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National Harbor to Honor National Black Business Month With “Black Biz Passport” to Spotlight and Celebrate its Black-owned Businesses

Passport is Available All Month During August

By PRESS OFFICER
National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (July 21, 2025)—National Harbor is celebrating National Black Business Month in August by launching the Black Biz Passport. The initiative will spotlight and celebrate National Harbor's Black-owned businesses. The Black Biz Passport encourages visitors to discover and support Black-owned shops, restaurants and experiences. There will be “National Harbor Black Biz Passport” signs at all participating locations and participants will be listed online as well, www.nationalharbor.com/black-biz-pass/. Each visit to one of the designated venues supports local businesses and enters guests into a drawing to win a grand prize staycation including an overnight at Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center. “We are excited to be able to celebrate and support our many Black-owned businesses,” said Lauren Fells, marketing content manager at Na-

tional Harbor who also organized the event. “There are so many unique shops, restaurants and experiences available at National Harbor. The program is an incentive for guests to discover something new.” Participating businesses range from restaurants like The Brass Tap, to the brand new Wigenton Candles Co and experiences like Sip & Develop and Thread and Sole by Ki-netics Lab. For the full list of Black-owned businesses, visit www.nationalharbor.com/black-owned-businesses. The Black Biz Passport is free, registration is available online or at participating locations. After registering, the passport is delivered via text or email to a mobile device. There are no apps to download. Each participating business has a unique four-digit code displayed at the register for proof of visitation. For additional entries, guest who make a purchase will receive a bonus entry for the prize drawing. For additional information, visit Black Biz Passport: [https://www.nationalharbor.com/black-biz-](https://www.nationalharbor.com/black-biz-pass/)



PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL HARBOR
Learn how to develop old school 35mm black & white film in a fun filled social environment at Sip & Develop.

pass/. For more information on National Harbor, go to www.nationalharbor.com.
Situated on the banks of the historic Potomac River and just minutes from the nation's capital, National Harbor is a waterfront resort destination unlike any other. National Harbor is home to two of Maryland's Four Diamond rated hotels—Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center; the East Coast's largest non-gaming hotel and convention center and has almost 2,000 hotel rooms and 660,000 sq. ft. of meeting space and MGM National Harbor, an integrated luxury casino resort with renowned chef-driven restaurants, a 3,000-seat state-of-the-art theater and one of the largest gaming floors outside of Las Vegas. The vibrant Waterfront District features boutique shops, restaurants and entertainment options along picturesque promenades. The iconic Capital Wheel, a 180-ft observation wheel, Tanger National Harbor's 85 designer brands, and a robust calendar of events round out this destination that welcomes more than 15.2 million visitors a year.

Prince George's County Planning Board Announces New Director Darius A. Stanton for the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (July 18, 2025)—The Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announces its appointment of Darius A. Stanton as the new Director of the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County. Effective Monday, July 21, 2025, Stanton will assume leadership of the Department comprised of more than 5,000 full and part-time employees, an unionized park police force, and a \$492 million operating budget—all support-



PHOTO COURTESY M-NCPPC
Darius A. Stanton, the new Director of the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County.

ing 200+ miles of trails, 300+ athletic fields, four regional parks, four golf courses, an equestrian center, the oldest continuously operating airport in the world, a minor league baseball stadium, community and senior activity centers, ice skating rinks, and more. “Darius A. Stanton is a values-driven leader whose career reflects a deep commitment to results, innovation, and community engagement,” says Darryl Barnes Chairman of the Prince George's County Planning Board. “His experience in public safety, youth development,

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PHOTO COURTESY PGCEDC

PGCEDC Celebrates Successful Launch of Procurement 360: Targeting Opportunities Series

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCEDC

LARGO, Md. (July 24, 2025)—Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) proudly hosted the first installment of its new Procurement 360: Targeting Opportunities series on July 22, 2025, at the City of College Park Council Chambers. Drawing over 100 local entrepreneurs, business owners, and government procurement professionals, the event marked a powerful beginning to a timely and impactful initiative aimed at demystifying procurement and opening pathways for local businesses to thrive. “Procurement 360 was created to give our business community an immersive view of how to navigate and succeed in the government contracting landscape,” said Kimberlee Andrews, Business Development Director for the Government Sector at PGCEDC. “To see such strong participation and engagement from both vendors and agency partners at the kickoff confirms the need for these conversations and connections.” Building on the momentum of Procurement 360: Navigating New Opportunities and the Federal Professionals Entrepreneurship Fair, this new installment focused on “targeting”—

helping entrepreneurs identify and understand specific procurement opportunities across local, state, and federal levels. The session featured expert panelists, matchmaking resources, and direct insights into upcoming contracts in sectors critical to Prince George's County's growth. The Procurement 360 platform is a signature initiative of PGCEDC designed to equip business owners—especially small, minority, veteran, and women-owned businesses—with the tools, relationships, and strategic insights necessary to compete and win in the procurement space. “We are investing in a more inclusive and equitable economy,” said Ebony Stocks, CECd, Interim President & CEO of PGCEDC. “Through Procurement 360, we are ensuring our business community is equipped to access the available contracts awarded each year. This is how we expand opportunity and drive economic growth in Prince George's County.” The next Procurement 360: Targeting Opportunities event is scheduled for August 5, 2025, with the location to be announced soon. To stay updated and register for future events, visit www.pgcadc.com/procurement360.

State of Maryland Releases 2025 Housing Needs Assessment

The report provides new data and analyses concerning Maryland's housing market and housing cost burdens following the COVID-19 pandemic

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (July 24, 2025)—Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day today announced the release of the 2025 State Housing Needs Assessment, which expands on and updates the 2020 Housing Needs Assessment, published in December 2020. Maryland DHCD commissioned the report in 2024 and partnered with the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland College Park to conduct the research and analysis. The 2025 Assessment explores the scope and impact of Maryland's housing gap, particularly for low-income and elderly households. “Marylanders want more affordable housing, lower rent, and, ultimately, a chance at homeownership. They want government to play a greater role in delivering on these basic expectations. To find solutions that work, we need to assess the problems honestly and re-

alistically,” said Secretary Day. “Thanks to the National Center of Smart Growth for their work in producing this year's Maryland Housing Needs Assessment, which further underscores that our state's lack of housing, especially affordable housing, is hurting the budgets of everyday Marylanders and hampering Maryland's economic growth. The 2025 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment is comprised of an Executive Summary and three separate studies, each focused on a specific topic. The Executive Summary details how the housing problems faced by vulnerable populations relate to larger housing affordability issues for all Marylanders based on key findings across the three studies. Some key findings of the report include: • Housing production has not notably increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; the State will need approximately 590,186 new units to accommodate projected household growth through 2045. Chronic underproduction exacerbates the mismatch of supply and demand, resulting

in high housing cost burdens. • Maryland's regulatory landscape has tended to emphasize local control of land-use decisions, but local governments have used their authority to restrict housing development through low-density zoning, APFOs, and urban containment strategies that are the main drivers of high housing costs across the state. • Homeownership is increasingly out of reach for Marylanders, with only 49% of moderate-income households able to afford the median home in 2022, down from 75% in 2000. • Maryland's older adult population is increasing, with older adults aged 65+ projected to make up 21% of the total state population by 2040. Maryland currently lacks sufficient housing options, including notably age-restricted affordable housing, to meet the needs of its aging population. • The burdens of housing costs and afford-

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ChildWatch:
EDUCATION

“Strong Schools Brighter Futures!”

