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Andrews Federal Credit Union Sponsors Negro League Legends Hall of Fame Vintage Baseball Game

By NATALIE TATE
Andrews Federal Credit Union



PHOTO COURTESY ANDREWS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Andrews Federal Credit Union recently sponsored the Negro League Legends Hall of Fame Annual East/West Vintage Baseball Game and 10th Annual Auto Charity Showcase at Prince George's Stadium in Bowie, Maryland.

SUITLAND, Md. (Nov. 12, 2026)—Andrews Federal Credit Union recently brought families, baseball enthusiasts, and community leaders together through its sponsorship of the Negro League Legends Hall of Fame Annual East/West Vintage Baseball Game and 10th Annual Auto Charity Showcase at Prince George's Stadium in Bowie, Maryland.

As part of its ongoing commitment to strengthening the communities it serves, Andrews Federal's sponsorship made the event free and accessible to all attendees, providing an opportunity for families and neighbors to enjoy an afternoon of baseball, entertainment, and community fellowship.

The event celebrated America's rich baseball traditions while bringing together residents, local organizations, and elected officials for a shared experience. Andrews Federal employees also volunteered their time, engaging with attendees and demonstrating the credit union's commitment to making a positive difference beyond financial services.

"At Andrews Federal, we believe strong communities are built through meaningful connections and shared experiences," said Damita Robinson, Chief Operating Officer of Andrews Federal Credit Union. "Supporting events like this allows us to bring families and neighbors together, celebrate our community's history, and create opportunities for people of all ages to connect. We are proud to help make these experiences accessible to everyone."

The celebration also recognized the historic contributions of Negro League baseball players and their lasting influence on America's national pastime, honoring the individuals whose determination and achievements helped shape the game for future generations.

Maryland Lieutenant Governor Aruna K. Miller participated in the ceremonial first pitch alongside Greenbelt Mayor Emmett Jordan, Fairmount Heights Mayor Akiaba Stewart, Prince George's County Councilmember Jolene Ivey, and Delegates Kym Taylor and Denise Roberts. Andrews Federal representatives were also invited to participate in the ceremony in recognition of the credit union's sponsorship and community support.

Through sponsorships, volunteerism, and community partnerships, Andrews Federal continues to invest in initiatives that strengthen local relationships, celebrate shared traditions, and contribute to vibrant, connected communities.

Founded in 1948, Andrews Federal Credit Union *has grown to serve more than 165,000 members in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and military installations in central Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Visit andrewsfcu.org.*

Laurel Historical Society Launches American Sign Language Tour of "Beyond the 4th: Stories of Laurel's Freedom Celebrations" Exhibition

By SYDNEY YOUNGE
Laurel Historical Society

The Laurel Historical Society (LHS) is proud to present the American Sign Language (ASL) tour of the Laurel Museum and its current exhibition, Beyond the 4th: Stories of Laurel's Freedom Celebrations. This student-led project designed to increase accessibility at the Laurel Museum was created through a partnership with students in the Communication Arts Department at the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) and the Johns Hopkins Museum Studies program. The tour originally launched in September, National Deaf Awareness Month.

Johns Hopkins University graduate student, Shawn Clements-Ahava, conceived the ASL tour as part of the Museum Studies masters program. The project began with scripts provided by LHS that were reviewed by Clements-Ahava, before passing to the Communication Arts Department at the CCBC. With the help of students enrolled in the program, under the direction of CCBC professors Dr. Rebecca Minor and Stephen Kennedy, videos with ASL interpreters were created to increase accessibility at the Laurel Museum and bring the exhibit to the deaf and hard of hearing community. The CCBC has trained professional interpreters for over 40 years through on-site and online coursework.

"Not only was this an exciting opportunity for us to collaborate with students, it was an opportunity to put one of our core values, inclusion, into action," said Executive Director Kristen Norton. "Most importantly, it created a new way for more people to connect with Laurel's history."

These videos are available on the organization's YouTube page or via QR codes throughout the museum to guide visitors and provide background on the history of Laurel, the museum, and its current exhibit. LHS invites visitors to stop by the Laurel Museum (817 Main St, Laurel, MD 20707) during its open hours (Friday through Sunday from 12–4 p.m.) to experience the new tour before the exhibit closes December 20.

