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Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation Announces Ingrid S. Watson as President and Chief Executive Officer

By PRESS OFFICER
PGC Economic Development Corporation

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (Jan. 20, 2026)—Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) announced the appointment of Ingrid S. Watson as its next President and Chief Executive Officer, effective January 16, 2026.

Ms. Watson joins PGCEDC following her service as the Prince George's County Council Member representing District 4, where she advanced policies supporting economic opportunity, workforce development, infrastructure investment, and community well-being.

PGCEDC also welcomes Ms. Watson back to the organization, where she previously served in the Workforce Services Division prior to its transition to Employ Prince George's, playing an integral role in the visioning and development of workforce programs, services, and outreach that connect residents with employment opportunities and support business growth.

Ingrid Watson brings a deep understanding of Prince George's County and a strong record of public service to this role,"



PHOTO COURTESY PGCEDC

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation President and Chief Executive Officer Ingrid S. Watson

said Orlan Johnson, Chair of the PGCEDC Board of Directors. "Her prior experience within PGCEDC, combined with her leadership on the County Council and her deep knowledge of workforce development and economic policy, provides valuable per-

spective as we continue our work to support businesses, create jobs, and promote inclusive economic growth."

Ms. Watson brings more than 30 years of experience serving Prince George's County across local government, economic development, workforce initiatives, and government affairs. In addition to her service on the County Council, she previously served as an At-Large Council Member of the City of Bowie and as an elected member of the Prince George's County Democratic Central Committee. Her professional experience also includes serving as Government Affairs Manager for Children's National Hospital and Outreach and Communications Manager for Employ Prince George's.

During her tenure on the County Council, Ms. Watson focused on responsive constituent services and championed initiatives supporting workforce and education pipelines, infrastructure improvements, environmental sustainability, fiscal responsibility, public health, public safety, healthcare access, and support for seniors, youth, nonprofits, and small businesses. She served

See WATSON Page A3

PGCPS Releases FY27 Proposed Budget Focused on Stability, Classroom Protection, and Student Outcomes

\$3.0B proposal follows historic cuts, avoids layoffs, and invests in special education, literacy, and school safety

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Jan. 22, 2026)—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) today released its \$3 billion Proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2027, a fiscally disciplined plan that cuts \$150 million while protecting classroom instruction, stabilizing the workforce, and accelerating student outcomes.

The FY27 proposal is not an expansion budget. It is a stabilization budget, developed after the largest single-year reduction in district history. Over the past year, PGCPS eliminated long-term vacancies, reduced central office and contracted costs, exhausted one-time reserves, and absorbed a \$95 million investment in employee compensation to bring salaries closer to regional standards.

"These cuts came first," said Interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn Joseph. "But we also know we cannot cut our way to excellence. This budget stabilizes our system, protects classrooms, and makes targeted investments so every child, regardless of zip code, has access to opportunity and high expectations."

Protecting Educators and Classrooms

The proposed budget rejects furloughs and salary freezes and does not lay off active classroom teachers. Workforce savings are achieved primarily by eliminating long-term vacant positions and reducing non-classroom costs. Parent engagement and student support positions are preserved by shifting eligible roles to stable grant funding.

Targeted Adjustments, Student Protections

Based on enrollment trends and funding formulas, the proposal includes planned transitions in select specialty programs with low participation, including AVID, some immersion programs, and certain International Baccalaureate offerings. Current students will be supported through transitions, while instructional quality is maintained through expanded college and career readiness services, flexible world language pathways, and sustained IB instructional practices embedded in the district curriculum.

Strategic Investments to Improve Outcomes

Even amid reductions, the FY27 proposal makes high-impact investments where student needs are greatest:

- \$27 million for Special Education to ensure legal compliance, close service gaps, and reduce costly out-of-district placements
- \$1.2 million for Reading and Math interventions
- \$4.3 million for Safety and Security enhancements

• \$1.3 million for AI literacy and operational efficiency
View FY27 Budget Snapshot for a detailed breakdown of investments and reductions: <https://www.pgcps.org/globalassets/offices/budget-and-management-services/docs---budget/2027-operating-budget-snapshot.pdf>

View FAQs on the FY27 Proposed Operating Budget: <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/budget-and-management-services/fy2027-budget/faq-understanding-the-fy2027-pgcps-budget-proposal>

"The Board is committed to responsible stewardship and transparency," said Brandon Jackson, President of the Board of Education. "This proposed budget reflects that balance—protecting instruction, honoring workforce commitments, and addressing critical student needs while engaging the community throughout the process."

Unified Leadership and Workforce Stability

Educators welcomed the focus on stability.

"Protecting salaries, avoiding furloughs, and preventing layoffs of classroom teachers are crucial for recruitment and retention, and this budget prioritizes that," said Dr. Donna Christy, President of the Prince George's County Educators' Association. "There are still difficult decisions that have to be made, but this proposal reflects a shared vision of workforce stability, ensuring educators can focus on student success."

Next Steps

The FY27 budget is proposed, not final. The Board of Education will hold public work sessions and hearings in February 2026 before adopting the requested budget and transmitting it to Prince George's County.

Families, staff, and community members are encouraged to follow updates and participate through the PGCPS Budget Information Portal.

Learn more about the FY27 budget development process: <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/budget-and-management-services/fy2027-budget>

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), one of the nation's 20th largest school districts, has 201 schools and centers, more than 133,000 students and nearly 20,000 employees. The school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities. PGCPS is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion.

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County Launches "Pastport to History" for America's 250th Celebration

Explore, discover, and learn the lived experiences of Prince Georgians

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

drawing will take place on December 31, 2026.

To make this celebration accessible to all admission to M-NCPPC historic sites and museums will be free throughout 2026. Visitors can enjoy exhibits, programs, and discover how the past connects to the present.

To learn more about the Pastport to History experience and see the stories behind Prince George's County historic sites, watch the Pastport to History video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iEnU-3BSU>

To learn more about the Department of Parks and Recreation's history, events, and the Pastport to History visit <https://www.pgarks.com/event-list/250>.

Adventist HealthCare Joins the Support Education Foundation to Warm Hearts and Hands of Local Students

By PRESS OFFICER
Support Education Foundation, ESFCU

GAITHERSBURG, Md. (Jan. 20, 2026)—The Support Education Foundation, a nonprofit established by Educational Systems Federal Credit Union, is proud to announce a meaningful

of giving are filled with smiles, hugs and heartfelt thanks—a testament to the difference a community can make when it comes together.

