

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SINCE 1932

Vol. 94, No. 24 June 11 — June 17, 2026

Prince George's County, Maryland

Newspaper of Record

Phone: 301-627-0900

25 cents

Bowie High School NJROTC Graduation 2026



PHOTO COURTESY BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL NJROTC

On May 28, 2026, the Bowie High School NJROTC Battalion attended the Bowie High School Class of 2026 Graduation Ceremony. The ceremony was opened by the Bowie High School NJROTC Color Guard with the presentation of the colors, commanded by C/SA Derrick Ateawung. The graduation ceremony celebrated the accomplishments of the Class of 2026 as students, families, faculty, and community members gathered for the occasion. The Bowie High School Choir and Band also performed during the ceremony. The event marked an important milestone for the graduating seniors as they concluded their high school careers and prepared for their future.

—PAO C/SA Henderson

Lt. Governor Aruna Miller Joins Aviation Command to Celebrate 55 Years of Aviation Section in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of State Police

BOWIE, Md. (June 3, 2026)—Today, Lieutenant Governor Aruna K. Miller joined Colonel Michael A. Jackson, Dr. Douglass Floccare and other honored guests to celebrate the Maryland State Police Aviation Command's 55 years of medevac, law enforcement, search and rescue, homeland security and disaster assessment services provided by the crew members of Trooper 2.

Trooper 2, based at Joint Base Andrews in Prince George's County, has long been known as one of the busiest sections in the Maryland State Police Aviation Command. Due to the section's geographic location and overlapping coverage, calls for service extend farther than those of many other Aviation Sections in the fleet.

"For 55 years, the dedicated crews of Trooper 2 have answered the call whenever Marylanders faced their most difficult moments," said Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller. "Whether responding to a medical emergency, conducting a search and rescue mission, or supporting disaster response efforts, they have demonstrated extraordinary courage, professionalism, and commitment to public service. Today, we honor their legacy and thank every pilot, flight paramedic, maintenance technician, and support staff member who continues this lifesaving mission."

Since inception, the Aviation Command has transported more than 165,000 patients and has contributed to saving thousands of lives, thus earning itself a worldwide reputation as a leader in pre-hospital trauma care and MedEvac. The driving force behind the MedEvac was Dr. R Adams Cowley, the founder of the Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore. He believed that rapid MedEvac transportation of critically injured patients to a trauma center would save lives.



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

Lt. Governor Aruna Miller with Superintendent of the Maryland State Police Colonel Michael A. Jackson, other honored guests, and crew members of Trooper 2.

"In a single shift, Trooper 2 may respond to a hoist rescue in Frederick County, a heart attack patient in St. Mary's, a pedestrian struck in Prince George's or even a mayday call on the Chesapeake Bay," said Colonel Michael A. Jackson, Superintendent of the Maryland State Police. "In the same shift they may transport patients in between hospitals in Baltimore, Largo and Washington, D.C."

It was on March 19, 1970, that the Maryland State Police Aviation Command became the first civilian agency to transport a critically injured trauma patient by helicopter. This had never been done in the past in a non-military setting. The Command's first MedEvac mission forever changed the world of emergency medical services.

"The creation of Trooper 2 marked the initiation of the first true system of trauma care in the United States," said Dr. Douglas Floccare, State Aeromedical Director for the Maryland Institute for EMS Systems, "Every day highly skilled

medical professionals and first responders work together to provide the highest level of care during transport, ensuring patients reach the hospital best suited for their needs."

The Maryland State Police Aviation Command currently operates a fleet of 10 AugustaWestland AW139 helicopters that are assigned to seven sections strategically based throughout the state. Aviation hangars are located in Allegany, Frederick, Baltimore, Prince George's, St. Mary's, Talbot and Wicomico counties.

The Aviation Command is comprised of 182 dedicated personnel to include pilots, trooper flight paramedics, maintenance technicians and support personnel. The Command's pilots are all highly skilled and experienced and require a minimum of 2,000 helicopter hours to even be considered for hire. Co-pilots, or second-in-command pilots can be

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Celebrating Freedom, Heritage, and Community at the 2026 Juneteenth Festival in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (June 2, 2026)—M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County is proud to host the 2026 Juneteenth Festival, a vibrant celebration of freedom, heritage, and community on **Saturday, June 13**, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. at Watkins Regional Park (301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774).

This free, family-friendly event commemorates Juneteenth, the historic day when the last enslaved African Americans in the United States learned of their freedom in 1865. Today, the festival is a joyous community celebration featuring food, music, art, and opportunities

to reflect on the rich culture and achievements of African Americans.

The community is encouraged to bring their lawn chairs and blankets for a day filled with live entertainment, cultural activities, food, shopping, historical exhibits, and more.

Festival Highlights:

- Live entertainment by: Rare Essence, Soul in Motion, Proverbs Reggae Band, and Got my Own Sound Band
- History and art activities
- Children's activities
- Art and food vendors
- Interactive history and art exhibits

To learn more about the 2026 Juneteenth Festival and the Department's Black History Month program, visit pgparks.com.

Prince George's County Memorial Library System Board of Library Trustees Appoints Interim Library Director

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (June 3, 2026)—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System Board of Library Trustees is pleased to announce the appointment of Megan Sutherland as Interim Library Director, effective June 1, 2026. Following the departure of the Library's previous CEO, Dr. Mark Winston, on May 29, 2026, Sutherland will step into this important role while a regional search is conducted for the permanent Library Director.

Since joining PGCMLS in 2017, Sutherland has been a valued leader across multiple roles and departments. She currently serves as the Library's Chief Operating Officer, where she is responsible for guiding programs, services, and collections at the system's 19 branch libraries, the law library in the County Cor-

rectional Center, and the Library2Go: Career Connector service. She also brings a strong record of government advocacy, including several terms with the Intergovernmental Relations Task Force of the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators.

Sutherland is an active member of the Maryland Library Association and the Urban Libraries Council, and is a graduate of the Maryland Library Leadership Institute. Her academic background includes a Master of Library and Information Science from San Jose State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Art History from Mary Washington College, reflecting the depth of knowledge and commitment she brings to this role.

The Board thanks Sutherland for her strong leadership and for stepping forward to guide the Library during this transition.

Celebrating Pride Month and the 2026 Rainbow Festival at the Prince George's County Memorial Library System

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (June 5, 2026)—This June, the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is proud to commemorate Pride Month with more than two dozen exciting and inclusive programs for customers of all ages.

At the end of the month, the South Bowie Branch Library will host PGCMLS's 5th annual Rainbow Festival, an energizing all-ages, all-day event that brings the Prince George's County community together with local LGBTQ+ organizations for a free and festive community celebration filled with special craft programs, drag per-

formances, storytimes, face painting, balloon twister, and a "Bibliobop" dance party—all leading up to a fun parade through the branch.

"The Rainbow Festival brings so much joy to the Library every year," says PGCMLS Librarian Teresa Miller, who leads the Library's LGBTQ+ team and serves as lead organizer for the annual event. "This is a chance for everyone to celebrate love and authenticity with their community!"

