

# The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SINCE 1932

Vol. 94, No. 13 March 26 — April 1, 2026

Prince George's County, Maryland

Newspaper of Record

Phone: 301-627-0900

25 cents

## M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department Recognizes Participants of the Inaugural "Planning in Our County: A Course for Municipal Officials"

By PRESS OFFICER  
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (March 18, 2026)—The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) hosted and celebrated the graduates of the inaugural Planning in Our County: A Course for Municipal Officials, on Saturday, March 14, 2026, at the Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex in Landover, Maryland. Designed specifically for elected officials and leaders representing municipalities in Prince George's County, the participants of the one-day workshop learned the ins and outs of the County's planning and development process. Inspired by the award-winning Neighborhood Planning Academy, topics included the history and future of the County, planning and zoning, development review, multi-modal transportation and street safety, and building sustainable communities.

"Mayors, councilmembers, and municipal leaders often stand on the front lines of governance—balancing growth with preservation, economic opportunity with neighborhood stability, and innovation with accountability," said Darryl Barnes, Chairman of M-NCPPC and the Prince

George's County Planning Board. "Through this course, we are equipping our community leaders with a clear understanding of the planning process that shapes our shared future."

"As a spin to our Neighborhood Planning Academy, the municipal leaders collaborated in a charrette-style activity to form steps to resolve an issue in the community," said James Hunt, Acting Planning Director of the Prince George's County Planning Department. "The participants immediately used knowledge gained from the course curriculum to address real-life challenges."

The spring 2026 class of municipal officials and leaders included:

- William Barclay, Public Works Director, City of New Carrollton
- Greg Barnes, Councilmember, City of Hyattsville
- Trina Brown, Council Member, Town of Bladensburg
- Theresa Brownson, Councilmember, Town of Forest Heights
- R. David Chambers, Councilmember, Town of Morningside

See PARTICIPANTS Page A3



PHOTO COURTESY M-NCPPC

The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) hosted and celebrated the graduates of the inaugural Planning in Our County: A Course for Municipal Officials, on Saturday, March 14, 2026, at the Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex in Landover, Maryland.

## PGCPS Wins National Grand Prize for Indoor Air Quality and Climate Action Leadership



PHOTO COURTESY PGCPS

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) earned the National Grand Prize in the 2026 Magna Awards for its trailblazing work in improving indoor air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Sponsored by the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the award recognizes PGCPS as the top school system in the nation (over 20,000 students) for successfully integrating environmental health into student achievement goals. See article on page 5.

### Clean and Green: Elevate the Scene

Spring 2026 Event: Saturday, April 25, 2026, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

Registration Deadline: Monday, April 20, 2026

It's clean up time! Grab your gloves, roll up your sleeves, and let's get ready to ELEVATE Prince George's County! Let's come together, have fun, and make our community shine!

## County Library's Annual "Geek Out Expo" Set to Bring Pop Culture Fun to Hyattsville Branch Library This Weekend

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George's Memorial Library System

LARGO, Md. (March 20, 2026)—On Saturday, March 28, the Prince George's Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) will host its 4th annual Geek Out Expo, a free, all-day festival where community members of all ages are invited to join the Library and local partner organizations in celebrating all things "geeky" in pop culture.

Started in 2023 at the New Carrollton Branch Library, Geek Out Expo brings together staff from across the Library system and builds on the Library's popular year-round manga, anime, gaming, and other pop culture programming. Rotating to a new PGCMLS branch each year, Geek Out Expo creates a fun, energy-filled environment that is equally welcoming to community members who come to the Library to play chess, "Dungeons & Dragons," or "Magic: The Gathering"; manga and anime fans who screen favorites at one of the system's many "MAC Party" ("Manga and Anime Club") events; and K-pop, Pokémon, and animation enthusiasts who come out for the Library's regular one-off themed programs and events throughout the year.

"Geek Out Expo is my favorite event of the year," says Isaiah West, PGCMLS Teen Services Specialist and lead Geek Out Expo organizer. "It's a time for our community to connect over their favorite 'geeky' fandoms, through programs and with partners specifically chosen to celebrate how those fandoms bring us together."

This year's Geek Out Expo will be held at the metro-accessible Hyattsville Branch Library from 11 a.m.–4 p.m. on Saturday, March 28. Featured local "geeky" partners include Artway Alliance, the Pirate Girl Painter, Game Kastle College Park, Boba Studios, and DC's Korean Cultural Center. Following an enormously successful 2025 event that saw more than 400 attendees at the Surratts-Clinton Branch Library last year (many of them in their finest cosplay!), the Library is anticipating another robust turnout for 2026.



The full line-up of this year's Geek Out Expo events is listed below.

### PGCMLS Geek Out Expo

Free | Saturday, March 28 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. | All Ages | Hyattsville Branch Library

Fun for all ages! Let your inner "geek" out at the annual PGCMLS' Geek Out Expo. Join the Library and partners for a free, fun-filled day of creativity, camaraderie, and all things nerdy. From game demos (including "Magic: the Gathering" and an introduction to indie gaming) to face painting, pop culture cosplay, and Pokémon fun, Geek Out Expo is the perfect blend of excitement and community spirit!

The day's activities include:

10:30 a.m. (pre-festival)

**Geek Out Expo: Ready 2 Read Storytime:** Ages 3–5 | Storytime Room

Bring your preschooler for the Hyattsville Branch Library's weekly "Ready 2 Read Storytime!" Costumes are encouraged in celebration of Geek Out Expo festivities.

11 a.m.

**Face Painting Presented by the Pirate Girl Painter**

Ages 0–12 | Art Room

The Pirate Girl Painter transforms faces

with dazzling designs inspired by kids' favorite superheroes. First come, first served.

### Coloring Fun

Ages 0–5 | Conference Room 1

Young artists can enjoy a relaxed coloring activity designed just for little kids.

11:15 a.m.

**Super Smash Bros. Tournament for Kids** Ages 6–12 | Meeting Room 2

Test your skills, strategize your moves, and compete against fellow players for victory. Registration begins in-person at 10:45 a.m.

11:30 a.m.

**Pokémon Go & Draw Presented by Artway Alliance**

Kids and Teens | Learning Lab

Level up your creativity with Team Artway! In this workshop, participants will learn how to draw their favorite Pokémon.

**Game Demo Presented by Game Kastle College Park**

Teens and Adults | Conference Room 2  
Test out new tabletop games with a demo led by Game Kastle College Park.

12 p.m.

**Craft and Create**

See GEEK OUT EXPO Page A3

## INSIDE

Brandywine-Aquasco

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

Social Security Matters

Towns and Neighbors, Page A2

April Programs at Marietta Historic Site & Museum

Bowie NJROTC: Benjamin Tasker and Samuel Ogle Recruiting

Join NCRTV for World Amateur Radio Day!