"The initiative is a natural fit for our commitment to addressing the crucial social determinants of health, particularly poverty and resource insecurity, that lead to health disparities in our service area," stated Gina Maxham, the Director of Community Benefit and Engagement at Adventist HealthCare. "Ensuring children are warm and healthy is a fundamental step toward removing barriers to their education and long-term well-being."

The Warming Hearts and Hands initiative distributes thousands of kits each winter, filled with new hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and socks to K-12 and community college students in need. These items are more than just winter wear; they are essential tools that help students stay warm, healthy and focused on their education during the coldest months of the year. This effort directly addresses the social and resource insecurity that often leads to health outcome disparities.

"We are incredibly grateful to Adventist HealthCare for joining us in this mission of care and compassion," said Kristy Mathey, Board Chair of the Support Education Foundation. "For many students, a warm pair of gloves or a cozy scarf can be the difference between arriving ready to learn or needing a moment to recover from the cold before fully engaging."

The winter clothing kits are distributed in close collaboration with Title I school staff, ensuring that the most vulnerable students are prioritized. These moments

Through partnerships like this, the Support Education Foundation and Adventist HealthCare are proving that warmth, care and community can truly change lives—one pair of mittens at a time.

Adventist HealthCare supports programs that improve health and wellness for residents in the communities served by the organization.

Through its Community Partnership Fund, Adventist HealthCare is committed to supporting local organizations that address health disparities and the social determinants of health, with a focus on specific counties.

The Support Education Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) established by Educational Systems

FCU in 2017, supports students

and school employees through

charitable giving programs.

Learn more at <https://SupportEducation.org>.

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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

BLACK EDUCATORS

Rudell Jones recalls his path into the academic arena. "As a child in Cambridge, Maryland, I was exposed to two types of jobs in the Black Community. The people I saw on a daily basis were either factory workers or teachers. After seeing the long hours my father and others worked on their jobs in the local factories, I knew that type of career was not for me, so I decided to become a teacher. After graduating from Bowie State University in 1977, I was hired by the Talbot County Public School System as an intermediate math teacher at St. Michaels Elementary School in St. Michaels, Maryland.

It was the love of music that led Gwendolyn Johnson Deville to pursue an academic career. She stated, "when I went to high school, the class I enjoyed most was music, especially the choir under the direction of Mr. Earl Pearson. I always wanted to go to college after graduating from high school, but I could not decide which career I wanted to pursue. I came to the conclusion that if I liked music, why not major in music? I went to Morgan State College (now Morgan State University) and majored in music. Upon graduating from college, I was able to get a job in Prince George's County Public Schools as a music teacher at Frederick Douglass High School. If I had to do it all over again, I would choose the same career path. I have had so many blessings by trying to bless others."

Rudell and Gwendolyn continue to share their wisdom and experiences with others. Rudell advises Black educators of today to "establish a positive rapport with the families of your most challenging students, make an extra effort, implement strategies needed for their success, and encourage and motivate all students to exceed their potential. Also, I would tell Black Educators to be lifelong learners, get a degree higher than a bachelor's degree, and apply for administrative positions. Our Black students need to see people who look like them working in all levels at their schools."

"While Gwendolyn remarks, "To Black Educators, I would say our children need you, it is not an easy career and it can be frustrating, but the rewards of helping a child or adult make it through some difficult situations will be a blessing to you and the child/adult. You cannot put a price on it, and you will be rewarded knowing you made a difference in their lives." Information from the (MESSENGER) Nottingham Myers and Christ United Methodist Churches Cooperative Parish Newsletter, Joyce Lee Brown/Rev. Shemaiah Strickland.

ROOM 112 TOUR

Step back into the golden era of R&B with Room 112 Tour featuring the chart-topping group 112. Known for hits like "Only You," "Cupid" and "Peaches and Cream" 112 brings their smooth harmonies and unforgettable stage presence to the stage.

Joining them are fellow R&B powerhouses Total and Case, delivering fan-favorite tracks that defined the soundtrack of the 90s and early 2000s. Do not miss this night of timeless music, soulful performances and nostalgic vibes Sunday February 1, 2026, 8 p.m. at the MGM National Harbor Theater, 101 MGM National Avenue, National Harbor, Maryland, 20745. Please contact an MGM National Harbor box office representative on 844-346-4664 if you need help with your ticket purchase.

USF CHAPTER OF PHI DELTA KAPPA JAMES AND RUTH TURNER SCHOLARSHIP

Each year \$1,500 is awarded to a worthy student at the University of San Francisco through the James and Ruth Turner Scholarship. This is a fund created over ten years ago to recognize the extraordinary contribution that their daughter, Dr. Patricia Mitchell, Professor Emerita, had made to the ongoing success and the Organization and Leadership (O&L) Doctoral Program at the University of San Francisco.

As a tribute to Dr. Mitchell, the scholarship was named in honor of her parents, James and Ruth Turner. The scholarship is funded through contributions made by graduates of the School of Education O&L Doctoral Program and members of the USF family. The USF Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) manages the scholarship fund in conjunction with the scholarship selection committee. (Information received from my sister Dr. Patricia Mitchell.)

Our parents James and Ruth Turner lived in Brandywine, Maryland for over sixty years. Our mother Ruth Turner used to write the weekly article for Brandywine/Aquasco area in The Prince George's Post newspaper before her death.

BADEN COMMUNITY CENTER

Baden Community Center in Brandywine, Maryland is located at 13601 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland, 20613. The Center can be contacted via phone at (301) 888-1500 for pricing, hours, and directions. The Center includes a fitness center with Nautilus and five stations of cardio equipment and dumbbell hand weights. Hours are Friday: 1-8:45 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Sunday closed, Monday 2-8:45 p.m., Tuesday 2-8:45 P.M., Wednesday 2-8:45 p.m., Thursday 2-8:45 p.m.

Amenities are Baseball/Softball Fields, Basketball Courts, Bike Rack, Billard's Room, Horseshoes, Classrooms, Child Care Programs, Family Changing Room, Fitness Equipment, Full Basketball Courts, Game Room, Kitchen, Parking Lot, Picnic Shelters, Picnic Tables, Playground Equipment, Soccer/Futsal.

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

Larry Glaubitz, Suitland High grad, firefighter, dies

Larry Dale Glaubitz, 78, of Hollywood, Md., died January 4, at his home. He was born August 6, 1947, in Riverdale, Maryland, to Jean Loree (Quapp) and Gerald August Glaubitz. He grew up in Morningside, and it was there he started his firefighting service as a volunteer at Company 27, Morningside Volunteer Fire Department. He was only 16.

He attended Suitland High School, graduating class of 1965. After serving in the Navy, he began his career as a professional firefighter in Prince George's County. He served 27 years, retiring in 1995 at the rank of Lieutenant.