Just as the scholars in CDF Freedom Schools programs know what kinds of schools they want and deserve, students across the country deserve schools that will allow them to thrive.
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Gwen McCall-Winston Is the New Deputy
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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

With Mary McHale, will return soon!

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

DR. SHERECE Y. WEST-SCANTLEBURY

Congratulations to Dr. Sherece Y. West-Scantlebury, who graduated from Bowie State University in ’87, and who was named a 2025 Top Women Leaders in Non-profit by Women We Admire. Dr. West-Scantlebury is the President and CEO of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, a private foundation that seeks to disrupt the systems that block Arkansans, who are striving to get out of poverty.

PURCHASE A PIECE OF BSU HISTORY

Purchase an authentic commemorative brick from the original Martin Luther King, Jr. Building, hand-selected and preserved prior to its demolition. Quantities are limited, and deliveries will begin later this summer. Actual Brick from MLK Building in an Acrylic Display Case shipped directly to your house \$160. Brick reads MLK BLDG 1973–2024. Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts & Humanities Building.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships to foster safer, more caring places to live and work. This is a great opportunity to meet your neighbors and local officers, to learn about crime prevention, enjoy good food and family friendly activities.

Here is the list of Prince George’s County locations for this year’s National Night Out: <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/news-events/news/celebrate-national-night-out-2025-pgpd>. Tuesday, August 5, 2025. We hope to see you there! Clinton District V Community Location: District V CAC, Baden Firehouse, 16608 Brandywine Road, Brandywine, Maryland. Time: 5–8 p.m.

CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Clinton United Methodist Church Art as Therapy (Mental Health) Beauty for Ashes Retreat Friday, September 19, 2025, via Zoom at 7 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. (Prayer Garden & Multipurpose Room) cost is \$25 per person (lunch included in registration fee). Church address is 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland 20735. Church Office: 301-868-1281. Email: cumcmd@verizon.net.

CLINTON VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

“Our Vacation Bible School was a tremendous success. Many volunteers made a commitment to provide leadership during VBS. These leaders shared the Word of God with others. We now want to say Thank You.” Rev. Melaina Trice

“Leaders, thank you for the work you have done to make VBS such a success. Thank you for serving God and guiding children to trust God in every situation! On behalf of the congregation, I want to say how deeply we appreciate the gifts you offered of your time, talents, and service.” Rev. Melaina Trice.

“Thanks to all the parents and children in the community who made Clinton United Methodist Church Vacation Bible School a tremendous success.” Also, thanks to Rev. Melaina Trice and all the leaders and helpers who worked with me. You are deeply appreciated for all your help.” Audrey Johnson, Vacation Bible School Director.

COME BACK GIVE BACK CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

Morgan State University Southern Maryland Alumni Chapter Annual Scholarship Fundraiser will be held Saturday September 13, 2025, 20th Anniversary of the founding of their Chapter from 7–11 p.m. 20th Anniversary at Waldorf Jaycees Community Center, 3090 Crain Highway, Waldorf, Maryland 20601. For Dinner Dance tickets MESSAGE CENTER: 720-716-6117, EMAIL: msusmac@gmail.com. Victor Watson 202-215-3656.

CRAB FEAST

We will have a Crab Feast on Sunday, October 12, 2025, from 2–5 p.m. All YOU CAN EAT; ALL YOU CAN LOVE! At St. Phillip’s Church Hall, 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. All tickets in advance are \$60.00 Adults, \$25.00 12 & under. Land Lovers Food and Drinks included. Tickets: Vivian 804-301-9530, Shirley 302-690-4260, Michele 240-882-3369. Peter A. Gross, Sr. Scholarship/Memorial Fund “Proceeds Go to Future Scholarships.”

PHSAA

Good News: We are trying to find other ways of communicating with you, we have 124 people on our Facebook page (Pomomkey High School Alumni Association) and 65 members on our email list. “Like us” on Facebook to stay informed of our most recent news! If you are not familiar with using Facebook or other forms of social media (and computers, or cell phones), your grandkids are excellent helpers. They use social media all the time and can teach you or help you find the answers. They can access the site for you on your device. Use this free expert service you have at your fingertips. Do not be embarrassed. You taught them and their parents how to use a spoon. Let them teach you.

POMONKEY HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI DAY

Pomomkey High School Alumni Day will be held at Penny’s Estate in Marbury, Maryland on Saturday, August 9, 2025. Come for an afternoon filled with conversation, entertainment, food, games, and fun. Check Facebook for the latest details. Save the Dates and please add it to your calendar: October 2025: Casino Trip. More details soon. Check Facebook. November 15, 2025: Dinner Dance at St. Joseph’s Hall, Pomfret, Maryland.

FOODEES FEST

The Food Culture Festival will be held at Tanger National Harbor on October 17, 2025, at 1 p.m. Tanger Outlets National Harbor, 6800 Oxon Hill Road, National Harbor, Maryland 20745. Tickets and information: Visit Eventbrite, the Destination Magazine, AllEvents.

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University is a public historically black university in Prince George’s County, Maryland, north of Bowie. It is part of the University System of Maryland. Founded in 1865, Bowie State is Maryland’s oldest historically black university and one of the ten oldest in the country. Wikipedia. Mascot: Bulldog. Colors: Black, Gold.

Educational Systems Federal Credit Union Named 2025 Top Workplace Industry Award Winner

By PRESS OFFICER
Educational Systems FCU

GREENBELT, Md. (July 25, 2025)—Educational Systems Federal Credit Union is proud to announce it has been named a recipient of the 2025 Top Workplace Industry Award for Credit Unions by Energage, a leading HR technology and research company. This prestigious national recognition celebrates organizations that prioritize workplace culture and employee engagement.

The Top Workplace Industry Awards are based on Energage’s confidential, research-backed employee engagement survey, which assesses organizations using comprehensive industry benchmarks. The results are derived from nearly 20 years of culture research and millions of employee voices nationwide.

“Receiving the 2025 Top Workplace Industry Award is a true testament to our Ambassador-driven culture,” said Girado Smith, President/CEO of Educational Systems Federal Credit Union. “We refer to our employees as Ambassadors because they are more

than just employees. They are passionate advocates for our mission and a key differentiator in how we serve school employees, students, families and employees of education-related organizations. We prioritize creating a supportive, engaging and inclusive environment, and this recognition reaffirms our continued dedication to that vision.”

This recognition builds on the Credit Union’s recent achievement of being named a 2025 Top Workplace in the Washington, D.C. area by The Washington Post. Educational Systems FCU is proud to be recognized at both the regional and national levels for their commitment to a strong workplace culture.