Community, Page A3

### To Be Equal:

Black America Is Already in a Recession Commentary, Page A4

M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Board Welcomes New Commissioners

Business and Finance, Page A4

Local Warning: Climate Change In Maryland Maryland's Main Energy Producer Is Growing—But Concerns Remain

Prince George's County Advances Environmental Justice Through Urban Tree Planting Program Environment, Page A5

# TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

## Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### LAKE ARBOR JAZZ FESTIVAL

The 16th Annual Lake Arbor Jazz Festival returns to the MGM National Harbor, Oxon Hill, Maryland July 15–19, 2026. This 5-day event features performances from artists including Norman Brown, Boney James, Kirk Whalum, and Marcus Anderson. Tickets for various events, including the Summer White Affair and Sunday Jazz Brunch, are currently on sale. <https://lakearborjazz.com/>

### PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORY

"In 1634, Governor Leonard Calvert founded Maryland's first settlement at St. Mary's City. The Maryland colony flourished and enjoyed peaceful relations with the neighboring Piscataway and Susquehannock tribes. By 1695, 1,600 to 1,700 people left the original settlement to live on farms and plantations lining both the Patuxent and Potomac Rivers. Governor Francis Nicholson and the General Assembly agreed that the area deserved self-government. On St. George's Day, April 23, 1696, a new county was established, named for Prince George of Denmark, the husband of Princess Anne, heir to England's throne. The first county seat was at Charles Town on the Patuxent, a port town established in 1683 by the General Assembly. The new Prince George's County extended southward to the Charles County line, north towards the Pennsylvania border, and marked Maryland's western frontier. It remained the frontier until 1748, when the westernmost regions were granted their own government, and Prince George's County's northern boundary became basically the line it is today. In 1692, the Church of England became the established church of the Maryland colony through the Act of the General Assembly. In 1696, Prince George's County had two parishes established within its boundaries: St. Paul's and Piscataway (or King George's). There was already a church in Charles Town that was used as a meeting place for the county court until a new courthouse was completed in 1698. In Piscataway Parish, the first church was built in 1696 at the site of the present-day St. John's Church, Broad Creek". Information by Katharine D. Bryant and Donna L. Schneider on behalf of the Prince George's County Historical & Cultural Trust. Information about the 19th Century will be in my next article.

### THURSDAY NIGHT OPEN MIC

Come join us for our Open Mic! For two hours, audiences can expect a diverse chorus of voices and a vast array of professional spoken word performers, open mic rookies, and musicians. Expect to be moved, expect to be moved, expect a packed house, expect the unexpected, but come with an open mind and ear. HOSTED BY: Backpack Jeff. Jeffrey W. Young, known as Backpack Jeff, is a motivational speaker, spoken word artist, and conflict resolutionist who has traveled throughout the East Coast touching the lives of others with words. A person who always looked at life as distributing lessons, Jeffrey embraces each lesson that comes his way. As "the poet who always has what you need in his backpack," Jeffrey uses his words to motivate others to never lose sight of their passion and use their imagination to execute their dreams. Presented By: Busboys and Poets, recurring monthly on the 1st Thursday until October 1, 2026. Location: 5331 Bal-

timore Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland, 20781. Time: 8 p.m. Price: \$7.13 online. \$8.00 (tax and fees included) at the door.

### SISTERS AT HEART

Sisters at Heart is a Breast Cancer Support Group of Southern Maryland. Founded in 2007 with the hope to make a difference in the lives of women diagnosed with breast cancer. With sisterly love, we support each other and those affected by this disease. Join us to learn from one another's experiences, obtain the latest educational resources, engage in fundraising activities, participate in fun outings and retreats while developing friendships. Roberta J. Kieliger, Founder Sisters at Heart Est. 2007.

Sister Bonding monthly meetings 4th Monday of the month at the Clark Senior Center La Plata, Maryland. Activities: Annual Retreat, Luncheons, Annual Breast Cancer Anniversary Luncheon, Power of Positive Painting, Holiday Tree Decorating at the Clark and Waldorf Senior Center. Community involvement and fundraising activities are awareness, fundraising & outreach exhibits, sporting events, volleyball and pickleball. Annual Breast Cancer Awareness and Fitness Walk. County Commissioners of Charles County-Annual Proclamation for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Exercise for a Cause Events, Relay for Life, Paint the Park Pink. Christmas Connection-Children's Aid Society.

GRANT AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS: Grant Awards-Scholarships. Various organizations that support Breast Cancer health are awarded grants. Health Partners and the Charles Regional Medical Center are among the recipients. Roberta Kieliger Sisters at Heart Scholarship. Two College of Southern Maryland students pursuing a degree in the health field are awarded annually.

Meeting times are every 4th Monday of the month at the Clark Senior Center 11 a.m.–1 p.m., 1210 Charles St., La Plata, Maryland, 20646. Contact Information: Nila Straka (301)-399-3566, Susan Winborne (301) 752-6021. sistersatheartsond@gmail.com (301) 934-5423. sistersatheartsond.org, chesapeakecharities.org. Find us on Facebook, facebook.com/20sistersatheartsond07.

### KAPPA FOUNDATION OF FORT WASHINGTON

Kappa Foundation of Fort Washington (KFFW) has scholarships available for High School Seniors/Young Men in our South County service area (Fort Washington, Temple Hills, Oxon Hill, Camp Springs, and Clinton). Young men may apply using the following link: <https://www.kffw.org/scholarship-application/>

### SPRING 2026 OPEN HOUSE

College of Southern Maryland OPEN HOUSE starts April 18 at LaPlata Campus. Meet our faculty and discover the wide variety of programs that lead to a career or prepare you for a four-year degree. Learn more about scholarships and financial aid. Talk to current students about their CSM experience. Explore campus life and activities like athletics, student government, and other organizations. Tour the Center for Trades and Energy Training and the Center for Health Sciences at the Regional Hughesville Campus April 14, virtual via Zoom April 29. Visit csmd.edu/openhouse to learn more and RSVP. Attendees will be entered into a drawing for a \$500 scholarship.

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

### Morningside's jam-packed spring schedule

The town has a slew of fun events planned in the coming weeks. If you need more information or would like to register for any of them, you can call the Morningside Town Hall at 301-736-2300, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

On Saturday, March 28, Morningside will be hosting Lunch with the Easter Bunny at 11 a.m. at Town Hall. Admission is \$6 per person. Children under 1 are free with a paying adult, though they'll have to sit on a lap.

Participants will get a hot dog, french fries and a drink, followed, of course, by a visit with the Bunny.

Make sure you bring your Easter basket, because there's also an Egg Hunt for independent walkers up through age 12, with prizes for gold- and silver-egg winners.

Space is limited, so it might be sold out by the time this goes to press. But it can't hurt to call 301-736-2300 and find out.

Saturday, April 11 features the next Morningside Community Yard Sale (rain date, April 25). It runs from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the VFW parking lot.