Larry loved spending time eating Maryland crabs, watching the Washington Capitals hockey team, and tinkering with his old cars, all while enjoying a rum and coke or a beer. He treasured his time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Bonnie Jean Glaubitz. He's survived by his children, Deana Lynn Gunto, Dawn LaBar (Jeffrey), and Michael Glaubitz (Stephanie); grandchildren Christina and Zachary, Justin LaBar (Rachel), Gavin, Camden, and Hudson; great-grandchildren Adam, Libby, and Luke, and former spouse of 20 years, Sharon Schombert.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Tunnels to Towers Foundation (<https://t2t.org/donate/>), or D.C. Firefighters Burn Foundation (<https://www.deffburnfoundation.org/>). Services were at Rausch Funeral Home in Owings.

Battle for Billy

Billy Fowler is a Morningside native, and he is fighting leukemia. His family and friends are fighting for him, too.

On January 24, a Battle for Billy fundraiser was held. It was an action-

packed event, with raffles, bake sales, food, and entertainment. A slew of local businesses rose to the occasion with donations, including Topolino's, Ryan's Towing, Hair Force & TanFastics, Wild Rose Nails, Temple Hills Swim Club, MP Auto, Top Remodeling, Morningside Beer & Wine, Exxon, and Giant.

If you would like to help in the Battle for Billy, please call: Karen Rooker (301-335-3365), Sharon Fowler (240-579-6761) or Amy Foster (301-996-7396).

Changing landscape

That house on the top of the hill at 6218 Suitland Road has been substantially renovated and expanded and now is up for sale. Asking price is \$1,099,999. According to the real estate listing, that'll buy you 3,359 square feet with seven bathrooms, and eight bedrooms, some of which have their own balconies. The first floor has wood flooring and an upgraded kitchen. Plus, it has an extended driveway and multi-car garage. Check it out.

Slim Chickens, the Arkansas-based fast-casual restaurant, has opened a new location at 6444 Coventry Way in Clinton. It is in the same parking lot as Shopper's Food, in the building that used to be Three Brothers. They specialize in chicken tenders and wings, and have nearly 300 locations across the country. This is the fourth Maryland location.

I haven't been to Slim Chickens myself yet, but I've heard good things. If you go, let me know what you think!

Also, the new six-house development on Suitland Road sold its model home on January 7. The five-bedroom, four-bathroom, 2,766-square foot house sold for \$614,639.

The other five houses are in the early stages of construction. If that first house is any indication, though, they should be up and ready for sale pretty quickly.

Mike & Sandy in town

For the past month, I've been enjoying a visit from my oldest son, Mike, and his wife Sandy. They came all the way from their home in El Paso, Texas. We had plenty of delicious meals, long conversations, and jigsaw-puzzling. They drove me up to Laurel to celebrate Christmas with three more of my kids and a variety of grandkids, which was very nice. Mike and Sandy are now back in El Paso.

While they were here, Mike and Sandy were staying in my upstairs guest room. The week before they were scheduled to fly home, they noticed the patter-patter of very little feet coming from the attic space above them. Mike took a walk around the outside of the house and got a glimpse of a squirrel hopping up and disappearing into my attic vent.

After a little digging around, we decided to call Raven Termite and Pest Control. They sent Carl Nixon out to help us. Carl assured me that, in compliance with state law, they would remove the squirrels without harming them. And then they would put in screening around the vents. All of which they did.

Ever since Carl's visit, I've had plenty of squirrels around my bird feeders—but no more mysterious noises from the attic.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Sister Zion and Lisa Call, Jan. 29; David Call, Martha Kline, and Joanne (Clark) Bunch, Jan. 30, Donna Young and Robin Sawyer, Feb. 1; Stanley Holmes, Feb. 2; Ashley Lee, Feb. 3; Adam Cook, Feb. 5; Diane McCrone, Feb. 6; Theo Carter, Rita Beall, and J.B. Thomas, Feb. 7; Jesse Ritter, and my granddaughter Molly McHale, Feb. 8; Connie Waby, and Mary (Stakem) Crane, Feb. 9.

Happy 76th anniversary to William & Betty Fitzpatrick on Feb. 4.

Honors for Local Students

Local Students Named to Point Park University's Fall 2025 Dean's List

PITTSBURGH, Pa. (Jan. 22, 2026)—More than 1,400 students who were named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List at Point Park University. The following local students made the list:

Jaylen Bazemore of Temple Hills

Mudiwa Hargrove of Capitol Heights

To be named to the Dean's List, a student must have a 3.5 GPA.

University of Hartford Students Named to Dean's List and President's List

WEST HARTFORD, Conn. (Jan. 21, 2026)—The University of Hartford is pleased to announce that 2,327 students have been named to the Dean's List and President's List for the spring 2025 semester.

The Dean's List recognizes students achieving superior academic standing. The requirement, with some exceptions, is a grade point average of at least 3.0 and no grade below C.

The President's List recognizes a select group of students reaching the highest level of academic standing. To be placed on the President's List, students must maintain a GPA of at least a 3.75 and receive grades of C or better.

Among those recognized are:

Devin Bristol of Laurel, Dean's List

Ariel Wright of Clinton, Dean's List and President's List

Congratulations to all our students on their hard work and academic success!

Local Students Among 1,495 Named on Fall 2025 Dean's List at York College of Pennsylvania

YORK, Pa. (Jan. 21, 2026)—York College of Pennsylvania is proud to recognize academic excellence by naming high achieving students to the Fall 2025 Dean's List. This prestigious honor recognizes students who have achieved a GPA of 3.5 or higher and is a testament to students' dedication to academic excellence.

The following students from your region have achieved this honor:

Kevin Carey of Temple Hills, MD

Mercedez Grace Flores of Ft Washington, MD

Kaitlyn Hendershot of Laurel, MD

Morgan Jones of Laurel, MD

Anaysha Shahid of Ft Washington, MD

Logan Skovron of Bowie, MD

Isabel Tenney of Laurel, MD

Sperra Vittor of Laurel, MD

Local Students Named to University at Buffalo's Fall 2025 Dean's List

BUFFALO, N.Y. (Jan. 21, 2026)—The following local students were named to the University at Buffalo's fall 2025 dean's list.

Nikayla Schnell of Bowie, Maryland.

Gabrielle Wong of Fairmount Heights, Maryland.

UB is New York State's flagship university and the largest and most comprehensive institution in the State University of New York system.

"Each term, we are inspired by the determination and drive of our students," says Ann Bisantz, vice provost and dean of undergraduate education. "Those named to this semester's undergraduate dean's list have distinguished themselves through their commitment to academic excellence, intellectual curiosity and personal integrity. Their success reflects not only hard work, but also a steadfast dedication to their goals. We are proud to celebrate their achievements and look forward to the impact they will continue to make at UB and beyond."