Educational Systems FCU joins esteemed organizations across various sectors recognized for building exceptional workplace cultures. Energage partners with more than 60 prominent media outlets nationwide to identify and honor outstanding workplaces.

To learn more about the Credit Union’s most recent recognition, visit <https://topworkplaces.com/company/educational-systems-fede/>

tems-fede/

Educational Systems Federal Credit Union has proudly served the education community since 1955. With \$1.2 billion in assets and 13 branches, the Credit Union serves over 90,000 members of the education community including school employees, students, parents and individuals working for education-related organizations. For more information and to explore career opportunities with the award-winning organization, visit www.esfcu.org.

Energage is an HR technology company committed to building and promoting award-winning, people-first cultures. As the research firm powering the Top Workplaces employer recognition program, Energage leverages employee survey insights to identify and celebrate exceptional organizations at regional, national and industry levels. Our all-in-one platform equips companies to attract top talent and unlock potential. Visit www.energage.com and <https://topworkplaces.com>.

Register now for “The Woods in Your Backyard” Online Course

Monday, September 8 to November 17, 2025

By PRESS OFFICER
University of Maryland Extension

Looking to learn something new this fall that can improve your property’s natural areas? Join us for the fall 2025 session of “The Woods in Your Backyard” online course from the University of Maryland Extension’s Woodland Stewardship Education program. Our self-directed, non-credit course runs 10 weeks from September 8 to November 17, 2025, and allows you to work at your own pace from home without needing to attend evening or weekend workshops. The course provides strategies, such as converting lawn

to natural areas and enhancing existing natural areas, to landowners of small parcels of land (1-10 acres) that improve the stewardship of their property for personal enjoyment and environmental quality. It features a hands-on learning approach to help participants develop and implement a plan for their property. Activities include learning how to map habitat areas, understanding basic ecological principles about woodland and wildlife, choosing and implementing a few habitat management projects, and setting a timetable and recording your progress. Online discussion groups will allow participants to interact with others taking the course. A

certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed.

The course costs \$125.00 per person, which includes the 108-page “Woods in Your Backyard” guide, workbook, and a tree identification guide. The course is limited to 25 participants, so sign up now! Registration closes September 8 or when filled. Registration is through Eventbrite; go to <https://go.umd.edu/WIYB-Fall25>.

For more information, go to https://go.umd.edu/the_course, or contact course coordinator Andrew Kling, University of Maryland Extension, aking1@umd.edu, 301-226-7564.

Calendar of Events

City of District Heights National Night Out 2025

Date and time: Tuesday, August 5, 5–8 p.m.
Description: The District Heights Police Department is excited to announce our annual National Night Out event! National Night Out is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen community spirit and foster partnerships between our police and residents. Let’s come together for a night filled with fun, food, and activities! Enjoy live entertainment, meet your neighbors, and show support for our community’s safety and unity. See you there!
Location: 2000 Marbury Drive, District Heights, MD 20747

National Night Out with PGPD Division V

Date and time: Tuesday, August 5, 5–8 p.m.
Description: Join the District 9 community for a night of fun, and connection at National Night Out. This free family-friendly event, hosted by the Prince George’s County Police Department Division V and the Citizen Advisory Council, features games, door prizes, music, and food—all designed to strengthen police-community partnerships and promote neighborhood camaraderie. Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, friends, family, and neighbors (service animals welcome!) for a memorable evening that celebrates safety and togetherness.
Location: Baden Volunteer Fire Dept., 16608 Brandywine Road, Brandywine, MD 20613

Join the Cheverly Police Department for National Night Out

Date and time: Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 6–8 p.m.
Description: An evening of community, connection, and celebration. We hope to see you!
Location: 6400 Block of Landover Rd, Cheverly, MD 20785

City of Bowie National Night Out

Date and time: Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 6–8 p.m.
Description: This two-hour event will feature food, entertainment, and prizes. It is open to everyone, and all are encouraged to join. National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to foster safer, more caring places to live and work.
Location: Allen Pond Park, 3330 Northview Drive, Bowie, MD 20716

SAFE SUMMER PROGRAM

Hand Building with Clay

Date and time: Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 8–10 p.m.
Description: Build a vase, cup, or sculpt a figure with your hands at the Montpelier Arts Center using air dry clay. Once the clay is dry you can paint it to your heart’s desire.
Cost: Free. Tickets at ParksDirect. Ticket code: MAC-SPEC-GA-20250805
Ages: Teens ages 12–17
Location: Montpelier Arts Center, 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, MD 20708
Contact: 301-377-7800, montpelierarts@pgparks.com

History of Ice Cream in Colonial America

Date and time: Wednesday, August 13, 2025, 10:30–11:30 a.m.
Description: Beat the heat with everyone’s favorite cold treat! Learn how ice cream was made in the colonial period, what flavors were most popular, and how it has a fun Maryland connection.
Cost: Ticket Price: \$5, chaperones are free. Register on ParksDirect
Ages: 6–14
Location: Darnall’s Chance Historic Site, 14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Experience South Africa Through Music

Date and time: Saturday, August 23, 2025, 2–4 p.m.
Description: Join us for a spectacular live performance featuring America’s Got Talent 2023 Alumni group Mzansi Youth Choir. Come experience the Rhythm, Harmony, and South African spirit.
Cost: Free. Register <https://sankofafoundationinc.net/>
Location: Tanger Outlet National Harbor, 6800 Oxon Hill Rd, National Harbor, MD 20745

Military & Veteran Networking Event

Date and time: Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 4–7 p.m.
Description: University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) invites you to attend our 2025 Military and Veteran Networking Event (MilVet Net), a no-cost event highlighting national, regional, and local support services available to military servicemembers, veterans, spouses, families, and caregivers. Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), nonprofits, and employers will be available to meet with you and answer your questions. Plus, you’ll have the opportunity to get professional headshots taken! Includes Complimentary dinner.
Cost: No-cost admission, No-cost parking. Register: <https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=847294>
Location: College Park Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, 3501 University Blvd E, Hyattsville, MD 20783

Behind the Scenes with Jason Loewith:

In Conversation With Marlee Matlin

Academy Award-Winning Actress & Activist

Date and time: Tuesday, September 9, 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Description: Join us for an unforgettable evening with Academy Award-winning actress, director, producer, author, and activist Marlee Matlin. From Hollywood’s spotlight to global advocacy, Ms. Matlin shares her powerful story—breaking barriers, challenging norms, and inspiring hearts. This event promises insight, inspiration, and impact. Listeners come away informed and empowered to make a difference in the world, with the knowledge that they can begin by changing just one person’s life.
Cost: Tickets are \$55 Regular, \$53 Seniors, \$5 MC Students w/ID (Student tickets must be purchased through the box office.)
Location: Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD 20850
Contact: Box Office: 240-567-5301, www.montgomerycollege.edu/pac

COMMUNITY

Housing Resource Fair

By PRESS OFFICER
UCAP

United Communities Against Poverty (UCAP) will be hosting a housing resource fair on **Wednesday, August 20** from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. UCAP is Prince George County’s leading anti-poverty agency. This event is a day dedicated to empow-

ering residents with the tools and information they need to navigate the changing housing landscape. Whether you’re buying, selling, renting or facing foreclosure, you can receive expert advice and resources. Meet with certified housing counselors, employment resources, estate planning, energy assistance and many

more. Participate in sessions on topics such as mortgage readiness, credit repair and affordable housing. UCAP is located at 1400 Doewood Lane in Capitol Heights, Maryland. This event is free and open to all.