Tables are available for rental on a first-come, first-served basis, but sellers must call ahead of time to register. The rate is \$15 for the first table, and \$10 each for additional tables. Set-up starts at 7:30 a.m. And vendors are welcome.

Saturday, May 2, Morningside is celebrating Mother's Day with their Flowers with Mom event at the Town Hall, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

They will serve a brunch of Danish, fruit, juice and coffee, followed by an arts-and-crafts project. This event is free, but seating is limited, so pre-registration at 301-736-2300 is required.

Finally, on Saturday, June 13, fathers get their turn with Donuts with Dad from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Town Hall. Brunch will be donuts, fruit, juice and coffee, followed by an arts-and-crafts project. Like Flowers with Mom, there is no fee, but reservations at 301-736-2300 are required.

### Update on Billy Fowler

In late February, Billy Fowler received a stem cell transplant to treat his leukemia. He has responded well to the treatment and currently is in remission. On Monday, March 16, the hospital decided he was doing well enough that they discharged him so he could continue to recover at home.

He is enjoying being in his own bed in his own room with his own TV, and without nurses or doctors waking him up at all hours to check on him.

### St. Patrick's Day times two

The Morningside St. Patrick's Day Senior Luncheon was supposed to be held on March 16. The food was prepared, the decorations were hung, the bingo prizes were set out. And then a storm system came through the area that day, threatening fierce winds, thunderstorms, hail, and possibly even tornados.

Morningside quickly changed gears. The decorations came down. Karen Rooker ran home to grab a bulk-pack of takeout containers she had stashed away. The meals were boxed up, and then driven around Morningside, delivered to the houses of all the residents who had RSVP'd for the event. The weather wasn't as bad as predicted, though some parts of D.C. recorded wind gusts near 70 miles per hour. I was sorry not to get to try my hand at bingo, but grateful to have a nice meal on the table for my daughter Kathleen, visiting from Ohio, and me, without either of us having to go anywhere.

The next day, St. Patrick's Day itself, I enjoyed dinner with St. Philip's pastor Fr. Ryan Pineda, Jim Reilly, daughters Kathleen and Sheila, and grandson Conor and his family.

My granddaughter-in-law Heather made corned beef, cabbage, and potatoes, a tradition we started years ago, back when Morningsider Anne Woods was alive. Anne was from Ireland and always loved celebrating her heritage. We made sure to toast Anne before the meal, but it would've been so much nicer if she could've been here with us.

### Speed camera follow-up

An update on the new speed camera on the Joint Base Andrews-side of Allentown. As reported last week, the speed on that side of the road has been lowered from 40 mph down to 35 mph, which matches the speed limit in the other direction.

At the same time that change was made, both sides of that section of Allentown Road also were rezoned from a school zone to residential. This will improve safety for the residents of the apartments behind Andrews Manor who rely on the bus stops along Allentown Road. The rezoning means that the speed-camera operation no longer is limited to school hours. Now, they will run twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

While the new camera has been installed, it will not start issuing violations until April 11. That gives you a couple weeks to adjust your habits in light of all these changes. You've been warned!

### Pilot dies in small-plane crash

A small airplane crashed in Hollywood, Md., on February 28. The plane, a Sonex ultralight aircraft, went down a little after 9 a.m. in the woods in Dorsey Park.

The pilot, Andrew Mechling, 74, of Tall Timbers was pronounced dead at the scene. There were no passengers flying with him.

The cause of the crash is still unknown, though the National Transportation Safety Board is investigating.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Gina Foster, March 26; Walter Dimes, March 27; Robert Hay, Jr. and David Righter, March 28; Ben Surratt and Kimberly Smith, March 29; Akwete Bedewi, March 30; Sylvia Barbour and Mark Cummings, March 31; Wayne Booth, Susan Frostbutter, Douglas Mangum, and James Whipple, April 1.

Happy Anniversary to Terry and Gina Foster, March 26; Antoinette and Charles Mattison, March 29; Walter and Fannie Dimes, April 1.

## Social Security Matters

### Ask Rusty:

## Help! Social Security Reduced my Monthly Payment

By RUSSELL GLOOR,

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

**Dear Rusty:** My last Social Security payment decreased by about \$400, so I went to my online SS account and found a November 2025 letter explaining that my 2024 tax return showed a greatly enlarged AGI (Adjusted Gross Income). Thus, SSA decided to withdraw monies, as of Jan 2026, from my bank account because I'd owed far more monies to them! The letter itemized my greatly diminished 2026 SSA monthly payment, explaining should my next tax return show a regular AGI, then SSA would return my SS income to regular amounts (and return every prior month's deficits?). Said letter also mentioned an optional recourse, that of compiling an "Appeal" to regain my ongoing decreased income! The extra amounts now withdrawn for Medicare Parts A and D alone are outrageously high. I'm a retired senior citizen on a fixed income.

According to SSA, my having sold a piece of land in 2024 allows SSA to decrease my SS income! Has this become a common practice against USA (senior) citizens? Thank you in advance for your input! **Signed: Feeling Wronged**

**Dear Feeling Wronged:** From what you have shared, it appears that your SS benefit amount has been affected by a provision known as "IRMAA" (Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount). IRMAA isn't really a Social Security issue, rather it is a Medicare premium thing. But when IRMAA applies, it reduces your net Social Security payment because Medicare premiums are automatically taken from your Social Security benefit, thus making your net SS payment less. If you look at your gross Social Security payment (at your online "my Social Security" account) you will see that your gross SS payment did not change, but your Medicare premium did, thus affecting your net SS payment.

IRMAA, essentially, makes Medicare a "means tested" program, where those with a higher AGI can pay a higher Medicare Part B (and Part D) premium. However, IRMAA is usually based on AGI from two years prior to the current year (because your current AGI information isn't available from the IRS when Medicare premiums are determined in October of each year). FYI, you may have received a notice in the mail in early December telling you what your 2026 Social Security and Medicare amounts would be. In a nutshell, the land you sold in 2024 apparently increased your AGI to exceed the base IRMAA thresholds (which are \$109,000 if you file your taxes as a single, or \$218,000 if you file your income tax as "married/jointly"). And the IRMAA supplements are "progressive" (higher if your AGI is more), so if your Medicare premiums went up by about \$400 (about twice the 2026 standard premium) it's likely that your 2024 AGI was over \$137,000 if you filed as a single (or over \$274,000 if you filed as "married/jointly"). FYI, you can see the 2026 IRMAA brackets/premium amounts at this link: [www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/medicare-premiums.html](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/medicare-premiums.html)

A couple of additional points:

- Your Medicare premiums will, indeed, revert to the standard amounts for 2027, if your 2025 AGI amount is under the IRMAA threshold for your tax filing status.
- There is no premium for Medicare Part A (which is coverage for inpatient hospitalization care) because you are receiving Social Security benefits. However, there is a premium for Part B of Medicare (which is coverage for outpatient medical services), and you must also separately pay a premium for Part D (which is coverage for prescription drugs offered by private insurers). And these IRMAA supplements apply even if you have a Medicare Advantage plan from a private insurer.