UB named 6,320 students to its fall 2025 dean's list.

To qualify for the dean's list, full-time undergraduate students must demonstrate academic excellence by earning a grade point average of at least 3.600 while completing a minimum of 12 or more UB letter graded (A-F) credit hours. Students are named to the dean's list at the end of the fall and spring semesters.

Bridgewater College Fall 2025 Dean's List

BRIDGEWATER, Va. (Jan. 20, 2026)—Approximately 580 students at Bridgewater College were named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List. Students on the Dean's List have attained a 3.4 or better grade point average out of a possible 4.0.

Ateh Nji-Tanji of Bowie MD

Malachi Benjamin of District Heights MD

Shyanne Jackson of Capitol Heights MD

Reece Samuels of Upper Marlboro, MD Named to Springfield College Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (Jan. 20, 2026)—Springfield College has named Reece Samuels from Upper Marlboro, MD to the dean's list for academic excellence for the 2025 fall semester.

Samuels has a primary major of Criminal Justice.

The criteria for selection to the Dean's List are as follows: The student must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded coursework for the term, exclusive of "P" grades. The student must not have any incompletes or missing grades in the designated term. The student must have a minimum semester grade average of 3.500 for the term. Student must not have been barred from Dean's List due to disciplinary action.

Valencia Davis Elected to Membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

BATON ROUGE, La. (Jan. 20, 2026)—Valencia Davis of Brandywine, Maryland, was recently elected to membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society, at University of Maryland Global Campus.

Davis is among approximately 20,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each

COMMUNITY

Students from A2

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

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 300 campuses in the United States and its territories. Its mission is to "cultivate a community that celebrates and advances the love of learning."

NIU Fall 2025 Graduation List

DeKalb, Ill. (Jan. 20, 2026)—More than 1,200 students received their bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from Northern Illinois University in December. Included among the graduates is **Kyliah Hughes** of Hyattsville, MD, who earned a Master of Public Health.

Washington Earns Spot on Dean's List

SELINSGROVE, Pa. (Jan. 20, 2026)—**Audric Washington**, of Upper Marlboro, was named to Susquehanna University's Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester.

The dean's list recognizes students who achieve a grade point average of 3.4 or higher out of a possible 4.0 for the semester. To qualify, students must complete a minimum of 12 semester hours.

East Stroudsburg University Announces Fall 2025 Dean's List

EAST STROUDSBURG, Pa. (Jan. 20, 2026)—A total of 1,965 students have been named to the Dean's List at East Stroudsburg University for the Fall 2025 semester of the 2025–2026 academic year, as announced by Margaret Ball D.M.A., the university's provost and vice president for academic affairs.

The following local ESU students were named to the Dean's List or the Fall 2025 semester:

Neyah Hilton, a Exercise Science major from Hyattsville, MD.
Raquane Matthews, a Sport Management major from Brandywine, MD.

MTSU Congratulates Tyler Sonnett Among 6,647

Undergrad Scholars on Fall 2025 Dean's List

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. (Jan. 19, 2026)—Middle Tennessee State University is congratulating 6,647 students who appear on the dean's list for the Fall 2025 semester, including **Tyler Sonnett** of Upper Marlboro, MD.

To qualify for this distinction, an undergraduate student must maintain a current semester grade-point average of 3.5 or above and earn at least 12 semester hours.

Fall 2025 Dean's List Recognizes Academic Excellence at Radford University

RADFORD, Va. (Jan. 15, 2026)—Radford University has released its dean's list for fall 2025. Appearing on the dean's list is the most prestigious academic recognition students can receive for their performance during a semester.

Students will be placed on the dean's list if they meet four specific criteria. They must have 12 semester hours of coursework graded A–F; earn GPA's of at least 3.4 for courses not graded on a pass/fail basis; obtain no grade lower than "C"; and receive no incomplete grades.

Michael Cureton of Upper Marlboro, MD
Kirah Dandridge of Clinton, MD
Tyler Pulik of Beltsville, MD

McDaniel College Announces Dean's List

WESTMINSTER, Md. (Jan. 15, 2026)—McDaniel College announces its fall 2025 dean's list, recognizing full-time undergraduate students for outstanding academic achievement, including:

Nishant Manda of Bowie, recognized with Honors.
Timea Harley of Glenn Dale, recognized with Honors.
Kaitlyn Gebhardt of Laurel, recognized with Honors.
Josiah Limcheeyung of Hyattsville, recognized with Honors.
Gabby Gooden of Laurel, recognized with High Honors.
Jayla Pickler of Aquasco, recognized with High Honors.
Derek Jackson of Upper Marlboro, recognized with High Honors.
Maggie Johnson of Laurel, recognized with High Honors.
Evan Rigg of College Park, recognized with High Honors.
Santana Abney of Bowie, recognized with High Honors.
Nia Cuencas-Muhammad of Upper Marlboro, recognized with Highest Honors.

Grace Wagner of University Park, recognized with Highest Honors.

Highest honors are earned for a semester grade point average of 3.90 or higher, high honors for a grade point average of 3.70–3.89, and honors for a 3.50–3.69 grade point average.

Loras College Fall 2025 Dean's List

DUBUQUE, Iowa (Jan. 15, 2026)—The following Loras College student was recognized for academic achievement during the recent semester by Dr. Sarah Nytrøe, Loras College Provost. To be eligible, a student must earn a minimum grade-point average of 3.50 for the term and be a full-time student taking at least 12 graded credits (pass/fail courses are excluded). The Dean's List is compiled at the completion of each semester.

Hyattsville, MD: **Olive D. Taylor**

Ashley Teresa Martinez Named to Fall Semester 2025

Dean's List at UMN Crookston

CROOKSTON, Minn. (Jan. 14, 2026)—The University of Minnesota Crookston announces students who were named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List which was recently released by the Office of the Registrar. To qualify for the Dean's List, students must complete 12 or more letter-graded (A–F) credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average.

Students named to the Dean's List include **Ashley Teresa Martinez** of Bowie, MD, majoring in Health Management BS.

Maryland Transportation Authority Announces Public Hearings for Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Transportation Authority

The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) announced public hearings for the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 2 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which will provide the public an opportunity to review the project and submit comments and testimony.

The hearings, scheduled for February 2026, will focus on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the MDTA's Recommended Preferred Alternative – Alternative C, announced in December. MDTA will continue its analysis following review of public and agency comments. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is expected to issue a combined Final EIS and Record of Decision in Fall 2026.

