

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Since 1952

Vol. 82, No. 28 July 10 — July 16, 2014

Prince George's County, Maryland

Newspaper of Record

Phone: 301-627-0900

25 cents

Solar Power Coming to PG County

Solar farm projects to be installed on closed portions of local landfills

By PRESS OFFICER
PG Environmental Resources

LARGO, MD - Converting sunlight to electricity will be the job of nearly 8,500 solar panels included in solar farm projects to be installed at the Brown Station Road Sanitary Landfill and the Sandy Hill Creative Disposal Project in Prince George's County. The projects will span several acres at the County facilities and help decrease the County's energy cost, improve its carbon footprint and provide electricity service to County homes and buildings. The projects are anticipated to supply 4 to 5-megawatts of renewable energy to the County's power grid, enough to power approximately 800 homes.

"The projects are positive contributions to the rapidly changing energy landscape in the state of Maryland, and are an environmental and economic win for Prince George's County," said Department of Environmental Resources Director Adam Ortiz.

Currently, the County is reviewing proposals from public companies they could potentially partner with on a long-

See SOLAR Page A3



OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY PETE SOUZA.

President Barack Obama delivers remarks on climate change, at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., June 25, 2013.

Our Climate Action Progress: One-Year Report

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the White House

The effects of climate change are already being felt across the nation. In the past three decades, the percentage of Americans with asthma has more than doubled, and climate change is putting those Americans at greater risk of landing

in the hospital. The impacts of extreme weather events – from more severe droughts and wildfires in the West, to more powerful hurricanes and record heat waves – are hitting communities across the country. These changes come with far-reaching consequences and real economic costs.

At the same time, clean energy represents a significant

economic opportunity, and we know we can meet this challenge in a way that advances our economy, our environment, and public health at the same time.

That is why, on this day last year, President Obama announced his Climate Action Plan – a comprehensive plan to cut carbon pollution, prepare the United States for the im-

pacts of climate change, and lead international efforts to combat global climate change.

One year later, the Administration has made real progress in advancing the goals in the President's Climate Action Plan. The policies President Obama has put forward in just

See CLIMATE Page A3

Making Student Loans More Affordable

By PRESS OFFICER
County Executive's Office

President Obama declared 2014 a year of action – vowing to use the power of his pen and phone to help ensure that hard-working Americans have the opportunity to succeed. And this week will be no different. With a focus on supporting hardworking Americans and upholding our country's commitment to provide a quality education for all of our students, the President is again taking action. On June 9, 2014 he delivered remarks at the White House, announcing new executive actions to further lift the burden of crushing student loan debt, including a Presidential Memorandum that will allow an additional 5 million borrowers with federal student loans to cap their monthly payments at just 10 percent of their income.

From reforming the student loan system and increasing Pell Grants to offering millions of students the opportunity to cap their monthly student loan payments at 10 percent of their income, making a degree more affordable and accessible has been a longtime priority for the President.

See LOANS Page A3

Despite Campaign Promises, Casinos, Not Schools, Are Big Winners When Gambling Profits Are Talled

By MEGAN BROCKETT
Capital News Service

BALTIMORE – Gov. Martin O'Malley looked into the camera in 2012 and told his audience that expanded casino gambling would mean "hundreds of millions of dollars for our schools."

The upcoming referendum on gambling had propelled Maryland's schools into the spotlight of a multimillion-dollar campaign where supporters touted the message that more gambling would be a win for education.

But the measure, approved by voters that fall, has actually worked to send more money to the casino companies this fiscal year than to the education fund that was established when the state first legalized casino gambling in 2008.

The 2008 law set up an Education Trust Fund to receive the lion's share of gambling revenues from slots at five new casinos: About half of the slots revenue went directly to the education fund and an additional 18.5 percent to other state programs. The casino companies generally kept no more than 33 percent.

But the 2012 law included concessions for the companies to ease their concerns over the addition of a mega-casino in Prince George's County. The legislation allowed all casinos to add lucrative table games, such as poker, craps and roulette. And it allowed the companies to keep 80 percent of the table game proceeds – while also reducing the share of slots money that goes to the education fund.

As a result, casino companies have kept more than \$334 million of the revenues so far this fiscal year while the Education Trust Fund has gotten close to \$270 million – marking the first time since casinos opened in Maryland that more of the gambling proceeds will go to the casino companies than to the education fund.

And while expansion of gambling has raised more money overall both for casinos and the education fund, the money in the Education Trust Fund has replaced – not added to – general fund revenues normally spent on schools.

O'Malley, Senate President Thomas V. "Mike" Miller Jr. and House Speaker Michael E. Busch all declined to comment on the



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY NICHOLAS DUCHESNE

The exterior of Hollywood Casino Perryville, which sent \$1.76 million from casino revenues to the town of Perryville last year.

Capital News Service findings, according to their spokespersons.

The casino revenue is "helpful, but it's not helpful in the way that some politicians have claimed it's helpful," said Charlie Cooper, secretary of the Maryland Education Coalition.

"If we get \$300 million in casino revenues, it doesn't increase school funding by \$300 million, and in fact, it may not increase school funding at all."

"A fiscal fairy tale"

Comptroller Peter Franchot made a prediction in 2008, with the question of legalizing casino gambling before Maryland voters: "Slots are a fiscal fairy tale," he said. The plan "will not produce one dollar of new spending for education, and I encourage everybody to understand that

See CASINOS Page A7

DHMH Reminds Marylanders About Health Risks Introduced by Baby Animals

By PRESS OFFICER
DHMH

Baltimore, MD – With the start of the summer festival and fair season, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) reminds all Maryland residents that baby animals, such as chicks, ducklings, turtles, and animals commonly encountered at petting zoos and fairs, including reptiles, can pass harmful germs, such as Salmonella, E. coli O157, Campylobacter and other bacteria, viruses and parasites. While petting zoos and fairs are a fun and educational way to learn about animals, they are also a potential source of these germs.

"Baby animals are cute, but cuteness offers no protection from germs," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, DHMH Secretary. "Always be sure to wash hands thoroughly after handling pets or animals at petting zoos."

People visiting fairs, petting zoos, and other places where people can have contact with animals should be careful to wash

hands after interacting with the animals and their environments in order to reduce the risk of animal-associated illnesses. In particular, children can be exposed to germs by holding, cuddling, or kissing their pets, or putting their fingers in their mouths after contact with animals.

Currently, DHMH is working with several states and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to investigate several animal-associated outbreaks.

Multistate Outbreak of Human Salmonella Infections Linked to Live Poultry

• This outbreak, and similar ones in 2012 and 2013 linked to chicks and ducklings and other live poultry from the same supplier, has resulted in 126 illnesses and 35 hospitalizations in 26 states. To date, 2 Marylanders have been identified as having an infection associated with chicks and ducklings. While one Maryland patient was hospitalized, both patients have recovered.

See RISKS Page A5

INSIDE

Milkulski, Cardin Announce More Than \$2 Million in Federal Funds for Maryland Firefighters

Funds will be used to develop and deliver marketing programs that demonstrate the value of volunteer fire responders to local community safety initiatives, and to provide incentive programs to aid in the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire and emergency responders.
Community, Page A3

Mikulski Continues Investment in Metro Safety Reform With \$150 Million

This is the sixth installment of federal dedicated funding for Metro. The Committee's action on the legislation comes ahead of the five year anniversary of the deadly Red Line crash that killed eight passengers and one Metro employee, which was on Saturday, June 22, 2009.
Commentary, Page A4

Small Businesses Make a Big Impact on Maryland's Economy

We know that in Maryland small businesses account for more than 97 percent of all employers. They employ more than half of the private sector workforce and produce an annual payroll of approximately \$47.1 billion.
Business, Page A5

MovieReview: "Maleficent"

"Maleficent" explores the untold story of Disney's most iconic villain from the classic "Sleeping Beauty" and the elements of her betrayal that ultimately turn her pure heart to stone. Driven by revenge and a fierce desire to protect the moors over which she presides, Maleficent cruelly places an irrevocable curse upon Aurora.
Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

We often see and read reports about environmental threats to women's health, but aren't there also concerns about which men should be especially vigilant?

– Jay Walsh, Boston, MA

Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

Teacher taped to the wall after record-breaking fundraiser

All taped up! Mary Hay, the 3rd grade teacher at St. Philip's School in Camp Springs, was duct-taped to the wall May 29 in celebration of another amazing Math-a-thon. For every \$50 a child raised, he or she was given a foot-long piece of duct tape—tapes of all colors and designs—to tape the teacher to the wall. Mary had promised they could—if they raised more than last year. And they did!

They raised a whopping \$21,411.17 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. That's almost \$500 more than last year when they ranked #10 in the nation, from among 7,000 participating schools. They will learn later how they placed this year.

A St. Jude's patient, along with her mother and a St. Jude's representative, visited the Math-a-thon kickoff assembly. She talked about what it was like when she was diagnosed and going through treatment at the hospital. She is currently in remission but goes back for a yearly checkup.

One hundred percent of what is raised by the Math-a-thon benefits sick children at the hospital, regardless of the family's ability to pay.

St. Philip's has participated in the Math-a-thon for more than 25 years, and Mary Hay has been in charge for the past six, proud that each year they've raised more than the year before. Several years ago she accepted an invitation to visit St. Jude's for a tour of the hospital.

St. Jude's provides easy online tools to help raise money by solving math problems, earning prizes, and—once the parent gives an okay—contacting friends and family for donations. This year 209 students participated. The top three fundraisers were Zoie Robinson, Joey Graham and Adrianna Dawson.

Foulois teacher named Teacher of the Year

Laura Nedd Shelton has been named Prince George's 2014 Teacher of the Year. She has been a science teacher for

the past four years at Benjamin D. Foulois Creative and Performing Arts Academy in Morningside. She serves as chair of the Science Department and National Junior Honor Society, coordinator of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Fair, and eighth grade class sponsor.