Unfortunately, your only "recourse" is, as SSA suggested, to appeal the IRMAA supplement, but that is usually successful only if you can prove you had a "life changing event" which caused (or will cause) your AGI to be less than that used to determine your IRMAA surcharge. Your best option at this point will likely be to appeal using a "Request for Reconsideration" (Form SSA-561) asking that your 2026 Medicare premium be based on a recent year's (e.g., 2025) lower income.

Finally, IRMAA isn't really a new thing—it was enacted in 2003, effective in 2007. But it does have a profound effect on many seniors, as I explained in this article I recently published on the topic: <https://amacfoundation.org/irmaa-a-medicare-surprise/>

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org).*

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://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.Amac-Foundation.org](http://www.Amac-Foundation.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](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

# COMMUNITY



## April Programs at Marietta Historic Site & Museum

By STACEY HAWKINS  
Marietta Historic Site & Museum

### Marietta Historic Site & Museum Presents

#### "Unfinished Revolutions" 5th Annual Giving Voice Initiative Event

Please join us in person on **Saturday, April 4**, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. for Unfinished Revolutions: 5th Annual Giving Voice Initiative Event. This moving poetry reading is to help mark the nation's 250th anniversary. Marietta House Museum and a regional poetry organization mentored local poets to write this collection of poems inspired by the history of Marietta House, using the theme "Unfinished Revolutions".

Poets will read their poems and discuss them with the audience. Refreshments will be served. This event is recommended for ages 12 and older. Children who are attending the event must be accompanied by an adult. This is a FREE event. Walk-ins welcome; registration is requested. Register at [www.pgparksdirect.com](http://www.pgparksdirect.com) and use ticket code: MHM-SPEC-GA-20260404.

For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email [marietta-house@pgparks.com](mailto:marietta-house@pgparks.com). Marietta Historic Site & Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

### Marietta Historic Site & Museum Presents A Book Talk With Zaakir Tameez on "Charles Sumner: Conscience of a Nation"

Please join us for a virtual talk by Zaakir Tameez on **Thursday, April 16**, from 6:30–8 p.m. Author and historian, Zaakir Tameez will discuss his book "Charles Sumner: Conscience of a Nation". Mr. Tameez will consider the courageous Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner, who is remembered for receiving a physical beating while serving in Congress and for his leadership during and after the U.S. Civil War for civil rights. Drawing from hundreds of letters, newspapers, and speeches, Mr. Tameez shares a remarkable portrait of a complex man who faced many personal challenges.

"Charles Sumner: Conscience of a Nation" is a moving portrayal of a courageous, long-overlooked American who, in the words of one contemporary, "stood in the vanguard of freedom."

Visitors must register to receive the TEAMS link to the program. \$5/county resident & \$7/non-county resident. Visitors must register to receive the TEAMS link. Register at [www.pgparksdirect.com](http://www.pgparksdirect.com) and use ticket code: MHM-SPEC-GA-20260416.

This program is in partnership with Prince George's County Historical Society.

For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email [marietta-house@pgparks.com](mailto:marietta-house@pgparks.com). Marietta Historic Site & Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

### Participants from A1

- Gopi Dhokai, Councilmember, City of Hyattsville
- Shelley Dorsey-Washington, Treasurer, Town of North Brentwood
- Sarah Franklin, Councilmember, Town of Upper Marlboro
- Faith Ford, Council Member, Town of Capitol Heights
- Frankie Fritz, Councilmember, City of Greenbelt
- Edouard Haba, Councilmember, City of Hyattsville
- John Hoatson, Town Manager, Town of Cottage City
- Glenda Johnson, Councilmember, Town of Landover Hills
- Troy Barrington Lilly, President, Town of Forest Heights
- Danielle McKinney, Council Member, City of Greenbelt
- Phelecia Nembhard, Mayor, City of New Carrollton

- Paula Noble, Councilwoman, Town of Forest Heights
- Ray Ranker, Councilmember, City of College Park
- Kyrthlyn Rhoda, Grant Manager, City of Seat Pleasant
- Joseph Solomon, Councilmember, City of Hyattsville
- Agnelli Sybel Malavé, Councilmember, City of New Carrollton
- Christopher Wade, Council Member, Town of Cheverly
- Kristen Weaver, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Greenbelt
- Wanda Wheatley, Commissioner, Chair, Town of Cottage City

For more information on the Neighborhood Planning Academy, visit <https://academy.pgplanning.com>. Prince George's County residents and stakeholders may join the mailing list to receive announcements on applications for upcoming courses.

## Bowie NJROTC

### Benjamin Tasker and Samuel Ogle Recruiting

By PAO C/SA HENDERSON  
Bowie High School NJROTC

On Monday and Friday, March 9 and 13, 2026, the Bowie High School NJROTC Drone and Drill team visited both Benjamin Tasker and Samuel Ogle Middle Schools for a middle school recruiting event to introduce students to the NJROTC program. During the events, the unit's Drill team, Color Guard, Armed Exhibition and Armed Standard teams performed. In addition, the captain and co-captain of the Drone team, C/ENS Elizabeth Blackwood and C/SR Emely Rivera showcased their skills with drone technology. The event allowed middle school students to see the variety of opportunities within the Bowie High School NJROTC program.



Photos courtesy Bowie High School NJROTC

## Join NCRTV for World Amateur Radio Day!

By PRESS OFFICER  
National Capital Radio and Television Museum

NCRTV will be taking part in a nationwide amateur radio event highlighting our very own Ham Radio station—K3RTV! Join us to celebrate on **April 18, 2026** from 10 a.m.–3 p.m.! Free admission, and activities all day!

World Amateur Radio Day, held on April 18 each year, is celebrated worldwide by radio amateurs and the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU). It was on this day in 1925 that the IARU was formed in Paris. Join us in celebrating 100 years of IARU!

Our Ham Radio Open House is an exciting opportunity for

all community members to get hands-on with ham radio and wireless technology. NCRTV's Ham Station—K3RTV—will be broadcasting all day long, providing demonstrations to the public, and highlighting some of the unique and interesting ways that amateur radio can intersect with fun and learning! We will also be demonstrating smaller "Handie-Talkies," discussing the role amateur radio can play in emergency communications and how the SKYWARN Amateur Radio Network assists the National Weather Service!

The Museum is located at 2608 Mitchellville Rd., Bowie, Maryland, 20716. For more information, call us at 301-390-1020, or email [info@ncrtv.org](mailto:info@ncrtv.org).

### Geek Out Expo from A1

Kids through Adults | Conference Room 1

Follow step-by-step instructions to make fun projects like stuffies, fidget chains, bookmarks, and photo frames.

