

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SINCE 1932

Vol. 89, No. 49 December 9 — December 15, 2021 Prince George's County, Maryland Newspaper of Record Phone: 301-627-0900 25 cents

Wilkins of Bowie State Named 2021 Harlon Hill Trophy Finalist

By JOLISA WILLIAMS
Bowie State University Athletics

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Dec. 1, 2021)—Bowie State University senior running back Calil Wilkins was announced Wednesday morning as one of eight national finalists for the 2021 Harlon Hill Trophy presented annually by the Little Rock Touchdown Club to the Division II National Player of the Year.

Wilkins becomes just the second Bulldog to reach the final eight finalists in program history led by former standout Amir Hall in both 2017 and 2018.

The Super Region Two stud will be joined on the national ballot with West Florida's quarterback Austin Reed, Slippery Rock's wide receiver Henry Litwin, Nebraska-Kearney's quarterback TJ Davis, Northwest Missouri State's running back Al McKeller, Bemidji State's quarterback Brandon Alt and Colorado School of Mines running back Michael Zeman. All eight of the finalists come from teams that made the NCAA Playoffs.

The 5-foot-8, 210-pound running back has rushed for a CIAA-leading 1,260 yards so far this season with nine rushing touchdowns. He has also caught 12 balls for 141 yards and a score. This fall, Wilkins has already picked up numerous accolades, including First Team All-Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), CIAA Most Valuable Player during the 2021 CIAA championship game and a plethora CIAA Weekly Honors and DC Touchdown Washington Metro Football Player of the Week honor roll nods. Most likely, Wilkins will be locked in for another All-Region accolade and the All-America Team.

The Temple Hills, Md., native helped the nationally ranked Bowie State Bulldogs to three straight CIAA Northern Division titles, three trips to conference championship game and three-consecutive CIAA championship titles to go along with NCAA first and second round victories and a trip to the NCAA DII Quarterfinals—for the first time in school history.

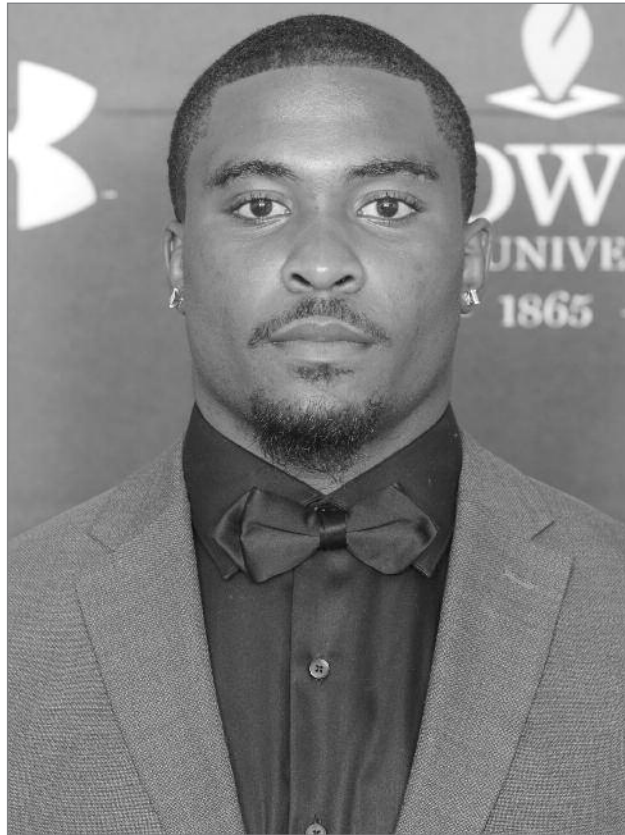


PHOTO COURTESY BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Calil Wilkins

The Bulldogs went a perfect 7-0 against CIAA opponents, extending its win-streak to 18-games total dating back to 2018. This season also marked the third straight year Bowie State has averaged 10 wins per season.

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Council Unanimously Adopts Legislation Approving Countywide Sectional Map Amendment

First Update to County's Zoning Ordinance in 50 Years

By ANGELA J. ROUSON
Prince George's County Council
Media

The Prince George's County Council, convening in the final session of Legislative Year 2021, on Monday, November 29, 2021, unanimously adopted CR-136-2021, approving the Countywide Sectional Map Amendment (CMA).

