity to reflect on our history and share the stories of the people and partnerships that continue to shape our impact," said Girardo Smith, President/CEO of Educational Systems Federal Credit Union. "We are honored to receive this recognition from the MD|DC Credit Union Association, especially in our first year entering this category. This award reflects the collaboration, creativity and purpose behind the campaign."

The 70th Anniversary video shared the Credit Union's story through reflections from leadership, Ambassadors, members and community partners. The project was designed to honor the Credit Union's legacy while reinforcing its focus on making financial wellness and stability accessible to the communities it serves.

Since 1955, Educational Systems Federal Credit Union has remained committed to supporting the education community through financial solutions, personalized service, educational resources and community partnerships.

Educational Systems Federal Credit Union has proudly served the education community since 1955. With \$1.3 billion in assets and 13 branches, the Credit Union serves over 80,000 members of the education community including school employees, students, parents and individuals working for education-related organizations. Visit esfcu.org.

Maryland Small Business Development Center

From Government Worker to Entrepreneur Through Franchising

July 13, 2026 • 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Location: Online • Cost: Free of Charge

Registration Required:

<https://mdsbdc.eccenterdirect.com/events/18666?embedded=0>

Ready to turn your public-sector experience into business ownership? Join this training for an engaging workshop exploring how franchising can provide a proven pathway to entrepreneurship. Learn the fundamentals of franchise ownership, financing options, and how to evaluate opportunities that align with your goals, lifestyle, and experience. Whether you're planning for retirement, considering a career change, or looking to build long-term wealth, this session will help you determine whether franchising is the right next step in your entrepreneurial journey. Presenter, Richard Bock, FranNet

The Small Business Blind Spot That Can Stall Growth: Understanding and Improving Business Credit Can Support Financing Readiness, Credibility and Long-Term Confidence

(Feature Impact) Nearly 60% of small business owners seek financing each year, according to the Federal Reserve's 2025 Small Business Credit Survey, but only about 2 in 5 secure the full amount they request.

It's not uncommon for business owners to be caught off guard by a credit issue just when they're poised to take their companies to the next level. To help business owners better understand how business credit can aid growth, consider this information from Chase for Business.

The Hidden Impact of Business Credit

Many owners miss the importance of business credit—74% of business owners have used personal credit cards or lending products that rely on their personal credit score for business purposes, according to a May 2026 Chase small business survey. However, business credit can play an important role in accessing capital, managing operations and planning for the future. Without a clear understanding of their business credit profiles, owners may miss out on opportunities or face unexpected challenges when seeking loans, negotiating with suppliers or expanding their businesses. That's why it's essential for small business owners to proactively monitor and manage their business credit.

Managing Business Credit

To help millions of small business owners better understand and manage this part of their financial picture, Chase for Business introduced Business Credit Journey, a complimentary digital tool designed to help owners establish, monitor and improve their business credit.

The tool brings together credit monitoring, score insights, actionable steps and educational resources in one place. It builds on the American Dream Initiative, a nationwide effort to help power 10 million small businesses, offering resources beyond basic credit tracking to help owners spot issues early, understand what's driving their scores and take action before opportunities slip away.

"Small business owners aren't overlooking business credit, they just can't see it clearly or aren't sure how to use that information," said Jameson Troutman, head of product for Chase for Business. "This tool is meant to change that, offering owners an easier, accessible way to understand their business credit scores and empowering them to take action over time."

Why Business Credit Matters

Business credit is only one part of the financing equation, but it can influence how prepared a business is for future opportunities, help owners make informed decisions and avoid surprises when it matters most.

Why Business Credit Can Be Easy to Overlook

For many owners, business credit is easy to put off while managing the daily demands of running their businesses. That can be especially true when they're focused on growth, and nearly 80% of business owners expect growth in 2026, according to Chase's Business Leaders Outlook.