In addition to the "Rainbow Storytime" program that's always a crowd favorite, Miller is excited to bring new activities and local part-

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

BSU ALUMNI SOCIAL AFFAIR

Bowie State University National Alumni Association Prince George's County Alumni Chapter presents an Alumni Social Affair Brunch on Sunday, June 28, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cash Bar, Music, Dancing. Tickets cost \$80 (\$20 Tax deductible contribution funds to support the PGCAC Scholarship fund). SPRINCEGEORGEACAC, TREASURER@CAC.ORG. Rose Coleman or any Chapter member. Martins Crosswinds, 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770.

JUNE WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Henry and Idena Thomas, Vincent and Ethel Cooke, William, III and Quiviana Stroman, Robert and Sandra Miley, Daniel and Carolyn, Joseph and Nadia Prah who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating Wedding Anniversaries in June.

EMPOWER VAPE-FREE YOUTH

The Empower Vape-Free Youth campaign encourages middle and high school educators to speak with students about the risk of e-cigarettes and nicotine addiction. Learn what you can do to protect youth from the harm of vaping. Educators can make a real difference by engaging in meaningful conversations with their students about the dangers of vaping for young people and ways to quit. Campaign resources include a fact sheet, conversation card, and digital media. Visit CDC's Median Campaign Resource Center to request digital files of campaign materials.

WOMEN'S DAY

Nottingham Myers and Christ United Methodist Churches Co-operative Parish invites you to WOMEN'S DAY, June 14, 2026, at 10 a.m. Women, Chosen, and EMPOWERED. Guest Speaker: Minister La Trelle Pinkney Chase of Everyday People, Extraordinary God Church, Boston, MA. Hosted by Christ United Methodist Church, 22919 Christ Church Road, Aquasco, Maryland. Rev. Shemaiah Strickland, Pastor.

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH BADEN

St. Philip's Church Baden, 13801 Baden Westwood Road ANNUAL DINNER will be held Saturday, July 18, 2026, at 12 p.m. until sold out. Dinners: Fried Chicken (Dark Meat \$20, White Meat \$22), Fried Fish \$2. All dinners come with potato salad, baked beans, sweet potatoes, green beans, and bread. Sandwiches: Fried Chicken (Dark Meat \$12, White Meat \$14). Fried Fish \$14, BBQ Ribs \$14, Hot Dogs \$3. RIBS, CHICKEN & FISH PRE-ORDERS MUST BE PAID FOR NO LATER THAN JULY 12.

DINNER PRE-ORDERS: Vivian Rich 804-301-9530, Trenda Hall 703-201-3863, Michele Chase 240-882-3369, Doretha Savoy 301-233-3136. There will be a Bake Sale. Celebrate Local Vendors. Art, Crafts and Resale. Fun and Games. VENDOR TABLES: Trenda Hall 703-201-3863.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

"Healthgrades honored our teams at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center with two 2026 Specialty Clinical Quality Awards for strong outcomes in coronary intervention and gastrointestinal (GI) care." Our Coronary Intervention Excellence Award reflects strong results for procedures such as angioplasty with stent placement, which opens narrowed or blocked coronary arteries to help restore blood flow to the heart. Our Gastrointestinal Care Excellence Award recognizes high-quality outcomes across

a range of digestive care, including common surgeries (like colorectal procedures and gallbladder removable) as well as treatment for urgent conditions such as bowel obstruction, GI bleeding, and pancreatitis."

"Healthgrades evaluates hospitals based on clinical outcomes for specific conditions and procedures, helping patients compare performance when choosing where to receive care. The 2026 Specialty Clinical Quality Awards highlight hospitals that consistently deliver high-quality results, including measures tied to outcomes, patient safety, and patient experience, reinforcing our team's commitment at MedStar Southern Maryland to bring exceptional specialty care close to home." MedStar Health (MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Spring 2026).

DC: CITY CRUISES

DC: City Cruises Buffet Brunch, Lunch, or Dinner Cruise. Dine aboard the Spirit of Washington DC and enjoy an extensive buffet meal while cruising down the Potomac River. Dance to the onboard DJ or play exciting games like giant Jenga and shuffleboard. Duration 2-2.5 hours. Check availability to see starting times. From \$67 per person. Reserve now and pay later. Keep your travel plans flexible. Book your spot and pay nothing today. Free cancellation. Cancel up to 24 hours in advance for a full refund.

Highlights: Feast on an extensive attended buffet lunch or dinner. Admire 360-degree views from the observation decks as you cruise the Potomac River. View DC landmarks like the Washington Monument, National Harbor, and Old Town. Board your vessel and receive a personal greeting. Have your photo taken by the ship photographer to capture the memory before being seated at your private table.

CUMC VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Join Clinton United Methodist Church Vacation Bible School Monday, July 13-Friday, July 17, 2026. Our theme this year is Snowball Mountain Challenge "I Can Do All Things Through Him Who Strengthens Me." Philippians 4:13 NRSV. From 9 a.m. to Noon. Ages PreK to 5th Grades. Please register your child for VBS Registration 2026 on our website <http://cumcmd.org/> If you need a printed form, please contact our office 301-868-1281 or Audrey Johnson VBS Director 301-922-5384, email ajohnson12906@yahoo.com. Church address is 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland, 20735.

CLARENCE B. JONES

"We remember Clarence B. Jones with deep respect and gratitude for his extraordinary life of service, courage, and advocacy for justice. As a trusted advisor and speechwriter to Martin Luther King Jr., his contributions helped some of the most important moments in the Civil Rights Movement." Clarence B. Jones, who helped MLK write "I Have a Dream Speech, has died at 95".

"I was honored to know him during his time on the faculty at University of San Francisco shortly before my retirement, and I had the distinct privilege of working with him on a small project. He was thoughtful, brilliant. Gracious, and deeply committed to educating future generations."

"His legacy will continue to inspire all who value justice, equality, and human dignity. May he be lovingly remembered and may his family and friends find comfort in the many lives he touched." Dr. Patricia Turner Mitchell.

Around the County

Prepare Before the Storm: Prince George's County Recognizes Flood Awareness Month

DoE to share flood safety tips, emergency resources, and insurance information as hurricane season begins

LARGO, Md. (June 2, 2026)—June marks the start of hurricane season, bringing an increased risk of severe storms, flash flooding, and property damage across the region. The Prince George's County Department of the Environment (DoE) is encouraging residents and business owners to "Be Flood Smart" by taking steps now to prepare their homes, families, and communities before severe weather strikes.

Flooding remains one of the most common and costly natural hazards in Prince George's County. Preparing in advance can help save lives, reduce property damage, and protect important documents and belongings.

As part of Flood Awareness Month, DoE is sharing flood-prevention resources, safety guidance, and preparedness tools to help residents understand flood risks and plan for emergencies.

Additional flood preparedness resources are available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Homeland Security, including information about evacuation planning, emergency preparedness, and flood insurance options. Prince George's County residents may qualify for savings of up to 25 percent on flood insurance premiums through the County's participation in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) Program.

Residents are also encouraged to sign up for Alert Prince George's, the County's emergency text notification system, which provides updates during severe weather and flooding events.

DoE recommends the following flood safety tips:

- Never walk or drive through floodwaters.
- Move immediately to higher ground if flash flooding is possible.
- If water rises around your vehicle and is not moving, exit safely and move to higher ground.
- Avoid camping or parking near streams, rivers, and creeks during periods of heavy rainfall.
- Review your flood insurance coverage before severe weather occurs.