Coming up

I haven't seen any more publicity on it, but a free military concert, open to the public, is due to perform Saturday, July 12 at the newly-constructed Heritage Park, near the Allentown Road Gate at Joint Base Andrews. I don't know the time, or if Heritage Park is ready.

Hard Bargain Farm will be at the Surratts-Clinton Library on Wed., July 30, at 10:30 a.m. Come meet some chickens and a rabbit and make and eat a simple snack. For all ages. The library is at 9400 Piscataway Road in Clinton.

The next Morningside Town Meeting will be Tues., July 15, 7 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Karate Class forming

Eagle Claw Karate is now accepting new students, ages 6 to adult. Classes are held at the Morningside Town Hall weekly. Monthly tuition is \$40 with discounts given for several members of the same family. For more information visit the class, at no charge, on any Monday at 6 p.m. and see what it's like.

Changing landscape

Five Below, "Hot Stuff, Cool Prices," will have a grand opening on July 18 at the Woodyard Crossing shopping center in Clinton.

The Maryland Sewing & Vacuum Center, in Woodyard Crossing, has closed. There's a sign on the door: "For vacuum repair, call Tim, 240-604-9013."

There is a "Closed" sign on the door of the G Mart International in Clinton. It moved into the space where my favorite Giant used to be. Can I get Giant back?

Morningside Memories

Jody Nyers enjoys my Morningside memories, and has sent some of her own:

"We moved the summer of 1965 to Morningside, on Larches Court, and I started school that fall in the 4th grade at Morningside Elementary, attended Foulois Junior High, Crossland, and was bussed in 1972 to Central where I graduated in June 1974...some 40 years ago.

"Many of my family members lived in Morningside (the Himes, Leigh and Goldsborough families) and growing up there was the best childhood a person could ask for. We had many friends and parents didn't worry (too much) when we were out and about because we were safe in our little town. It seemed as if everyone was part of the Morningside Majorettes and Drum & Bugle Corps. I loved Teen Club, Vacation Bible School at Morningside Baptist Church and playing kick the can. My first job was at the Taste Freeze, then Junior Hot Shoppes and Andrews Movie Theater. Those were the days which created great memories!"

Milestones

Happy birthday to former Morningside Councilman Kevin Kline, Nicole Wade, Dee (Curcio) Brown and Dave Williams Jr., July 11; Kenard Simms, July 13; Laverne Peggy Simms, Krista Lanehart and Laura (Thompson) Hoffmann, July 14; Dessirae Johnson and Helen Jurney, July 15; Norma Wright and Gary Lewis, Jr., July 16; my granddaughter Claire Mudd, Michael Busky, Mike Fowler Jr. and former Morningside Police Chief Stephen Armhold, July 17.

Happy anniversary to Dave and Carolyn Williams, their 39th on July 11; and to Morningside Councilman James and Selaine Ealey, their 55th on July 15.

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.

—Buddha

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Ruth Turner 301 888 2153

CARRY OUT DINNERS

St. Philip's Church, Baden Parish will have carry out dinners Saturday, July 12, 2014 at 12:00 Noon until all dinners are sold. The church is located at 13801 Baden Westwood Road Brandywine, Maryland 20613-8426. Call (301) 888-1536 (day of event), (301) 888-2510 or (301) 888-1475 (prior to event). Pre-orders accepted and appreciated.

Chicken Dinner cost \$11.00. Barbeque Spare Ribs Dinner cost \$13.00. Fish Dinner cost \$13.00. Pig Feet Dinner cost \$13.00. Combination Dinner (any two (2) meats cost \$18.00. All dinners include potato salad, sweet potatoes, macaroni & cheese, green beans, cake, and bread. Drinks will be on sale. Benefit: Peter A. Gross Sr. Scholarship/Memorial Fund, Inc.

FASHION EXTRANAGANZA

New Hope Fellowship in Upper Marlboro, Maryland enjoyed a day with a luncheon and fashions at their Family Life Center

on Saturday June 28, 2014. The participants modeled a variety of fashions.

Everyone enjoyed a plate lunch of Pineapple Chicken with all the trimmings. Thanks to the Women of New Hope Fellowship, members of the congregation, family and friends who helped to make this a monumental event. It was a wonderful day spent with family, friends and people from different communities.

SUMMER READING SKILLS PROGRAM

Classes are offered in Upper Marlboro and Mitchellville. Phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, study skills, speed reading and love of reading. Call 1-800-978-9596 for more information or to register Monday-Friday 8:00 AM-10 PM, Saturday 8:00 AM-7:00 PM and Sunday 9:00 AM-7:00 PM.

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH ANNUAL BULL ROAST

The church Annual Bull Roast will be Saturday, July 19, 2014 from 12:00 Noon until. Come and enjoy a day of fun,

food and Gospel Fellowship. Dinners include Chicken Dinners \$12.00, Fish Dinners \$12.00, Beef Dinners \$13.00, Rib Dinners \$14.00 and Combo Dinner \$16.00 (any 2 meats) Beef/Chicken/Ribs/Fish. All dinners include green beans, corn on the cob, baked beans, sweet potatoes, potato salad and a roll.

Sandwiches include Hot Dog with chips and drink \$2.50, Chicken Sandwich \$6.00, Fish Sandwich \$7.00, Rib Sandwich \$9.00, Beef Sandwich \$8.00, Hot Dog \$1.25, chips \$.50. Side items \$1.50 include green beans, potato salad, baked beans, sweet potatoes, corn on the cob (2). Water \$1.00 and sodas \$1.00. There will also be a Bake Sale.

Admission will be free for everyone. There will be fun activities for the kids: Activities include Water Slide, Moon Bounce, Basketball, Horse Shoes and Indoor Games. Location is St. Philip's Episcopal Church 13801 Baden Westwood Road Brandywine, Maryland 20613-8426. Telephone is 301-888-1536.

Neighborhood Events

Edwards Attends White House Bill-Signing Ceremony for Conference Report for Water Resources Reform and Development Act

Washington, DC — Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (MD-4) joined President Barack Obama at the White House bill-signing ceremony for the Conference Report to H.R. 3080, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014.

"The Water Resources Reform and Development Act is critical for the economic and environmental future of Maryland: creating jobs, meeting unmet water transportation infrastructure needs, and protecting our vital natural resources and public health. With the fourth longest coastline in the continental United States, this new law is important to our state. The Chesapeake Bay and several of its tributaries, including the Anacostia, Patuxent, Potomac, and Severn Rivers, flow through the Fourth Congressional District. It was an honor to serve as a conferee and to attend today's signing ceremony at the White House.

"For Maryland specifically, the conference agreement includes over \$2.1 billion in funding for projects including:

- Reauthorization of the 18-year-old Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration Program, in which the Army Corps of Engineers works to restore bay ecosystems;
- Reauthorization for the Poplar Island Expansion;
- Restoration of the 75-25 cost-sharing for Poplar Island Expansion;
- Authorization of Mid-Bay Islands;
- Full access to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to allow necessary dredging of the Port of Baltimore.

"While I would have preferred that the environmental provisions in the conference report were not included, I believe the final product was improved significantly. The conferees ensured the public will still be able to participate effectively as part of the NEPA process on water projects that have a profound effect on their health, safety, and well-being. This law also reauthorizes the State Revolving Fund for the first time since 1987 and includes innovative financing of water infrastructure projects. As part of both programs, I am proud to say that we will for the first time consider an idea that I have championed: the use of innovative, green, and low impact technologies. These types of projects are usually less expensive, require less operations and maintenance, and reduce risk. I thank President Obama, and congratulate Chairmen Boxer and Shuster and Ranking Members Vitter and Rahall on enactment of this important law."

Prince George's County Recognizes 2014 Atlantic Hurricane Season

Upper Marlboro, MD - The 2014 Hurricane Season for our Atlantic region, officially started on June 1, 2014 and ends on November 30, 2014, with the peak of the season from mid-August to late October. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has predicted a below-normal hurricane season, estimating 8 to 13 storms, of which 3 to 6 could become hurricanes with wind speeds of 74 mph or higher. There is no prediction of how many storms

will actually hit landfall or where the storms will strike.

"Readiness is our best defense. We must plan early, prepare our homes, our families and our businesses in case of disaster," said Ronald E. Gill Jr., Director, Office of Emergency Management. "The effects of Hurricane Sandy continue to be embedded in our minds and the level of devastation it caused with flooding, high winds and rainfall. I encourage all County residents to prepare early and take precautionary measures."

"Flooding is one of the most common hazards that can happen anywhere, during any weather condition," said Adam Ortiz, Director of the Department of Environmental Resources (DER). "Although most flooding occurs because of hurricane-related storms, not all floods are alike. I urge all citizens to know the risks and how to protect themselves and their property."

Before bad weather strikes, DER suggests homeowners know their risks and determine if their property is located in a high-risk area, especially in low-lying areas, near water, behind a levee or downstream from a dam. To learn more about your flood risk, visit www.floodsmart.gov or contact DER at 301-883-5834.

Homeowners are also reminded to protect themselves and their property and to check with their insurance agent regarding flood insurance. Prince George's County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and a related program known as the Community Rating System (CRS). Through the County's flood management activities and Class 5 rating under the CRS, residents can receive up to a 25 percent reduction in flood insurance premiums. For information on the NFIP, call 800-427-4661.

In addition, homeowners should take preventive measures in their home by fixing leaks, foundation cracks, and clearing gutters and drains.

The Prince George's County Office of Emergency Management wants everyone to know that awareness and being prepared are essential to surviving major storms. Here are a few helpful reminders:

BEFORE A STORM

- Stay informed. Register for Notify Me Prince George's to receive real-time information and notifications of severe weather watches, floods, significant power outages, and other storm related updates. Register by logging onto <https://notifyme.princegeorgescountymd.gov> or by texting 411912.