LHS thanks Shawn Clements-Ahava for helping create the tour, CCBC professors Dr. Rebecca Minor and Stephen Kennedy for their direction, and the CCBC students who assisted with the project, which has made the Laurel Museum and its exhibit more accessible.

The Laurel Historical Society *is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 1975 with the mission to deepen the understanding of the past and cultural heritage of Laurel, Maryland to connect and inspire, for today and the future. To learn more please visit laurelhistoricalsociety.org*

University of Maryland Extension Receives $580,000 SAMHSA Grant to Expand Mental Health Training

Funding will help Maryland communities recognize mental health challenges, respond safely to crises, and connect individuals with appropriate care.

By LAURA WORMUTH
University of Maryland Extension



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

Dr. Alexander Chan receiving the Outstanding Rural Health Program Award from the Maryland Rural Health Association for promoting and providing effective community-oriented rural health care delivery.

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (Nov. 9, 2026)—Dr. Alexander Chan, mental health specialist with the University of Maryland Extension (UME), has received a $580,000 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand mental health awareness, literacy, and crisis response training across Maryland till September 2029.

The initiative will build on UME's Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) programs to equip community members with the skills to recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness, safely de-escalate crisis situations, identify community resources, and connect individuals with appropriate mental health services.

The need for accessible mental health education is significant. According to the 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, nearly one in four U.S. adults experienced a mental health issue in the past year. Additionally, approximately one in five adolescents ages 12 to 17 experienced moderate or severe symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder in 2024. These findings highlight the importance of preparing communities to recognize mental health concerns and respond effectively.

"Many people feel nervous to intervene during a mental health crisis, if they even recognize the situation as such," said Chan. "The training is important to help people identify the early warning signs of a mental health challenge and intervene before a person lands in the emergency room, or in police custody."

Through the grant, UME will expand training for individuals who are positioned to support others in their communities. "The more people who know how to handle mental health situations, the stronger a community's safety net is," Chan said.

Training focuses on four primary objectives:

- **Recognizing mental health challenges:** Helping participants identify signs and symptoms of mental illness and recognize when someone may need support.
- **Responding safely to crises:** Developing skills to respond appropriately and de-escalate crisis situations involving individuals experiencing mental health challenges.
- **Identifying community resources:** Increasing awareness of local mental health agencies, support programs, and other available services.

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Marylanders Lost Over $390 Million to Cybercrime in 2025. Here's What the FBI Data Shows

By ZEPHAN MATTESON
Capital News Service

Two Baltimore-area residents reported losing a combined $5,095 to scams on Nov. 4, one to a fake job offer and the other to a Facebook sneaker ad, according to reports filed with the Better Business Bureau Scam Tracker.

Data from the FBI shows that online scams and cybercrime have been rapidly increasing every year since the pandemic.

Marylanders are losing thousands of dollars to online scams and cybercrime. The amount of cybercrime complaints in Maryland in 2025 rose 30% from 2024, according to data from the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3). Marylanders reported over 19,000 cybercrimes to the FBI in 2025 with losses totaling over $390 million, according to that same report.

The number of cybercrimes reported increased by over 5,000, and the monetary losses added up to slightly over $150 million more than 2024—an increase of just over 62%. The amount of scams Marylanders reported has increased by over 226% since 2015.

The amount of money lost and the type of scam perpetrated can vary greatly. The Better Business Bureau, a nonprofit organization that works to improve consumer trust in the marketplace, hosts a scam tracker where businesses and consumers can report online scams.

Phishing scams are the most common scam, according to IC3 data. However, phishing scams—usually emails that appear to come from trustworthy sources, but are actually ploys to gather personal or financial information—are not the crime costing consumers the most.

The BBB lists investment scams and employment scams as the most "risky" type of fraud.

"The top two riskiest scams are investment crypto scams and employment scams," said Melissa Lanning, executive director of the BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust. "While it's a smaller percentage of

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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

HARMONY HALL FORT WASHINGTON

Harmony Hall, located in Fort Washington, Maryland, is managed by the United States National Park Service as part of the National Capital Parks-East system.