In February, MDTA and FHWA will hold virtual and in-person public hearings, providing opportunities for interested parties to review the alternatives and environmental impacts evaluated in the Draft EIS, learn about the MDTA's Recommended Preferred Alternative, and offer testimony. The Draft EIS is available online at baycrossingstudy.com and in person at viewing locations listed on the website. Individuals who are unable to access the Draft EIS may call 1-667-203-5408 for assistance.

Virtual Public Hearing
Monday, February 9, 2026, 6–8 p.m.
www.baycrossingstudy.com

Anne Arundel County Public Hearing
Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 5–8 p.m.
Broadneck High School
1265 Green Holly Drive, Annapolis, MD 21409

Queen Anne's County Public Hearing

Thursday, February 12, 2026, 5–8 p.m.
Kent Island High School
900 Love Point Road, Stevensville, MD 21666

Each public hearing will include a brief presentation followed by live testimony. Individuals wishing to provide testimony should visit baycrossingstudy.com to pre-register. If you cannot access the project website, call 1-667-203-5408.

In-person public hearings will feature an open house format beginning at 5 p.m., allowing attendees time to view project displays and materials. Live testimony sessions will begin at 6 p.m. All hearing materials are available at baycrossingstudy.com.

If the hearing locations are closed due to inclement weather, please visit baycrossingstudy.com for new hearing dates.

The MDTA's Recommended Preferred Alternative, Alternative C includes:

- **Two new four-lane bridge spans** with full shoulders across the Chesapeake Bay, enhancing safety while providing additional transportation capacity, reliability and mobility;
- **Removal of the existing Bay Bridge spans**, addressing existing roadway deficiencies including narrow lanes and lack of shoulders, eliminating the need for major rehabilitation projects and associated lane closures and delays, and increasing navigational clearance to meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements. The navigational clearance will be 230 feet, allowing larger ships to access the Port of Baltimore;
- **Widening of US 50/301 to eight lanes** (four per direction) from west of Oceanic

Drive to east of Cox Creek to accommodate transitions to the new crossing;

- **Financial commitments** for transit-related improvements; and
- **An optional bicycle and pedestrian shared-use path**, which the MDTA will further evaluate to determine if it should be included.

MDTA is accepting comments on the Draft EIS and MDTA's Recommended Preferred Alternative through March 9, 2026. Comments may be submitted via mail, email, the project website, public or private testimony, or by phone at 1-667-203-5408. All comments received will be given equal consideration and will be addressed in the Final EIS and Record of Decision.

In coordination with FHWA, MDTA is following the federally mandated NEPA process to evaluate alternatives that address existing and future transportation capacity needs across the Chesapeake Bay and along the U.S. 50/301 approaches to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge from the MD 2/Md 450 Interchange near Arnold to the U.S. 50/301 split near Grasonville. NEPA review is required for all major federal actions, including those involving federal funding or approvals.

Individuals who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or who require translation services at no cost should contact MDTA at 410-537-1000 (711 for MD Relay) no later than five (5) business days prior to the hearing they wish to attend.

The Maryland Transportation Authority finances, owns, operates, secures and improves the state's eight toll facilities. The MDTA is financed by toll revenue without relying on state tax dollars.

State of Maryland Launches NourishMD Grant Program to Expand Fresh Food Access in Food Deserts

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's new grant program will address the persistent issue of fresh food insecurity in communities across the state

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development



NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (Jan. 20, 2026)—Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day today announced applications are open for the Department's NourishMD Grant Program. The new program, offered by the Department's Division of Business Development, will provide grants to support the development, stabilization, and expansion of retail outlets that provide fresh food in Maryland's food deserts—areas where residents have limited or no access to nutritious food options.

"Marylanders' access to healthy food should never depend on their ZIP code or neighborhood. Food deserts are a result of long-standing inequity and disinvestment that limits opportunity and dignity for too many Marylanders," said Secretary Day. "By investing in the expansion of fresh food access and community-based solutions, we can help more Maryland families and communities thrive."

The \$2 million grant program will provide eligible food retailers with grants of between \$25,000 and \$150,000 for capital-related needs such as facility upgrades, infrastructure and technology, and equipment purchases. To be eligible for funding, businesses must be located in an area with a

Fresh Food Gap Score of 60 or higher as provided by the Maryland Community Business Compass, an initiative of Governor Wes Moore's Innovation Team. Awards will be provided on a competitive basis, with special focus given to applicants that are in ENOUGH ACT-awarded areas or designated Just Communities. Full eligibility criteria, program priorities and application requirements are available on the Department's website: <https://dhed.maryland.gov/Business/Pages/NourishMD-Grant-Program.aspx>.

The NourishMD Grant Program will prioritize awards to businesses that accept, or are seeking support to become able to accept, federal nutrition benefits. To support this, the Department has entered into a co-awarding partnership with the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Maryland Market Money Program (MMM). The MMM program provides a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition

benefits at participating Maryland farmers markets, farm stands, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) while providing technical assistance, training, marketing, and additional services to stakeholders. Jointly eligible businesses that apply for both programs will receive prioritization for awards from each.

"This partnership reflects a shared commitment to farmers, small food businesses, and the communities they serve," said Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks. "By investing in technology and infrastructure, we are strengthening market viability, supporting farmer income, and expanding equitable access to healthy food across Maryland."

Applications open[ed] January 20, 2026, and are due February 20, 2026.

The Division of Business Development focuses on growing Maryland's business community and oversees the department's flagship Neighborhood Business Works loan program and the deployment of State Small Business Credit Initiative funds throughout the state. In Fiscal Year 2025, NBW closed more than 108 deals representing over \$21 million in business development and assistance.

To learn more about eligibility and to apply for the NourishMD Grant Program, visit the Department's website: <https://dhed.maryland.gov/Business/Pages/NourishMD-Grant-Program.aspx>.

Watson from A1

As Chair of the Council's Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee, where she helped oversee a \$5.8 billion County budget, and as a member of the Education and Workforce Development Committee and the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee. She also chaired the Accessory Dwelling Unit Task Force and represented the Council on the Council of Governments Board of Directors and the Prince George's County Workforce Board.

"I am honored to return to the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation and to serve as President and CEO," said Watson. "Having previously

worked within PGCEDC and spent my career focused on workforce development, economic growth, and community engagement, I understand the critical role the organization plays in supporting existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and expanding opportunities across our County. I look forward to working with County leadership, the business community, and regional partners to continue building a strong, inclusive economy that benefits all Prince George's County residents and businesses."