In that environment, business credit may not get attention until a financing need or growth opportunity puts it into focus. That often means businesses confront their credit profile only when it starts to limit their options.

How Digital Tools Can Help

Created to make business credit easier to understand and man-



PHOTO CREDIT FEATURE IMPACT

Nearly 60% of small business owners seek financing each year, according to the Federal Reserve's 2025 Small Business Credit Survey, but only about 2 in 5 secure the full amount they request.

age, the tool allows business owners to monitor their credit scores, see what is influencing them and receive insights and actionable steps tailored to their business profile. It's designed to help owners stay on top of changes over time and take a more proactive approach to strengthening their business credit.

"Small business owners deserve resources that help them make more informed decisions," Troutman said.

For many small businesses, credit only becomes visible when something depends on it. Having a clearer view earlier can change the decisions owners make long before that moment. Visit chase.com/business/creditjourney to learn more.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Why Don't They Just Create Individual Social Security Accounts?

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

Dear Rusty: Regarding Social Security's financial issues, three people contributing to Social Security for every one beneficiary sounds to me like a surplus. If they had given workers their own accounts, similar to a 401k, where they could manage their own money, it would have worked out more favorably for retirees. President George W Bush suggested these changes, but it was shot down by Congress.

The average worker now pays a 6.2% Social Security tax. If the government had bumped it up to say 7%, I don't believe that me or anyone else would have cried too hard. There are ways of correcting this before the SS reserves are depleted and, hopefully, Congress will address Social Security's financing soon. **Signed: Skeptical Senior**

Dear Skeptical: Believe it or not, putting SS contributions (from payroll taxes) into separate individual accounts is not really a good idea. For information, most people get back all payroll taxes they contributed to Social Security within about 5 years of receiving SS benefits. Even with decent public market returns, some individual separate accounts would eventually run out of money, causing some to lose Social Security benefits before they die, meaning they would likely live in poverty. People are now collecting benefits (on average) for decades, and the current SS format means that even those who contribute only a small amount will collect benefits no matter how long they live. Remember, the primary purpose of the SS program is to reduce poverty in America.

FYI, President Bush's plan had opposition in the 2005 Congress largely because of the cost to transition to that plan, and the fear that investments in the public markets subjected individual retirement savings to unacceptable risk. In any case, few have since advocated investing Social Security funds in the public financial markets because of the risks and the political backlash. And adding a small amount to the FICA/SECA payroll tax rate only somewhat mitigates the problem—it doesn't completely solve it. I'm afraid that Social Security's financial issues are more complex than that and can't be fully solved by a small increase in SS payroll taxes.

You are right—Congress can (and, we are confident, will) address this, and hopefully soon. For its part, AMAC (the Association of Mature American Citizens) and the AMAC Foundation have been evaluating this issue for years and have developed a Social Security reform plan for Congress to consider (see <https://amac.us/social-security-guarantee/>). And we are actively promoting our reform plan in Washington, D.C. Please know that we share your concerns about the future of Social Security and will continue to work hard to ensure the program is here for many generations.

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 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.

Morningside from A2

sion for the town council will be July 14.

School is out!

As of June 18, Prince George's Public Schools are out for the summer. Drive carefully and keep an eye out for kids playing. I hope kids still play outside these days.

Want a kitten?

A good neighbor of mine in Skyline has kittens that need a good home. If anybody is interested, let me know, and I'll pass along your contact info.

Donuts with Dad

This year's Donuts with Dad event was a big success. The thirty attendees dug into six dozen Krispy Kreme donuts, and also got to grab a paper Krispy Kreme hat. They painted rocks and played games, and, most delightfully, also just sat around and chatted. It

came on the heels of last month's Mother's Day event, where the participants got to decorate flow-erpots and then plant seeds in them.