MOTOWN HOLIDAY

Motown Holiday: December 5, 2026, at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. The Brencore Allstars Band performs holiday classics from legendary icons like The Temptations and Stevie Wonder. Ron Lee Ward, Jr.: December 9, 2026, at 2–3 p.m. An intimate afternoon showcase blending traditional gospel roots with contemporary jazz. The Harbor Foundation Inc. Annual Holiday Gala: December 11, 2026, at 8 p.m. An inaugural festive indoor evening event featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres, live entertainment, and a D.J. Early 2027 Lineup: Tribute to the Music of New Birth: January 23, 2027, at 3 p.m. High-energy classic soul and R&B tribute by the Brencore Allstars.

NORTH KEYS COMMUNITY PARK

North Keys Community Park (officially managed as Brandywine-North Keys Park) is a 55-acre public green space in Southern Prince George's County, near the Croom and Brandywine areas. Atmosphere & Setting: Quiet Hideaway: Known locally as a peaceful, low-traffic neighborhood park that rarely feels overcrowded, even on most weekends. Scenic Landscape: Set in a rural, rolling portion of the Patuxent River basin, offering a calm escape away from busy commercial corridors.

Specialties & Unique Services: Sports & Athletics: Features active fields for baseball/softball, soccer, and football. Walking & Running: Includes a quarter-mile, hard-surface walking and jogging track that loops around the main athletic fields. Fishing Ponds & Piers: Contains a central pond equipped with multiple dock-like fishing piers where visitors catch species like largemouth bass, bluegill, and sunfish. Playgrounds & Family Areas: Offers multi-age playgrounds with swings and slides, alongside covered picnic tables and charcoal grills. Seasonal Foraging: Local visitors frequently note wild blackberries growing around the park grounds during the summer.

LT. COLLINS DAY OF SERVICE

Please join the BSU-UMD Social Justice Alliance, 2nd Lt. Richard W. Collins III Foundation, and Veterans across Maryland on Saturday, December 5, 2026, for our annual Lt. Collins Day of Service, honoring the life of 2nd Lt. Richard W. Collins, III. Together we'll return to City Ranch, where volunteers will work alongside Cowboy Brandt to help prepare for an exciting new chapter as he transitions to a larger space, allowing him to expand his reach, serve more families, and make an even greater impact in the community. Whether you're a student, faculty or staff member, parent, child, veteran, or community supporter, there's a place for you Saturday, December 5, 2026, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. City Ranch Inc., 7613 Dogwood Road, Windsor Mill, MD 21244. Transportation provided from Bowie State University and UMD. Register if you want to attend Lt. Collins Day of Service: https://bsos.umd.edu/event/annual-lt-collins-day-service.

BULLDOGS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Celebrating the accomplishments, milestones, and well-deserved recognition of our #BowieBOLD alumni, faculty, staff, and students. Dr. Monifa McKnight ('04) "Full Flight" Book Signing. #1 Amazon Best Selling Author. Dr. Monifa McKnight is more than an accomplished educational leader and author, she is one of our very own! A proud Bowie State alumna from the class of 2004, member of the BSU Board of Visitors, and longtime supporter of the University. She is coming back home to share her journey, wisdom, and lessons on leadership. Book Signing- "Full Flight Lessons in Leading as a Black Woman in Education" was held Tuesday, November 17, 2026, in the BSU Bookstore.

Refaa Sait, '28 is a force. She arrived at Bowie State from Saudi Arabia in 2025 with many roles to play: student, wife and mother. Her plan was to earn a degree in business administration with a concentration in economics while raising her three-year old son. But she didn't expect to discover so much about herself, both academically and personally, or to win a business competition for her chocolate enterprise along the way.

BULLDOGS ON ELECTION DAY

Our Bulldogs made us proud on Election Day! Bowie State students came together for a student-organized March to the Polls, walking across campus to cast their ballots and encourage others to make their voices heard. We're proud to see the next generation of leaders stepping forward, supporting one another and taking an active role in their communities. That is what it means to be #BowieBOLD!

THE BOLD BUZZ

Bowie State named among U.S. Veterans Magazine's 2026 Top Veteran Schools. A national distinction honoring colleges and universities that provide exceptional support, resources and educational opportunities for veterans, service members and military connected students.

STAY UP TO DATE WITH BSU

Calling all BSU alumni! If you moved or changed your email or mail address, please let us know. By keeping your information current, you will continue to receive BSU news and updates. For questions and support, send an email to the Advancement Services Office at advancementservices@bowiestate.edu. Follow us on all social media platforms. Facebook: BSUOAEF, Instagram: BowieAlum, LinkedIn: Alumni Bowie State, Bowie State University YouTube Channel. If you have questions, you can Email alumni@bowiestate.edu.