12:30 p.m.

**Balloon Twisting Presented by the Pirate Girl Painter**

Ages 0-12 | Art Room  
Marvel at the Pirate Girl Painter's talent as she twists and shapes balloons into imaginative creations straight out of your favorite cosplay, anime, and gaming worlds.

1 p.m.

**Super Smash Bros. Tournament for Adults**

Ages 18+ | Meeting Room 2  
Test your skills, strategize your moves, and compete against fellow players for victory. Registration begins in-person at 10:45 a.m.

**The Making of a Pop Culture Powerhouse Presented by DC's Korean Cultural Center**

Ages 10+ | Learning Lab  
Explore Korea's fascinating transformation from a nation rebuilding after war

to a global pop culture powerhouse.

**Game Demo Presented by Game Kastle College Park**

Teens and Adults | Art Room

Test out new tabletop games with a demo led by Game Kastle College Park.

**Learning Magic the Gathering**

Teens and Adults | Conference Room 2

Step into the world of "Magic: The Gathering" and learn to play this legendary card game!

2 p.m.

**Costume Dance Party**

Ages 0-5 | Storytime Room  
Dress up and hit the dance floor at our "Costume Bibliobop" dance party!

2:30 p.m.

**Game Demo Presented by Game Kastle College Park**

Teens and Adults | Art Room

Test out new tabletop games with a demo led by Game Kastle College Park.

**Indie Gaming Presented by Boba Studios**

Teens and Adults | Learning Lab  
Get an inside look at the world of indie game development with Boba Studios, a Baltimore-based game studio.

3 p.m.

**Super Smash Bros. Tournament for Teens**

Ages 13-18 | Meeting Room 2

Test your skills, strategize your moves, and compete against fellow players for victory. Registration begins in-person at 10:45 a.m.

**Anime Trivia**

Kids through Adults | Conference Room 2

Think you know your anime? Put your knowledge to the test at our Anime Trivia showdown!

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is a beacon within its diverse and dynamic community. The Library serves Prince George's County, Maryland's 966,000+ residents through 19 public branches, a law library in the County Correctional Center, various pop-up services and events, and 24/7 access to free online resources. As a trusted and responsive community leader, PGCMLS democratizes knowledge and opportunity by providing safe, accessible spaces where customers of all backgrounds can freely engage with the resources needed to build knowledge, literacy, skills, and creativity at every phase of life. Learn more at [pgcmls.info/about-us](http://pgcmls.info/about-us).

## Camp Nabi and Nature-Informed Therapy Bring Hope and Healing for Kids This Summer

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (March 16, 2026)—For children grieving the death of a loved one, summer can be especially challenging, but Camp Nabi offers a safe space where healing and hope take root. Hosted by Chesapeake Life Center, this beloved weekend overnight grief camp returns Aug. 7 to 9 at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center in Millersville, Maryland, combining comfort, connection and classic summer fun.

Open to children ages 6 to 18 who have experienced the death of a loved one, Camp Nabi provides a supportive environment with a full team of grief counselors and trained volunteers. Campers engage in activities focused on memorializing loved ones, learning coping skills in small groups and using integrative arts to express grief. Of course, classic camp experiences like swimming, field games, roasting marshmallows and ropes courses are also part of the weekend.



PHOTO COURTESY HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE  
(Aug. 8, 2025)—Marie Burgess, Licensed Clinical Professional Therapist, Certified Grief Educator and Certified Nature-Informed Therapist, also volunteers at Camp Nabi

To ensure access for families across the Chesapeake Life Center service area, free transportation is provided from one location in each of the counties served: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's. The cost is \$100 per camper, with a limited number of scholarships available thanks to community donations.

In addition to Camp Nabi, the Chesapeake Life Center offers Children's Nature-Informed Therapy, a quarterly program designed to help kids express emotions and honor loved ones through creative and outdoor experiences. This program is led by certified nature-informed therapist and grief educator Marie Burgess. A licensed clinical professional therapist, Burgess's love for the outdoors and playful spirit make her a natural. The next session is from 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 13, on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland.

For children needing more personalized support, individual and family



PHOTO BY ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN, HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE  
(Aug. 3, 2023)—Middle school campers take part in field activities at Chesapeake Life Center's Camp Nabi held at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center in Millersville, Maryland.

counseling are also available, helping families navigate grief together.

To register for Camp Nabi, the Children's Nature-Informed Therapy session, or to inquire about counseling, call 1-888-501-7077, email [griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org](mailto:griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org) or visit [chesapeakelifecenter.org](http://chesapeakelifecenter.org).

Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For details, visit [www.chesapeakelifecenter.org](http://www.chesapeakelifecenter.org).

# COMMENTARY

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## Black America Is Already in a Recession

*“Policy rollbacks that have removed protections and investments designed to support Black communities ... is the regression, combined with economic indicators, particularly unemployment, that would qualify as recessionary if they were applied to the national economy.”*

—Monica Mitchell, Chief of Staff, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

The revelation that the U.S. economy shed 92,000 jobs in February and now faces its highest unemployment rate in years has rattled economists, many of whom warn that the country may be on the brink of a recession.

For Black America, the recession has already arrived.

Even worse, the Black recession isn't driven natural market cycles alone. It is the predictable outcome of the deliberate policy choices of the Trump administration—choices that have aggressively dismantled the very protections meant to advance equity and stabilize communities historically shut out of opportunity. Not only did the administration take a sledgehammer to federal diversity, equity, and inclusion programs on Day One, it has spent the last year slashing agencies that have long served as engines of mobility for Black workers, including the federal civil service.

More than 327,000 federal jobs have been eliminated, not through attrition or organizational modernization, but through deliberate cuts that have eroded pathways to the middle class built through generations of civil-rights gains.

At the same time, the administration has abandoned federal support for disadvantaged businesses. Critical institutions—among them the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund and the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)—have been targeted for defunding or dismantling altogether. These programs have been lifelines, offering capital and technical assistance to Black entrepreneurs who face entrenched discrimination from traditional lenders. Removing them does not create a level playing field; it cements an unequal one.

The consequences are measurable and immediate. After reaching an all-time low during the Biden administration, the Black unemployment rate surged to 8.3% by November 2025—the highest level since the pandemic—and remains more than twice the rate for white Americans. The Black homeownership rate fell to 43.9% in the first half of 2025, wiping out years of fragile progress and deepening a racial wealth gap that already stood among the most persistent in the country.

Even before the latest dismal jobs report, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies had already declared 2025 “a regression and recession” for Black Americans. In its State of the Dream 2026 report, the authors wrote, “Instead of aggressive leadership in dismantling structures of racial inequality, we are witnessing regressive leadership that is slashing government employment and agencies designed to address predatory economic practices that disproportionately harm Black communities.” The report further notes that the One Big Beautiful Bill Act entrenched permanent tax cuts for high-income households and corporations while reducing investment in poverty-alleviating programs and leaving support for working families stagnant or shrinking.