The CMA is the second and final phase of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project to modernize the County's current 50-year-old Zoning Ordinance. Final adoption of the CMA now implements the County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations by updating the current zone on each property in the County with a similar new zone that is closest in use and purpose.

Under CR-136-2021, the County's new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations become effective on April 1, 2022.

Council Chair Calvin S. Hawkins, II, says Prince George's County is now positioned to expand and better capitalize on economic development opportunities to benefit County residents and communities.

"This process has been a huge undertaking and it has been a long journey, but the end result is a new and modern Zoning Ordinance, the first in 50 years for Prince George's County, and it will

reap great economic reward for Prince Georgians now and in the future. This is a game-changer for our County, and I want to thank this Council and our staff, the Planning Board, County Executive Angela Alsobrooks, the State Delegation, and our residents and stakeholders for their hard work and commitment to participating in this process and bringing us to this defining moment. Prince George's County is now in a posture to successfully compete in our region and seize opportunities for smart growth, economic development and improved quality of life for its residents."

The CMA is required to implement the updated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances approved by the Council in 2018 after more than four years of review. The County's new Zoning Ordinance will streamline procedures and enhance user-friendliness; pave the way for achieving the economic goals of Plan 2035, the County's Adopted General Plan; encourage increased public input in the development review process; consolidate and simplify zones and use; and incentivize development at targeted growth locations, particularly in our 15 transit-oriented communities.

District 4 Council Member Todd M. Turner, who served in Council leadership

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County Library to Offer Free COVID-19 Self-Test Kits

By NICHOLAS BROWN
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 1, 2021)—Prince George's County residents will temporarily have access to free COVID-19 Rapid Self-Test kits through the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS). Part of a statewide effort to make 500,000 free kits available to the public to reduce COVID-19 rates, PGCMLS is partnering with the Maryland Department of Health and Prince George's County Health Department to launch this new public health service.

Test kits are available as of Wednesday, December 1 at PGCMLS' branch libraries (see map of branches at <https://www.pgcmls.info/map-of-branches>). These tests are Ab-

bott BinaxNOW AG At-Home COVID-19 Test Kits (2 tests per kit). The Library will receive approximately 1,700 kits per week (subject to change) that will be available to the public at all open branch libraries until further notice. The supply at each location is limited and available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Customers are asked to limit to one kit per person so that the supply can serve as many Prince Georgians as possible. The kits will be replenished on a weekly basis as supplies allow through the state of Maryland's program. Availability is subject to change.

"Testing continues to be one of the most important tools we have to keep people safe, and we have now conducted nearly 15 million tests statewide," said Governor Larry Hogan in his November 24 announcement.

"By making these at-home test kits available through local health departments, we are giving Marylanders more options and more peace of mind as we head into the holiday season. Of course, the single most important thing you can do, if you haven't already, is get vaccinated or get your booster shot."

Tests must not be completed at the Library. Individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms should have someone retrieve a test on their behalf in order to minimize the risk of exposure to PGCMLS staff and customers. Face masks are required indoors at all PGCMLS facilities. Kits are available for free; no identification or proof of insurance are required.

Test kit instructions are available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Korean,

Please do not conduct the test at the Library.
Por favor no haga la prueba de COVID-19 en la biblioteca.

COVID-19 Rapid Self-Test Kits
GRAB-AND-GO

Available while supplies last at all branches.
Las pruebas de COVID-19 estarán disponibles semanalmente.

Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese. These test kits do not meet Centers for Disease Control and Prevention requirements for entry to the U.S. from international travel. Customers may contact Ask a Librarian with questions at 240-455-5451 or askalibrarian@pgcmls.info with questions.

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) helps customers discover and define opportunities that shape their lives. The Library serves the 967,000+ residents of Prince George's County, Maryland through 19 branch libraries, a 24/7 online library, and pop-up

services throughout the community. PGCMLS is a responsive and trusted community-driven organization. Programs, services, and outreach activities serve booklovers, immigrants and refugees, job seekers, children, young professionals, seniors, and families alike. Learn more at pgcmls.info/about-us.