- Know the difference between a hurricane watch and a hurricane warning. A watch is issued when the threat of hurricane conditions exist within 24-36 hours. A warning is issued when hurricane conditions are specified to 24 hours or less. (Actions to protect life and property should begin immediately).

- Have emergency preparedness kits available in your home and vehicle.

- Have non-perishable foods for up to three days, 1 gallon of water per person, per day and don't forget your medications or prescriptions.

- Ensure that your vehicles have a full tank of gas.

- Know and practice your family communications plan.

- Ensure copies of important documents are stored in a safe place.

- Have some cash on hand.

- Secure or bring inside exterior items that might become windborne.

- Turn the refrigerator and freezer to the coldest setting in anticipation of a power outage. Open the doors only when necessary and close quickly.

DURING A STORM

- Please remain calm and do not call 9-1-1 unless it is an emergency. Do not go outside; flying debris from high winds is a danger.

- Try to stay in an interior room; stay away from windows or soft spots in the home.

- Use flashlights. Avoid using candles for lighting due to fire hazards.

- Never use a candle when fueling equipment such as a kerosene heater or lantern. Candle flames can ignite fumes from the fuel.

- If flooding occurs, turn off electricity at the main breaker.

- During a power outage, turn off major appliances. This will minimize losing power again through a power surge and protect the equipment when the power returns.

- Do not operate charcoal grills, propane camping stoves or generators indoors which can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

- The County also operates an automated Flood Warning System, which notifies County personnel of impending conditions, alerts residents of hazardous conditions and allows users to access data from remote locations. The National Weather Service has designated Prince George's County, Maryland as a StormReady community. Residents can access the rainfall at <http://water.weather.gov/afws/county.php?state=MD&county=033>

AFTER A STORM

- Do not touch fallen or low-hanging wires of any kind under any circumstances. Stay away from puddles with wires in or near them. Do not touch trees or other objects in contact with power lines to avoid electrocution.

- Call police or utility companies immediately to report hazards such as downed power lines, broken gas, water mains or overturned gas tanks.

- Avoid areas subject to flooding, including low spots, canals and streams. Do not attempt to drive on a flooded road, as motorists can be stranded or trapped. The depth of the water and the condition of the road is not always obvious; therefore, do not make assumptions.

- Be very cautious at night as it is harder to recognize flood dangers, downed wires and other hazards.

For more information about the 2014 Atlantic Hurricane Season, visit the (NOAA) website. To obtain information on flood prone structures, flood management, and how to purchase flood insurance, contact DER at 301-883-5810. For additional tips on how to prepare before, during or after a hurricane, contact the Office of Emergency Management at 301-780-8183.

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

Claim a Tax Credit for Summer Daycare Expenses

For harried parents, the definition of true panic is realizing in April that you forgot to enroll your kids for summer day camp and now all the slots are filled. Cut to: as the school year ends, you're feverishly trying to find adequate daycare because neither of you can take time off work to watch the kids.

I know of one such couple; with any luck you're more organized than they were. In fact, bonus points if you thought ahead and signed up during last fall's open enrollment for a dependent care flexible spending account (FSA), which allows you to pay for childcare using pretax dollars.

But if you didn't enroll in an FSA or your employer doesn't offer them, there's still a way to get a tax break on your summer daycare expenses (and other dependent care costs throughout the year): the Child and Dependent Care Credit. Here's how it works:

If you pay someone to care for your young child (or other qualifying dependents) so you can work — or look for work — you may be eligible for this tax credit worth up to 35 percent of those expenses. Because it's the IRS doling out the credit, there are a number of qualifying provisions:

- ❑ Typically the dependent must be a child in your custody under age 13.
- ❑ However, the credit is also available if you paid for the care of your spouse or other dependent who is physically or mentally incapable of self-care and lives with you more than half the year.
- ❑ Your tax-filing status must be single, married filing jointly, head of household or qualifying widow(er) with a dependent. If you're married but filing separately, you generally cannot receive the credit.
- ❑ You (and your spouse, if married) must be working or seeking employment when the care was administered. Exceptions are made if one spouse is a full-time student or physically or mentally incapable of self-care.
- ❑ The payment must be made to a care provider who is not: your spouse; someone you claim as a dependent; the child's parent; or your child under age 19.
- ❑ Typical eligible caregivers include: summer day camps (but not overnight camps); daycare, before-school or afterschool care providers; babysitters or nannies; housekeepers who also provide care for your dependent; and nursing, home-care or other providers who care for a disabled dependent.
- ❑ You must provide the taxpayer ID number (usually the Social Security number) of each qualifying dependent on your tax return.
- ❑ You also must report the name, address and taxpayer ID number (either the Social Security number or the employer ID number) of the care provider.
- ❑ Employer-provided dependent care benefits could reduce your credit amount — for example, company-provided daycare or money you contributed to a dependent care FSA.

The maximum amount of expenses that qualify for the Child and Dependent Care Credit is \$3,000 a year for one dependent and \$6,000 for two or more. If your adjusted gross income is less than \$15,000 you generally can claim a credit for 35 percent of eligible expenses. The percentage gradually decreases, the higher your income. It caps out for those earning more than \$43,000, who can claim 20 percent.

To learn more about the Child and Dependent Care Credit, see IRS Publication 503 and Chapter 32 of IRS Publication 17 at www.irs.gov.

Bottom line: If you're paying someone to take care of your kids while you're at work, make sure you're taking advantage of the available tax savings.



Mikulski, Cardin Announce More Than \$2 Million in Federal Funds to Recruit and Retain Firefighters in Maryland

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Senator Mikulski

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senators Barbara A. Mikulski and Ben Cardin (both D-Md.) announced that the Maryland State Fireman's Association (MSFA), in partnership with the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association (MFCFA) will receive \$2,254,670 in federal funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) program to enhance volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention efforts across Maryland. As Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Mikulski fights each year to increase federal funding for the fire grants program. Senator Cardin is a member of the Finance Committee.

"I know how important this funding is to Maryland communities — often it's the difference between life and death. First responders protect our homes and communities, and the federal government has a responsibility to protect them by providing them with the tools they need to do their jobs safer and smarter," Senator Mikulski said. "Every day when our first responders report for duty, they don't know what they will face. That's why I fight every year for the equipment, training, and staffing our protectors and communities deserve."

"Ensuring that we have the first responders in place to protect Marylanders has always been a priority for me," Senator Cardin said. "From fires to natural disasters to possible terrorist threats, communities cannot shoulder this burden alone. It is

important that the federal government give local communities the resources they need to recruit and retain the first responders that are needed to protect us from harm."

MSFA and MFCFA will use this federal funding to implement a four-year project to develop and deliver marketing programs that demonstrate the value of volunteer fire responders to local community safety initiatives, and to provide incentive programs to aid in the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire and emergency responders. The programs will permit local fire companies to address volunteer recruitment and retention challenges unique to their respective communities. The funding will also enable the MSFA and MFCFA to create scholarships for volunteer re-

sponders to attend higher education training programs and national level training conferences. The programs developed with this funding will be jointly managed by the MSFA and MFCFA with the assistance of a statewide coordinator.

The goal of any SAFER grant is to enhance the ability of grantees to attain and maintain 24-hour staffing. The objective of the program is to award grants directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to help the departments increase the number of frontline firefighters, and to rehire firefighters who were laid off due to the economy.

Since 2001, Maryland fire departments and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) units have received over \$137 million in fire grant funding.

Loans from A1

FACTSHEET: Making Student Loans More Affordable

A postsecondary education is the single most important investment that Americans can make in their futures. Higher education results in higher earnings and a lower risk of unemployment, but for too many low- and middle-income families this essential rung on the ladder to opportunity and advancement is slipping out of reach. Over the past three decades, the average tuition at a public four-year college has more than tripled, while a typical family's income has barely budged. More students than ever are relying on loans to pay for college. Today, 71 percent of those earning a bachelor's degree graduate with debt, which averages \$29,400. While most students are able to repay their loans, many feel burdened by debt, especially as they seek to start a family, buy a home, launch a business, or save for retirement.

The President and his Administration have a long track record of taking steps to make college more affordable and accessible for families. And as part of his year of action to expand opportunity for all Americans, the President is committed to building on these efforts by using his pen and his phone to make student debt more affordable and

more manageable to repay.

Today the President will use the power of his pen to help millions of borrowers afford their student loan payments. He will sign a new Presidential Memorandum directing the Secretary of Education to propose regulations that would allow nearly 5 million additional federal direct student loan borrowers the opportunity to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. The Presidential Memorandum also outlines a series of new executive actions aimed to support federal student loan borrowers, especially for vulnerable borrowers who may be at greater risk of defaulting on their loans.

Today the President will also reiterate his call for the Senate to pass legislation that could help an estimated 25 million Americans refinance outstanding student loans at lower interest rates, the same as those available to federal student loan borrowers taking out loans this year. This move could save a typical student \$2,000 over the life of his or her loans.

The Challenge of Student Debt: The challenges of managing student loan debt can lead some borrowers to fall behind on their loan payments and in some cases even default on their debt obligation, with such consequences as a damaged credit

rating, losing their tax refund, or garnished wages. Because credit ratings are increasingly scrutinized in making employment offers, financing a home, or even opening a bank account, a damaged credit rating can further reduce borrowers' ability to repay their loans. Today's actions build on the Administration's significant progress in creating flexible repayment options for borrowers and raising awareness about the steps borrowers can take to responsibly manage their debt.

Capping Student Loan Payments at 10 Percent of Income: Today, the President will direct the Secretary of Education to ensure that student loans remain affordable for all who borrowed federal direct loans as students by allowing them cap their payments at 10 percent of their monthly incomes. The Department will begin the process to amend its regulations this fall with a goal of making the new plan available to borrowers by December 2015.