NATIONAL HARBOR

National Harbor Saturdays until December 19, 2026, from 12–7 p.m. Christmas Market and Holiday Craft Show Series feature rotating artisans, crafters, holiday sweets, and seasonal treats. Learn more on the National Harbor Events page.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

The Christ Episcopal Church Christmas Bazaar in Clinton, Maryland, will be held on Saturday, December 5, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Location: Christ Episcopal Church, 8710 Old Branch Avenue, Clinton, Maryland 20735. Contact & Information: Phone: 301-868-1330. Email: christepiscopalchurchclinton@gmail.com to request the vendor application, booth fee details, and space availability. Call for direct assistance. Reach out to the church office by phone at 301-868-1330 to speak with the event coordinator about vendor requirements.

New Hope Academy Launches Groundbreaking Pre-Legal Studies Program in Partnership With Prince George's Community College

By PRESS OFFICER
New Hope Academy

LANDOVER HILLS, Md. (August, 2026)—New Hope Academy is proud to announce the launch of a premier 31-credit Paralegal Studies Dual Enrollment Program, set to begin in the 2027–2028 academic year. Developed in collaboration with Prince George's Community College (PGCC), this rigorous three-year track offers high school students a direct pipeline into the legal profession, allowing them to earn a college certification before they receive their high school diploma.

As the legal landscape becomes increasingly competitive, New Hope Academy is taking a proactive approach to student success. Starting in the 10th grade, students in the program will be taught by college professors in a curriculum that covers foundational legal principles, ethics, and critical analysis.

"This program is more than just an academic track; it is an investment in the future of our local legal community," said Mrs Dolores Muhammad, Principal of New Hope Academy. "By the time these students graduate high school, they will have completed nearly one full year of college credit and possess a Professional Certification in ParaLegal Studies. We are removing the financial and structural barriers that often prevent talented students from pursuing law."

To ensure the program is accessible to all high-achieving students, the school has partnered with local law firms to establish a Legacy Scholarship Fund. Each scholarship, valued at approximately $16,500 per year, covers the cost of college tuition and specialized resources.

Applications for the inaugural cohort are now open to current 2026 9th-grade students. Local law firms and businesses interested in sponsorship or providing internship opportunities are encouraged to contact the Principal's Office at 301-459-7311 Ext 308.

Located in Landover Hills, Maryland, New Hope Academy *is committed to academic excellence and innovative career-readiness programs. By partnering with higher education institutions and local industry leaders, New Hope Academy prepares students to lead and succeed in a global economy.*

More Employers, More Opportunities: Fall Career Fair Connects 766 Students With 89 Partners

By PRESS OFFICER
Bowie State University

Employers are increasingly looking to Bowie State University for their next generation of talent. On November 4, 2026, 766 students and alumni met with recruiters from 89 organizations at the Fall 2026 Career and Internship Fair, hosted by the Engage Center for Experiential Learning and Career Readiness, in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center.

Participating organizations included Enterprise Mobility, Motorola, Under Armour and WSSC. Recruiters shared insights on career pathways, current hiring needs and what it takes to stand out in today's job market.

"Having 89 employers, graduate schools, and community partners, on campus tells us that organizations recognize the talent and preparation Bowie State students bring," said Dr. Jared Moffett, Executive Director for The Engage Center for Experiential Learning and Career Readiness. "Our goal is to make sure every student walks into those conversations ready, whether they are a first-year student exploring options or a senior or graduate student preparing for that first offer."

Moffett said the turnout reflects a growing culture of career readiness on campus. "When 766 students show up, they are telling us they are serious about their futures. Our job is to keep opening doors and to make sure they are prepared to walk through them."

The fair is just one part of the center's year-round support. Students and alumni can get help refining their resumes, strengthening interview skills and connecting with potential employers, and they can schedule one-on-one career appointments for personalized career counseling.

Events like the Fall Career and Internship Fair reflect Bowie State's continued investment in career readiness and workforce development, preparing students and alumni to compete and lead in their chosen fields.