Governor Hogan Announces \$10,000 in Rideshare Credits During Holiday Season

Federal and State Agencies Partner With Uber to Provide Safe Ride Options for Marylanders

By SHAREESE CHURCHILL
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 24, 2021)—Governor Larry Hogan announced that a new partnership is launching today between the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's (MDOT MVA) Highway Safety Office and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) to provide 1,000 Uber ride credits worth \$10 each to Marylanders for a sober ride home. Maryland is one of five states to be awarded this grant.

"No one should ever get behind the wheel of a car and drive impaired, and we hope that this creative new initiative will encourage more Marylanders to make better choices," said Governor Hogan. "This holiday season, it's critical that we work together to protect our families, friends, and neighbors."

The governor first announced the initiative at the annual Maryland Remembers ceremony, which honors the victims of impaired driving.

These \$10 rideshare credits are available as of Nov. 24 at 4 p.m. through 11:59 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 1. To redeem the \$10 credit, Marylanders can

open the Uber app, choose Wallet from the menu on the top left corner, and scroll to the Promo Codes section. Marylanders can use the code "MAKEAPLAN2021" and \$10 will be applied to their account. Each rider is limited to two \$10 credits during the campaign while the supplies last.

Last year, 120 people died and more than 2,600 were injured on Maryland roadways due to impaired driving. Even though 2020 saw substantially lower traffic volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic, 14,170 people were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs—1,345 of

those arrests occurring between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

"There are already too many families that will have empty chairs at the dinner table this holiday season because of the pandemic," said GHSA Executive Director Jonathan Adkins. "It's tragic and frustrating to see even more lives lost on our roads from completely preventable drunk and drug-impaired driving crashes. GHSA is proud to partner with Uber to help Maryland provide drivers a safe and convenient alternative to getting behind the wheel impaired."

Throughout the holiday season, the Highway Safety Office will promote Be the SOBER Driver and Be the MAKE A PLAN Driver messaging on advertising platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Waze, iHeartRadio, and Pandora.

For more information, visit Uber.com/Safety. For more information about GHSA, go to ghsa.org or visit the Facebook and Twitter accounts.

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COMMUNITY

Holiday Happenings

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation Announces Seasons of Light Digital Program From Publick Playhouse

By ANGEL WALDRON

Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (Nov. 29, 2021)—Coming in December is Seasons of Light, the beloved holiday favorite that bridges communities and cultures the world over—virtually! Enjoy an adapted, filmed version of this enchanting, signature Discovery Theater show that will be available for digital viewing. Celebrate the history and customs of Diwali (Devali), Chanukah, Las Posadas, Ramadan, Sankta Lucia Day, Kwanzaa, Christmas, and the First Nations' tradition of the Winter Solstice.

December 13: A virtual field trip offering for Seasons of Light will be available to schools. Teachers will receive a unique access link that will be available for a two-week period. Grades K–8. Cost: \$25/per classroom.

* Free access is available for Title 1 Prince George's County Public Schools from generous support through the GEICO Philanthropic Foundation.

December 18: An on demand digital version of Seasons of Light will be available. For All Ages. Cost: \$3

The Seasons of Light Digital Program is made possible by a generous grant from the Nora Roberts Foundation and a partnership with the Smithsonian Discovery Theater. For more information, contact publick playhouse@pgparks.com or call 301-277-1710 (M-F, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.).

Since 1947, the historic Publick Playhouse continues to serve as a popular venue for music and modern dance, musical theater, historical drama, educational programs and monthly events for seniors. With its ornate sky scene and plush seating for 494, the theatre is one of the two surviving Art Deco theatres in Prince George's County. To learn more, visit <http://www.mncppc.org/2280/The-Prince-Georges-Publick-Playhouse>.

The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation delivers an award-winning park system through progressive, innovative leadership and a commitment to the community and the environment in Prince George's County. For more on the Department of Parks and Recreation, visit www.pgparks.com and stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, PhotoShelter, and Instagram. The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities in all programs and services. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation.