For more information contact 301-322-5700 ext 172 or email jjglover@ucappgc.org.



WINE & JAZZ at MARIETTA

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta House Museum

Please join us on **Saturday, August 2**, at 2 p.m. for our 12th Annual Wine & Jazz at Marietta event, (rain date is Aug. 9). We are happy to introduce a new jazz group to our audience; The Hyattsville Jazz Collective will perform from 2–4 p.m. This ensemble has a different sound with trombone, horn, and other brass. We look forward to hearing their syncopated rhythms! Starting at 4:30 p.m. until closing, a longtime Wine and Jazz at Marietta favorite, AJQ Plus 1, will perform their classic jazz and other fan favorites.

Bring your chairs and blankets and enjoy the day. Please, no tents or large umbrellas. Food trucks, vendors, authors, and tastings from four Maryland wineries!

Ages 21 & up. \$10/person. Cash only at the door. To register in advance, please use www.pgparksdirect.com and use the ticket code MHM-SPEC-GA-20250802. For information call 301-464-5291 or email: mariettahouse@pgparks.com.

Marietta House Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Time Travel to Fun

The 2025 Maryland Renaissance Festival

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Renaissance Festival

The Maryland Renaissance Festival, a tradition for the entire family, begins its 49th season **August 23** and runs Saturdays and Sundays and Labor Day Monday through October 19th for nine weekends of thrills, feasting, handmade crafts, entertainment and merriment in Crownsville, near Annapolis, Maryland.

The 27 acre Village of Revel Grove comes to life each autumn with more than 200 professional performers on ten stages, a 3,000 seat arena with armored jousting on magnificent steeds and streets filled with village characters. Join His Most Royal Highness King Henry VIII in the forests and glades with over 140 artisans exhibiting crafts in their own renaissance shops, five taverns featuring cool libations, 42 food and beverage emporiums providing a vast array of succulent and sweet treats to sate even the most hearty of appetites.

The almost continuous entertainment on all ten stages features many returning favorite performers: Shakespeare’s Skum with rollicking twenty-minute renditions of the Bard’s most popular plays; A Fool Named “O” and LaLa mime show; walk with nobility through the village with King Henry and his Royal Court. Minstrels, magicians, musicians, jugglers, daring feats of skill and artistry abound. Returning this season is the jousting troupe Debracey Productions with a field full of horses, men in armor, chariots, trick riding and thrills for all ages. Major additional acts include Topsy Turvy, Markita’s One-Woman Stunt Show; Piper Jones; The Queen of Hoops, Paolo Gar-

SPECIAL WEEKENDS FOR 2025!

Discounts for all, first three weekends! August 23 through September 7 all tickets are reduced without any coupons or special purchases required. Peak season pricing begins for the weekend of September 13 and continues through October 19. Visit www.rennfest.com for pricing, directions, and each weekend’s scheduling and event info.

Children’s Weekend: August 23 and 24—One child aged 7 through 15 is admitted free with each adult ticket purchased. Children 6 and under are always free! No ticket required from the website for the free admission!

Seniors Day, Labor Day Monday, September 1—All seniors 62+ are admitted free. Seniors do not need a ticket. You may arrive and proceed directly to the gate.

Myth & Magic Weekend: September 6 & 7—Celebrate the myths and legends of the British Isles and special magic performances!

Pirate Adventure Weekend: September 13 & 14—Pirate music and mayhem! Dress to impress in your piratical best!

Celtic Celebration: September 20 & 21—Join festival favorites and special guests as we focus on a celebration of Celtic music!

Visit www.rennfest.com for more special weekends, pricing, directions, and each weekend’s scheduling and event info.

banzo; Hilby, the Skinny German Juggle Boy amazes and confuses; the enormously popular Jacques Ze Whipper for three weekends, and Barely Balanced’s acrobatic

antics, and in the 52nd year of their enormously popular comedy sword fighting and witty repartee Puke and Snot bedazzle with their fast paced humor. Add in a village full of stilt walkers, beggars, hermits, wenches, pick pockets, rakes and rogues for an entertainment experience not only to be seen but to be immersed amongst. Visit www.rennfest.com/entertainment for a full listing and their dates.

The Maryland Renaissance Festival’s reputation of unique and predominately handmade wares by the very artists in their renaissance shops is among the best in the realm of festivals. Metal work, wood sculpture, jewelry, furniture, clothing, footwear, ceramics, stained glass, headwear, glassblowing and many demonstrating craftsmen fill the shops and studios.

The King’s kitchens prepare a sumptuous feast of delicious and wondrous delights to satisfy most any Lord or Lady. One pound smoked turkey legs, steak on a stake, fresh crepes, stuffed chili peppers, gyros, succulent ribs, a fresh seafood raw bar, sweet concoctions and tender sandwiches of chicken, fish, crab, beef and pork with bountiful servings of all manner of sides add to your table. Cool, mild drinks and an array of ales, ciders and wines cleanse your pallet and refresh your constitution.

The first three weekends, from August 23 through September 7, the Festival reduces pricing for all without coupons or special purchasing required to offer family friendly entertainment pricing. Tickets beginning September 13 through October 19 are for peak season and still among the lowest of any renaissance festival in the country. More information is available at www.rennfest.com.

LOCAL WARMING: CLIMATE CHANGE IN MARYLAND—FINAL PART

Trump Administration Policies Pose Threats to Maryland’s Ambitious Climate Efforts

By SAM GAUNTT
Capital News Service

The low-lying coastal community of Crisfield, on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, lost a federal grant aimed at preventing flooding and managing sea-level rise, while universities and research institutions across the state face extensive funding cuts.

Disappearing, too, are federal incentives to move to clean energy sources—replaced by President Donald Trump’s effort to repeal state laws aimed at addressing climate change.

Meanwhile, scores of employees at federal environmental agencies, including many from Maryland, have already lost or could soon lose their jobs.

All of that is happening for one simple reason that U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins spelled out May 8 on Fox Business.

Under the Trump administration, “We’re not doing that climate change, you know, crud anymore,” Rollins said.

Trump has long called climate change “a hoax,” and since returning to office in January, his administration has treated it as that. This about-face in federal climate policy is impacting almost every aspect of Maryland’s efforts to address environmental and climate issues, as well as those of states across the country, environmental leaders said.

Climate change experts and state government officials warn these funding cuts and other federal actions could potentially set Maryland’s climate efforts back years.

The changes come at a delicate time for the state’s environment, regardless of the federal government.

Maryland entered its annual legislative session at the beginning of the year facing a \$3 billion budget deficit, leading Gov. Wes Moore to direct the state to cut more than \$250 million from its four environmental agencies.