As President & CEO, Ms. Watson will lead PGCEDC's strategic vision and day-to-day operations, with a focus on business attraction and retention, entrepreneurship, and cross-sector partnerships

that position Prince George's County as a competitive and welcoming destination for investment. Her leadership will advance PGCEDC's mission of strengthening communities through business development and job creation.

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC)'s mission is to cultivate and promote a strong local economy supporting entrepreneurs' and businesses' growth and prosperity. It is dedicated to strengthening communities through business development and job creation. For more information about Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation's services to local companies, visit www.pgcdec.com.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

About Claiming Social Security Early and Investing It

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 am a 63-year-old single lady, and I have questions regarding Social Security "early retirement," though I will still be working full time.

I know there is a maximum allowable income limit and, if I exceed that, I will need to return probably 2/3 of my received Social Security benefit. I'm thinking about taking those early SS benefits (about \$1,400 per month) and putting them in my high yield savings or CD where I can gain the interest on it and have it stay "liquid" so I can return what I need to. My current interest rate is 3.65% on the savings, and over 4.25% on CD, with options for 3,6,9 mos. or longer—but I want to be able to access the money to pay Social Security back at the end of the year. Can you advise me on this? **Signed: Still Working but Wondering**

Dear Still Working: I commend you, for investigating your options before claiming early Social Security benefits while still working. FYI, the 2026 annual earnings limit for those collecting early SS benefits is \$24,480 (changes annually). If your 2026 work earnings exceed the annual limit, Social Security will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. The annual earnings limit lasts until you reach your full retirement age (FRA), and the limit is about 2.5 times higher during the year you attain FRA.

FYI, when you apply for benefits, Social Security will ask if you are working and, if so, how much you make. Using that info, they will evaluate whether you can take benefits now and, if so, how many months they can actually pay your benefits. For example, if your projected 2026 earnings are, say, \$100,000, you would be about \$75,000 over the annual limit which means that half of that (\$37,500) would need to be paid back to SS. Since your monthly SS benefit at your current age would be about \$1,400 per month, Social Security will say that you are temporarily ineligible to collect early benefits because you cannot pay back within one year what you would owe for exceeding the limit. In other words, they won't pay your SS benefits just yet because your earnings are too high and they do not want to overpay benefits which you will only need to return.

For additional perspective, if your expected 2026 earnings are less (say about \$50,000)—that means you would be about \$25,000 over the limit—about half of that (about \$12,500) would need to be paid back to SS. In that event, SSA would tell you they will withhold 9 months of your SS payments in advance and pay your benefits for only 3 months. This because the overpayment, with your current benefit of about \$1,400, could be recovered by withholding your SS payments for 9 months. They do not want to intentionally overpay your SS benefits.

So, despite your best repayment intentions, Social Security will not favor intentionally overpaying your benefits. Historically, overpayment of benefits due to exceeding the annual earnings limit has been a notoriously difficult issue for the Social Security Administration. So, to get your early SS benefits while you are working full time, you would likely need to lie about your anticipated 2026 earnings on your application for SS benefits, which we strongly discourage. Keep in mind that this all changes when you reach your FRA (67), because the earning limit goes away entirely when you reach FRA (and the limit goes up by about 2.5 times in the year you attain full retirement age). So, depending on your earnings level, you may wish to either wait until your full retirement age, or until you stop working full time, to claim SS.

Now, as for the general idea of taking early benefits and investing them, many have said they wish to do that, and we understand that logic. Our caution is that it requires religious discipline to put the SS money into a higher yield investment vehicle to accomplish the goal of beating the SS increase realized when you wait to claim. Many who try it succumb to the temptation to use the invested funds for emergency needs (and sometimes non-emergency needs). I offer this only as something to be aware of, as some have shared that they failed in their investment objectives with their Social Security money.

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

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

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Announces State's First Housing Ombudsman

Steven Palmer to fill new position established by Governor Wes Moore's "Housing Starts Here" Executive Order

By PRESS OFFICER
DHCD

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (Jan. 21, 2026)—Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day today announced the Department has hired Steven A. Palmer as the State of Maryland's Housing Ombudsman. Palmer joins the agency's Division of Policy, Strategy and Research, filling the new position established by Governor Wes Moore's "Housing Starts Here" Executive Order.

As Maryland's inaugural Housing Ombudsman, Palmer will help increase Maryland's housing production by improving processes and cooperation between government, industry partners, and community stakeholders. These efforts will include troubleshooting ongoing housing development projects that have been delayed by state and local permitting or entitlement processes and facilitating housing development on high-potential sites, such as government-owned land.

"To make Maryland more affordable, to spur economic growth and keep up with our neighbors, to ensure that every current and future resident can find a home in our great state, we must build more housing of all types and sizes, and we must build it quickly," said Secretary Day. "As the state's first-ever Housing Ombudsman, Steven's passion and expertise will help Maryland meet this challenge by strength-



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Steven A. Palmer, the State of Maryland's Housing Ombudsman

ening both policies and partnerships to cut red tape and remove roadblocks that too often constrict and delay housing production."

An attorney focused on public service and policy, Palmer joins the department after serving as Director of Public Policy at Housing&, a nonprofit association serving Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. In that role, he advocated for more affordable housing and racially equitable communities. Before his tenure at Housing, Palmer served in various legislative

roles at the Council of the District of Columbia, where he advised council members, conducted agency oversight, and drafted legislation, including legislation that removed racist and exclusionary covenants from housing deeds.

Originally from Olney, Maryland, Palmer is a proud alumnus of Montgomery County Public Schools and the University of Maryland, College Park. After graduating from Harvard Law School, he returned to the region to briefly practice law as an associate at Covington & Burling LLP before entering government service. In his spare time, he enjoys rooting for the University of Maryland Terrapins with his wife, Katherine, and their very large corgi, Puff.

"Growing up in Maryland provided me with unlimited opportunity, truly setting the stage for my life. It was only possible because my family moved to the state during a time of abundant and affordable housing supply," said Palmer. "I am honored to serve my home state and to join the wonderful team at DHCD in their efforts to meet the state's housing needs, create great places and unlock Maryland's fullest potential so that every family has the same chance to build a stable future."

To learn more about the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and the work of the Department's Division of Policy, Strategy and Research, visit dhcd.maryland.gov.

Roberta's House Welcomes Nakia Williams as Community Engagement and Volunteer Program Manager

By PRESS OFFICER
Roberta's House

BALTIMORE (Jan. 20, 2026)—Roberta's House—A Family Grief Support Center is pleased to announce the appointment of Nakia Williams as its new Community Engagement and Volunteer Program Manager. A mission-driven community engagement and human services professional with more than eight years of experience, Williams brings deep expertise in volunteer coordination, school-based youth services, trauma-informed facilitation, and community outreach to this leadership role.