10x10 INVITATIONAL December 4–January 2

By KATE TAYLOR DAVIS
Pyramid Atlantic Art Center

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (Nov. 24, 2021)—Pyramid's gallery will be packed with over 200 pieces of original artwork donated to Pyramid by artists who love the nonprofit art center. This exhibition-slash-fundraiser has just two rules: all work must measure 10 x 10 inches and be priced at \$50. Buyers receive instant gratification, as they are able to take the art home immediately. 10x10 gets rearranged each week encouraging repeat visits.

10x10 opened to the public Saturday, December 4. After opening weekend, works are available to view online and visitors are welcome during gallery hours without appointment through January 2, 2022.

The exhibition is free, and gallery hours are Wed–Thu 10–8 p.m., Fri–Sat 10–6 p.m., and Sunday 12–5 p.m. Masks are required for entry and we are limiting the number of visitors to allow social distancing. Pyramid Atlantic is located at 4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville Maryland 20781. More info at pyramidatlantic.org or 301-608-9101.

Now in its 7th year, the 10x10 is a great opportunity for collectors of all levels to get interesting pieces by talented artists at a remarkable price. Prints, drawings, paintings, and mixed media will be on display and works can be taken home immediately.

Artists with studios, residencies, or exhibitions at Pyramid over the past year are invited to participate. Additional artists are nominated by a committee. This year's committee included Imar Hutchins, John Thomas Paradiso,

Risikat Okedeyi, Edgar Reyes, and Alec Simpson. Thanks to their work, the exhibition boasts an impressive roster of artists.

Confirmed Artists: Sasa Aakil, Sheena Ashun, Mariza June Avila, Jennifer Axner, Rushern Baker IV, Evelyn Bandoh, Maria Barbosa, Jessica Beels, Ronald Beverly, Rick Black, Chelsae Blackman, Elisabeth Boerwinkel, Michael Booker, Hannah Brancato, Laurie Breen, Vickie Brewster, Daniel Brooking, Antonius Bui, Jason Bullock, June Burden, Eric Burriss, Kimberley Bursic, Sharon Burton, Amy Callner, Roslyn Cambridge, Lyell Castonguay, Cindy Cheng, Wesley Clark, Eliza Clifford, Rafi Crockett, Jared Davis, Chase Deforest, Julee Dickerson-Thompson, Nehemiah Dixon, Eric Easter, Lauren Emeritz, Juan Esparza, Andrea Sherrill Evans, Melissa Ezelle, Jamila Zahra Felton, Jodi Ferrier, April Flanders, Dan Flounders, Jeana Foley, Erin Fostel, Kevin Franco, Helen C. Frederick, Marta Pérez García, Michele Godwin, Meghan Gordon, Maggie Gourlay, Deborah Grayson, Eoin Guidas, Megan Haidet, Holly Harris, Winston Harris, Melissa Harshman, Francine Haskins, Melissa Haviland, Shaymar Higgs, Tom Hill, Gabrielle Holder, Stephen Honiki, Li Howard, Imar Hutchins, Annie Immediata, Elisabeth Jacobsen, Rose Jaffe, Fleming Jeffries, Cynthia Farrell Johnson, Wayson R. Jones, Bronwyn King, Kristina King, Zofie King, Alice Kresse, Selene Lamarca, Caroline Lampinen, Pamela Harris Lawton, Jun Lee, Rob Lindsay, Bonnie Magness-Gardiner, Betsy Martin, Nick Martinez, Sarah Matthews, Matthew T McLaughlin, Anna Meyer Zachurski, Sally Middle-

brooks, Johanna Mueller, Daniella Napolitano, Tatiana Nelson-Joseph, Terence Nicholson, Kaisa Nichols-Russell, Sarah Noreen, Cory Oberndorfer, Risikat Okedeyi, Anisa Olufemi, Maya Ormsby, John Ortiz, Christina Osheim, John Thomas Paradiso, Nicole Parker, Bonnie Parry, Planta, Heather Polk, S.M. Prescott, Alanna Reeves, Deborah Remmers, Edgar Reyes, Sharon Robinson, Nan Roche, Linda Rollins, Nathalie Ryan, Sarah Hood Salomon, Gretchen Schermerhorn, Adi Segal, Gail Shaw-Clemons, Daniel Shay, Jen Sheckels, Jeanette Ibarra Shindell, Kathy Shollenberger, Alec Simpson, Steven Stichter, Kamala Subramanian, Shay Summers, Lynn Sylvester, Kim Thorpe, Susan Tuberville, Daniel Varillas, Denise Wamaling, Mark Wamaling, Gerald Watson, Lilibet Wenge, Ian White, Hadiya Williams, Reggie Williamson, Clare Winslow, Andrew Wodzianski, Nemesius Zambrano, and Karen Zens.