On top of that, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science recently downgraded the Chesapeake Bay’s health from a “C+” to a “C” in its annual report card due to worsening weather patterns.

In an interview, Adam Ortiz, deputy secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment,

said the Trump administration has put the state’s climate, environmental and clean energy projects “on the chopping block.”

“The biggest exposure and liability is to everyday people,” he said.

The money

Crisfield, a city of about 2,500 in Somerset County, lost out on \$36 million in flood-prevention funding when the Federal Emergency Management Agency canceled its Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program in April. That was just one small part of the Trump administration’s government-wide effort to slash climate-related funding.

Canceling that one FEMA program cost the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed nearly \$1 billion in federal funding, the Chesapeake Bay Journal reported.

FEMA, in a since-deleted news release, called the grant program “wasteful and ineffective.” But Rep. Sarah Elfreth, whose 3rd District includes flood-prone communities in Anne Arundel County, begged to differ.

“Now, towns like Crisfield in Maryland and Baltimore and dozens of communities across this nation rely on this funding to ward off the very real and very devastating effects of flooding,” she said on the House floor in April. “Flooding will continue to devastate communities, even if the president does not believe in climate change.”

Elfreth has already been proven to be correct. Through July 15, the National Weather Service issued 3,045 flood warnings this year—more than any year in modern history. This summer’s floods range from those that led to a state of emergency in Western Maryland in May and the flash floods that hit the northern D.C. area on July 19 to the July 4 torrent in Texas that has claimed more than 130 lives.

FEMA’s decision to cut the disaster mitigation program hasn’t gone unchallenged. On July 16, a coalition of 20 states, including Maryland, filed a lawsuit in federal court in Massachusetts disputing the agency’s authority to cut the program without prior approval from Congress and seeking a permanent injunction to restore its funding.

In a statement on July 16, Maryland Attorney

General Anthony Brown said that it is “the worst possible time to cut life-saving disaster preparedness funding.”

“Any community in Maryland can be struck by a devastating natural disaster that forever changes the lives of those who live there,” Brown said.

The Trump administration isn’t just cutting flood-control funding. Over the last six months, Trump has sought to cancel more than \$23.3 billion in clean energy grants nationwide, according to the Climate Program Portal.

Trump is also seeking to cut billions in funding for federal environmental agencies, including a roughly \$2 billion proposed cut to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and a proposed almost \$5 billion cut to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Because federal agencies are picking up less of the bill, the state has been forced to find new ways to generate revenue to cover spending on climate, environmental and energy projects, said Ortiz, the EPA’s former top administrator for the mid-Atlantic region. One way has been by increasing the cost of inspection and enforcement fees that haven’t been raised in decades.

“The state is trying to pick up a lot of the slack, since the federal government has abandoned its support role,” Ortiz said.

The UMD Center for Environmental Science hasn’t yet lost any grants of which it was the primary recipient, but it has lost some grants of which it was a co-lead or secondary recipient, said Dave Nemazie, the center’s interim vice president for administration and finance.

More than anything, Nemazie said, the center has seen an “overall slowdown” of both getting awards and of communication with federal partners.

He said the center, which typically receives about 60% of its external funding from the federal government, is facing a 25% reduction in grants and awards for the 2026 fiscal year.

“The spigot is not flowing as fast,” he said. “And the communication has been much more complicated than it has in the past.”

Kristin Reilly, director of the Maryland-based Choose Clean Water Coalition, said funding cuts

could have a “major impact” on Maryland’s climate restoration efforts.

“Pretty much anything that you’re doing at the state level, there is a need for some level of federal investment that’s been counted on, that’s been incorporated and calculated into the state budgets,” she said. “If that isn’t going to continue, we’re going to have to make some really tough choices and have some really serious conversations, especially here in Maryland.”

The policies

The recently passed “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” Trump’s signature policy effort, will have broad impacts on climate change and environmental justice funding and programs, too.

The budget reconciliation bill, signed into law by Trump in early July, removed incentives for clean energy, electric vehicles and efficient homes, which the bill describes as “Green New Deal subsidies.”

Marisa Olszewski, the Maryland League of Conservation Voters’ manager for environment and community, described the current landscape as an “assault” on clean energy.

The U.S. is throwing away its position as a global leader in clean energy, said Olszewski, who is married to Rep. Johnny Olszewski, D-Sparrows Point.

“Once you pull back on that, it’s not like the rest of the world is going to wait for us to come back around and develop the technology, or put out the research,” she said. “They’re going to go ahead and do it without us.”

Many of Trump’s executive actions have also taken aim at clean energy programs.

In April, he signed an executive order titled “Protecting American Energy From State Overreach,” which ordered the attorney general to immediately identify and challenge the legality of state climate laws.

“Many states have enacted, or are in the process of enacting, burdensome and ideologically motivated ‘climate change’ or energy policies that threaten American energy dominance and our economic and national security,” Trump said.

That executive order never mentioned Maryland, but it took issue with a carbon trading program in California that is similar to one formed by a group of states, including Maryland.

COMMENTARY

Marian Wright Edelman
*Founder and President Emerita,
Children’s Defense Fund*



ChildWatch: EDUCATION

“Strong Schools Brighter Futures!”

“Strong Schools Brighter Futures!”
“School helps me grow!”
“I can get into good trouble!”
“What do we want? GOOD SCHOOLS!
When do we want them? NOW!”
These are just a few of the messages students in grades K–12 at Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools® summer programs chanted and carried on handmade signs at marches and rallies across the country for their July 23 National Day of Social Action project. More than 12,000 scholars in CDF Freedom Schools programs participate in this annual event, a collective organizing effort centered around CDF’s mission to build community so young people grow up with dignity, hope, and joy. The day is always led by young people with support from caring adults and community members, and together they organize, mobilize, and raise awareness about an issue that directly

affects their lives and futures. This year’s event focused on the message “Public Education is a Public Good,” reflecting CDF’s core belief that education is a building block for civic life and work and has a major impact on children and young people’s ability to flourish.
The scholars’ joyful, urgent calls for strong public schools couldn’t have been planned for a timelier moment, as some adults are seeking new ways to undermine the nation’s public education system right now. But as CDF puts it: “We believe public education is a cornerstone of democracy, opportunity, and justice. When we invest in education, we invest in the leadership, well-being, and futures of our children and youth . . . Education is more than academics. It shapes our communities, our democracy, and our collective future. Public education is one of the most powerful tools for social mobility. Investing in education helps every

child, no matter their background, reach their full potential. When we center public education as a common good, we bring people together across divides.”
CDF cites data showing our students deserve better:
• Schools in the United States spend an average of \$20,387 per pupil, the third highest spending among the 40 other developed nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but statewide funding formulas and allocations create gaps in the amount of funding actually spent per child. This leads to similarly wide gaps in access and outcomes.
• The U.S. spends 2.7 times as much per person on incarceration as on public education.
• Thirteen states have no civics course requirement, and only seven require a full year of government or civics instruction.
• While the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause requires states to provide equal access to schooling, *Plyer v. Doe* ruled that undocumented children can’t be barred from attending public schools, *Board of Education v. Rowley* stated that schools must accommodate students with disabilities, and *Brown v. Board of Education* declared separate but equal schooling illegal, nothing in our country or courts guarantees the right to an education. In fact, in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*, the Supreme Court found that education is not ex-