With legislation passed by Congress and signed by the President in 2010 and regulations adopted by the Administration in 2012, most students taking out loans today can already cap their loan payments at 10 percent of their incomes. Monthly payments will be set on a sliding scale based upon income. Any

remaining balance is forgiven after 20 years of payments, or 10 years for those in public service jobs. However, this Pay As You Earn (PAYE) option is not available to students with older loans (those who borrowed before October 2007 or who have not borrowed since October 2011), although they can access similar, less generous options. No existing repayment options will be affected, and the new repayment proposal will also aim to include new features to target the plan to struggling borrowers.

This executive action is expected to help up to 5 million borrowers who may be struggling with student loans today. For students that need to borrow to finance college, PAYE provides an important assurance that student loan debt will remain manageable. Because the PAYE plan is based in part on a borrower's income after leaving school, it shares with students the risk of taking on debt to invest in higher education.

Many student loan borrowers are working and trying to responsibly make their monthly payments, but are nonetheless struggling with burdensome debt. For example, a 2009 graduate earning about \$39,000 a year as a fourth year teacher,

See **LOANS** Page A5

Climate from A1

one year — when implemented — are expected to cut nearly 3 billion tons of carbon pollution between 2020 and 2025. That's an amount equivalent to taking more than 600 million cars off the road for a year.

And it doesn't stop there. We have increased our reliance on clean energy sources as we take steps to make our communities more resilient to the effects of severe weather, and we are working with other countries to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases internationally.

In the last year, some key initiatives the President has taken to combat climate change include:

• **Carbon pollution standards for power plants:** In June 2014, EPA proposed common-sense carbon pollution standards for existing plants, which would protect the health of our children and put our nation on the path toward a 30% reduction in carbon pollution from the power sector by 2030.

• **Setting new energy efficiency standards:** Cutting our energy waste remains one of the

easiest and cheapest ways to combat climate change. That is why in the last year the Energy Department has issued nine proposed energy conservation standards for appliances and equipment and finalized eight energy conservation standards. In total, these final rules alone are expected to reduce carbon pollution by 340 million metric tons through 2030, with more reductions coming later once the proposals are finalized.

• **Strengthening building codes:** In May 2014, DOE preliminarily affirmed the industry's latest commercial building energy code, which cuts up to 30 percent more energy waste than today's predominant state energy codes. The updated code will help states and the federal government save money and energy on building operations and cut emissions by 230 million metric tons of carbon pollution by 2030.

• **Developing heavy-duty engines and vehicles:** In February 2014, President Obama directed EPA and the Transportation Department to develop and issue the next phase of fuel efficiency

and greenhouse gas standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles by March 2016.

• **State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force:** In November 2014, President Obama established the State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, which is made up of 26 governors, county executives, mayors, and tribal leaders whose task is to advise the Administration on how the federal government can respond to the needs of communities nationwide that are dealing with the impacts of climate change.

• **National Climate Assessment:** In May 2014, the Administration released the Third U.S. National Climate Assessment (NCA), the most authoritative and comprehensive source of scientific information to date about climate change impacts across all U.S. regions and on critical sectors of the economy.

• **Leading internationally:** The Administration has made substantial progress in implementing the President's announcement to end public U.S. financing for new conventional coal plants overseas, except in the poorest countries. Already, seven countries have announced that they would join the U.S. coal finance policy, including the United Kingdom, the five Nordic countries, and the Netherlands. The World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and European Investment Bank all announced similar policies in the second half of 2013.

Through the Climate Action Plan, the U.S. has become a leader in climate change mitigation and preparedness, and our work is just the beginning. As we continue to combat climate change at home, we continue to lead a worldwide effort to prepare for a cleaner, healthier, and safer future.

ADVERTISE WITH US

301 627 0900

Solar from A1

term basis to provide comprehensive support in the design, construction, operation, finance and maintenance of the solar farm projects.

"These solar farm projects will be a great benefit and foster the County's movement toward more sustainable energy resources. They underscore our efforts to produce clean and renewable solar power while diversifying the County's energy source op-

tions," commented Office of Central Services Acting Director Roland Jones.

The solar farms will be built on closed portions of the Brown Station Road Sanitary Landfill in Upper Marlboro and the Sandy Hill Creative Disposal Project in Bowie. Upon the successful launch of the initial stations, expansion of the project will occur to other facilities within the County.

For more information about the solar farm projects, contact County Click 3-1-1.

Read The President's Climate Action Plan Progress Report at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/cap_progress_report_update_062514_final.pdf

COMMENTARY

Barbara A. Mikulski

United States Senator for Maryland



Mikulski Continues Investment in Metro Safety Reform With \$150 Million

Senator worked to include additional oversight of Metro funds following FTA audit

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced that the full Committee passage of the fiscal year 2015 (FY15) Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations bill which includes language that would provide \$150 million for Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) safety reforms.

This is the sixth installment of federal dedicated funding for Metro. The Committee's action on the legislation comes ahead of the five year anniversary of the deadly Red Line crash that killed eight passengers and one Metro employee, which was on Saturday, June 22, 2009.

"For all that Metro does to keep government running, get people to work and get cars off the road, this investment in Metro is about safety and it's about jobs," said Senator Mikulski, who fought to get the first-ever federal rail transit safety standards passed into law. "I have fought every year to deliver dedicated funding for Metro's capital improvements. I have also demanded strict accountability for every dollar spent to ensure the federal funds are properly managed to help keep safety on track on America's subway."

Legislation authorizing \$1.5 billion in federal funds over 10 years to help improve Metro's aging infrastructure and provide Metro's first dedicated, federal funding source was passed in 2008. Funding for FY 2015 will be used in part for new rail cars and to improve track signaling, which were both determined to have been significant factors in the deadly crash in 2009. The new rail cars, being built by Kawasaki in Lincoln, Nebraska, meet all of the

National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) most wanted safety standards. These were unveiled on Monday, January 6, 2014 at the Greenbelt Metro Station.

Senator Mikulski also ensured the legislation includes additional oversight for the management of federal Metro funds after an Federal Transit Administration (FTA) audit uncovered financial problems with Metro's accounting and procurement of federal funds. The legislation requires FTA certification that Metro has made significant progress implementing its financial management corrective action plan before these funds can be spent. It also requires quarterly progress reporters from Metro on its implementation of 45 financial management recommendations included in the FTA audit. Following the mismanagement revelations from the FTA audit, Senator Mikulski demanded accountability from Metro. Her letter to Metro is available here.

Federal Transit Administration's Safety Office

The bill also fully funds the Federal Transit Administration's new safety office, allowing the agency to hire staff and set the new policies and standards Senator Mikulski fought for as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century. This bill, known as MAP-21, incorporates Senator Mikulski's metro safety initiatives by establishing the first-ever federal safety standards for rail transit systems nationwide, including metro systems.

In the next step of the appropriations process, the bill will move to the Senate floor for a vote, which has not yet been scheduled.

Marc Morial, President and CEO

National Urban League



20th Anniversary of the "Party with a Purpose": Featuring the 2014 Essence Festival Career Connections Powered by the National Urban League

"We're designed for greatness. No excuses. No apologies."

— Lisa Nichols, CEO of Motivating the Masses and author

July 3-6 is the date. New Orleans is the place. Empowerment is the purpose. Iconic thought leaders and musicians bring the message. For the 20th year in a row, Essence Magazine is organizing the largest annual gathering of African American music, culture and inspiration in the nation. Thousands of families across the country have marked their calendars and are making final plans to spend their July 4 weekend in New Orleans for the 20th anniversary of the Essence Festival.

As then-Mayor of New Orleans, I served as founding mayor of the Essence Festival and was there when it began in 1995 as a one-time event to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Essence Magazine. I am thrilled to see it blossom into more than any of us ever imagined — the largest, most exciting and purposeful gathering of African-Americans anywhere in the U.S.

The partnership of the Essence Festival and the City of New Orleans was ideal from the start. Michelle Ebanks, President of Essence Communications, explains, "New Orleans has been just a tremendous home for the Essence Festival. There's not a better place. Louisiana's famous for festivals. We believe there is a symbiotic relationship that we have here." The Festival has also been good for New Orleans. Last year, more than 540,000 people come to New Orleans for the Essence Festival with an estimated \$100 million impact. According to Mark Romig, President and CEO of the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, "This has become sort of our kingpin, milestone event for the summer months."

The Essence Festival has played a significant role in the rebuilding of post-Katrina New Orleans and brings much more than music to the City. For example, in addition to the Festival's significant economic contribution, in 1995 Essence and the City of New Orleans co-founded the Louis Armstrong Jazz Camp, which exposes emerging jazz artists from all over the world to master jazz artists in New Orleans. Today, it is a continuing, self-sustaining organization that is making a tremendous community impact. This year, on Sunday, July 6, the Festival will hold its second "A Mother's Prayer Vigil," a gathering of mothers and grandmothers who come together to grieve and honor the children they raised whose lives were tragically cut short by gun violence.

The Essence Empowerment Experience, featuring some of the most influential thought-leaders in America, has also become a high-point of the Festival. It offers free workshops, lectures and seminars at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center designed to "give you the tools to better your world." I am proud to join such luminaries as Alicia Keys, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Rev. Al Sharpton and Bishop T.D. Jakes as part of this year's Empowerment Experience. The National Urban League, in partnership with leading healthcare services provider HCA, is also running the Essence Festival Empower U Zone for Career Connections. This is the ultimate networking lounge where attendees can meet industry leaders, network with entrepreneurs, get career advancement tips and attend recruitment sessions with some of the top companies in the country. Special presenters in-

See *Anniversary, Page A5*

HANCOCK'S RESOLUTION



Open to the Public

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS PHOTO BY: PUBDOG

HANCOCK'S RESOLUTION

In 1785 Stephen Hancock, Jr. built the original stone section as the main house for what was then a 410-acre (170 ha) farm. Additions to the house were built in 1855 and in about 1900. Stone and frame outbuildings remain, including a one-storey gable-roofed stone dairy. Hancock's Resolution remained in Hancock family ownership until the deaths in the 1960s of Mary Hancock and her brother, Henry Hancock, who left the property to Anne Arundel County to be preserved. Hancock's Resolution underwent a thorough restoration in 2000 and is now open to the public as a house museum. Open April through October Sundays 1-4.