The County's FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan also outlines ongoing efforts to reduce flood risks and strengthen community resilience throughout Prince George's County and the City of Laurel.

Residents can learn more by visiting DoE's Flood Management webpage or contacting PGC311.

Tickets on Sale now for National Capital Radio & Television Museum Annual Gala

Tickets are officially on sale for the 2026 Annual Gala!

Join us on October 3, 2026 (5:30-9:30 p.m.) at the Bowie Comfort Inn for an evening of great food, dancing, and a Silent Auction—all supporting our biggest fundraiser of the year.

We are especially proud to honor Tony Perkins with the Ed Walker Lifetime Achievement Award in Broadcasting, recognizing his outstanding contributions to the industry.

Get your tickets today: <https://ncrtv.org/gala>

Or call 301-390-1020 or email info@ncrtv.org

Your support through this event plays a vital role in helping us continue to collect, preserve, and interpret the history of radio and television, ensuring it remains accessible for future generations.

We hope to celebrate with you on October 3!

Bowie Resident Lauren Shieh Completes Intensive Research Project

WORCESTER, Mass. (June 4, 2026)—Lauren Shieh, a member of the class of 2027 majoring in Environmental Engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), was a member of a student team that recently completed a professional-level research-driven project titled "Urban Nature Based Solution in Hong Kong's Parks."

Known as the Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP), this project is a core part of the innovative undergraduate experience at WPI. Centered around project-based learning, this hands-on approach offers students opportunities to help develop thoughtful solutions to open-ended problems. These real-world problems affect the quality of life for people in the communities where students work, giving students a chance to make a difference in the world before they graduate. All WPI undergraduates are required to complete an IQP, usually in their junior year, through which they apply science and technology to address an important societal need or issue. About two-thirds of WPI students complete their IQP at one of the university's 50+ off-campus project centers located in more than 30 countries around the world.

Revolutionary VP Studios Brings New Investment to Prince George's County

On May 28, PGCEDC President & CEO Ingrid S. Watson joined County Executive Aisha N. Braveboy, elected officials, and community leaders to celebrate the announcement of Revolutionary VP Studios' new production facility in Laurel.

The state-of-the-art, 38,000-square-foot facility represents a significant investment in Prince George's County's growing media, entertainment, and technology sectors. Designed to support film, television, podcast, and digital content production, the facility will feature advanced production capabilities, including a 156-foot by 26-foot LED volumetric wall and immersive virtual production technology.

This investment further strengthens Prince George's County's position as a destination for innovation and creative industries while creating opportunities for business growth, workforce development, and future job creation. The project also builds on the momentum of other transformative investments across the County, reinforcing Prince George's County's competitiveness as a hub for emerging industries and next-generation technology.

As Prince George's County continues to attract visionary companies and strategic investments, projects like Revolutionary VP Studios help drive economic growth, expand opportunity, and contribute to a dynamic and diversified local economy.

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

Morningside Town Elections

Morningside town elections were held May 4. Council members John Anthony and Sharon Fowler both ran unopposed and were elected to serve another term. They were sworn in again on May 18.

The council held its budget meeting on June 3 and its work session on June 9. The full town meeting, which would usually be held June 16, will be moved to the following Tuesday, June 23, at 7 p.m.

The week of June 14, many of the Morningside town officials will be in Ocean City, attending the annual Maryland Municipal League conference, where they will attend workshops, learn about available resources and opportunities for the town, and meet officials from communities across the state.

During that week, the town of Morningside will still be operating on its regular schedule, except for Friday, June 19, when the office will be closed in observance of Juneteenth.

Cincinnati, Saginaw & Rehoboth

I know it's been a while since my last column, but I've been busy!

An April trip to Cincinnati and Michigan was very busy, but wonderful. I got to visit with an array of grandkids, cousins, nieces and nephews, plus daughter Kathleen and my three surviving siblings, Rosie, Tom, and Stella.

In Saginaw, Rosie gave me her bed for the week, and Stella kept bringing food for us. Tom still lives in my childhood home. One afternoon, he took me around the big old 1860 house, reliving the days we grew up there in the 1930s. It was lovely.

A few days after I returned to Maryland, daughter Therese arrived from Brownsville, Texas. I'd barely unpacked from Michigan before I found her packing

me again, and we were off to a cottage in Rehoboth Beach, Del. We joined some of my other kids—John, Elaine and Sheila—and their families. I spent the week reading, doing puzzles, chatting, and drinking wine. Other people may have done things involving sand or water, but I knew the correct way to spend my time.

Wesley graduates

I got home from Delaware just in time to head to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (next door to Catholic University in Washington) where I watched my great-grandson, Wesley, graduate from Bishop McNamara High School.

Wesley heads to the University of Maryland, College Park, in the fall.

Do you know anyone who graduated and deserves congratulations? Send me the details, and I'll make sure to mention them.

Big plans for the 4th of July

The 250th Independence Day is just around the corner, and the Town of Morningside is busy preparing. Just this week, the DJ was locked in and the tug-o-war rope ordered from Amazon. The fireworks are getting finalized, with Morningside planning the full spectacular residents have come to expect.

The parade already has numerous groups signed up. But there's still room for you! Just call 301-736-2300 to register and get details. However, if you show up early on the day, they might still be able to take you.

The 4th of July celebration, of course, will kick off with the parade, which starts at 11:30.

As for me, I'll be at my regular viewing station, under the tree in front of the Suitland Road Baptist Church. I'm told former

Morningside council member Bonnie Kamenicky might be joining me there this year. I hope so. Come by and say hi!

The parade will end in Patterson Park, where the festivities will continue. In addition to the aforementioned DJ, there will be field games including tug-o-war, naturally, three-legged races, hula hoops, and more, plus the ever-popular mechanical bull, other games and prizes. The games are free, while the prizes last. The town also will be raffling a Family Summer Fun basket, but you must be present to win.

The town will be handing out free popcorn and nachos, plus bottled water so everyone can stay hydrated. There also will be four or five food trucks selling a variety of other food and drink options, plus a couple of ice cream vendors.

The Patterson Park activities will wrap up at 3, to allow folks to shut down and clean up. Ice cream will still be on sale into the evening, plus a table on Marianne Drive which will be selling glow sticks, glow necklaces, and other light-up toys.

And then, the main event: fireworks begin at dusk. It's sure to be spectacular.

The Recreation Committee meeting has a meeting at 3 p.m. on June 28, to tie up any last-minute 4th of July details. Rumor has it, the Rec Committee will skip their July meeting, in favor of a well-earned rest.

Electronic sign update

You've probably noticed that the new electronic sign in front of the VFW is up and running. So far, it just has the logo for Watchfire, the sign company. But keep watching that space for news about Morningside and the VFW, which will be coming soon.

COMMUNITY

Celebrate Summer and America's 250th at National Harbor

Military concerts and other live music, movies, markets, festivals and more, National Harbor is the place to be for summertime fun!

By PRESS OFFICER
National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (June 2, 2026)—National Harbor has long been known as Washington's premier waterfront destination. With its many boutique retail shops, renowned restaurants, water activities, premium hotels, unique entertainment, and a Tanger Outlet, including a robust summertime event lineup, it provides the perfect location for summer fun. This year, as the nation celebrates 250 years, National Harbor offers even more opportunities to experience great entertainment, exceptional food and amazing activities.