This exhibition is made possible in part through support from the Maryland State Arts Council (msac.org), The Morris & Gwendolyn Foundation, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County.

Founded in 1981, Pyramid Atlantic is a nonprofit contemporary art center fostering the creative disciplines of papermaking, printmaking, and book arts within a collaborative community. We equip, educate, and exhibit in our historic Hyattsville home. Our vision is to create an artistic hub in Hyattsville that inspires and enables local, national, and international artists to create and innovate in our core disciplines; elevates the local arts and small business scene; and enhances the quality of life for artists and neighbors. We value artistic excellence, infrastructure for artists, hands-on experiences, and collaboration.



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A commitment to changeUP your health
and the health of this community.

As part of University of Maryland Medical System, we're fulfilling our promise to step up health care in this region. We have more leading specialists and more of what you need including women's health, a Heart & Vascular Institute and a new primary and specialty care center in National Harbor. And, this summer, we're opening a state-of-the-art hospital in Largo and a health and wellness campus is on the horizon in Laurel.

It's time to changeUP how you feel about health care ... because a new era is here.

See how we are changing up health care for you at UMcapitalregion.org/changeUP.

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BOWIE • CHEVERLY • LAUREL • NATIONAL HARBOR • SUITLAND



BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Prince George's County Emergency Rental Assistance Program to Stop Accepting New Applications

New Application Deadline December 15

By ALEXIS REVIS YEOMAN
Department of Housing and
Community Development

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 2, 2021)—The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will close the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) application portal on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 3 p.m. The ERAP will continue to review and process remaining applications after the application portal closes. Closing the application portal will ensure that DHCD

has the funding needed for the open applications that still need to be processed for payment, including applications received between now and December 15.

The Prince George's County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) has assisted over 5,200 households, making over \$42 million in rent and utility payments to landlords on behalf of tenants since March 2021. These payments have enabled tenants to stay housed during the COVID-19 pandemic while assisting landlords in maintaining their mortgage obligations. To date,

Prince George's County has been leading the State in the deployment of rental assistance funds, and in collaboration with our non-profit community partners, Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, the Office of the Sheriff, and the Office of Community Relations, we continue to work in diverting evictions and in keeping families safely housed.

DHCD is pleased to be a recipient of the State of Maryland's ERA 1 supplemental assistance. With these funds, DHCD will be able to finalize the award-

ing of an additional \$20 million to County residents affected by the pandemic.

Working with its community service providers, DHCD will ensure that the remaining ERAP funds will be used to provide assistance for eligible pending applications. Low-income households facing eviction and residents with addresses in a census tract of greatest vulnerability will continue to be prioritized. Applicants will be contacted by their assigned reviewers to finalize all necessary information. Residents with pending

eviction cases should continue to reach out to DHCD and call the ERAP Hotline at 301-883-6504 and press 9.

The submission of an application does not guarantee approval for ERAP assistance. All applications are carefully reviewed and subject to state and federal eligibility requirements. Applications are also subject to the availability of funding at the time of processing.

Calls and questions can be made to the ERAP Hotline customer service representatives on 301-883-6504 or by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/pgERAP>.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Should I Take My Widower Benefit Now?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty: I lost my wife 7 years ago. I was told that I could possibly collect 30 to 35% of her benefit as a widower benefit when I turned 60. I will be 61 soon. Would it make sense to pursue this if it is true? I am still working full time. Would this affect my ability to collect Social Security on my own account once I retire? **Signed: Working Survivor**

Dear Working: Survivor benefits for a widower can be paid as early as age 60 if you have not remarried prior to that. But collecting a survivor benefit before you have reached your full retirement age (your "FRA", which is age 67) creates some other considerations you should be aware of:

- Your survivor benefit will be based upon the SS benefit your wife was entitled to at her death. Taken at your FRA you'd get 100% of the SS amount your wife was entitled to at her death, but if taken any earlier than your FRA the survivor benefit will be reduced.
- Taken before your FRA, your survivor benefit will be actuarially reduced according to the number of months prior to your FRA it is claimed. The reduction amount is 4.75% less per full year earlier than your FRA, and that is a permanent reduction. If you take your survivor benefit at age 61, you'll get 71.5% of the SS benefit your wife had earned up to her death.
- Since you're not yet receiving your own SS retirement benefit, you can take your survivor benefit first and allow your personal SS retirement benefit to grow. Assuming your personal SS retirement benefit will be more than your survivor benefit, you can switch from your survivor benefit to your SS retirement benefit at any time after you are age-eligible to do so (age 62). You can also, if you wish, choose to continue your survivor benefit up until your personal SS retirement benefit reaches maximum at age 70. At age 70 your own benefit will be 24% more than your FRA benefit amount.
- If you claim the survivor benefit before your FRA and you are still working, you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn before SS takes away some of your benefit. The earnings limit for 2021 is \$18,960 (the 2022 limit is \$19,560) and if your earnings from work exceed that amount, SS will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit.

So, although you can claim a survivor benefit from your deceased wife now (and allow your own SS benefit to grow), practically speaking you may not be able to get a survivor benefit if you are working full time and earning considerably more than the annual earnings limit. In other words, the penalty for exceeding the earnings limit may entirely offset the survivor benefit you are entitled to. If you're over the earnings limit by only a small amount, you'll only lose benefits for the number of months needed to repay what you owe. And for clarity, in the year you attain FRA the earnings limit goes up by about 2.5 times and the penalty is less (\$1 for every \$3 you are over the limit), and once you reach your full retirement age there is no longer a limit to how much you can earn. To avoid the earnings test, you could also choose to wait until your FRA to maximize your survivor benefit and then wait until age 70 to claim your maximum SS retirement benefit.

Regardless of when you claim your survivor benefit, your own SS retirement benefit won't be affected. Your SS retirement benefit, which will replace your smaller survivor benefit, will be based solely on your lifetime earnings history and the age at which you claim it.

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

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Prince George's County Announces New \$15 Million ROFR Preservation Fund

Additional \$1 Million for the Home Ownership Preservation Program

By ALEXIS REVIS YEOMAN
Department of Housing and
Community Development

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 29, 2021)—Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks announced on Nov. 29 the launch of the Right of First Refusal (ROFR) Preservation Fund and committed \$15 million from the American Rescue Plan Act over a three-year period. The announcement took place at Hamilton Manor, 3342 Lancer Drive, Hyattsville, MD at 1 p.m. The County recently exercised its Right of First Refusal (ROFR) on Hamilton Manor, a 245-unit multi-family apartment building.

"Prince George's County is committed to preserving housing affordability and we are working hard to diversify the County's housing stock. We cannot have quality economic development without affordable housing. Our key economic development goals for growing jobs and the commercial tax base must be anchored by infrastructure that serves a range of household incomes, especially around transit-oriented development opportunities," said County Executive Alsobrooks. "Our community is growing, and it is up to us to make the right choices now. This year, our administration has exercised our Right of First Refusal (ROFR) program for the first time.

The ROFR Preservation Fund is helping us to preserve, protect and expand quality, safe homes that residents of all incomes can afford."

The fund will support the preservation of existing naturally occurring affordable housing in the County. It will be used to strengthen the implementation of the existing ROFR program and will assist in preserving the affordability in properties located in Qualified Census Tracts, particularly in transit-oriented areas as well as targeted areas of economic development growth. The fund will help to ensure that low and moderate County renters can maintain residency as the County grows and prospers.

In December 2020, the County relaunched the ROFR program, then exercised it on two multi-family properties in the County. According to Resolution CR-51-2015, the County can exercise its Right of First Refusal where the owner of a multi-family rental property of 20 units or more intends to sell the apartment building. The Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has the authority to purchase the property or assign its rights to a third party developer in an effort to stabilize, preserve and expand housing opportunities for low and moderate income households and increase the availability of quality affordable

rental housing in designated areas of the County.