Keep your eyes open for these events next spring. Your family can be part of the fun.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Angela Booth and Mable Hemmes, June 26; Charles "Chuckie" Henry, Rose Hoffman, Veda Curcio, Shawn Kumra, and Cathryn Cordero Pracht, June 27; Mike Dudding, Juanita Eppard, Erica R. Webb, EvaMarie Anthony, and granddaughter Leah Sharp, June 28; Faith "Dycki" Brown, Alexis Schuler, and great-grandson Wesley McHale, June 29; Linda Carson and Karen Ellis, June 30; Ruth LaBelle and Jordan Foster, July 1; Sharon Simms, Matthew Clark, and Megan Frostbutter, July 2.

Happy Anniversary to Jack and Kimberly Hay, June 28; Carl and Sue (Stine) Mason, June 29.

PART 6—A REGION RESHAPED: FEDERAL LAYOFFS IN MARYLAND A YEAR LATER

'Just Give me a Job': Maryland Former Federal Workers' Stories of Survival

In the months since thousands of federal workers in Maryland were laid off or left their posts, many have had to find new ways to support themselves and their families, often doing gig work or switching careers entirely.

By ALEXANDER TAYLOR, ANDREW MOLLENAUER, IAN FERRIS
Capital News Service

GERMANTOWN, Md.—One recent morning, student teacher Rachel Bayer started her class by holding up a slab of a tree trunk or as she called it, a "tree cookie."

She explained how trees grow a ring around their trunks for every year they live, then had one of her second-grade students share how life changed each year he has been alive. In the past year, Bayer's life has dramatically changed.

A year ago, she worked for the U.S. Forest Service—a place she planned to spend the rest of her career. But after President Donald Trump returned to office, she worried there might be reassignments at the agency.

"It appeared that there were going to be changes that, long term, would be a difficult transition for my family," she said. So, when an email went out to all federal employees offering a chance to resign and keep their pay and benefits until September, she took it.

"This is probably the best deal I'm going to get, without taking a pretty big risk and trying to stay," she recalled.

Bayer was not alone. Like her, some federal workers decided to leave because they felt vulnerable. Others were forced out or their positions were eliminated. In the months since, they have had to find new ways to support themselves and their families, often doing gig work or switching careers entirely.

Maryland was one of the hardest hit states. Between January 2025 and January 2026, it lost more than 31,000 federal jobs, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Your life really does ... hang in the balance when there is a shutdown or these losses of work when you don't get a paycheck and your family is reliant upon you," said Grace Middleton, of Gaithersburg, a wife and mother of two. "It's really, deeply hurtful."

The 47-year-old was just nine months into her role as a project manager working in public health communications for the National Cancer Institute when she lost her contracted position in August.

She turned to teaching barre classes to bring in some income. She had enjoyed participating in the fitness classes and thought it would be a good interim job.

"It really was an expansion of the hobby, a way to fill my time and have a routine, but also make a little bit of money to maybe pay for some gas," she said.

Middleton recently landed a full-time job in communications but still teaches barre classes on the side.

"It just gives me an emotional boost, the working out, but also doing something that's of service for others to make them feel good about themselves," she said. "It's filling a different gap in my life."

Middleton recently landed a full-time job in communications but still teaches barre classes on the side.



Rachel Bayer, a student teacher and former federal worker, working with elementary students April 22, 2026.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA GRAVES

Grace Middleton (middle), of Gaithersburg, leads a barre class at Pure Barre in Olney in November 2025.

On the job hunt

Ambar Zobairi, of Silver Spring, spent more than six years at the United States Agency for International Development working on the elections team, including on missions in Africa, Europe and Asia. She was let go last July.

The 51-year-old with two children in college said she applied for more than 200 positions before she landed a new job at a national civil rights organization. She's making less money, but said she's grateful to have income.

"Feeling good about what I'm doing has been more important than the money aspect, honestly," she said.

Chris Steven, of Waldorf, worked for a company that had a federal contract with the Food and Drug Administration before he was laid off last September. He had worked as a help desk coordinator for a safety reporting program.