Visit https://www.bowiestate.edu

Around the County

ATTENTION: Important Notice of Dr. Stephen R Damm's Retirement/Closing of Medical Practice

The practice will be closed for patient appointments effective **December 31, 2026**.

To obtain a copy of your medical records, please call the office at 301-776-2818 no later than February 18, 2027.

After February, please call 443-254-5034.

Free Book Recycling Bin in District Heights

Books: hardcover and paperback books go in the BookDrop bin at 2000 Marbury Dr, District Heights Municipal Building. Textbooks, children's books, CDs and DVDs are fine too. Please keep magazines, newspapers and encyclopedias out. No cost to residents. More at https://www.bookdrop.com.



PHOTO COURTESY BOOKDROP

CSA23 Leadership Council Toy Drive

The CSA23 Leadership Council (Community Service Area 23 Leadership Council) and the Largo Civic Association host their annual holiday toy drive to support children in the community.

Donate new, unwrapped toys for kids ages 1–16

- Date: Saturday, December 5, 2026
- Time: 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
- Location: Marlborough Village Shopping Center (near the Dutch Village Market), located at 5010 Brown Station Road, Upper Marlboro, MD.
- Beneficiary: All collected toys and proceeds go directly to The Mission of Love Charities, Inc. to help local families during the holidays. www.molcinc.org

RSVP via the CSA23 Annual Toy Drive Eventbrite Listing

PGCC President Falecia D. Williams Named Among Washingtonian's Most Powerful Women for Second Consecutive Year

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 6, 2026)—Prince George's Community College (PGCC) President Falecia D. Williams, Ed.D., has been named to Washingtonian magazine's 2026 Most Powerful Women list, marking her second consecutive year receiving the distinction and reinforcing her standing among the region's most influential leaders in higher education. Featured in the magazine's October 2026 issue, the annual recognition honors women who are shaping the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area through their leadership and influence in business, public policy, the arts, media, education, health care, and other industries. Dr. Williams was recognized in the publication's Education Powers category.

"Being recognized by Washingtonian for a consecutive year is a tremendous honor and a reflection of the collective excellence of the Prince George's Community College community," President Williams said. "This recognition reinforces our commitment to lead with purpose, advance student success, and create lasting impact across the communities we serve."

Dr. Williams' leadership has also strengthened PGCC's connections to regional workforce and economic development priorities. Through strategic collaborations with organizations including MedStar Health, Luminis Health, NASA, Microsoft, and other industry partners, the College continues to expand opportunities that connect education with high-demand careers and emerging industries.

On October 20, Washingtonian hosted a reception at The Ned's Club in Washington, D.C., bringing together honorees from across the region to celebrate their leadership and contributions.

Dr. Williams' leadership reflects how Prince George's Community College continues to expand educational opportunities, strengthen partnerships, and serve as a catalyst for economic and community growth throughout Prince George's County and the greater Washington region.

Training from A1

- **Connecting individuals with care:** Helping participants guide individuals toward appropriate professional treatment and community-based support.

The initiative will also establish and strengthen connections with community-based mental health agencies to improve access to services and support by building stronger partnerships among schools, emergency response organizations, community leaders, and local mental health service providers. "Marylanders should seek us out to bring the training to their communities," Chan says. "We organize training anywhere across the state, from Deep Creek to Ocean City."

The initiative aligns with SAMHSA's strategic priorities of expanding crisis intervention care and services and improving access to evidence-based treatment for mental illness. Mental Health First Aid is part of the Maryland ROPTA (Reinforcing Overdose Prevention through Training and Advocacy) program, which recently received the Outstanding Rural Health Program Award from the Maryland Rural Health Association for promoting and providing effective community-oriented rural health care delivery.

For more information about Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid through UME, visit https://extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/mental-health-well-being/maryland-ropta/programs/ or contact Alexander Chan at alexchan@umd.edu.

Community

From Upper Marlboro to a Navy Warship: Sailor Serves Aboard USS Mahan

By Chief Mass Communications Specialist JULIA A. MELZER
Navy Office of Community Outreach

NORFOLK, Va. (Oct. 5, 2026)—Petty Officer 3rd Class Fnu Itie, from Upper Marlboro, Maryland, serves the U.S. Navy assigned to USS Mahan, a Navy destroyer operating out of Naval Station Norfolk.

Itie graduated from Bilingual Grammar School Molyko Buea in 2016.