Williams joins the Community Engagement team from her current position as a School-Based Facilitator in Roberta's House's Youth Services Department, where she has delivered grief, loss, and emotional-wellness workshops for students across Baltimore City and Prince George's County, collaborated with school counselors and administrators, and supported program implementation and data tracking. She has also played a key role in advancing Roberta's House's healing-centered approach to supporting young people and families navigating trauma and bereavement.

Prior to joining Roberta's House, Williams served as Substance & Mental Health Program Coordinator at Allianze Inc. and as a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program (PRP) Counselor with Therapeutic Wellness Services, where she coordinated volunteers and peer-support services, facilitated trauma-informed group and individual sessions, and worked closely with community and clinical partners to support families facing complex challenges.

Gregory Prioleau, Member of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Volunteer Committee, who participated in Williams' final interview, shared his personal endorsement of her appointment:

"Having participated in Nakia's final interview, I was deeply impressed by her compassion, professionalism, and clarity of purpose," said Prioleau. "I am excited to personally welcome her to this role and confident she will be a strong partner in strengthening Roberta's House's volunteer community."

In her new role, Williams will oversee volunteer recruitment, training, and retention; deepen relationships with community and corporate partners; and strengthen the volunteer infrastructure supporting Roberta's House's expanding portfolio of

programs and events, including the Elijah Cummings Leadership Awards, the Maryland Safe Sleep Summit, Camp Erin Baltimore, and year-round grief-support services.

Williams holds an Associate of Arts in Business Administration from the Community College of Baltimore County and is completing her Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration (HR) at the University of Baltimore. She is also HUD-certified as a Housing Counselor and licensed in Life, Health, Property, and Casualty Insurance in Maryland.

Community members interested in volunteering with Roberta's House are encouraged to contact Ms. Williams at (410) 235-6633 or by email at nwilliams@robertashouse.org.

Roberta's House—A Family Grief Support Center is a Maryland-based nonprofit providing compassionate, trauma-informed grief support to children, youth, and families who have experienced the death of a loved one. Through counseling, peer support, school-based programs, and community partnerships, Roberta's House helps families find hope and healing after loss.

Maryland Small Business Development Center

Establishing Your Business' Credit Foundation & Solidifying Your Profile-Part I

February 17, 2026 • 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Location: Online Meeting (Live)

Cost: No Fee

Registration Required:

<https://mdsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/events/18447?embedded=0>

In this first of a two-part series, we'll dive into the basics of building a healthy business credit foundation and how to review business credit profiles. You'll learn the importance of:

- Business entity formation to secure credit
- NAP validation/accuracy
- Other lender compliance items
- Vendor/credit/merchant/other business accounts
- NAICS & SIC codes
- Researching, correcting and updating business credit profiles with the various bureaus

Presenter: Geoff Suval; President & Managing Director Xceleran Business Funding Solutions, Inc.

**Part #2 will be held on March 25, 2026 at 10 a.m.

Instructions: The log-on link will be included in your registration confirmation email you receive once you register.

The Prince George's Post

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ENVIRONMENT



CREDIT: PEXELS.COM

More and more people are working together to advocate for food insecure communities and increase food availability.

EarthTalk® Q&A

Reducing Food Insecurity Without Increasing Food Waste

By Rachel Berliner | January 21, 2026

Dear EarthTalk:

How do we reduce food insecurity without increasing food waste?
—D.A., via email

Food insecurity, the lacking of access to adequate food, is a prevalent global issue. According to a study conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), 1.3 billion people experienced food insecurity in 2022. And it is experienced in varying degrees; some experience food insecurity as not having enough to eat; others need to sacrifice nutritional value. Food insecurity has many climate-related causes. For example, extreme weather and natural disasters impact crop production, and pollutants make soil no longer fertile, ultimately decreasing the amount of viable, nutritional food available.

The best way to improve food security is to decrease personal waste. Slight changes in cooking, buying and disposal practices can reduce food waste and, subsequently, food insecurity. Planning meals at the beginning of the week allows individuals to gauge exactly how much food they will need to buy and eliminate the possibility of waste. Freezing leftovers or unused ingredients and using food scraps for another purpose, like pickling vegetables that are not as fresh, are great alternatives to food disposal. "The waste of one player is a raw material for another," says Yana Panneccouke, a program manager for Get Wasted, which focuses on reducing food waste. "For example, a lime that's too yellow or a carrot that has an ugly shape might not fit the criteria of a supermarket but is perfectly healthy for human consumption."

Improved agricultural practices can also help to increase food security. Vertical farming allows farmers to grow crops in tightly-packed layers rather than space-consuming rows. "This is a way to learn new technology and mass produce crops..." says Dan Hilarides, manager of Vertical Acres. Also, improving post-harvest conditions can decrease crop loss. Utilizing cold storage warehouses and facilities and improving the efficiency of transportation help to keep food fresh.

Education, especially for children and youth, is a particularly impactful global initiative when it comes to improving food security. Organizations around the world increasing awareness about food insecurity, meal preparation and sustainable food markets. "Our educational programs support student learning about complex food issues and teach them how to advocate for themselves and their communities," says Keren Dalyot, implementation leader at FoodEducators, a startup working towards increasing food security.

More and more people are working together to advocate for food insecure communities and increase food availability. If you are interested in improving food security, try out one of the food waste-reducing methods above, educate families and friends about ways they can help, or support organizations educating the next generation about food insecurity.

CONTACTS: World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/09/7-ways-to-boost-food-security-in-the-face-of-climate-change/>.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit **EarthTalk**. See more at <https://emagazine.earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org

Gen Z Turns the Houseplant Craze into a Lifestyle Trend: Shops Thrive as Gen Z Continues to Nurture the 'Plant Parent' Trend

(Family Features) When Jessica Janik-De Gennaro started seeing her \$20 succulents pop up between electronics and yoga pants on a mobile marketplace, she knew she'd found something unexpected.

The entrepreneur had been shipping plants nationwide since 2012, but joining Temu in 2024 opened an entirely new customer base.

"We saw growth right away," said De Gennaro, the 43-year-old founder of Shop Succulents who sold 3,500 items on the platform in just four months.

Her success reflects a broader trend: While many pandemic habits faded, America's houseplant obsession only grew stronger. Spending on gardening-related items jumped 18.7% in 2020—an \$8.5 billion increase from the year before, and that momentum hasn't stopped. The indoor plants market was valued at \$20.68 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach \$30.25 billion by 2032, according to industry research.