When unemployment payments ended, he turned to DoorDash to help pay bills.

"It's not the greatest amount of money I've ever made, but it's something, which is better than nothing," Steven said.

For Steven, 38, the financial strain was exacerbated by the Oct. 1 federal government shutdown. His wife is a federal employee, so for a period, they had no income, he said.

He continues to apply for full-time positions and recalled a recent interview where he was told he was overqualified.

"In my mind, it's so hard not to scream, 'Just give me a job!'" he said. "I don't care what you have me do. I want to make money."

'Protect our people'

Following the mass layoffs, the state began offering resources for Marylanders in need.

Since February 2025, laid-off federal workers have logged into a weekly virtual workshop hosted by the Maryland Department of Labor, where they can get advice and resources for job searches. More than 2,100 people have participated so far, according to the agency.

In October 2025, Gov. Wes Moore announced the launch of the Federal

Worker Emergency Loan Program.

"At a time when the federal government is stepping back from its most basic obligations, Maryland is stepping up to protect our people," Moore said in a news release.

The program allows federal workers who have been laid off since Jan. 1, 2025, to apply for a \$700 no-interest loan within six months of their termination. More than 120 Marylanders have used the loan program, according to the Labor Department.

Funding for the program came from the Protect Our Federal Workers Act, which Moore signed in April 2025. The act also expanded the power of the state attorney general to try to protect Maryland residents from federal decisions, and created a fast-track hiring program for former federal workers looking to transition to state jobs.

'A different type of service'

Bayer, the 46-year-old student teacher, decided to work in the classroom because it's similar to what she did in the past. Much of her career had been in education. She thought it would be an exciting, new way to change careers.

"Honestly, if I'm going to be frank, there's usually teaching jobs," she said. She said teaching can be rewarding and fulfilling, especially when things don't go as anticipated.

"Teaching is service," she said. "It's just a different type of service."

Ethan Taylor, 55, was in a similar situation. He worked for the U.S. Department of the Interior in a position funded by USAID. When the Trump administration dismantled USAID, Taylor was worried his position would be eliminated.

"Going in every day, not knowing if it was my last, was just literally eating me alive," he said.

So, like Bayer, he took the deferred resignation offer.

"I knew I needed to make a decision," he said. "I wanted it to be on my terms and not the government's."

As soon as he left, he started substitute teaching in Montgomery County. Teaching is always something he has enjoyed. He had been an adjunct professor and taught in graduate school and in the Peace Corps.

He got his first full-time teaching job through Montgomery College's Alternative Certification for Effective Teachers. The program gives prospective teachers an accelerated pathway into the classroom. The state gave the program money to help displaced federal workers land teaching jobs.

Taylor is almost done with his first year teaching Spanish at Quince Orchard High School—something he's doing while participating in the program. He said it's exhilarating and exhausting.

"I'm here late and I stay up late, but it makes it all worth it when somebody comes up to me and says, 'Señor Taylor, I love your class. This is my favorite class,'" he said.

This is the final part in the series.

EarthTalk® Q&A State of the Art Pollution Tracking Key to Pollution Reduction

By Rachel Berliner | June 14, 2026

Dear EarthTalk:

Why is real-time or near-time tracking of pollution and other environmental markers important today and who is leading the charge?

—Barry Jenkins, Erie, PA

Pollution tracking is a way of continuously monitoring the air quality of an environment. Though this technology has been used since the mid-20th century, it has become increasingly more reliable in recent years. Pollutants like carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and others are detected and monitored by a variety of technological systems, providing key insights for scientists, researchers and the public.

Pollution tracking serves many roles, including providing a means to detect an issue and trigger a quick response to a rise in pollutants. This helps implement protections before the pollutant levels become dangerous. Also, pollution tracking helps educate the general public about the impact of poor air quality.