"Growing up taught me to overcome challenges," Itie said. "Learning to navigate has allowed me to succeed at everything life challenges you with."

Itie joined the Navy three and a half years ago.

"I wanted to live a different life from my friends," Itie said. "I wanted to excel at life, and I knew that I had to move away to get to a better place and become more independent from my family and be on my own."

Today, Itie serves as a culinary specialist.

A Navy destroyer is a multi-mission ship that can operate independently or as part of a larger group of ships at sea. The ship is equipped with Tomahawk missiles, torpedoes, guns and a Phalanx close-in weapons system.

More than 300 sailors serve aboard USS Mahan. Their jobs are highly specialized, requiring both dedication and skill. The jobs range from maintaining engines to handling weaponry, along with a multitude of other assignments that keep the ship mission-ready at all times, according to Navy officials.

This year, the Navy is commemorating its contribution to the nation's defense as the United States celebrates 250 years of independence. According to Navy officials, for more than 250 years, the Navy has sailed the globe defending freedom and protecting prosperity. More information is available here: https://www.navy.mil/navy-250/

With 90% of global commerce traveling by sea and access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber-optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to recruiting and retaining talented people from across the rich fabric of America.

Itie has many opportunities to achieve accomplishments during military service.

"I am proud that because of the Navy I was able to get my citizenship," Itie said. "I am honored that I have been awarded the opportunity to explore different parts of the world."

Itie serves a Navy that operates far forward, around the world and around the clock, promoting the nation's prosperity and security.

"My service is all about commitment and hard work," Itie said. "Once you decide you're committed, you will accomplish your goals."

Itie is grateful to others for helping make a Navy career possible.

"I would like to thank my father, Denis, who has played a very big role in my life," Itie added. "His service in the National Guard in the U.S. inspired me to join the Navy."

Diane Wilbon Parks Named Inaugural Poet-in-Residence at Marietta

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta Historic Site & Museum

Marietta Historic Site & Museum has named Diane Wilbon Parks as our Poet-in-Residence. The fall 2026 appointment marks the start of our four-month partnership with the literary artist who is dedicated to interpreting the history of the enslaved families, the grounds, and the community's legacy. She will dig into the site's complex history, which includes the intersecting lives of the enslaving and enslaved families who lived and labored at Marietta-as the foundation of her new creative works.

"I am deeply honored to step into the role of the first Poet-in-Residence at Marietta House," said Wilbon Parks. "The appointment of this residency means the world to me, because I believe in the new direction in which the Marietta Historic Site & Museum is moving regarding the legacy, history, and sacrifice of the enslaved. I am honored to be a part of their huge initiative to elevate the enslaved community and give voice to the enslaved through poetic interpretation. My vision is to incorporate literary works on the grounds, inside the museum, and within the pages of a chapbook or booklet to honor the enslaved."

Wilbon Parks is an award-winning poet and literary advocate. She has published two poetry books and a children's book and has authored and co-authored several poetry collections. She was featured in The Poet & The Poem from the Library of Congress, and her work is in their recorded collection. One of her poems and artwork was installed at the North Patuxent Research Refuge to enhance the butterfly garden.

Wilbon Parks is a USAF veteran and retired IT Program Manager with an active PMP Certification, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Information Systems Management from the University of Maryland, University College, and a member of the University of Maryland College Park Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi, and resides in Prince George's County with her family.

For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@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's Upcoming Events:
Marietta's Winter Holiday Celebration
December 3–31, 2026, Thursdays through Sundays, 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. We will be closed on Dec. 25, 2026. Free.

The 50th Anniversary of Alex Haley's Roots: The Saga of an American Family
Thursday, December 10, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Hybrid program: hear the talk in person at Marietta Historic Site & Museum or online on TEAMS. Register: www.pgparksdirect.com

JAZZERY: Where the Unspoken Finds its Expression

A meeting of melodies, spoken word, and the stories that live within us.

By CHRISTOPHER BULBULIA
JAZZERY

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (Nov. 16, 2026)—Every memorable cultural experience begins with imagining the possibilities. For founders Chris Bulbulia and JaKale Watson (Jhett), their dream was to create a space where live jazz, spoken-word poetry, hospitality, and in-person connection could come together in a single immersive experience.