"As part of our celebration of America's 250th birthday, we're excited to offer an extensive list of summer programming and activities," said Deborah Topcik, Senior Director of Marketing at National Harbor. "From military bands to classic American films, our waterfront will serve as a vibrant gathering place to honor this historic national milestone."

Recurring Weekly Summer Programming

The summer-long celebration runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day with weekly activities including the free **Salute the Sunset Concert Series** every Saturday at 7 p.m. The series showcases premier U.S. military bands on the waterfront. Attendees are encouraged to grab takeout from one of National Harbor's nearby restaurants, bring a blanket and enjoy a free evening of music on the waterfront.

On Thursdays at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 6 p.m. National Harbor features free **Movies on the Potomac**. During National Harbor's America 250 celebration, movies will have an American focus. Thursday movies are "date night" movies with family movies on Sundays.

Fridays on the Plaza features "**Summer Sounds**" honoring America's 250 with a mixture of free live musical performances featuring a variety of styles from across the U.S. and line dancing classes. Hours are 6 to 8 p.m. In addition to great music, enjoy lawn games and beautiful sunsets over the Potomac River.

From June to August, children can enjoy free fun activities at **National Harbor's Kids Day** every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. on the Plaza (150 National Plaza, National Harbor.) Children can participate in free weekly educational activities. Programming includes interactive storytime with the Prince George's County Memorial Library System and educational experiences rooted in PBS KIDS content with WHUT (Howard University Television). Additional activities feature meet-and-greets with the Prince George's County Police and Fire/EMS Departments, history activities with George Washington's Mount Vernon, and public artwork exploration of the Wildlife Wonder Boat with the Prince George's Arts and Humanities Council.

Special Summer Events and Festivals

On **Friday, June 12**, National Harbor along with Michelob Ultra and FOX 5 DC will host a **summer soccer watch party** with giveaways, prizes, and Michelob Ultra beer garden. Fans can watch the live soccer double-header on the jumbo screen starting with Canada vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed by the USA vs. Paraguay match at 9 p.m. For a full list of soccer celebrations including activities at MGM National Harbor, visit <https://www.nationalharbor.com/blog/soccer/>.

The **Stars & Smiles Foodie Festival** takes place on **June 13 and 14** at 137 National Plaza with a family-friendly culinary experience featuring an exciting lineup of top local and regional food vendors, sweet treats, refreshing beverages and flavors from around the DMV and beyond. There will also be music. Tickets are \$14.64 to \$44.52 (VIP). No charge for kids, when accompanied by an adult.

On **July 4 and August 1**, visitors to National Harbor can experience the **250th Veterans' Maker's Market** showcasing veteran makers and artisans with handmade art, crafts, jewelry, home décor, gifts and specialty items. The market takes place on the dates noted above from noon until 8 p.m., rain or shine.

The **Salute to America Walk and Picnic** celebrates the nation's 250th anniversary with a patriotic procession from Spirit Park to the midpoint of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge on **July 4** from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Participants can enjoy a unique salute to the capital followed by a free community picnic, ticket for The Capital Wheel, live music and waterfront views. Registration is required. Participants who wear their best red, white, and blue, or even a presidential costume will be entered for a chance to win prizes!

Gaylord National Resort joins forces with DC this summer for a superhero adventure all summer long through Sept. 6. **Super Hero Summer** features interactive experiences, thrilling challenges and dazzling spectacles featuring iconic characters Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman—straight from the pages of DC comics. Gaylord's overnight stays provide exclusive resort experiences that let guests immerse themselves in Super Hero Summer featuring DC.

Additional activities at National Harbor include summer boating fun and the property's popular Freedom Ring Boat rentals that are fun for groups of up to 10 people. Participants are encouraged to bring a picnic. Adventures Unbound provides kayak, canoes and pedal boat rentals for those who want to explore the Potomac on their own.

For more information on National Harbor, visit www.NationalHarbor.com.

National Harbor is a waterfront resort destination unlike any other. The vibrant Waterfront District features boutique shops, restaurants and entertainment options along picturesque promenades.

Dr. Shawn Joseph Named Permanent Superintendent of Prince George's County Public Schools

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 1, 2026)—Prince George's County Executive Aisha Braveboy has appointed Dr. Shawn Joseph as the permanent superintendent of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). Joseph, who has served as Interim Superintendent since July 2025, will now formally lead the state's second-largest school system following a year marked by budget stabilization, staffing improvements and expanded student opportunities.

"This is the right leadership team at the right time to usher in a new era of excellence, and I am pleased to continue partnering with Dr. Joseph and the Board of Education to chart a positive path forward," Braveboy said. "Over the past year, Dr. Joseph has demonstrated strong leadership, steady financial stewardship and a deep commitment to our students, staff and families. This is a pivotal moment for PGCPS, and with Dr. Joseph's leadership and the Board's continued partnership, we have an opportunity to strengthen student achievement, improve employee relations and enhance the educational experience across the district."

Joseph entered the role ahead of the 2025–26 school year and launched a 100-day plan focused on academics, operations and accountability. In his first months leading the district, he launched an extensive community engagement effort that included 20 listening sessions and budget town halls, offering families, students, staff and community members a direct voice in shaping district priorities and future planning.

Working with stakeholders, Joseph introduced five district priorities centered on literacy and math achievement, student attendance, organizational development, college and career readiness, and support for special education and multilingual learners.

During his first year leading the district, PGCPS faced a \$150 million structural deficit—the largest single-year budget adjustment in district history. District leaders balanced the budget without teacher layoffs while

maintaining classroom instruction and daily operations.

Joseph also delivered the district's first State of the Schools address in more than a decade, bringing together families, staff, students, educators, business leaders, elected officials and community partners to align around the district's vision, priorities and direction for the future.

Under his leadership during the 2025–26 school year, PGCPS reported progress in several key areas:

- Teacher vacancies fell by 52%, including a significant reduction in special education vacancies from 242 positions to 80.
- PGCPS finalized three union contracts through a collaborative bargaining process, securing agreements that support educators, staff and school operations across the district.
- A districtwide immunization compliance campaign reduced noncompliance cases from about 4,000 to 44, restoring nearly \$20 million in state funding.
- PGCPS launched new public dashboards allowing families and community members to track student growth, graduation trends, attendance and staffing data by school.
- The district expanded tuition-free Dual Enrollment opportunities in partnership with Prince George's Community College and County government, to be offered across all high schools.
- A partnership with Bowie State University streamlined admissions and resulted in more than 600 scholarships totaling \$1.6 million for students.
- PGCPS earned national recognition for school modernization through Blueprint Schools Phase II and reached a record 164 certified Maryland Green Schools, leading the state and nation.
- Transportation staffing improvements helped the district reach a 96% bus driver fill rate, alongside the launch of a new real-time bus tracking app for families.
- The Innovation & Performance Area was established to offer targeted support and additional resources to 24 schools identi-

fied for accelerated improvement.

• The district expanded communication and public engagement efforts through a budget education series, a new legislative tracking tool, weekly superintendent communications and regular media appearances designed to improve transparency and keep staff, families and the community informed.

"Every child in every zip code deserves a transformative education—and here in Prince George's County, the work of accelerating student progress and strengthening outcomes is already well underway," said Dr. Joseph. "The candidacy I offered is a continuation of our momentum. I am honored to step into this role permanently, and I look forward to working alongside our families, staff, and community partners to scale excellence across every single school in our district."