Policy experts often refer to Black Americans as the “canary in the coal mine”—the first to feel the impact of economic stress. If that analogy holds, the warning is clear: a broader national recession is not far behind. But acknowledging that Black America is already in recession is not merely a prediction about the future; it is a call to confront what is unfolding in the present. The question now is whether policymakers will heed that warning—or continue to ignore the communities already bearing the brunt of the nation's economic retreat.

# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Board Welcomes New Commissioners Brittany Jenkins and Lori Matthews

By PRESS OFFICER  
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (March 19, 2026)—The Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) welcomes Brittany Jenkins and Lori Matthews as members of the five-member Planning Board. Appointed by Prince George's County Executive Aisha N. Braveboy and confirmed by the Prince George's County Council following a public hearing, Jenkins was sworn in on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, and Matthews on Wednesday, March 18, 2026. Jenkins succeeds former Prince George's County Planning Board Commissioner, A. Shuanise Washington, whose four-year term will end on June 15, 2028. Matthews succeeds former Prince George's County Planning Board Commissioner, William M. Doerner, Ph.D., whose four-year term will

end on June 15, 2026. Jenkins and Matthews joined Chairman Darryl Barnes, Vice Chair Manuel Geraldo, and Commissioner Billy Okoye on Thursday, March 19, 2026, for their first Planning Board meeting.

“On behalf of M-NCPPC and the Prince George's County Planning Board, we welcome Commissioners Jenkins and Matthews to the Commission,” said M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Board Chairman Darryl Barnes. “With Commissioner Jenkins' strong background in business analytics and strategic planning and Commissioner Matthew's experience in education and community engagement, they will offer unique perspectives to our mission to plan vibrant communities and deliver top-notch planning, parks, and recreation services to the residents of our bi-county region.”

In addition to serving on the Prince George's County Plan-



PHOTOS COURTESY M-NCPPC

New Commissioners Brittany Jenkins, left, and Lori Matthews

ning Board, the Planning Board members work with their colleagues on the Montgomery County Planning Board and meet monthly as the M-NCPPC's full Commission. Together, the commissioners have oversight of decisions for the Montgomery and Prince George's region.

### About Brittany Jenkins

Brittany Jenkins brings an understanding of data analytics,

strategic planning, and performance management across both public and private sector environments. She currently serves as a senior consultant with Deloitte Consulting, LLP where she leads cross-functional teams to deliver data-driven solutions for government organizations and help translate complex information into actionable insights that strengthen planning, budgeting, and operational decision-making. Prior to her current position,

Jenkins held analytics and leadership roles at Berkeley Research Group and 2U where she led data initiatives and developed performance frameworks across healthcare and higher education organizations.

Jenkins holds a master's degree in business analytics from American University Kogod School of Business and a master's degree in sociology. She earned a bachelor's degree in mass communications from Minnesota State University, Mankato.

### About Lori Matthews

Lori Matthews possesses 30 years of professional experience in education, government, and administration and a strong commitment to public service, community engagement, and responsible leadership. As a former educator in Charles County and Prince George's County Public Schools, she developed curricula, managed classroom environ-

ments, and mentored students. In addition, Matthews has served as Chief Executive Officer of Executive Décor and gained administrative experience through a previous position with the United States Department of Homeland Security. Matthews earned her bachelor's degree in communications from Bowie State University.

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.

Founded in 1927, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a nationally recognized leader in land use planning, parks, and recreation achieving countless awards for innovation, stewardship and exemplary vision for enhancing the lives of current and future generations.

## Maryland Transit Administration Earns LEED Silver Certification for Purple Line Operations Facility

Second LEED-Certified Facility Reflects Agency's Commitment to Sustainable Infrastructure

By PRESS OFFICER

### Maryland Transit Administration

BALTIMORE (March 16, 2026)—The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) today announced that the U.S. Green Building Council has awarded LEED Silver certification to the newly constructed Purple Line Operations and Maintenance Facility located in Glenridge, Maryland. This prestigious designation for leadership in energy and environmental design recognizes the facility's adherence to high-performance standards in energy efficiency, water conservation and environmental stewardship.

“Earning LEED Silver certification is a gratifying accomplishment for the Purple Line project,” said MTA Senior Project Director for the Purple Line, Ray Biggs II. “This facility demonstrates how thoughtful design and sustainable building practice can support transit operations while reducing our environmental footprint.”

The Operations and Maintenance Facility serves as the central location for maintenance, inspection and servicing of the Purple Line's fleet, which includes 28 light rail vehicles. The building will also house administrative offices and the Operations Control Center. Achieving LEED Silver status underscores

MTA's commitment to building a transit system that is as environmentally responsible as it is vital to the region's mobility.

“We're honored to receive LEED certification,” said Doran Bosso, CEO, Purple Line Transit Partners. “Working in close partnership with the Maryland Transit Administration, Maryland Transit Solutions and Purple Line Transit Operators, we designed, built and are now utilizing a facility that meets or exceeds some of the world's highest building standards for environmental quality.”

Key sustainability features of the Purple Line's primary Operations and Maintenance Facility include:

- **Energy Efficiency:** Solar-reflective roofing and low-mercury lighting contributed to the building's energy reduction and consumption scores.
- **Water Conservation:** Water-use efficiency through low-flow fixtures and a specialized reclaimed-water system for the Light Rail Vehicle wash bay contributes to overall potable water reduction.
- **Waste Reduction:** During construction, over 75% of specialized waste was diverted from landfills. The facility incorporates recycled content in its structural steel and concrete. The building also achieved positive scoring for its green cleaning products and practices.

- **Sustainable Transit Integration:** Located near the New Carrollton transit hub, the Purple Line Operations and Maintenance Facility promotes green commuting for staff with dedicated bike storage, electric vehicle charging stations and direct access to multi-modal transit options.

This certification marks the second LEED certification for the agency, reflecting its ongoing commitment to building infrastructure that provides operational efficiency, long-term community benefit and environmental stewardship. The Camden Station, located in Baltimore, opened in 2019 and received LEED certification in 2020.

The Maryland Transit Administration is one of the largest multi-modal transit systems in the United States. The Purple Line is a 16-mile, 21-station light rail line that will extend from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County. It will directly connect to WMATA's Metrorail Red, Green, Yellow, Orange, and Silver Lines at Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton. The Purple Line will also connect to MARC, Amtrak, and local bus services. To learn more, visit purplelinemd.com, and follow Purple Line on Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Bluesky, X/Twitter and YouTube.