That vision became JAZZERY: An Intimate Fusion of Jazz, Culture & Vibez, debuting **Saturday, December 5, 2026**, co-presented at and with The Vault Studio in Hyattsville, Maryland. "Jazzery—the feeling that grips you like musicians' hands on their instruments. We want you to imagine yourself as the element to be performed," said Jhett. With two separately ticketed performances—Doors Opening at 6 p.m. & 9:15 p.m.—Jazzery will offer an unforgettable evening, featuring multiple seating options, signature cocktails, wine, nonalcoholic refreshments, and Caribbean-inspired cuisine catered by Jerk At Nite.

The event will also be professionally recorded, with planned streaming through media partner Unskrypted TV, and an anticipated audio EP to be released for Grammy-consideration in 2027. JAZZERY is a curated event series, and its first iteration brings together the AMASAX Band with featured spoken-word artists A'Niya Taylor, Amuché The Poet, Patrick Washington (Black Picasso) alongside co-producer and award-winning poet Jonathan B. Tucker (JBT).

From Concept to Cultural Experience

Chris and Jhett have combined their backgrounds in arts & humanities production, live entertainment, food and beverage service, and community-centered programming into the JAZZERY. For Chris, JAZZERY is rooted in the emotional relationship between music, poetry, and lived experience—"Jazz and spoken word are deeply connected to the human spirit. They express some of our darkest, brightest, most vulnerable and most joyful emotions. Spoken word often draws on the same improvisation we experience in jazz. Bringing the two together felt like bringing siblings back into the same room."

EVENT INFORMATION
JAZZERY: An Intimate Fusion of Jazz, Culture & Vibez
Saturday, December 5, 2026
The Vault Studio, 5149 Frolich Lane, Hyattsville, MD 20781
First Show: Doors 6 p.m. | Performance 6:30–8:30 pm. Second Show: Doors 9:15 p.m. | Performance 9:45–11:45 p.m.
Ticketed Admissions: 83 per show
Tickets: https://posh.vip/f/f6e2c
A $15 food-and-beverage minimum applies to every attendee.

Building Community Through Creative Collaboration

Co-Producer Abdul Sabour (J-Rock)—is an entertainment entrepreneur, AMASAX band manager, and cultural producer from the "I Bet It Buzz" brand—who views the event as an opportunity to connect creative professionals while building an environment that encourages artistic freedom and genuine community engagement. "It's been great to be around like-minded individuals and to create a safe space for people to indulge, let their hair down, and create at the same time," said J-Rock. His perspective reflects one of JAZZERY's central ambitions: creating a gathering where artistic collaboration happens naturally and where musicians, poets, producers, and audiences can engage beyond the boundaries of a conventional concert.

Co-Producer and Poetry Coordinator JBT added, "It feels like audiences are yearning for intimate and inspiring experiences curated with an appreciation for classic and contemporary forms of expression. The Jazzery provides a unique connection point for DC-area artists and audiences to create and enjoy such experiences, with poetry and music collaborations performed live in a supper club style. I'm excited to return to the stage with great artists whom I admire. I'm also thrilled for the opportunity to jam together, and share our artistic creations in such an elegant and upgraded style.

With admissions capped at 83 per performance, seating options span lower-level individual seats ($35), dining tables that seat four ($45 per individual seat; $100 for two; $200 for the full table), balcony standing tables for two ($45 per person or $100 per table), and balcony obstructed-view seating ($33). A $15 food-and-beverage minimum applies to all guests. Ticket prices exclude applicable checkout fees.

National Park Service Reopens Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site

Multiyear rehabilitation features new exhibits, enhanced visitor amenities and improved access to Woodson's enduring legacy

By PRESS OFFICER
National Capital Parks - East

WASHINGTON (Nov. 9, 2026)—On Friday, Nov. 6, 2026, the National Park Service reopened the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site following a $14.2 million multiyear rehabilitation that restored the historic property, expanded exhibit space, added a visitor center and improved visitor amenities. Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Kevin Lilly marked the reopening with National Park Service leaders and project partners, including the Association for the Study of African American Life and History and the National Park Foundation.

he site preserves the Washington home, office and organizational headquarters where historian, scholar and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson lived and worked from 1922 until his death in 1950. Woodson founded the organization now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History and established Negro History Week in 1926, which later became Black History Month.