Looking ahead, Joseph will oversee the district's new three-year strategic plan, "Forward by Design: Acceleration 2029," focused on student achievement, workforce development, expanded access to programs, family partnerships and organizational culture.

Joseph brings more than 30 years of experience in public education as a teacher, principal, district leader and superintendent. He previously served as superintendent of Metro Nashville Public Schools in Tennessee and the Seaford School District in Delaware.

He is also an assistant professor at Howard University, co-director of the AASA/Howard University Urban Superintendents Academy and author of "The Principal's Guide to the First 100 Days." He holds a doctoral degree in educational administration and policy studies from George Washington University, a master's degree in reading education from Johns Hopkins University, and a bachelor's degree in English education from Lincoln University, the nation's first degree-granting HBCU.

Following County Executive Braveboy's selection, The Board of Education is scheduled to vote on Dr. Joseph's contract in June, with final confirmation by the Maryland State Superintendent of Schools to follow.

Data Center Boom Raises Environmental Justice Concerns in Maryland

By JEREMY COX
Chesapeake Bay Journal

As Staci Hartwell sees it, her community has much more to lose than to gain from the development of a massive data center.

"I don't think it needs to be in the heart of a community that is suffering from cumulative impacts, which just happens to be a predominantly Black and brown community," said Hartwell, a resident of Prince George's County, MD, and strategist for the South County Environmental Justice Coalition.

Lerner Enterprises, a real estate firm operated by the family that owns the Washington Nationals, has proposed a \$5 billion, 4-million-square-foot data center complex on the site of the long-demolished Landover Mall. Those plans were put on hold last September, though, after County Executive Aisha Braveboy placed a temporary halt on processing data center permits.

Hyperscale data centers are sprawling buildings that house hundreds of thousands of computer servers, often used to power global cloud and AI applications. Their meteoric proliferation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and beyond has been accompanied by a commensurate rise in concerns over strains to public water supplies, air quality and the electric grid.

In Prince George's County, the debate over data centers has an added dimension: worries that the industry will worsen health and environmental problems in communities already overtaken by them.

"There needs to be a look at what impacts have happened to a community and make sure that data centers don't add to that burden," said Sacoby Wilson, director of the University of Maryland's Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH).

Last November, a 20-member county task force released a report designed to be the last word on data center planning within the suburban DC jurisdiction. But it wasn't. In March, the NAACP's national office and CEEJH published a "counter report," a full-throated denunciation of what they considered to be the county report's failure to address environmental justice.

Nearly 90% of Prince George's 960,000 residents identify as people of color, and 60% identify as Black. Compared to the rest of Maryland, the county has a higher percentage of people living in poverty and without health-care coverage. The county, meanwhile, has a history of "clustering" industrial facilities in marginalized communities, such as the predominantly Black community of Brandywine, according to the report.

Wilson, a Bowie resident, fears that, given the county's proximity to DC, it will join a growing list of what he calls "digital sacrifice zones"—communities that are "used to host the negative externalities" of data centers but "don't see the benefits from them."

The counter report highlights the vicinity around the proposed Landover data center as a prime example. The U.S. Centers for Dis-



PHOTO JEREMY COX/CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

Staci Hartwell of the South County Environmental Justice Coalition in Prince George's County, MD, said a massive data center at the site of the old Landover Mall is out of step with the community.

ease Control and Prevention's Environmental Justice Index, which integrates environmental exposures and health indicators, gives the adjacent census tracts a score of 0.86 on a scale of 1, putting the area into the highest burden category.

Landover isn't alone. Nationwide, data center pollution could lead to 600,000 asthma cases and 1,300 deaths by 2028 under a "high-growth scenario," according to an analysis led by researchers at the University of California Riverside. That would equate to more than \$20 billion in public health burden nationwide—a 213% increase from the 2023 level. The study has

That pain wouldn't be equally distributed. People with lower incomes are in line to bear the brunt. All 10 counties with the projected highest data center-related health costs in 2030 have lower median income levels than the national median, the study noted.

"This substantial disparity highlights the need to carefully examine local and regional health impacts to support more responsible computing and data center siting," the authors wrote.

The paper suggests that Prince George's County is already paying a high price from hyperscale data centers, even though the county has none within its borders yet. That's because it's downwind of Northern Virginia, home to a large concentration of such facilities known as Data Center Alley.

The research team's modeling showed that if Virginia's diesel-powered backup generators emit pollutants at 10% of their permitted

COMMUNITY

Pride Month from A1

ners to this year's Festival. These include a Latin dance class presented by Rumba Queer, a lip sync drag performance by Angelica Lize, and a special presentation about Maryland's LGBTQ+ history from the Rainbow History Project.

Ahead of the Rainbow Festival on June 27, Prince George's County community members are invited to celebrate Pride Month at the Library through programs like Pride bingo and trivia; "Craft and Create" offerings featuring rainbow dragons, pronoun ribbons, and Keith Haring's pop art; and engaging community film and book discussions featuring titles like "Felix Ever After," "Rent," and "Woodworking." This year's Pride Month slate, along with the 2026 Rainbow Festival, emphasizes the welcoming spaces, services, and programs for LGBTQ+ community members, families, and allies that PGCMLS is proud to offer year-round.

For the full calendar of Pride Month events at PGCMLS branch libraries, along with curated reading lists and stories from LGBTQ+ history, visit the Library's LGBTQ+ Heritage Hub.

Featured PGCMLS Events Celebrating Pride Month 2026 Rainbow Festival

Free | Saturday, June 27 at 11 a.m. | All Ages | South Bowie Branch Library



Join your neighbors and local LGBTQ+ organizations and community members for the Library's 5th annual Rainbow Festival, hosted this year at the South Bowie Branch Library!

This free all-ages, all-day event will include:

- A salsa and bachata dance class presented by Rumba Queer;
- A lip sync drag performance by Angelica Lize;
- Rainbow Storytime;
- Pride crafts;
- Balloon twister;
- A selfie booth;
- A presentation about Maryland's LGBTQ+ history from the Rainbow History Project; and more!

Festive dress and costumes are encouraged—there will be a parade for all to join in at the end of the afternoon!

Book Crawl: Pride Bingo

Free | Thursday, June 18 at 6:30 p.m. | Adults | Pizzeria Paradiso

Celebrate Pride Month with glitz and glam! PGCMLS is kicking off our summer "Book Crawl" series with a fabulous bingo night at Pizzeria Paradiso in Hyattsville. Featuring fun prizes and library swag; a lively, inclusive atmosphere to celebrate Pride; and a dazzling performance by host Charlemagne Chateau, "Pride Bingo" is free to join—but tables will be first come, first served, so get there early to grab a spot!

Trivia: Fabulous Facts

Free | Tuesday, June 30 at 6 p.m. | Teens and Adults | Upper Marlboro Branch Library

Join your Upper Marlboro neighbors in a lively game of Pride-themed trivia!

Run through Kahoot, this interactive quiz-style game will focus on questions that celebrate the fabulous diversity, history, and culture that Pride month is all about. From iconic LGBTQ+ figures to memorable moments in pop culture, the evening promises fun, learning, and plenty of pride!