PLICITLY protected by the Constitution.
Our children and young people do indeed deserve more. CDF also notes that research shows lifting up public education as a public good with a proven track record of contributing to democracy, workforce development, and civic engagement unifies people with differing perspectives. Loud and widespread support for this unifying message is sorely needed right now. As CDF sums it up: “Education is the foundation for children and youth to build upon to ensure a successful, healthy, engaged, and safe adulthood. We must continue to uplift public education as a necessary investment, tout its successes, and work together to advocate for necessary improvements.”
As students prepare to start a new year in the next few weeks, what kinds of classrooms and school communities will they find? Will their schools be fully equipped and fully committed to preparing every child, no matter their background, to reach their full potential? Or will their experiences vary more widely than ever from school to school and state to state? Will adults be working together to strengthen local public school systems for all students, or tearing those systems apart? Just as the scholars in CDF Freedom Schools programs know what kinds of schools they want and deserve, students across the country deserve schools that will allow them to thrive. Adults everywhere must do their part to step up, speak out, and vote to support them.

—July 25, 2025

Marc Morial
President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Combined Purchasing Power of Black and Latino Consumers Is too Great for Companies Retreating on DEI to Ignore

“Who will try to blend communities of color during a time the administration would like to see it kept apart? A strong combined effort would turn politics and the economy on its head by creating a single voice of people tired of being relegated to society’s second class. Who will step up?”
—Ray Marcano

They may not be making as much noise as the extremists who boycott LGBTQ + inclusive brands, but communities of color are quietly flexing their economic muscle against companies who abandon diversity, equity, and inclusion policies.
The combined spending power of Black and Latino Americans—who make up more than 30%

of the U.S. population—is \$6 trillion. That’s larger than the economies of every nation on earth except the United States and China.
Companies who kowtow to extremist demands to abandon their commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion policies are sacrificing their bottom line for political expediency. Even though there’s been no call for communities of color to join forces in a large-scale, organized boycott, companies who backtracked are losing out to companies who stood firm in their commitments.
As shareholder activist Andrew Behar recently told Fortune magazine, the Trump administration’s crusade against diversity, equity, and inclusion is forcing companies to underperform.
“This is an anti-capitalist, anti-freedom, anti-democracy crusade that is being waged to try to suppress information and suppress shareholders from having the disclosure and the information they need to make good fiduciary decisions,” Behar said.
Without calling for a boycott or singling out any particular business, the NAACP earlier this year issued a Black Consumer Advisory, encour-

aging people to spend their money where they’re respected, to support Black-owned businesses, and to demand that businesses prioritize people over profit.
But it turns out that prioritizing people actually is profitable. And the financial consequences of failing to do so are potentially enormous.
DEI strategist Joseph Santana wrote, “CEOs that cut DEI initiatives miscalculated the market impact, incurring costly consequences in a business landscape where talent, consumers, and investors demand alignment with modern values.”
During the Essence Festival of Culture in New Orleans earlier this month, a panel titled “We Drive Prosperity: Impact of Black and Brown Businesses on the Economy” brought together Robert Hartwell, host of HBO Max’s “Breaking New Ground;” Juan Proaño, CEO of League of United Latin American Citizens, and Elis Clementino, head of strategic relationships at NVH Studios.
Their message: “Black and Brown communities already have the economic power—they just need to use it together.”

—July 25, 2025

Last Chance to Catch UniverSoul Circus’ High-Flying Thrills Before the Final Show Sunday, Aug. 10 at National Harbor

A Ticketmaster “Top 10 Most Requested Family Event,” UniverSoul Circus Has Wowed Over 25 Million Fans With Jaw-Dropping Stunts, Music, Dance and Cultural Celebration

By PRESS OFFICER
UniverSoul Circus

WASHINGTON (July 28, 2025)—Only a few fearless flips and fire-breathing feats left! UniverSoul Circus enters its final days of entertaining families in the greater D.C. region under the big top at National Harbor (268 Waterfront St., National Harbor, MD 20745). Celebrating 31 years, the internationally acclaimed circus—which runs through Sunday, Aug. 10—brings together world-class talent in a high-energy,

interactive cultural celebration filled with vibrant music, dance, costumes, comedy and more. Tickets start at \$25 and are available at Ticketmaster.com (ticket fees apply). Performance times are 7 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays; noon, 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Saturdays; and noon, 3 and 6:30 p.m. on Sundays.
Rated as one of Ticketmaster’s “Top 10 Most Requested Family Events,” UniverSoul Circus has entertained over 25 million people with its unique blend of circus arts, theater and live music. The show spans genres including R&B, Latin, hip hop, jazz, gospel,

pop and the infectious beats of world music. The diverse cast of performers, representing five continents, promises to dazzle and entertain with their acrobatic feats, comedic antics and cultural displays.
More than a performance, UniverSoul is an exhilarating, all-ages celebration where audiences from every background come together and feel like one big global family.
For more information, ticket prices, show times, and schedules, visit universoulcircus.com.

Policies from A3

In addition, the executive order could lead to a federal attack on Maryland’s Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, which sets statewide greenhouse gas emissions goals, energy efficiency standards for new buildings and other climate-related measures. County-level actions—such as a Montgomery County law banning gas appliances in new buildings—could be challenged, too.
“Should the U.S. attorney general choose to target either the state of Maryland, Maryland’s counties, or both, the effect on Maryland’s energy landscape as well as local control could be dramatic,” Dominic J. Butchko, director of intergovernmental relations at the Maryland Association of Counties, wrote in a blog post shortly after Trump issued that executive order.
Trump signed a different executive order in January, which halted all federal approval of new wind farms, and has sought to roll back or cancel wind energy projects across the country. While the Maryland Offshore

Wind Project located off the coast of Ocean City, one of the state’s signature clean energy projects, had already been approved by the federal government, it too has been caught up in administrative hurdles.
On July 7, the EPA informed Maryland regulators the state’s air quality permit for the project had an error, and ordered them to revise and reissue the permit. The state does not plan to reissue the permit, Maryland Environment Secretary Serena McIlwain wrote in a July 17 letter to the agency.
The people
Federal and state agencies haven’t just lost money. They’ve lost people.
Few states are more at risk from the federal government’s sweeping layoffs than Maryland, where more than 6% of residents are employed by the federal government.
Maryland is home to almost 230,000 federal workers, the third-largest number in the U.S. Among those workers include scores of scientists, researchers and environmental experts. NOAA and the Smithsonian

Environmental Research Center call Maryland home. Other agencies, including the EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy have sizable presences in the state.
These agencies, including the EPA, play a key role in helping oversee and fund many of the state’s most extensive environmental and climate projects, such as its efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay.
EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin announced in May that the agency will cut staffing levels to those it had during the Ronald Reagan administration in the 1980s. On July 18, the agency announced it would shutter its research and development office and implement a large-scale “reduction in force,” which, combined with previous personnel changes, would decrease the agency’s workforce by about 23%.
More than 500 Maryland residents worked for the EPA in 2024, according to data from the federal Office of Personnel Management.
Ortiz said changes in federal departments and agencies will impact Maryland’s ability to

carry out environmental work, as many of its authorities are delegated to the state by the federal government.
“Often we do need a thumbs up, a nod or an approval to carry out various programs,” he said. “That responsiveness will be slower. Areas that we’ve been investing in to try to fix long-standing challenges are going to be weakened and slowed because we don’t have that partnership.”
Nemazie, of the UMD Center for Environmental Science, said the center has implemented a hiring freeze while it works to cut its costs. About 40% of its staff is supported solely by external grants and contracts, he said.
Some federal cuts targeting environment-focused positions, however, have been overturned in the courts.
The administration halted funding to the federal AmeriCorps program in April, which impacted hundreds of Maryland workers, including dozens at the Maryland Conservation Corps. But in June, a federal judge in Maryland ordered the Trump administration to reinstate funding for AmeriCorps positions.