## The Prince George's Post

Your Newspaper of Legal Record

Serving Prince George's County Since 1932

## The Prince George's Post

The Prince George's Post  
P.O. Box 1001, 15209 Marlboro Pike, Suite 209  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3151  
Phone: 301-627-0900 • Legal Fax: 301-627-6260  
Email: pgpost@gmail.com  
Contents © 2026, The Prince George's Post

<b>Publisher/Senior Editor</b> Legusta Floyd	<b>Editor</b> Lisa Duan
<b>General Manager/ Legal Advertising Manager</b> Brenda Boice	<b>Administrative Assistant/ Billing</b> Julie Volosin
<b>Legal Advertising Assistant</b> Robin Boerckel	<b>Web Manager</b> Kyler Quesenberry

Prince George's County, Md. Member National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia Press Association. The Prince George's Post (ISSN 10532226) is published every Thursday by the New Prince George's Post Inc., 15209 Marlboro Pike, Suite 209, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20772-3151. Subscription rate: 25 cents per single copy; \$15 per year; \$7.50 senior citizens and students; out of county add \$1; out of state add \$2. Periodical postage paid at Southern Md. 20790. Postmaster, send address changes to Prince George's Post, P.O. Box 1001, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20773.

# ENVIRONMENT

## Prince George's County Advances Environmental Justice Through Urban Tree Planting Program, Installing More Than 2000 Additional Native Trees

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George's County Department of the Environment

LARGO, Md. (March 19, 2026)—Prince George's County is planting an additional 2,147 native trees and more than 3,000 native perennials, shrubs, and smaller trees through the end of May as part of its Urban Tree Planting Program, a major investment in environmental justice, climate resilience, and community beautification.

Plantings are underway within public rights-of-way and community spaces in the City of District Heights, the Town of Capitol Heights, the Town of Bladensburg, and additional homeowners association and church properties that will be announced in the coming weeks. Trees have been delivered, ground preparation is in progress, and understory plantings will follow installation, weather permitting.

The initiative is supported by the Chesapeake Bay Trust Urban Tree Grant Program, a state-funded grant administered through the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Department of Natural Resources along with matching funds included in the Department of the Environment's budget appropriation.

"This investment reflects our commitment to environmental justice and climate resilience," said County Executive Aisha Braveboy. "For decades, some of our communities have experienced the impacts of historic inequities—including lower tree canopy coverage, higher heat exposure, and greater flood risk. Planting more than 2,100 street-sized native trees is about restoring balance, improving public health, and ensuring every neighborhood benefits from a greener future."

The Prince George's County Urban Tree Planting Program supports Maryland's Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021, which calls for the planting of five million native trees statewide by 2031 as part of Maryland's broader strategy to address the ongoing impacts of climate change. In Prince George's County, planting locations are determined using the Chesapeake Bay Trust's equity-based mapping requirements, alignment with MDEnviroScreen data, and the Department of the Environment's Tree Equity Mapping Tool. These tools help identify communities with low existing tree canopy, high concentrations of impervious surfaces, and increased vulnerability to urban heat island impacts and stormwater runoff.

"This program is a powerful example of climate action in practice," said Dr. Sam Moki, Director of the Department of the Environment. "By prioritizing historically underserved communities, we are addressing long-standing inequities while building long-term resilience. Trees function as natural infrastructure—reducing heat, absorbing stormwater, improving air quality, and strengthening neighborhood well-being."

In addition to expanding canopy coverage, the inclusion of more than 3,000 native understory plantings will enhance biodiversity, support soil health, and improve the long-term sustainability of these sites. County staff and project consultants are documenting the installation process, including before-and-after photography, and will coordinate with participating municipalities and community leaders to highlight local perspectives as plantings are completed.

The Prince George's County Urban Tree Planting Program as supported by DoE, reflects our County's continued commitment to advancing environmental equity, strengthening climate resilience, and investing in healthier, more vibrant communities.

For more information about Prince George's County's environmental programs, visit [environment.mypgc.org](http://environment.mypgc.org).

From front page—

## PGCPS Wins National Grand Prize for Indoor Air Quality and Climate Action Leadership

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (March 18, 2026)—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) earned the National Grand Prize in the 2026 Magna Awards for its trailblazing work in improving indoor air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Sponsored by the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the award recognizes PGCPS as the top school system in the nation (over 20,000 students) for successfully integrating environmental health into student achievement goals.

The award highlights the district's success in implementing a comprehensive Indoor Air Quality management plan, developed in collaboration with the Go Green Initiative (GGI) and aligned with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. These efforts are a central pillar of the PGCPS Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), a landmark initiative established in 2021 to transition the district toward a sustainable, low-carbon future.

"This recognition is a testament to our belief that every child, regardless of their zip code, deserves to learn in a space that is safe, healthy, and built for the future,"

said Interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn Joseph. "Our Climate Action Plan is a moral obligation to the 'whole child.' By prioritizing air quality and sustainability, we are removing barriers to wellness and ensuring our facilities support the academic excellence our community deserves."

Through its Sustainability and Resilience office, PGCPS has institutionalized air quality monitoring and emission-reduction strategies. These actions directly support the CCAP's mission to reduce the district's environmental impact while improving student wellness and academic outcomes.

The Magna Awards have recognized exemplary school district programs for more than three decades. The 2026 program specifically focused on districts that demonstrated measurable progress in environmental health and carbon footprint reduction.

District leaders will present their award-winning strategies at the NSBA Annual Conference and Exposition, held April 10–12 in San Antonio, Texas. PGCPS will also be featured in the April issue of the American School Board Journal.

Learn more about the district's sustainability efforts at <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/sustainability-and-resiliency>.

### LOCAL WARMING: CLIMATE CHANGE IN MARYLAND

## Maryland's Main Energy Producer Is Growing—But Concerns About Nuclear Energy Remain

By AAMALY HOSSAIN  
Capital News Service

LUSBY, Md. (March 9, 2026)—Steam drifts above two steel-lined concrete domes at Calvert Cliffs, a 50-year-old landmark for carbon-free energy perched along the Chesapeake Bay.

Those two domes, along with an adjoining building, make up the Calvert Cliffs Clean Energy Center, a familiar sight to locals and Maryland's main producer of energy.

After a recent \$100 million upgrade, Constellation Energy is considering a further investment in new equipment that could lead to a 10% boost in the amount of power generated at the plant. Constellation said that additional energy would amount to more than all the wind and solar energy currently produced in Maryland.

But any further expansion at Calvert Cliffs, like every proposed nuclear expansion nationwide, faces a daunting question: Just how green is nuclear energy?

The growth plans at Calvert Cliffs point to nuclear energy's ability to strengthen the nation's clean-energy supply with steady, carbon-free power.

"If America is to achieve its 80% reduction goal in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, nuclear energy needs to be part of the solution," said Brandy Donaldson, manager of Generation Communications-East for Constellation, which is also working to reopen the long-shuttered and once-troubled Three Mile Island nuclear facility in Pennsylvania.