PGCMLS Pride Month 2026 Book & Film Discussions

Community members are invited to join the Library in commemorating Pride month with thoughtful book and film discussions at multiple PGCMLS branches and other locations around the county.

Book Discussion: "Dead in Long Beach, California" by Venita Blackburn

Saturday, June 13 at 2 p.m. | Teens and Adults | Bladensburg Branch Library

True Crime Book Discussion: "The Third Rainbow Girl" by Emma Copley Eisenberg

Monday, June 15 at 12 p.m. | Adults | Upper Marlboro Branch Library

Solidarity Stories: "Woodworking"

Free | Tuesday, June 16 at 6:30 p.m. | Adults | miXt Food Hall

Book Discussion: "Felix Ever After" by Kacen Callender

Free | Wednesday, June 17 at 6 p.m. | Teens and Adults | Accokeek Branch Library

Book Discussion: "Emperor of Gladness" by Ocean Vuong

Free | Wednesday, June 17 at 6:30 p.m. | Adults | Virtual

Film Discussion: "Fire" (PG-13)

Free | Tuesday, June 23 at 1 p.m. | Adults | South Bowie Branch Library

Featured PGCMLS Pride 2026 Craft Programs

Craft and Create: Pronoun Ribbons
Free | Wednesday, June 17 at 3 p.m. | Adults | Hyattsville Branch Library

Kids Create: Rainbow Dragons

Free | Tuesday, June 30 at 1 p.m. | Ages 5–12 | Upper Marlboro Branch

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 through 19 public branches, a law library in the County Correctional Center 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 at every phase of life. pgcmls.info/about-us.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

PART 4—A REGION RESHAPED: FEDERAL LAYOFFS IN MARYLAND A YEAR LATER

Disappearing Demographic Data Impacts Efforts to Track Who Make Up Laid-Off Federal Workers

Civil rights activists said the federal government's removal of race and gender data of its workforce makes it hard to know who was impacted by the mass layoffs and could leave protected groups vulnerable to targeted actions.

By NOLAN ROGALSKI
Capital News Service

Some civil rights activists and Maryland lawmakers said the federal government's removal of data tracking the race and gender of its workforce impedes efforts to identify exactly who has been impacted by last year's mass layoffs.

"I think the message is clear," said Del. Denise Roberts, D-Prince George's. "They don't want us to know, and that's an abomination."

As part of its campaign to eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, the federal government has deleted or made private demographic data for workers in those groups, making it nearly impossible for states, including Maryland, to track the impact on specific populations.

Federal civilian jobs comprised approximately 6% of all jobs in Maryland, Gov. Wes Moore said in a statement last February.

According to data from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), 46% of federal workers nationwide were women and 41% were people of color as of September 2024. The probationary workforce, which experts say is at greater risk of being fired, had even greater percentages of people from the groups.



PHOTO CAIT KELLEY/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Hundreds of protesters rally near the U.S. Capitol in support of USAID on Feb. 5, 2025 and against the Trump administration's efforts to reduce the federal workforce.

The federal government does not provide the exact demographic breakdown of Marylanders within its workforce, but about 51% of Maryland's population is female and roughly 32% of the state population is Black, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.

Sarah Javaid, a senior research analyst at the National Women's Law Center, compiled a report that showed federal workers who belonged to protected groups—groups receiving special legal or policy protections based on personal characteristics—could be particularly vulnerable to being laid off.

"Folks are hearing and experiencing exactly what this report says is happening, which is that

it's women and people of color, particularly a lot of Black women, who are being pushed out of the federal workforce," Javaid said.

OPM, an independent agency that oversees federal civil service, was the primary agency tracking demographic data. In March 2025, OPM removed both current and historic data on diversity indicators, including information related to race, gender and sexuality.

In a statement then, the OPM described its intent to end "wasteful programs and policies promoting divisive DEI and gender ideology" and said its reform is about "streamlining operations, restoring merit, and ensuring that the federal

government works for the American people."

But Javaid called it "a huge blow to our ability to do these types of reports and bring attention to this issue."

Responses to questions about gender identity and sexuality dating back more than a decade were redacted last year after President Donald Trump signed an executive order titled "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government."

In its most recent report, the OPM provides just four demographic indicators for the federal workforce: median age, retirement eligibility, veteran status and education level.

"This is most definitely an attempt by the administration to hide what they're doing and also who is impacted by their actions," Javaid said.

OPM also stopped administering its annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, which evaluated overall workplace culture in the federal government and provided benchmarks of progress.

In addition, previously recorded diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility data was scrubbed, including questions on whether an organization met workers' accessibility needs and whether workers felt they were

provided equal opportunities to advance.

According to a Maryland Department of Labor spokesperson, the state does not record its own demographic information.

Last year's layoffs were particularly detrimental to women because the federal workforce offers more opportunities for promotion, supervisory positions and pay raises than in most private sector businesses, according to Javaid.

"It is going to be very hard to recover from this, particularly when we look at the departments and what they do," she said. "It's not easy to just turn around and get those systems back up and

working. It's a lot of infrastructure that has been attacked."

Roberts said she was concerned about the impact on her constituents in Prince George's County, where 62% of the population is Black.

"What's happening in Washington is not only unfair, it's just unconscionable," she said. "These [layoffs] affect real people, real lives, people who have mortgages, people who have to pay the rent, people who have children. What are they supposed to do now?"

Capital News Service reporter Rhiannon Evans contributed to this story.

The Prince George's Post

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Contents © 2026, The Prince George's Post

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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.

Celebrate from A1

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A video tribute to the members of the

Aviation Command and all those dedicated first responders who are part of Maryland's emergency response system produced by Maryland State Police Pilot Hae Kim. The video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/mfY4loj7N2o>

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Why Can't I get a Lump Sum Death Benefit From my Wife?

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 wife passed away in September 2025 at age 64. We had been married for 43 years and started collecting benefits when I turned 62 and she was 63. She did not have enough work credits to claim her own SS and thus collected on my record. SSA told me that I was not entitled to receive the lousy \$255 death benefit because my wife was collecting on my work record. Is this correct? **Signed: Grieving Widower**

Dear Grieving: We extend our sincere condolences on your wife's passing. But I must tell you that what the SSA (Social Security Administration) told you is correct.

Although we often see assertions that the so-called "one-time lump sum death benefit" is always paid, there are specific rules for when that admittedly small SS benefit is available. And there are also specific rules regarding who is eligible to receive it.

Essentially, the lump sum death benefit is paid when the deceased person was collecting Social Security retirement benefits (or at least entitled to SS retirement benefits). And that one-time lump sum death benefit usually goes to the deceased person's surviving spouse (more on that later). But for the death benefit to be paid, the deceased person must have been collecting Social Security retirement benefits (or was at least entitled to SS retirement benefits). In your specific case, because your wife was not eligible for her own SS retirement benefit and was, instead, just collecting a spousal benefit from your SS record, you unfortunately are not able to collect the lump-sum death benefit as your wife's surviving spouse. So, what you were told by Social Security about this special survivor benefit is, indeed, correct.

For information, here is a bit more on who can collect the SS death benefit: the one-time lump sum death benefit is normally paid to the eligible surviving spouse of a deceased person who was collecting Social Security. But if there is no surviving spouse to receive the onetime payment, the death benefit may be paid to someone else who was also a dependent of the deceased. That might be a minor surviving child or a surviving adult disabled child who was collecting dependent benefits from the deceased person's SS record. In rare cases, a dependent parent may be paid if no other surviving dependents are eligible. FYI, ex-spouses are not eligible for a death benefit from a former spouse.