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



We, the People

We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. — Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

Those of us in Mississippi for the historic 1964 Freedom Summer anniversary know very well none of it could have unfolded in the way it did without the quiet and courageous leadership of Robert Moses and David Dennis. Bob, a Harlem-born son of a janitor and graduate of Hamilton College who had studied philosophy at Harvard, left a job teaching mathematics at New York City's private Horace Mann School to work for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and in 1961 began leading a voter registration project in Mississippi where voting was a White sport with no or few Blacks allowed to play in many counties. Dave, who grew up in a Louisiana sharecropping family, had been a Freedom Rider and sit-in organizer in Louisiana before becoming the Mississippi director for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). In 1962 they became co-directors of the newly formed Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a coalition of the major national and local civil rights organizations working in Mississippi.

After continuing frustrating and dangerous struggles to gain visibility for their efforts against Mississippi's racist violence and exclusion of Black citizens from political participation, including the right to vote, with the collusion of state and local officials and law enforcement officers and White terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, Bob Moses created the Freedom Summer strategy seeing the need to engage White volunteers that the country would care more about. He and Dave worked tirelessly with others to plan and coordinate the logistics for recruiting mostly White students aided by Allard Lowenstein who reached out to campuses across the county. Those students con-

verged in the state to join with local Black citizens, SNCC workers, and local civil rights workers to fight for the constitutional rights of Black citizens including the right to vote.

Fifty years later, Bob Moses and Dave Dennis are still fighting passionately on another critical frontier in the Civil Rights Movement and our nation: to ensure a quality public school education as a federal constitutional right for all children. Every child in America regardless of the lottery of state geography should have the right to a quality education. A child in Mississippi should have no less right to be prepared for the future than a child in Massachusetts.

In 1982 Bob founded the Algebra Project using math as an organizing tool—with a special focus on bringing math skills and advanced math courses to poor children, especially non-White children of color. The Algebra Project believes math literacy is the key to 21st century citizenship, opening up the doors of opportunity required to succeed in our technology-based society. Lack of advanced math opportunities is often a symptom of other shortcomings in a school's failure to provide a high

quality education for its students. After a career as a lawyer in Louisiana, Dave became a director of the Algebra Project's Southern Initiative.

In June, the Children's Defense Fund honored them both with our Ella Baker Leadership Award at our national training for nearly 2,000 college age young people preparing to teach and lead Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® programs for over 12,600 pre-K through 12th grade students in 29 states and 102 cities across the country this summer. CDF Freedom Schools quality summer literacy and child empowerment programs are inspired by and build on the experience of the 1964 Freedom Summer movement. Children need quality year round summer and after school educational opportunities to avoid learning loss and we are grateful that Bob Moses and Dave Dennis reminded CDF's newest class of young educators and mentors of the key role they must play in this 21st century struggle.

Dave made the connection between their work today and the 50th anniversary celebration of

See *WATCH, Page A6*

The Prince George's Post

The Prince George's Post
P.O. Box 1001 15207 Marlboro Pike
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3151
Phone 301-627-0900 Legal Fax • 301-627-6260
email: pgpost@gmail.com
Contents © 2014, The Prince George's Post

Publisher Legusta Floyd	Subscriptions/Legals Liz Brandenstein
General Manager/ Legal Advertising Manager Brenda Boice	Senior Editor Legusta Floyd
Legal Advertising Assistant Robin Boerckel	Editor Michal W. Frangia
	Web Manager Kyler Quesenberry

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. 20772-3151.

BUSINESS

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Depression In The Elderly Can Be A Serious Health Issue

The signs of depression in an elderly person can be easy to miss. We may incorrectly assume that being depressed is just part of the aging process. But despite its often being ignored or overlooked, depression can be a very real problem for many elderly people. It's a serious health issue that needs to be treated when it happens at any age.

Admittedly, recognizing true depression in the elderly can be difficult. An older person can have numerous reasons for feeling sad — the recent loss of someone close, increased health problems, lessened social opportunities, financial worries and similar problems the elderly can face.

The key is recognizing the differences between simple sadness and actual depression. Sadness is just an emotional low point and it's usually short-lived. True depression is a life-altering problem. It can diminish every aspect of a person's life and helps cause the high rate of suicide among the elderly.

Real depression is an ongoing, persistent mood. It's not just having a sad day or two, but rather facing a continual emotional low that interferes with daily life activities and functions.

There are a number of signs to look for. They include withdrawing socially, losing interest in pleasurable activities and ignoring personal care and hygiene. A depressed person often has sleep problems, perhaps difficulty falling asleep or waking repeatedly, then suffering from daytime sleepiness.

Depression can also upset normal eating patterns. There may be a lack of interest in food and subsequent weight loss, or binge eating and sudden weight gain.

Depression can leave the person feeling discouraged, hopeless, and worthless. There may be little energy, no interest in things around him or her, or perhaps high levels of anxiety, feelings of guilt or constant irritability and demanding behavior.

If someone you care about (or you yourself) is displaying such symptoms over an extended period of time, clinical depression could be the cause and it requires action. Depression does not cure itself or just go away. And many elderly people have trouble asking for help, especially just because they feel "sad."

Be pro-active and seek help. While clinical depression is a serious problem, the good news is that once identified, there are a variety of effective treatments available. Consult with a professional counselor or other mental health professional to find out more about dealing with this issue.

"Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACACorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org

Risk from A1

Multistate Outbreak of Human Salmonella Cotham Infections Linked to Contact with Pet Bearded Dragons

• An ongoing outbreak of an uncommon strain *Salmonella* associated with pet bearded dragons has been linked to 132 cases in 32 states, including 4 cases in Maryland. There have been 55 hospitalizations associated with this outbreak, including 2 of the Maryland cases.

Multistate Outbreak of Human Salmonella Typhimurium Infections Linked to Frozen Feeder Rodents

• Another outbreak of *Salmonella* is associated with frozen mice that are used to feed snakes and other pet reptiles. These frozen mice are packaged by Reptile Industries and sold through pet stores. There have been 37 cases, with 5 hospitalizations, from 18 states, including one case in a Marylander who was not hospitalized.

Infections from animals often cause gastrointestinal illness. Symptoms are commonly diarrhea, vomiting, ab-

dominal cramps, nausea, and sometimes headache and fever. These infections can be severe, sometimes leading to hospitalization and sometimes, but rarely, even death. The elderly, infants and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have complications if they get these infections.

In order to prevent infections associated with handling animals, DHMH recommends the following:

- Recognize that all animals, including pets, farm animals and wildlife, can carry harmful germs.

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water right after having any contact with any animals and their environment.

- Do not prepare or eat food where contact with animals or their habitats is likely.

- Avoid contact with animals and pets and their habitat if you are at high risk for complications from infections.

- Call your health care provider if you develop an illness and have concerns about your health.

Anniversary from A4

officials did not fully understand the economic potential of the Black consumer — which now has a combined buying power approaching \$1.1 trillion. Twenty years later, the annual "Party with a Purpose" has become one of the major tourist attractions and economic infusions in New Orleans and one of the nation's largest summer festivals. Hope to see you there.

When the Essence Music Festival began in 1995, City

Small Businesses Make a Big Impact on Maryland's Economy

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor O'Malley

We know that in Maryland small businesses account for more than 97 percent of all employers. They employ more than half of the private sector workforce and produce an annual payroll of approximately \$47.1 billion.

Because we believe that the most important job is the next one, Maryland's small business owners represent some of the State's most important economic players.

That's why we have repeatedly increased the State's support for programs and resources that clear the path for the next generation of entrepreneurs and ease the burden for existing small companies.

We created the Governor's Commission on Small Business, a panel of small business owners and other experts, to advise us on small business issues. And, working with President Obama, we helped create the \$1.5 billion State Small Business Credit Initiative, part of the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. This national program expanded the capacity of small business

loan guarantee programs in 34 states and U.S. territories. Here in Maryland, we received \$23 million, which we are using to support small businesses across our state.

Our FY2015 budget includes \$11.1 million for the Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Business Investment Account, which was created to provide loans to small businesses. The new budget also includes \$10 million for Sustainable Communities tax credits, so Maryland's Main Streets can continue to nurture the small businesses communities depend on. We've also renewed our commitment to tax credits for cybersecurity, biotech, research and development, job creation and other worthy endeavors.

Maryland's early-stage small companies, which tend to be most vulnerable to market forces, have more resources than ever to strengthen their foothold in the State.

On Monday, May 19, I am pleased to join the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development to announce the winners of the second annual InvestMaryland Challenge, which will award



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
Governor Martin O'Malley at Linemark Printing in Upper Marlboro Maryland.

\$100,000 grand prizes to businesses in four categories, including information technology hardware and software, life sciences, cybersecurity and general industry. All challenge competitors are also eligible for more than \$300,000 in grants, software, lab and incubator space and other prizes. The winners of last year's Challenge have already hired additional employees and expanded their operations, proving the power of dedicated funding and fostering.

These small business resources did not simply mate-

rialize, but are the deliberate result of years of planning and cooperation between our administrative team, industry and community leaders and members of the legislature. Their hard work is showing real results.

Join me in supporting the hardworking men and women who operate the more than 100,000 small businesses active in State, not only during National Small Business Week, but all year long. Making yourself their next customer is the best way to thank them.