Ortiz said the state is working to make “smart and strategic decisions” on how to handle federal cuts and policy changes. But he added as state officials make plans, new events are unfolding

at “an almost hourly pace.”
“We want to react, but we also don’t want to overreact,” he said. “This is uncharted waters. So it’s no easy answers, and there’s certainly no playbook.”

The Prince George’s Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

I’m Turning 70. When Should I Apply for Social Security?

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

Dear Rusty: I have a very simple question: I will turn 70 on September 20th and want to start my Social Security benefits in September. What month should I file my claim? Have there been delays with the reductions in SSA staff? Thank you for your help.
Signed: Ready to Claim.

Dear Ready to Claim: Social Security allows you to submit your application for benefits up to 4 months prior to the month you wish benefits to start (you will specify your desired benefit-start-month on the application). Thus, to have your benefits begin in September (the month you turn 70), you can submit your application as early as May 2025. That will give SS plenty of time to get your benefits started on time. Remember, though, that SS pays benefits in the month following the month earned, so if you start benefits in September, you will receive your first SS payment in October (on the 3rd Wednesday). And, since you will be turning 70 in September you are entitled to full benefits effective from the first of that month. Congratulations on choosing a strategy which maximizes your monthly payment. By claiming at age 70, your monthly SS benefit will be about 31% more than it would have been at your full retirement age, and you will get that higher monthly amount for the rest of your life.

Re your question about possible delays, Social Security staff reductions have not included “front line” agents (those who handle applications), so the SS recent staff adjustments should not likely delay processing your application. Although some back-office staffing turmoil currently exists at SSA, they have been moving more people to front-line positions to try to improve their service. Just be aware, however, that it normally takes the SSA about 2 to 3 months to process new applications, which is why they allow applications up to 4 months in advance. You will specify the month you wish benefits to start on your application. In any case, although your application should be fine if you submit it this month, rest assured that they will pay you starting with the month you requested, even if they must do so retroactively.

FYI, you can apply for Social Security in person by making a telephone appointment to do so at 1.800.772.1213, or you can apply online at www.ssa.gov/apply. To apply online, you need to have first created your “my Social Security” online account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Here is a video which explains the online application process: www.ssa.gov/hlp/video/iclaim_r01.htm.

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

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

Assessment from A1

ability gaps disproportionately affect Maryland’s Black and Hispanic residents.

The Housing Production and Zoning Capacity study analyzes Maryland’s regulatory landscape, recent trends in housing production, and zoning capacity related to the state’s projected housing growth through 2045. Per this study’s findings, Maryland needs more than 590,000 new housing units to accommodate projected growth, which cannot be supported by the current, underperforming pace of construction. Maryland’s communities also have the most restrictive land use practices in the region, creating an additional barrier to housing production, particularly higher-density development.

The Housing Gaps study analyzes the challenge of housing affordability in Maryland for all residents, with a special focus on vulnerable populations. The study finds that Marylanders across the State are increasingly unable to afford their rent due to the shortage of housing units and rising rents. In more than half of Maryland’s counties, at least 50 percent of renters are cost-burdened, paying more than a third of their incomes for housing with an increased impact on minority communities. Maryland has a current shortage of 275,000 rental units that are affordable for households earning 80% or less of Area Median Income, and homeownership is out of reach for many due to rising home prices.

The Housing Needs of Older Adults study analyzes housing needs and trends for Maryland’s older adult population. Maryland’s older adult population, aged 65 years or above, is increasing significantly, projected to grow from 16% of Maryland’s total population in 2022 to 21% by 2040. While most would prefer to stay in their community, a lack of local housing options and costly home repairs are challenges for Maryland’s seniors. Additionally, older Marylanders have an increased likelihood of developing a disability as they age, impacting their ability to live independently.

The Assessment’s Executive Summary presents several recommendations to address Maryland’s housing needs. First, increasing overall housing production in tandem with upzoning for denser housing types. Second, increasing production of affordable homes, and preserving existing affordable housing stock, especially for older adults and extremely low-income renters. Third, the state must continue to emphasize and provide supportive housing to those experiencing homelessness.

Prince George’s County Planning Board Announces Gwen McCall-Winston as the New Deputy Planning Director for the M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Department

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (July 18, 2025)—The Prince George’s County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announces its appointment of Gwen McCall-Winston as the new Deputy Planning Director of Administration of the M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Department. Effective Monday, July 21, 2025, McCall-Winston will provide high-level administrative oversight of the Planning Department’s Human Resources team and the Information Management, Intake and Regulatory Review, and Management Services Divisions.

“Gwen McCall-Winston is a proven leader in Prince George’s County and the region,” said Darryl Barnes, Chairman of the Prince George’s County Planning Board. “She will bring a fresh perspective and innovation to our already high-performing Planning Department. Her leadership and team building skills will complement the vision of Director Lakisha Hull.”

The Prince George’s County Planning Department supports thriving communities—now and into the future. With a staff of 200 planners and professional staff, the Planning Department provides quality recommendations to the Prince George’s County Planning Board through development applications, functional master plans, community master plans, Zoning and Sub division Ordinances, and Plan Prince George’s 2035, the Approved General Plan



PHOTO COURTESY M-NCPPC

Gwen McCall-Winston

for Prince George’s County. The Planning Department acts as a catalyst for positive change in Prince George’s County through seven divisions: Planning Director’s Office, Community Planning, Countywide Planning, Development Review, Information Management, Management Services, and the newly launched Intake and Regulatory Review. Under the leadership of Planning Director Lakisha Hull, McCall-Winston will serve alongside Deputy Planning Director of Operations James Hunt.

“I am honored to serve the residents of Prince George’s County in this capacity,” said McCall-Winston. “Through continued collaborative work with the community, agency partners, elected officials, and other stakeholders will continue to position Prince George’s County as a vibrant place to live, work, and play.”

Hospice of the Chesapeake Announces New Board Members

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (July 22, 2025)—Three prominent members of the community were recently appointed to the Hospice of the Chesapeake Board of Directors. They are **Vanessa Aburn, Dr. Tom-meka Archinard** and **Laural Brinkley**.