The lump-sum death benefit must be applied for by contacting Social Security and the benefit must be claimed within two years of the person's death. You will need to verify your identity and confirm your eligibility for this survivor benefit, and you will need to provide other information about the deceased also (including a death certificate). There is an SSA form to apply for the lump sum death benefit (SSA-8), but calling your local SS office (or 1.800.772.1213) to make an appointment to apply for the one-time lump-sum death benefit in person is usually all that is needed.

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.

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The City of Bowie Announces New City Manager

By PRESS OFFICER
City of Bowie

The Bowie City Council is pleased to announce the selection of Ms. Angel L. Jones as the next City Manager of the City of Bowie, beginning July 20, 2026.

Ms. Jones was selected after a comprehensive nationwide search. She brings more than 30 years of distinguished executive leadership in municipal government and currently serves as City Manager for Missouri City, Texas.

Prior to her service in Missouri City, Ms. Jones served as City Manager for Portsmouth, Virginia and Gaithersburg, Maryland. She also served as Assistant City

Manager and City Manager Pro Tem for the City of Eugene, Oregon, and has held numerous executive and leadership positions throughout her career, including serving as a Captain in the United States Army Reserve.

The City of Bowie operates under a Council-Manager form of government. As City Manager, Ms. Jones will serve as the City's chief executive officer and will be responsible for administering municipal operations, implementing City Council policies and initiatives, and advancing the City's strategic priorities.

A graduate of Virginia Union University, Ms. Jones has completed executive management programs at the University of Vir-

ginia's Darden School of Business.

Ms. Jones will succeed Alfred D. Lott, who retired in February after nine years of dedicated service to Bowie. The Bowie City Council congratulates Ms. Jones on her selection and looks forward to working with her through this exciting new chapter of leadership.

The City Council also expresses its deep appreciation to Assistant City Manager Daniel Mears for leading Bowie through this transition. Dan's dedication and professionalism allowed the city to maintain continuity of operations, deliver a timely balanced budget, and continue the high-quality service delivery for which Bowie is renowned.

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Announces Honorees of Inaugural CareFirst Healthy Business Awards

Awards recognize employers advancing workplace well-being and community health across the Mid-Atlantic region

By PRESS OFFICER
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON (June 1, 2026)—CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst), one of the country's largest not-for-profit healthcare organizations, today announced the honorees of the CareFirst Healthy Business Award, a new recognition created to honor employers that are embedding well-being into the fabric of their workplaces and helping advance healthier communities across the Mid-Atlantic region.

"Healthy workplaces start with small, everyday moments, listening to people and giving them room to thrive," said Ricardo Johnson, Chief Growth Officer at CareFirst. "This inaugural group of honorees shows what's possible when well-being is treated as part of the work itself. We're grateful to partner with organizations that are doing that in ways that truly last."

The 84 inaugural CareFirst Healthy Business honorees represent organizations across D.C., Maryland and Northern Virginia and reflect a wide range of industries, sectors and sizes. Together, they demonstrate how thoughtful approaches to workplace well-being can be put into practice through everyday decisions, policies and culture.

Honorees were evaluated and selected based on how they support employee health, encourage engagement with wellness resources and embed well-being into everyday workplace culture, reflecting sustained commitment rather than one-time initiatives.

The award is rooted in CareFirst Well-BeingSM, a personalized digital wellness program that provides CareFirst members with easy-to-use tools and resources, and reflects the organization's broader commitment to prevention, population health and long-term affordability. Through the program, CareFirst helps expand access to well-being resources and healthy practices that extend beyond the workplaces, supporting individuals, families and communities across the region.

"Healthy workplaces don't just benefit employees—they strengthen families, neighborhoods and the overall health of our region," said Gabriella Gold, Vice President of Commercial Markets at CareFirst. "By launching this award, we're helping establish and recognize a network of employers who see well-being as essential to how they operate and how they show up for their communities."

CareFirst Healthy Business will continue to recognize and bring together organizations

who are advancing workforce well-being, creating a growing community of leaders committed to improving health in the workplace and beyond.

Congratulations to this year's honorees:

- Allegany County Commissioners—Gold
- AltaGas—Gold
- American College of Cardiology—Gold
- American Diabetes Association—Silver
- American Society of Clinical Oncology—Silver
- American University—Silver
- Anne Arundel County Public Schools—Silver
- APT Management, LLC—Silver
- Asbury Communities—Bronze
- Association for Talent Development—Gold
- Baltimore City Public Schools—Gold
- Baretz+Brunelle LLC—Bronze
- Body Art Alliance—Gold
- CACI International—Bronze
- Caroline County Public Schools—Gold
- Charles County Government—Silver
- Choptank Electric Cooperative—Silver
- City of Baltimore—Silver
- **City of Bowie—Bronze**
- Cornerstone Government Affairs—Gold
- Danfoss—Gold
- DC Government—Gold
- Dynamo Technologies LLC—Silver
- Eagle Creek Renewable Energy—Gold
- EagleBank—Gold
- **Elizabeth Seton High School—Gold**
- Enterprise Community Partners—Gold
- Events DC—Silver
- **Excelsia Injury Care—Gold**
- Fearless—Bronze
- Frederick County Public Schools—Gold
- Garrett County Government—Bronze
- Garrett County Public Schools—Gold
- Gates Hudson & Associates, Inc.—Silver
- Harford Community College—Gold
- Harford County Public Schools—Gold
- Hendersen-Webb, Inc.—Silver
- Hillis-Carnes Engineering Associates—Bronze
- Human Resources Research Organization—Gold
- IntelliDyne, LLC—Gold
- JSI—Gold
- Kennedy Krieger Institute—Bronze
- LifeBridge Health—Gold
- Meals on Wheels America—Silver
- **MedStar Health—Gold**
- Mercy Health Services—Gold
- Metis Strategy—Gold
- Miles & Stockbridge—Silver
- Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and

- Popeo, P.C.—Silver
- Montgomery County Government—Gold
- **Navy Federal Credit Union—Gold**
- Patient Access Network (PAN) Foundation—Gold
- PM Hotel Group—Gold
- Pompeian—Gold
- **Prince George's Community College—Silver**
- **Prince George's County Public Schools—Gold**
- Queen Anne's County Commissioners—Bronze
- Queen Anne's County Public Schools—Working Towards Healthy Business
- RMF Engineering, Inc.—Silver
- Sheppard Pratt—Gold
- Smithsonian Institution—Silver
- Somatus, Inc.—Gold
- Somerset County Public Schools—Bronze
- SoundExchange—Silver
- St. Mary's County Government—Gold
- St. Mary's County Public Schools—Gold
- Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox P.L.L.C.—Gold
- Stevenson University—Silver
- Streetsense Consulting—Silver
- TAI Inc.—Gold
- Tenable, Inc.—Silver
- The Catholic University of America—Gold
- The Dixon Group, Inc.—Silver
- Town of Ocean City—Bronze
- **Transit Employees Health & Welfare Plan—Gold**
- Two Six Technologies—Gold
- Venable LLP—Silver
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority—Gold
- Westat—Gold
- Wicomico County—Silver
- Wicomico County Public Schools—Gold
- Worcester County Government—Bronze
- Worcester County Public Schools—Silver

Nearing its 90th year of service, CareFirst, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit healthcare company which, through its affiliates and subsidiaries, offers a comprehensive portfolio of health insurance products and administrative services to 3.5 million individuals in Maryland, the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and beyond. In 2025, CareFirst infused over \$356 million to support regional community impact to improve overall health and advance accessible, affordable, equitable, high-quality healthcare. Visit www.carefirst.com.