Loans from A3

with student loan debt of \$26,500, would have his or her initial monthly payments reduced by \$126 under the President's Pay As You Earn plan compared with monthly payments under the standard repayment plan and would see a reduction in annual loan payments of over \$1,500.

Doing All We Can to Help Students Repay their Loans:

The President today will also direct the Secretaries of Education and the Treasury to work together to do all they can to help borrowers manage their student loan debts. Specifically, the Departments will:

1) Strengthen Incentives for Loan Contractors to Serve Students Well:

The Department of Education administers the federal student loan program through performance-based contracts with private companies awarded through a competitive process. Rather than specifying every step of the servicing process, as was done in the guaranteed loan program that ended in 2010, these contracts provide companies with incentives to find new and innovative ways to best serve students and taxpayers and to ensure that borrowers are repaying their loans. Today, the Department announced that it will renegotiate its contracts with federal loan servicers to strengthen financial incentives to help borrowers repay their loans on time, lower payments for servicers when loans enter delinquency or default, and increase the value of borrowers' customer satisfaction when allocating new loan volume. These changes will improve the way that servicers are compensated to better ensure high-quality servicing for student loan borrowers.

2) Ensure Active-Duty Military Get the Relief They Are Entitled to:

The Servicemember Civil Relief Act requires all lenders to cap interest rates on student loans — including federal student loans — at 6 percent for eligible servicemembers. The Department of Education already directs its loan servicers to match their student borrower portfolios against the Department of Defense's database to identify eligi-

ble active-duty servicemembers. Now, the Department of Education will reduce those interest rates automatically for those eligible without the need for additional paperwork. It will also provide additional guidance to Federal Family Education Loan program servicers to provide for a similar streamlined process.

3) Work with the Private Sector to Promote Awareness of Repayment Options:

The Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Education will work with Intuit, Inc. and H&R Block, two of the U.S.'s largest tax preparation firms, to communicate information about federal student loan repayment options with millions of borrowers during the tax filing process — a time when people are thinking about their finances. The Administration is continuing its partnership with Intuit, through its TurboTax product, which serves around 28 million tax filers. The Administration will also form a new partnership with H&R Block, serving approximately 15 million tax filers through its 11,000 retail locations, and an additional 7 million tax filers through its digital tax products. Partnerships like these will give us the opportunity to provide information about federal student loan repayment, building upon our work during the most recent tax season by exploring different messages and the timing of information to best help borrowers in evaluating their federal loan repayment options.

In addition, the Administration will work with Intuit to explore ways to communicate with federal student loan borrowers through Intuit's free personal financial management product, Mint.com. Mint is used by 15 million people for financial management and advice, and partnering with Mint provides the opportunity to communicate with their 15 million users about income-driven repayment options. Mint includes the capability to provide personalized information about federal loan repayment options, based upon the information that a user has already provided to Mint.

4) Use Innovative Communication Strategies to Help

Vulnerable Borrowers: Too many borrowers are still unaware of the flexible repayment options currently available to them, especially when they run into difficulties in managing their payments. The Department of Education is redoubling its efforts to identify borrowers who may be struggling to repay and provide them with timely information about their options supporting them through the repayment process and helping them avoid or get out of default. Last year, the Department's efforts led to more than 124,000 borrowers enrolling in an income-driven repayment plan like Income-Based Repayment or the Pay As You Earn plan. Moving forward, the Department of Education will test new ways to reach 2.5 million borrowers with the greatest risk of encountering payment difficulty, such as borrowers who have left college without completing their education, missed their first loan payment, and those who have defaulted on low balances loans to get them back on track with their loan payments. The Department will also evaluate these strategies to identify which can be used on a larger scale and which are the most effective.

5) Promote Stronger Collaborations to Improve Information for Students and Families:

All student borrowers are required to receive loan counseling when they first borrow federal student loans and when they leave school, but little is known about the effectiveness of these programs. Working with student debt researchers and student advocates, the Department of Education and the Department of Treasury will also develop and launch a pilot project to test the effectiveness of loan counseling resources, including the Department of Education's Financial Awareness Counseling Tool. The lessons learned will be considered for future actions by the Department and shared with outside partners like the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators to improve loan counseling activities at colleges and universities throughout the country. Another way to reach student

borrowers is by working with professional associations to provide customized information about repayment options. Today, the Administration is announcing its commitment to work with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Nurses Association, American Association of Physician Assistants, Business Forward, City Year, National Association of Social Workers, Physician Assistants Education Association, SEIU and the YMCA of the USA to provide comprehensive information about repayment options and federal student aid resources that are available to them. Moving forward, the Administration will continue to engage organizations, institutions of higher education, and others to ensure that all borrowers have access to the resources and information they need to responsibly manage the repayment of their student loans.

Additional Actions to Reduce Indebtedness and Promote College Affordability:

Helping Students and Families Access Education Tax Benefits. In addition to helping borrowers manage their student loan debt, the Department of Education and the Department of Treasury will also work together to educate students, families, financial aid administrators, and tax preparers to ensure that all students and families understand what education tax benefits they are eligible for and receive the benefits for which they qualify. In 2009, the President created the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), which provides up to \$2,500 to help pay for each year of college. But the process of claiming education tax credits like the AOTC can be complex for many students, including for the 9 million students who receive Pell Grants, and hundreds of millions of dollars of education credits go unclaimed each year. To help address this complexity, the Department of Treasury will release a fact sheet clarifying how Pell Grant recipients may claim the AOTC.

OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

"Maleficent"

Maleficent
Grade: C-
Rated PG, fantasy action
and violence, right on the
border (or maybe over it) of
PG-13 territory
1 hr., 37 min;

Hey, kids! How would you like to see a new version of Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* that isn't animated and doesn't make any sense? Hmm? You wouldn't like that at all? Then why did we spend \$200 million to make one?! You kids never appreciate anything.

Maleficent retells the Disney version of the classic fairy tale from the point of view of the villain, the horned witch-fairy who cursed baby Aurora to die via spinning wheel by the end of her 16th birthday. Now, you may be wondering: how can *Maleficent* be reformed into a sympathetic character without contradicting the story we already know? The answer is that she can't. So *Maleficent*, written by studio stalwart Linda Woolverton (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2010's *Alice in Wonderland*), changes the story to make the revisions work, and in the process loses everything that made it logical and coherent.

In this version, young *Maleficent* (played by Isobelle Molloy) is a happy fairy living among other fantastical creatures in the moors adjacent to a human kingdom. She befriends a boy named Stefan (Michael Higgins) and they fall in love; later, when they have grown up to be Angelina Jolie and Sharlto Copley, Stefan breaks her heart and cuts off her wings while she's asleep, in a scene that is not at all uncomfortably rapey, nope.

Having thus explained why *Maleficent* hates King Stefan and might want to curse his baby, the film then proceeds to dismantle everything. The king sends baby Aurora to live in a cottage with three small, irritating pixies named Flittle (Lesley Manville), Knotgrass



"Maleficent" explores the untold story of Disney's most iconic villain from the classic "Sleeping Beauty" and the elements of her betrayal that ultimately turn her pure heart to stone. Driven by revenge and a fierce desire to protect the moors over which she presides, Maleficent cruelly places an irrevocable curse upon the human king's newborn infant Aurora. As the child grows, Aurora is caught in the middle of the seething conflict between the forest kingdom she has grown to love and the human kingdom that holds her legacy. Maleficent realizes that Aurora may hold the key to peace in the land and is forced to take drastic actions that will change both worlds forever.

(Imelda Staunton), and Thistlewit (Juno Temple). In the original version, this was to hide the kid from *Maleficent*. In this version, *Maleficent* knows where they are, and in fact hangs around in the area and becomes Aurora's playmate, somehow without the pixies' knowledge.

Why Aurora is not allowed to know her true identity or that her three "aunts" have magic powers is not explained. Why she left the castle at all is not explained, in fact, if it wasn't to keep her hidden from *Maleficent*.

Meanwhile, an increasingly insane King Stefan (portrayed with embarrassing hamminess by Copley) keeps sending his armies out to destroy *Maleficent*, but they can never find her, I guess because she's always over at Aurora's house.

Years later, when *Maleficent* has a change of heart about the whole curse thing, she finds it's too late. The spell cannot be undone, even by her. That means the movie gets to have it both ways: Aurora (played as a teen by Elle Fanning) can still fall into her deep sleep, but now we don't blame *Maleficent* for it. She tried to fix it! It's all Fate's fault now. Villain redeemed.

This shiny, lumpy mess of a movie, directed by first-timer Robert Stromberg, looks incredibly expensive yet feels like it was slapped together. It rushes quickly through its nonsensical plot, yet somehow seems drawn-out and over-long, too. Details clash. *Maleficent* can't fly without wings, but she can work all sorts of other magic, including making other people fly. De-

spite her amazing powers, she incapacitates a guard by hitting him in the head with a club. We're told at the beginning that the fairies and humans rarely enter one another's jurisdictions, and then the entire film is full of disregard for that rule. And so on.

The three pixies, the handsome prince (Brenton Thwaites), and *Maleficent*'s raven-man companion (Sam Riley) are useless, none of them serving any purpose in the story. It really is all about *Maleficent* — who, it should be said, is brought to life vividly by the perfectly cast Angelina Jolie. It's a nice touch that many of her lines in the christening/cursing scene are straight from the 1959 cartoon, but it's a pity this new *Maleficent* doesn't jibe with that one in any other respect.

Watch from A4

Freedom Summer very clear: "We're looking at quality education as a constitutional right . . . And this is where you play that role . . . When the sharecroppers and others stood up and made the demand that 'I want to be a first-class citizen,' that's when this country began to say, 'I've got to look at this.' Well, now, in terms of education, those sharecroppers—you are the sharecroppers. You have to make that stand and say, 'I demand a quality education for myself and my children in the future.' So we're calling this to action this summer. Mississippi Freedom Summer is not just about a celebration. It's about organizing, bringing young people together from around the country, where we can begin to share with you our stories, but also our skills, what we know about organizing. And we want you to go out and continue to do what you're doing now."