But its efforts to grow the industry continue to collide with environmental concerns. Much of that skepticism stems from history, be it the partial meltdown at Three Mile Island in 1979, the reactor explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the then-Soviet Union in 1986 or the earthquake-prompted accident at the nuclear facility in Fukushima, Japan, in 2011.

"Whenever anybody says to me, personally, nuclear power is green energy, what I want to say to them is 'I wonder if the folks that lived near Chernobyl and Fukushima would agree with you,'" said Sandra Gwynn, group chair of the Southern Maryland Group of the Sierra Club, which is part of the Maryland chapter.

### Calvert Cliffs' future

Calvert Cliffs is expanding, but not as much as once proposed.

In 2007, plans were underway for Calvert Cliffs to expand with a third reactor. But by 2015, the proposal was shelved, derailed by the surge of cheap natural gas, escalating construction costs and years of regulatory slowdown.

Attention shifted toward sustaining and upgrading the two existing reactors rather than building a new one. That led to last spring's "refueling outage," the plant's most significant overhaul in a decade.

More than 2,000 contract employees arrived in southern Calvert County to take on a dense schedule of inspections and maintenance—from replacing aging overhaul pumps, motors, valves and control rods to repairing electrical systems that have been operating since the plant began producing power.

Workers also completed one of the most complex electrical projects at the site in years: the full refurbishment of the plant's 13-kilovolt transformer, a central component that allows Calvert Cliffs to push large volumes of electricity onto the grid, Donaldson said.

The overhaul included modernization work typically done during major life-extension efforts at nuclear plants, such as digital upgrades to control equipment that replace 1970s systems. The improvements reduce the risk of equipment failures and give operators more precise data on plant conditions.

With the improvements in place, the facility can power another 150,000 to 200,000 homes, Kathryn Maney, president and CEO of the Calvert County Chamber of Commerce, told CNS in an email.

### Carbon-free energy

The increased output at Calvert Cliffs comes with no added carbon emissions and no additional land footprint. That's one reason climate researchers often favor



PHOTO COURTESY OF CONSTELLATION ENERGY GROUP

The Calvert Cliffs Clean Energy Center in Lusby, Md.

extending the life of existing nuclear units.

"Existing plants should be kept open if possible—if they're managed well," said Joseph Romm, a senior research fellow at the University of Pennsylvania who advocates cutting carbon emissions and expanding clean energy.

Experts also highlight that nuclear energy is carbon-free energy.

"Nuclear reactors produce electricity, they don't produce even one atom, one molecule of carbon dioxide," said Mohamad Al-Sheikhly, a nuclear and radiation researcher and professor at the University of Maryland. "It's a very promising technology to produce energy without increasing carbon dioxide."

In climate terms, that matters. Each year, Calvert Cliffs prevents millions of tons of carbon emissions—the equivalent to taking 80,000 cars off the road, according to Nuclear Powers Maryland, an advocacy group.

As electricity demand rises—driven by data centers, electric vehicles, electrified heating and population growth—Constellation has said it could add another 5,800 megawatts of power in Maryland by combining the expansion of Calvert Cliffs with new natural gas and battery storage facilities throughout the state.

Meanwhile, Calvert Cliffs will remain a significant economic contributor to Southern Maryland. Calvert Cliffs' operations employ more than 800 employees and contribute to \$23 million a year in local property taxes.

"In general, nuclear plants employ more people per megawatt than any other type of power source," Donaldson said.

### Costly—at first

Modernizing and expanding a nuclear power plant like Calvert Cliffs is far less costly and time-consuming than adding a reactor or building an entirely new facility. According to federal data, only two new nuclear reactors have been built in the U.S. since the mid-1990s, and experts said cost is the big reason why.

In an analysis published last year, Michael Purtill, an analyst with the Harding Loevner investment firm, noted the cost to build a new nuclear facility amounts to more than \$7,000 per kilowatt hour of energy produced. In contrast, building a new coal-fired power plant costs \$4,000 per kilowatt hour, solar costs less than \$2,000 and a new natural gas-fired facility costs about \$1,000.

"The problem with nuclear energy today isn't safety," Purtill wrote. "It's cost and time, specifically the upfront costs to build a new plant and the years, or decades, that it takes to get a new plant up and running."

Al-Sheikhly noted, though, that even if the cost of expanding or building a nuclear power plant is high, the cost of production is not.

"[Nuclear power plants] are producing at 3 cents on every 1 kilowatt of electricity on the wire. Three cents, for goodness sake. Three cents. I mean, it's so cheap," he said. "When you build them, you spend a lot of money—no doubt."

### Safe despite accidents

Al-Sheikhly stressed that despite a handful of headline-grabbing accidents, nuclear power actually appears safer than

many other forms of energy.

Research conducted in 2007 and updated in 2018, which was published by Our World in Data, showed nuclear energy produces vast quantities of electricity while causing a minuscule number of deaths compared to coal.

Accidents have served as lessons for the nuclear sector, said Doug Vine, the director of energy analysis at the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions.

"It's largely demonstrated itself to be a very safe source of electricity with the exception of a few examples," Vine said. "We've learned a lot from Three Mile Island, from Chernobyl, from Fukushima, and those safety enhancements have all been incorporated."

In addition, people who live near nuclear plants don't tend to criticize them, noted Ann Bisconti, president of Bisconti Research, who has been researching public opinion about nuclear energy for 42 years.

"We have found remarkably high support for the plants," she said. "Ninety-one percent of nuclear power plant neighbors across the nation, that's an average of all the sites, have a favorable impression of the plant. ... So, there's a really strong sense of ownership and belonging that the community really has something that is theirs."

### Environmental concerns

Not everyone is convinced, though, that nuclear energy is safe.

Living just 6 miles from Calvert Cliffs, Gwynn said the risk feels real.

"I think frequently about what would happen if there was a significant release of radioactive material," she said. "I can't imagine the nightmare of trying to evacuate the area."

A study published last month in the academic journal Nature indicated that thanks to the low levels of radiation emitted by nuclear facilities, older people living near them could die of cancer at higher rates.

"These results indicate a spatial association between residential proximity to nuclear power plants and cancer mortality," said the study, which was conducted by researchers at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Other scientists still stress the risk of nuclear meltdown: accidents where huge amounts of radiation could be released. Mark Z. Jacobson, a professor of civil and environmental engineering and director of the atmosphere/energy program at Stanford University, last year published an essay on the One Earth website noting that 1.5% of all nuclear reactors nationwide have experienced meltdowns of some kind.

"The nuclear industry has proposed new reactor designs that they suggest are safer," he wrote in the essay, where he argued that nuclear energy is not the answer to climate change. "However, these designs are generally untested, and there is no guarantee that the reactors will be designed, built and operated correctly or that a natural disaster or act of terrorism, such as an airplane flown into a reactor, will not cause the reactor to fail, resulting in a major disaster."