Concerns from A3

level, Prince George's would incur \$9 million in annual health burdens. That was the third-highest total after Maryland's Montgomery County at \$20 million and Virginia's Fairfax County at \$19 million.

Prince George's data center report was based on eight meetings held from May through November 2025 in which subject matter experts shared insights on how to manage data center growth. There were also four community meetings, which drew a combined 600 attendees, officials say.

The county report states that the task force considered the positive and negative consequences of data centers and concluded that the "economic and community benefits" would outweigh the potential downsides, such as higher electricity bills.

Braveboy's office didn't respond to requests for comment. Representatives of Lerner Enterprises also didn't respond.

The main body of the county report mentions the term "environmental justice" three times in its 89 pages. It is mentioned as one of the discussion topics during a June 11, 2025, task force meeting, in a description of another community's data center ordinance and as part of the name of Hartwell's organization. She was a member of the task force.

As the task force process unfolded, though, Hartwell said, "I became increasingly concerned that core environmental justice issues were not being fully addressed within either the structure of the task force or the recommendations that ultimately emerged from it."

County Councilwoman Wala Blegay, another task force member, said that environmental justice was brought up at the meetings, but there wasn't enough time to give it the attention it deserved. She and other members determined that more science needs to be conducted on data centers' health conse-

quences before conclusions can be drawn.

Blegay said she is not in favor of the Landover data center moving forward. "It's too close to people's homes, and we don't know the impacts," she added. "I just want people to know we aren't going to make a decision and completely disregard the community."

Abre' Conner, director of the NAACP's Center for Environmental and Climate Justice, said that what's happening in Prince George's County demonstrates that local elected leaders in many parts of the country aren't listening to what their citizens are saying, especially those in vulnerable communities.

"What we were seeing from local, elected and appointed individuals," she said during a data center webinar in May, "was to say, 'We're going to move forward,' despite what community members were saying."

This article is provided by the Chesapeake Bay Journal: bayjournal.com

EarthTalk® Q&A The Planetary Health Diet: Healthy You, Healthy Earth

By Nitya Dani | May 29, 2026

Dear EarthTalk:

Since the food we eat is an important environmental factor in our health, what foods are the healthiest for our bodies and the planet?

—Jan Harmon, New York, NY

In a world increasingly aware of climate change and public health crises, our food choices and diet have become a focus. The foods we eat not only affect our health but also the health of our planet. From the moment a crop is harvested to when it reaches our plates, every step, including processing, packaging, transport and storage, leaves a footprint on the environment. Meat production, in particular, requires large tracts of land and undergoes ample processing, making carnivorous diets detrimental to the environment.

A plant-based, whole-food, and minimally processed diet is typically both human- and planet-friendly. As per scientific evidence, the EAT-Lancet Commission, a global scientific collaboration of researchers which formed to define a "Planetary Health Diet," concluded that foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts are less processed, use fewer resources, and generate fewer emissions. Moreover, these nutrient-rich foods are packed with essential fibers and minerals that improve digestion and reduce inflammation. Food habits of a vegetarian diet center on going meat-free, but with the inclusion of dairy and eggs. Vegan diets go one

step further, eliminating all animal products and relying completely on plant-based foods. The Mediterranean diet, rich in vegetables, whole grains, beans and lentils, is considered to be gut-friendly and sustainable while also being quite flavorful. Lastly, the flexitarian diet, as the name suggests, offers a flexible and approachable move to sustainable eating by emphasizing plant-based foods while still allowing eggs, fish and occasional meat.

Transitioning to a new diet can be challenging due to various factors, including habit and availability. But taking some simple and gradual steps can make this goal achievable. Choosing more plant-based foods is one of the most effective ways to reduce one's carbon footprint, as it also remarkably reduces meat intake. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the transportation of food is a bigger contributor of greenhouse gas emissions than agriculture itself. Hence, to minimize these effects, eating locally and seasonally is the way to go, as this reduces lengthy transport. One major concern when changing diets is meeting protein needs; however, this can be addressed with nutrient-rich alternatives like tofu, lentils and legumes. According to Dr. Stephen Devries from the American Medical Association, "We know from a health standpoint that replacing beef with plant sources of protein is associated with a whole host of health benefits, from reduced risk of diabetes to lower risk of cardiovascular disease."

CONTACTS: Best Diets for the Environment, health.usnews.com/wellness/food/articles/best-diets-for-the-environ-



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Explore the planetary health diet and its benefits for both your health and the environment through conscious food choices.

ment; Four Easy Changes for an Environmentally Sustainable Diet, asc-aqua.org/blog/four-easy-changes-for-an-environmentally-sustainable-diet/; Food and Climate Change: Healthy diets for a healthier planet, un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/food.

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Morningside from A2

By the end of the year, additional electronic signs will be installed by the fire house and in Glaubitz Circle.

The new development next to the VFW is progressing. The blue-gray model home now has a deep-red neighbor that seems to be nearly complete.

Father's Day Celebrations

Morningside is hosting Donuts with Dad this Saturday, June 13, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring Dad. Participants will get a brunch of donuts, fruit, juice, and coffee. Then there will be games, including safe axe-throwing (with plastic axes and a special target) and a "fishing" pond loaded with prize bags. There also will be a rock-painting activity.

The event is free, but registration is required. Technically, the registration deadline is June 11, but if you ask really nicely, they might be able to sign you up on the 12th.

Then on June 21, Bishop James E. Walsh Assembly of the Knights of Columbus is hosting a night of Smooth Jazz for Dad from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Iva Ambush will be singing, accompanied by the Friends of Leon Alexander.

Tickets are \$75, and include dinner and light refreshments. A cash bar is available, though, of course, you must be 21 or older to drink.

The show will be held at the Knights of Columbus Arto Hall, 3611 Stewart Road, in Forestville. Proceeds will go to the Knights of Columbus charity programs. For more information, call 301-466-2533.

Billy Fowler on the mend

I am pleased to report that I just heard Billy Fowler's leukemia is in remission, and he is on the way to recovering from the hard work of fighting cancer.

He looks forward to making a trip to Morningside soon, to visit his mother, Sharon, and retrieve his beloved dog, who has been staying with Sharon these past few months.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Fannie Dimes, Meghan Trexler Decker, and Jennifer Jenkins McClelland, June 11; Keen Clark and Shirley Proffit, June 12; Aimee Crawford, Joel McCune, and Cameron Nichols, June 13; Rep. Steny Hoyer, June 14; Kara Dameron, Dot Pfeil, and June Zaccagnino, June 15; Helen Padgett and Lucia Scott, June 16; Bill Kimbles, June 18.

Happy anniversary to Jill and Ken Kimmel, June 15; and Steve and Cornelia Blankenship, June 18.

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