Bob with his trademark powerful quiet simplicity and directness began by asking the young leaders to repeat the Preamble to the Constitution after him—"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice,

insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Bob then said: "It does not say we, the President—it couldn't, because there was no President. It does not say we, the Supreme Court, or we, the Congress, because they were not in existence. It did not say what it could have said—it could have said we, the citizens of the several states, but it did not say that; if it had, we would be a very different country. It just says we, the people. So, we, the people, have to take over this country . . . We, the people, folks. You, the people." And with those words the crowd of young Freedom Schools leaders—and educators everywhere—were given their marching orders to do their part to finish the unfinished business of the Civil Rights Movement by establishing a constitutional right for every child to a quality education in our nation and creating a level playing field regardless of lottery of geography.

I traveled to Mississippi this week along with Bob Moses,

Dave Dennis, and hundreds of others including young leaders from around the country to celebrate the anniversary of Freedom Summer. Many of us retraced the tragic last trip James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner took to Neshoba County and visited their killing site where the violent racial hatred of the Ku Klux Klan ended their lives but ignited the movement towards a more just Mississippi and America. As much progress as has been made in Mississippi over the last half century, so much remains to be done. Mississippi ranks 50th, the worst, among all states in the percentage of children who are poor (34.7%); 49th in the percentage of households that lacked access to adequate food; and 49th in the percentage of high school students graduating on time. It is tragic that in 2013 79 percent of Mississippi's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 74 percent were unable to compute at grade level; 89 percent of Black fourth graders could not read and 89 percent could not compute at great level.

We often say with pride that Mississippi has the largest num-

ber of Black elected officials in the nation—yet the political leaders of that state still feel they can deny more than 137,000 people health care and refuse the Medicaid expansion. I hope Black elected officials will demand that health care be made available for those who need it and demand quality education for the children who cannot read or write or compute and are being sentenced to social and economic death and the prison system without education and jobs and hope for the future. Fifty years later it's time for another movement to demand a fairer and more just Mississippi and America and end the violence of poverty and illiteracy. Repeat after me: We, the people.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org.

Mrs. Edelman's Child Watch Column also appears each week on The Huffington Post

The Edge of Sports

by DAVE ZIRIN

Pure Poison: The UCSB Shooting, Ray Rice and a Culture of Violence Against Women



If a mass killing perpetrated by a deeply disturbed misogynist does not make us look at how our society promotes and perpetuates violence against women, I am not sure what will. Our culture has always looked the other way or even validated gendered violence, particularly against African-American women. Yet in an era of lightning-fast cultural transmission, this historic violence seems to be both mutating and becoming more perniciously commodified before our eyes. It's a violence that seems to exist in its own cultural category, where it is not only excused but also treated as deeply humorous—and woe to anyone who says otherwise. It's a violence that has become so normalized, so all encompassing, that it often feels that saying or doing nothing becomes an act of complicity.

It does not take any sort of genius to draw a line in between the weekend's shooting, the torments faced by Marissa Alexander or other women who defend themselves, and the fact that the quickest way to invite a barrage of social media hate is to say something as simple as, "I don't think rape jokes are funny." These dots connect to create a gun pointed at the ability of women to possess the most elemental human right in what is supposed to be a free society: the right to be left alone.

As a sportswriter, I try to look at the ways in which violence against women is excused and glossed over in professional sports, sending messages to their young, male audiences that this is somehow just part of being like their game-time heroes. This weekend, the day before the shooting, saw yet another one of those moments that should make the National Football League burn with shame, and take account for the role they play in creating this culture.

Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice and his wife Janay Rice held a press conference to apologize and explain why Rice was caught on camera dragging his wife by the hair from a casino elevator after punching her into unconsciousness. The Rices were basically throwing themselves on the mercy of the court of public opinion. That is nothing new, and we have seen male athletes and their wives do this in the past. What was different, at first bizarre and then obscene, was when it became clear that whoever controlling the Ravens official twitter account was live-tweeting the press conference. What they chose to tweet speaks volumes. After sending out a series of 140-character banalities to their half-million followers about how sorry Ray Rice was that he let down the organization and how he was going to come back better than ever, the Ravens official twitter account sent out the following: "@Ravens Janay Rice says she deeply regrets the role that she played the night of the incident."

Yes, she really did communicate this and, yes, it is tragic that a woman knocked unconscious and dragged by her hair by a heavily muscled pro athlete felt compelled to effectively say that she was in any way at fault. It is even worse that the team live-tweeted such a comment, attempting to do its part to shape public opinion and encourage "Ravens Nation" to welcome Ray Rice back into the fold. This is the Ravens not seeing that maybe there are things more important than defending their product. This is also of course, as I've written, far more than a Ravens issue but symptomatic of a league-wide problem in the way the NFL disregards violence against women. Or, as Tomas Rios wrote for *Sports on Earth*, "A woman has publicly sided with her abuser before, but the collusion between athlete and team to impose a feel-good narrative of personal redemption on the public sends a horrifying message."

That tweet, and the NFL's entire approach to this question, demonstrates the difference between violence against women and what it means to have a culture of violence against women. The violence is what Ray Rice did to Janay Rice. The culture is a team—and a league—that thinks rehabbing the images of players who project the violence of their game onto women is no more than a public relations problem. This is no different than the connective tissue between the act of rape and rape culture. Just as "rape" is a crime and "rape culture" is when the crime is disregarded and mocked, violence against women excused is ensuring that violence will occur again. This is also why people who say "not all men" commit rape or violence against women don't understand what it will actually take to resign these pathologies to the dustbin of history. It is a collective responsibility that men either take seriously, or risk becoming part of the problem.

The high rates of violence against the wives and girlfriends of pro athletes have a multiplicity of causes, but when the league institutionally either ignores it or provides set pieces to somehow justify it, this ceases to be an individual or athletic problem and becomes one that seeps into our pores and poisons every part of our culture. We saw what happened over the weekend, when that poison is weaponized.

Calendar of Events

July 10 — July 16, 2014

Xtreme Teens: Late Night Swim

Date and Time: Wednesdays & Saturdays, July 2-August 9, 2014 9 pm-12 midnight

Event Description: Safe Summer participants will enjoy swimming at Theresa Banks Aquatic Facility.

Ages: 12-24
Fee: FREE

Location: Glenarden Community Center
8615 McLain Avenue, Glenarden 20706
Contact: 301-772-3151; TTY 301-218-6768

Xtreme Teens: Laser Tag

Date and Time: Thursday, July 10, 2014 9 pm-12 midnight

Event Description: Safe Summer participants will enjoy playing Laser Tag inside the gymnasium or on the football field.

Ages: 13-18
Cost: FREE

Location: Glenarden Community Center
8615 McLain Avenue, Glenarden 20706
Contact: 301-772-3151; TTY 301-218-6768

Xtreme Teens (Safe Summer): Pita Pizza and Volleyball

Date and Time: Friday, July 11, 2014 10 pm-12 midnight

Description: Pick your toppings and create your own pita pizza to enjoy! After we fule up, take your talents to the volleyball court.

Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID
Ages: 12-17

Location: Rollingercrest-Chillum Community Center
6120 Sargent Road, Chillum 20782
Contact: 301-853-2005; TTY 301-445-4512

Washington Nationals & M-NCPPC Baseball Clinic

Date & Time: Saturday, July 12, 2014 9-11AM

Description: Co-ed youth are invited to attend FREE baseball clinics. Clinics will be conducted by local high school coaches. Bring your baseball equipment (glove, bat, shoes, hat and water) for active participation!

Cost: Free
Ages: 7-15

Location: PG Sports Park
13200 Woodmore Road, Mitchellville 20721
Contact: 301-446-6800; TTY 301-446-6802

Salute to the Military Open House

Date & Time: Saturday & Sunday, July 12-13, 2014 12 noon-4 pm

Description: Join us as we salute our active and retired military men and women! Free tours and samples goodies will be provided. Don't forget to bring your current military I.D. to receive a discount in the museum shop and to receive a special gift bag!

Cost: Free
Ages: All ages welcome

Location: Surratt House Museum
9118 Brandywine Road, Clinton 20735
Contact: 301-868-1121; TTY 301-699-2544

Arts on the Waterfront

Date and Time: Sunday, July 13, 2014 6 pm-7:30 pm

Description: Join us at the Waterfront with a great day of arts on the waterfront! There will be plenty of music and entertainment from jazz to rock—even a puppet show. Refreshments will be available for sale.

Cost: FREE
Ages: All ages welcome

Location: Bladensburg Waterfront Park
4601 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg 20710
Contact: 301-779-0371; TTY 301-699-2544

Merrell Down & Dirty Obstacle Course Race

Date & Time: Sunday, July 13, 2014 7:30 am-12 noon

Description: The Department of Parks and Recreation is proud to partner with MESP to host the second annual Merrell Down & Dirty Obstacle Course Race!

It will take place at Governor Bridge Natural Area in Bowie featuring two courses, three or six miles in length, with over twenty obstacles.

Last year, nearly 2000 participants experienced one of our parks in a truly new and unique way.

Cost: Free
Ages: 13 & up for 3 & 6 mile race.

Location: Prince George's Stadium
4101 Northeast Crain Highway, Bowie 20716
Contact: 301-805-6000; TTY 301-446-6802

Club 300 Group Walk (Patuxent River Park)

Date & Time: Monday, July 14, 2014 9:30-11 am

Description: Hey seniors, join Club 300 for our Summer Walking Program! Walking is an easy way to stay in shape, and, we'll do so walking through Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay Natural Area!