In addition to launching the ROFR Preservation Fund, County Executive Alsobrooks also launched the Home Ownership Preservation Program (HOPP) with a \$1 million investment. HOPP can provide up to \$30,000 to homeowners for health, safety, energy efficiency and accessibility repairs in qualified, owner-occupied homes. Households under 50% of the area median income (AMI) can receive up to \$50,000 in services. There are income, location, and eligibility requirements. DHCD has partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Metro Maryland to implement this program in the County's qualified census tract areas with special emphasis on homes within one mile of a future Purple Line transit stop.

Home preservation services may include the following: roofing and gutters, electrical repair, plumbing repair, tree removal, stairlift and accessibility equipment, HVAC replacement and repair, water heater replacement/repair and more.

For additional information on the ROFR Preservation Fund or HOPP, e-mail Pam Wilson, Housing Development Program Manager, Housing Development Division, Prince George's County Department of Housing & Community Development: pawilson@co.pg.md.us

Comcast Rise Announces Major Expansion to All Women-Owned Small Businesses Nationwide Starting in 2022

In its first year alone, Comcast RISE has provided over \$60 million in grants, marketing, and technology services to support more than 6,700 small businesses owned by people of color
With the expansion to all women-owned small businesses, the program is on track to support 13,000 business by the end of 2022

By SANDY ARNETTE
Comcast

NEW YORK (Nov. 23, 2021)—Comcast Corporation announces today a major expansion of Comcast RISE to all women-owned businesses nationwide, furthering its efforts to advance digital equity and help provide underrepresented small business owners with access to the digital tools and funding they need to thrive.

In its first year alone, Comcast RISE has provided more than \$60 million in grants, marketing, and technology services to more than 6,700 small businesses owned by people of color—including Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Asian Americans. Of the 6,700 Comcast RISE recipients to date, nearly 70% have been businesses owned by women of color, spurring Comcast to take a deeper look into the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

According to a study by the National Association of Women Business Owners, 42% of businesses in the U.S. are owned by women, with more than 1,800 new businesses being started every day. That's nearly five times the national average. However, according to the same study, women-owned businesses are growing at only half the rate of those run by men, namely because women struggle to access capital and other resources to help them succeed.

Sarah Sommer, Co-Founder of iFund-

Women echoes this important point, "The data about how women, a rapidly increasing number of whom are small business owners, have fared during the pandemic is stark. Women business owners tend to have limited access to capital and debt-free funding options, yet they represent a tremendous opportunity. Women-owned businesses deliver two times higher revenue per dollar invested than those founded by men, making them great investments."

"As we continue to rebuild and emerge from the effects of the pandemic, small businesses will continue to be the backbone of our economy—and we must take every opportunity to help them thrive," said Teresa Ward-Maupin, Senior Vice President, Digital and Customer Experience, Comcast Business. "Looking forward, this expansion will enable Comcast RISE to further empower and strengthen even more small businesses that are the heart of our local communities across the country."

Comcast RISE, which stands for Representation, Investment, Strength, and Empowerment, is part of Project UP, Comcast's comprehensive initiative to advance digital equity and help provide underrepresented small business owners with access to the digital tools and funding they need to thrive. Over the next 10 years, Comcast has committed \$1 billion to programs, like Comcast RISE, and partnerships that will reach an estimated 50 million people with

the skills, opportunities, and resources they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world

Comcast recently announced its fifth round of Comcast RISE recipients, which includes 1,400 small businesses owned by people of color, that will receive a TV campaign, production of a TV commercial or consulting services from Effectv or computer equipment, internet, voice or cybersecurity from Comcast Business. [NOTE: 39 of these small businesses are in Comcast's Beltway Region, which includes Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., and parts of Delaware, North Carolina and West Virginia.] In addition, as part of round two of the Comcast RISE Investment Fund, 600 additional small businesses in Houston, Miami, Oakland, Seattle, the Twin Cities, and Washington, D.C. will each receive \$10,000 grants, bringing the total Comcast RISE Investment Fund recipients to 1,100.

Comcast RISE, which just celebrated its one year anniversary, will continue to be open to racially and ethnically diverse small business owners and the expanded Comcast RISE eligibility to all women-owned businesses will be effective on January 16, 2022. More information and the applications to apply for either the grant program or marketing and technology services are available at www.ComcastRISE.com.