Aburn is retired after over 25 years of experience in strategic planning, marketing and operations in the healthcare industry. Her most recent positions include Principal for Advisory Services at xG Health and Vice President of Strategic Planning and Marketing at both Medstar and Anne Arundel Medical Center.

Archinard is Senior Vice President



and Chief Medical Officer of University of Maryland Capital Region Health. She is a nationally recognized physician executive and healthcare strategist with more than 20 years of experience leading clinical operations, advancing health system performance and building high-reliability organizations.

Brinkley is Vice President Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer of CalvertHealth Medical Center. She has over two decades of experience in nursing leadership, strategic planning, and quality improvement.

Hospice of the Chesapeake is honored

to welcome these new board members in support of its mission.

Headquartered in Pasadena, Maryland, with local offices in each county it serves, the organization is the largest independent not-for-profit hospice in the state of Maryland. It provides hospice, supportive and grief care services to residents of Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George’s counties.

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

Director from A1

and strategic operations makes him uniquely qualified to lead our department into its next era.”

The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County—a six-time National Gold Medal Award winner and current 2025 finalist—is a national leader in innovation, service, and community impact. With more than 29,000 acres of parkland including trails, cultural spaces, and historic sites, the Department remains dedicated to creating inclusive, accessible, and sustainable opportunities for all residents and visitors. With the guiding plan, Formula 2040, and the mission to help people “Live More, Play More,” the Department provides opportunities for active lifestyles, meaningful connections, and community pride through programs, classes, events, and accessible facilities.

“I am honored to serve the residents of Prince George’s County in this capacity,” said Stanton. “Our parks and recreation facilities are not just amenities—they are destinations, engines of public health, safety, and family development. I look forward to building on the Department’s legacy and expanding access to transformative programs.”

About Darius A. Stanton

Darius A. Stanton brings more than three decades of executive leadership across government, nonprofit, and private

sectors. His career began in the City of Annapolis, where he was appointed Drug Czar at age 22. He moved to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington and ultimately became Vice President of Operations overseeing facilities, staff—civilians and police officers, and award-winning youth programs. He later transitioned to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Baltimore. His leadership helped launch a program called the “Boys Club” at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center, which has been credited with reducing violence in the facility. Mr. Stanton was the co-founder of The Stanton Group, Inc., a human development and strategic business consulting firm.

Mr. Stanton holds a master’s degree in human services from Lincoln University and has taught sociology at Anne Arundel Community College. He is the immediate past Board President of the Maryland Black Caucus Foundation and currently serves as a Commissioner on the Maryland Economic Development Commission. He resides in Prince George’s County with his wife of 29 years and their family.

About the Prince George’s County Planning Board

The Prince George’s County Planning Board, together with the Montgomery County Planning Board, make up The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission—a bi-county agency established by State law in 1927 to acquire,

develop, maintain, and administer a regional system of parks and administer a general plan for the physical development of both counties. In Prince George’s County, the agency also administers the public recreation program. The Planning Board’s responsibilities include supervising preparation of land use plans and comprehensive zoning maps, advising the County Council on zoning map amendment and special exception applications, and reviewing and approving site plans and subdivisions. The Board also oversees the Commission’s work in the County, as carried out by the Parks and Recreation and Planning Departments. In Prince George’s County, the Planning Board’s full-time Chair and four part-time members are appointed by the Prince George’s County Executive and confirmed by the Prince George’s County Council, serving overlapping four-year terms. Visit www.pgplanningboard.org for more information.

With over 29,000 acres of parkland, trails, athletic fields, playgrounds, and more, the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County provides an award-winning park system through progressive, quality, innovative leadership and a commitment to its community and environment. The Department delivers first-class recreational activities and programs for people of all ages and ability levels. Visit www.pg parks.com.

EarthTalk® Q&A

Wooly Mice & Dire Wolf Pups, Oh My: De-Extinction Gets Real

By Choyoung Kim | July 15, 2025

Dear EarthTalk:
Does the recent birth of wooly mice and dire wolf pups mean that “de-extinction” is a real thing now? And why would we want to bring back dire wolves, wooly mammoths or saber-toothed cats anyway?

—Paul Wilson, San Francisco, CA

In recent months, the Dallas-based biotech firm Colossal Biosciences announced the rebirth of the long-extinct dire wolf and woolly mammoth, species that had been extinct for thousands of years, pioneering the first successful de-extinctions in history. In response, some view this as a revolutionary breakthrough, whereas others express skepticism about the legitimacy of the de-extinction claim.

On its website, Colossal states that its mission is to “secure the health and biodiversity of our planet’s future”. The company claims that the restoration of extinct species would improve the ecosystem and combat biodiversity loss as they are reintroduced to their original habitats. Additionally, research on de-extinction can be used to protect endangered species; in fact, the company has leveraged its gene-editing technology to repopulate the critically endangered red wolf.

In principle, the process of de-extinction is relatively straightforward. The woolly mammoth, despite being extinct for over 4,000 years, has been preserved in permafrost, allowing Colossal to access and extract the genomes easily. Then, by using the gene-editing

tool CRISPR, Colossal edited a mouse’s stem cell to exhibit the unique traits of the mammoth and introduced the cell into a mouse embryo. When the mouse pups were born, all of them expressed the woolly mammoth’s DNA through their “dramatically altered coat color, texture, and thickness reminiscent of the woolly mammoth’s core phenotypes.” Colossal applied a similar approach with the dire wolves by editing the genome of the gray wolf, the closest surviving relative to the dire wolf, to express dire wolf traits. As a result, three dire wolf puppies were successfully born.

Although Colossal Biosciences claims to have completely restored the extinct dire wolf, some scientists are skeptical. Hank Greely, director of Stanford University’s Center for Law and the Biosciences, told CBC News that “it is important for people to remember that these are not dire wolves. There are gray wolves that have some dire wolf characteristics.” Similarly, according to National Geographic, the dire wolf pups “are better understood as slightly-modified gray wolves rather than true dire wolves.”

Amid controversies, Colossal revealed its plans to edit the genes of Asian elephants, the woolly mammoth’s closest living relative, to birth a life-sized recreation of the woolly mammoth by 2028. Furthermore, Colossal is also attempting to bring back the dodo bird and the Tasmanian tiger.

With the uncertainty surrounding de-extinction and gene-editing technology, it is crucial for the scientific community to use this tool with caution and utilize it to develop effective solutions to urgent global issues. Finally, rather than adopting the idea that we shouldn’t



PHOTO CREDIT: CREDIT COLOSSAL BIOSCIENCES

Environmentalists have mixed feelings about the movement to bring back extinct wildlife species.

worry about extinction because we can always recreate those animals, we should shift our focus towards taking proactive measures aimed at protecting endangered species and slowing the rate of biodiversity loss.

CONTACTS: Colossal Biosciences, <https://colossal.com/de-extinction/>; Is this really a dire wolf? Here’s how the ‘de-extinct’ pups compare to the real thing, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/dire-wolf-deextinction-colossal-paleontology>.

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