"The potential for scaling is enormous," De Gennaro said. "Seeing our \$20 succulents next to Temu's bargain electronics was surreal, but that's the magic—the algorithm doesn't discriminate. Our plants became 'items to explore' for people who never knew they wanted a spiky plant until it popped up between yoga pants and kitchenware."

MPT Series Outdoors Maryland Returns With Two New Episodes in February

Prince George's County wildlife & water featured in new Outdoors Maryland episode
Segments include rescuing stranded seals, adaptive sailing, and statewide surveys for freshwater mussels

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Public Television

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (Jan. 21, 2026)—Maryland Public Television's (MPT) award-winning original series Outdoors Maryland continues its 37th season with new episodes on February 3 and February 10. Produced in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Outdoors Maryland continues to captivate viewers with memorable stories and compelling videography.

Outdoors Maryland airs Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. on MPT and online at mpt.org/livestream, with encore broadcasts on Saturdays at 4:30 p.m. Episodes will be available to watch live and on demand via MPT's online video player and the free PBS app at the time of their premiere.

Segments debuting during the February 3 episode are:

- **A Season for Seals** (Worcester County and Baltimore City)—Winter is seal season along Maryland's Atlantic Coast, with multiple species of these marine mammals hauling out onto state beaches. Join the National Aquarium's stranding response team as they rescue sick and injured seals and prepare them for eventual release back into the wild. Plus, visit a growing seal colony in the Delaware Bay with Cape Water Tours and the MERR Institute.
- **Fishing the Margins** (Baltimore City and Dorchester County)—Join a cohort of kayak anglers for a pre-dawn paddling trip on the Patapsco River, as they work the margins of the river hunting for rockfish. Then, head to the Chicamacomico River in Dorchester County, where

snakeheads—an invasive species that has gained a reputation as one of the region's most exciting sportfish—lurk in the shallows.

Segments debuting during the season finale on **February 10** are:

- **Healing Waters** (Anne Arundel County)—At Annapolis' adaptive sailing center, meet Marylanders who aren't letting disabilities keep them from a Chesapeake adventure. Join 80-some sailboats for the annual CRAB Cup, a fundraising race organized by local nonprofit Chesapeake Regional Accessible Boating. Then, tag along with CRAB volunteer skipper Steve Palmer, an avid sailor and double amputee, as he takes guest sailors with a range of disabilities out on the water and teaches them the ropes.
- **Mussel Memory** (Charles, Prince George's, and Washington counties)—Visit a forested creek in Charles County, where Department of Natural Resources biologists survey the state's largest population of endangered dwarf wedge mussels. Witness the bizarre and hypnotic life cycle of the lampsisilis mussel. Finally, learn how scientists from DNR

and the Anacostia Watershed Society are working towards restoring mussel populations in areas where pollution has taken its toll.

Audiences are invited to engage with the MPT series on social media @OutdoorsMarylandTV on Facebook and @OutdoorsMarylandTV on Instagram.

Since debuting in 1988, MPT has produced more than 700 Outdoors Maryland stories on topics ranging from science-oriented environmental issues to segments about fascinating people, animals, and places across the state. The series has earned more than 50 awards over 37 years of production including 30 Emmy® Awards from the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) member offering entertaining and educational content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices via its online video player and the free PBS app. A state agency operating under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission, MPT also produces local, regional, and national programming and frequently earns regional Emmy® awards for its work. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through its Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education and Thinkport.org. MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources covering a wide range of topics. More information is available at mpt.org.

Community: New Report Exposes the Limits of Plastic Recycling

(StatePoint) Have you tossed plastic into a recycling bin recently? There's a large chance that material won't be recycled. That's according to a new report, which finds that after decades of being touted as a solution to pollution, plastic recycling is not all it's cracked up to be. The report also highlights the growing scientific consensus on the health risks and economic costs of plastic pollution.

"Merchants of Myth," the Greenpeace USA report, uncovered that less than a quarter of the most commonly produced types of plastics—found in items like bottles, jugs, food containers and caps—is actually recyclable. Moreover, plastic recycling rates in the United States have been cut in half since 2014, from 9.5% to roughly 5–6% today, due to recycling access gaps, as well as infrastructure and technical limitations at recycling facilities. Up to 43% percent of U.S. households lack access to basic recycling services, and participation in recycling is actually decreasing. Meanwhile, only 12% of national municipal recycling facilities are even capable of processing common consumer plastics. Despite the small amount of plastic recycling actually taking place, the public pays to collect and sort plastics, while most of it ends up burned or dumped in landfills.

Researchers say that the plastic industry, retailers, prominent plastic-reliant brands, and related trade associations are retracting their sustainability commitments while continuing to rely on single-use plastic packaging. And with global plastic production projected to triple by 2050, voluntary measures made by corporations won't be enough.

"Sufficient change will only come with regulatory intervention and with politicians holding corporations accountable. Instead



PHOTO SOURCE: (C) EYEEM MOBILE GMBH / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

of investing in real solutions, the plastic industry, and corporations that rely on plastic, have poured billions into public relations campaigns making false claims about the recyclability of their products to avoid bans and reduce public backlash," says John Hocevar, Greenpeace USA oceans campaigner director. "My sincere hope is that a year from now, no one with any credibility is still talking about a circular economy for plastic, and that we are united in focusing on reducing plastic production and use."

To read the report, visit greenpeace.org.

"The plastic crisis grows worse every day we fail to act—for biodiversity, environmental justice, human health and our climate. It's time to stop pretending we can recycle our way out of it," says Hocevar.



Following a similar strategy, House Plant Shop's inventory spans more than 500 species, from air plants and succulents to pet-friendly potted plants and rare tropicals.

After joining Temu in December 2024, sales on the platform rocked. By May, it had become the company's largest online channel,

surpassing all other marketplaces.

"Temu quickly became bigger for us than any other marketplace," said Andy Burde, 33, founder of House Plant Shop.

The platform's young customer base has proven ideal for plant sellers. A survey by CraftJack found that 6 in 10 young Americans say "pets are the new kids, and plants are the new pets."

The smaller plants, sold in 2–3-inch pots and priced around \$10 by House Plant Shop, have performed especially well.

"They're affordable, easy to ship and our customers love watching them grow," Burde said.

The shift to mobile commerce has been crucial to both companies' success. With 76% of U.S. adults using smartphones to shop online, platforms like Temu have become discovery engines for impulse purchases, including houseplants.

Now, House Plant Shop ranks among the top three live plant sellers on the mobile marketplace.

"Our goal is to become the No. 1 live plant seller on the platform," Burde said. "We've found our second growth wave, and we're excited to keep growing while staying true to our roots."

Join the plant parent trend by visiting Temu.com or downloading the app.

#17754 Source: Temu