Recently, there have been various advances in real-time technology, making it more accurate and reactive. These improvements are essential for a speedy and precise response to a rise in pollutants. “Regulators can pinpoint precise interventions, and cities can compete on measurable impacts, not vague promises,” says Ingmar Rentzhog, the founder and CEO of We Don’t Have Time, the largest

global climate action media platform. “Investors, regulators, insurers, and policymakers now have regular insight into exactly who is polluting, how much, and where.”

In addition, experts are developing a wider variety of detection systems for different settings. For example, continuous emissions monitoring systems are used by industries subject to regulatory emissions standards. Another form of pollution monitoring is a geographic information system, which creates spatial data that can be used by environmentalists and policymakers. Indoor air quality monitoring systems are useful for businesses and individuals monitoring healthy enclosed environments.

There are many groups leading the charge toward faster, more reliable pollution detection. Climate TRACE is one group that is publishing reports accessed by large audiences. “Worldwide, we’re seeing the rapid rise in clean energy jobs overtake dirty energy jobs, and we’re seeing people all around the world continue to demand that we respect their future,” says AI Gore, one of Climate TRACE’s founders. Such tracking can have a profound impact on legislation, too. “This is a tool to show the threat to our own children...and politicians are going to have to yield to this technology,” says Jay Inslee, former governor of the State of Washington.

Readers interested in getting involved can stay updated by reading pollution tracking reports from Climate TRACE or other sources and take measures to reduce carbon emissions and air pollutant production.



PHOTO CREDIT: PEXELS.COM.

Without state-of-the-art pollution tracking technology and communications infrastructure, we don't stand a chance in reducing pollution.

CONTACTS: Climate TRACE, climatetrace.org; We Don’t Have Time, app.wedonthavetime.org.

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COURTESY OF MDE

Maryland Department of the Environment staff collect water samples from Piscataway Creek inside Joint Base Andrews.

Leak from A3

Then in January and February, MDE said, the base’s monthly fuel system reports showed inventory losses.

But Harnly said those didn’t raise concerns either, because measurements of the volume of fuel in the base’s underground storage system vary naturally with the temperature. Liquids expand when heated and contract when chilled, Harnly said, and the losses seen in those bitterly cold months were “within our tolerance.”

The base’s fuel system has leak detectors, but they’re stationed beneath the storage tanks, not along the pipelines that deliver the fuel to the flight line—which is the suspected location of the leak.

It’s still unclear whether the base had other chances to catch the leak early. Pressure tests are conducted weekly, Harnly said, but she declined to say what those tests showed in the weeks leading up to the leak’s discovery. They are at least one focus of an internal investigation, she said.

“We are looking into it and as soon as we get fidelity out of that investigation, we will inform the community,” a base spokesperson said.

Sampling in the creek in mid-April detected jet fuel constituents such as naphthalene and benzene, with some results exceeding action levels, according to MDE. Officials said they are sampling weekly but have yet to report more recent results.

“There’s a lot of potentially harmful stuff” in jet fuel, said Natalie Exum, assistant professor of environmental health and engineering at Johns Hopkins University. She contributed to a study of another large jet fuel spill in Hawaii that contaminated drinking water.

Piscataway Creek is not a drinking water source. But Exum said, “The ecological damage is still to be determined.”

State officials urged the public to avoid swimming or wading in areas of the creek where a sheen or odor is present or where there are containment booms across the water.

Since 2021, though, recreational anglers have been warned to limit or avoid eating certain fish from there. They are contaminated with perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, a toxic “forever chemical” that was discovered in the creek after a 2020 fish kill. MDE learned that there had been a large spill on the base of fire-fighting foam containing PFOS.

“This jet fuel is just highlighting the problems with the river,” said Potomac Riverkeeper Dean Naujok, who lives along Piscataway Creek. “People want answers and accountability.”



COURTESY PHOTO

Booms and ‘underflow dams’ made of sandbags have been used in Maryland’s Piscataway Creek to capture contaminants from a jet fuel leak at Joint Base Andrews.

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