Cost: FREE
Ages: 50 & better

Location: Patuxent River Park
16700 Croom Airport Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
Contact: 301-446-3400; TTY 301-446-3402

Xtreme Teens (Safe Summer): Zumba

Date and Time: Wednesday, July 16, 2014 9 pm -11 pm

Description: Want an exciting way to stay fit, teens? Try Zumba and dance your way into shape!

Cost: Free
Ages: 12-17

Location: Seat Pleasant Activity Center
5720 Addison Road, Seat Pleasant 20743
Contact: 301-773-6685; TTY 301-218-6768

Jazz on the Lawn: Gina DeSimone & the Moaners

Date and Time: Wednesday, July 16, 2014 7 pm

Description: It's time for our free outdoor summer concert series: Jazz on the Lawn! Pack a picnic basket and bring a blanket to the enjoy jazz sounds of Gina DeSimone & the Moaners.

Cost: FREE
Ages: All ages welcome

Location: Riversdale House Museum
4811 Riverdale Road, Riversdale Park 20737
Contact: 301-864-0420; TTY 301-699-2544

EARTH TALK ... What About the Connection to Men's Health and the Environment

Dear EarthTalk:

We often see and read reports about environmental threats to women's health, but aren't there also concerns about which men should be especially vigilant?

— Jay Walsh,
Boston, MA

Indeed, women aren't the only ones who should be worried about environmental threats. A recently released report ("Men's Health: What You Don't Know Might Hurt You") by the non-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG) concludes that environmental exposures may have major negative impacts on men's health as well, and outlines ways that guys can avoid some of the major risks.

"Most men understand that smart lifestyle choices—such as exercising regularly, eating a healthful diet and not smoking—make a big difference in staying healthy," says EWG researcher and report author Paul Pestano. "However, what many men might not know is that research in the last few decades has shown that environmental exposures may contribute to major diseases and health concerns that especially affect men, including heart disease, prostate cancer and infertility." He adds that toxic substances in drinking water, food, food packaging and personal care products have all been linked to serious health

problems that affect millions of American men.

According to EWG, men's heart disease risks are exacerbated by exposure to mercury in certain seafoods, Teflon chemicals in non-stick cookware, and bisphenol-A (BPA) in hard plastic containers and canned foods. Additionally, arsenic and lead in drinking water supplies is a contributing factor in elevated heart disease risks for men. Meanwhile, certain agricultural pesticides common on fruits and vegetables as well as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) that build up in meat and dairy products have been associated with prostate cancer, the second most common cause of cancer for American men. And exposures to lead, pesticides and chemicals in personal care products contribute to low sperm counts, infertility and other reproductive issues for men. EWG also underscores the importance of limiting sun exposure, as men face a higher risk of developing melanoma than women.

"While genetics can pre-determine certain health outcomes, there are a number of ways men can dramatically reduce their potentially harmful environmental exposures," Pestano says. Some tips include:

- investing in a water filter system specifically designed to reduce exposure to lead, arsenic and other drinking water contaminants (see EWG's "Water Filter Buying Guide" to find the right one);
- avoiding canned foods and plastic containers with



CREDIT: CLUC, COURTESY FLICKR

Research during the last few decades -- including a recent report by the Environmental Working Group -- has shown that environmental exposures may contribute to major diseases and health concerns that especially affect men, including heart disease, prostate cancer and infertility.

the recycling code #7 to limit BPA exposure;

- using personal care products that don't contain phthalates, parabens or other potential contaminants (see EWG's "Skin Deep" database that lists toxic chemicals in some 69,000 personal care products);
- choosing conventionally grown fruits and vegetables that have the fewest pesticide residues and buying the organic versions of certain types of produce that otherwise rely heavily on chemicals (EWG's "Dirty

Dozen" guide lists apples, grapes, strawberries, celery, peaches, spinach and sweet bell peppers as the worst offenders among others); and

- using proper sun cover and getting regular skin checks with a dermatologist to reduce melanoma risks.

By following these guidelines along with eating a healthy, varied diet and getting regular exercise, men can significantly reduce their health risks and potentially add years to their lives.

CONTACT: Environmental Working Group, www.ewg.org/research/mens-health.

EarthTalk® is written and edited by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of E - The Environmental Magazine (www.emagazine.com). Send questions to: earthtalk@emagazine.com.

Casinos from A1

this industry is a shady and sleazy practice."

The plan to legalize slots had come from an unlikely source. O'Malley had spoken out against gambling proposals as mayor of Baltimore. But when he became governor in 2007, Maryland faced a \$1.7 billion structural deficit in the midst of an increasingly dismal economy.

He called for a special session that fall to address the state's budget woes, announcing plans to generate revenue through tax reform and the authorization of slot machines in five casino locations around the state.

But he had to win over lawmakers who blocked attempts to legalize casino gambling under former Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. So O'Malley recommended that the legislature approve a plan for legalization and then put it up for a vote at referendum. He also increased the number of slot machines in his proposal to 15,000 from 9,500, appeasing slots supporters not thrilled about the added step of a referendum.

After contentious debate, the deal that emerged from Annapolis was one that taxed casinos at among the highest rates of any state in the nation. Maryland would keep about 67 percent of the revenue from slots, with most—roughly half of all casino revenue—going to an Education Trust Fund dedicated to schools.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce and AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, threw their support behind the slots measure—as did the gambling industry. Pro-slots groups outspent opponents 7-to-1, with the Laurel Racing Association and Penn National Gaming contributing a combined \$5 million to the total \$7.1 million spent on supporting slots.

The Maryland teachers union voted to endorse the measure too, after Miller, the Senate president and a leading slots advocate, warned the union that education spending could face significant cuts if the slots measure failed and the state's budget trouble continued.

On Nov. 4, 2008, Maryland residents approved the slots measure with nearly 59 percent of the vote.

A package of tax breaks

Before even one of the original five casinos had opened, Maryland lawmakers began weighing the question of expanding casino gambling.

Miller, a Democrat from Prince George's County, announced an interest in early 2010 in adding a sixth casino there. Not long after, the state panel charged with awarding the casino licenses recommended that lawmakers consider allowing table games to help Maryland compete with gambling in surrounding states. Pennsylvania, Delaware and West Virginia had all moved to allow table games after Maryland passed its slots-only measure in 2008.

In June 2012, MGM Resorts International announced its interest in building a casino at the National Harbor in Prince George's County, if presented with an acceptable deal—which included a lower tax rate and table games.

O'Malley called a special session the following month to debate a gambling expansion that would include a sixth casino and Las Vegas-style table games.

But lawmakers met with fierce resistance from some of the companies holding Maryland casino licenses, especially the Cordish Cos., owner of Maryland Live! Casino in Anne Arundel County.

Company representatives complained that the proposed sixth casino would be an unexpected, and unwelcome, source of competition that would diminish its customer base and hurt its bottom line.

So, the legislature offered tax breaks to the companies.

Casino companies would get to keep 80 percent of table game revenue and give 20 percent to the Education Trust Fund. The education fund's share would drop to 15 percent in 2017, when the local governments that host casinos would begin receiving 5 percent of table game revenue.

The education fund's share of slots revenue would shrink too.

The General Assembly passed the measure, sending it to a refer-

endum as required by the 2008 slots law.

MGM, with its eye on the sixth casino license, gave close to \$41 million to the rival, pro-expansion group, For Maryland Jobs and Schools.

Penn National Gaming, with casinos in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Perryville, Md., led the opposition, spending more than \$44 million, according to the National Institute on Money in State Politics.

The teachers union took no position.

After the most expensive campaign in state history—totalling more than \$94.9 million—the referendum passed with 51.9 percent of the vote.

An "outrageous" break

Sen. James Brochin, D-Baltimore County, in a recent interview said he supported legalization in 2008 but voted against the expansion bill because he thought the state was giving far too much away to the casinos as part of the compromise.

"The tax break that we gave the casino operators was outrageous," he said.

Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency officials say that granting casino companies a bigger share of the revenue from table games makes sense because those games cost more to operate than slot machines, with additional expenses including pay for dealers. The casinos also received breaks for taking over ownership of the slot machines from the state.

Additionally, a lower tax rate allows casinos to invest more in marketing and promotional programs that bring in more customers and more money, said Will Cummings, of Cummings Associates, which did a study for the state gambling agency.

In fact, casino revenues have soared since table games debuted in Maryland last spring, sending more total dollars to the state as a result.

Even so, Brochin argues, the state is taking in millions of dollars less than it should be.

As a result, the casino industry has pushed ahead of the education fund as the biggest bene-

fiary of state-sponsored gambling in Maryland.

The amount of revenue going to casino operators each month of fiscal year 2014 has surpassed the amount going to the Education Trust Fund. For the first time since Maryland legalized casinos, the casino companies are on track to take in more money this fiscal year than the Education Trust Fund.

"It was just bad public policy," Brochin said.

Replacing, not supplementing, funds for schools

For Maryland schools, the argument over how much should go to casinos versus the education fund has been strictly academic so far.

Neither the 2008 nor 2012 legislation specified that the state should spend more on education with the gambling revenue. And the legislature hasn't.

Since the first casino opened in Maryland, almost \$700 million gambling dollars have gone into the Education Trust Fund. But lawmakers have used that money to replace rather than increase general fund revenues normally spent on schools. In other words, they have used it to free up general fund money for other purposes.

While the state's education budget has fluctuated, that has been due largely to other factors like federal contributions.

There's another reason the casino money has had little obvious impact on schools: Last year's education budget totaled more than \$7 billion, with the \$285 million in the Education Trust Fund accounting for just a small fraction.

Still, education advocates have a list of things the extra money could be used for, from expanding access to high-quality pre-K to improving mental health services at schools.

"I certainly understand the position the state was in for several years, but I think now is the time to really go back to this and take a look," said David Beard, the education policy director at Advocates for Children and Youth in Baltimore. "Are we just supplementing dollars and supplanting or are we really using this for opportunities to improve education and educational outcome?"