"Carter G. Woodson understood that knowing our full history strengthens the nation," said Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks Kevin Lilly. "This rehabilitation preserves the place where he built institutions, advanced scholarship and expanded the public's understanding of African American history. The Department of the Interior and the National Park Service are proud to reopen this nationally significant site and ensure that future generations can learn from Dr. Woodson's life and legacy."

The rehabilitation included structural repairs, restoration of historic architectural elements and original interior features, expanded exhibit space and modern visitor improvements. New exhibits use historic spaces, period furnishings, original artifacts and multimedia elements to explore Woodson's scholarship, institutions and daily life in the home.

Support from the National Park Foundation, the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, and other philanthropic partners helped advance the site's exhibits and visitor experience.

"We are grateful to the donors and partners who joined the National Park Service and ASALH to bring Dr. Woodson's story to life through new exhibits and visitor experiences," said Jeff Reinbold, president and CEO of the National Park Foundation. "Dr. Woodson's home is where the study of Black history became a national movement, and together, we are making sure this place continues to teach, inspire and invite people to carry his work forward."

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History, including its Woodson House Committee, contributed research, reviewed exhibit content and helped ensure community perspectives were reflected in the visitor experience.

"The home of Dr. Carter G. Woodson is sacred ground for ASALH. It is where he lived, worked, organized and built a movement to preserve and teach Black history," said Karsonya Wise Whitehead, Ph.D., National President of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. "Homes hold memories and tell stories. His home holds ours. It reminds us of the responsibility he entrusted to us: protect our history, carry it forward and never let it be erased."

Under President Donald J. Trump's leadership, the National Park Service is preserving America's historic places and expanding opportunities for Americans to engage with the nation's history. Through these efforts, the National Park Service is helping preserve America's heritage and making these places accessible for years to come.

The Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site opened to the public Nov. 7. Regular operating hours will begin Nov. 10. The site will be open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Advance reservations for regular tours are available through Recreation.gov. Walk-in visitors are welcome, subject to tour availability.

For more information, visit nps.gov/cawo or Recreation.gov. https://www.nps.gov

Established in 1916, the National Park Service *preserves America's most treasured natural and cultural places for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of current and future generations. Learn more at https://www.nps.gov.*

The National Park Foundation *is the nation's most trusted way for people to support America's national parks. We work with the National Park Service and partners across the country to fund priority projects that keep parks strong, relevant, and accessible. This work helps ensure parks continue to inspire pride across the country and offer experiences that create meaningful connection. Learn more at nationalparks.org.*

Founded in 1915 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson and a small group of colleagues, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) *has spent more than a century preserving, interpreting, and advancing the study of Black life, history, and culture. Dr. Woodson, often called the "Father of Black History," understood that Black history is American history. Today, ASALH carries forward his belief that preserving Black history requires people willing to research it, protect it, teach it, and pass it on. Learn more at asalh.org.*



PHOTO CREDIT NPS / MATHEW JOHN

Pictured from left to right: Jeff Reinbold, Robert Stanton, Linda Wilson, Kevin Lilly, Jessica Bowron, Jen Nersesian, Dr. Karsonya Wise Whitehead, Mark Jackson, Serena Bellew.

Environment

Over 500 Marylanders Gathered in Baltimore for East Coast's Largest-Ever Conference Fighting Data Centers

"People Over Data Centers" summit spotlighted dozens of community activists, virtual appearances by Rep. Jamie Raskin and author/activist Bill McKibben, and state/local lawmakers exploring the need for a pause and protections from data center impacts

By PRESS OFFICER
Chesapeake Climate Action Network

BALTIMORE (Nov. 10, 2026)—More than 500 Marylanders gathered at the Baltimore Convention Center Saturday, November 7, for Maryland's first statewide "People Over Data Centers" conference, to demand stronger protections against unchecked data center expansion. Community leaders and residents came together to hear policy experts, grassroots organizers, and state and local lawmakers from across Maryland—as well as Congressman Jamie Raskin (MD-8) and environmental author Bill McKibben—address the threat of reckless data center proliferation.

"I'm inspired to know that so many people in Maryland are standing up to fight for our communities, for our environment, for our economy, for our health, for our democracy, and for our future," said Representative Jamie Raskin (MD-8). "We've got to overcome the political control of authoritarians and billionaires and trillionaires to...protect American democracy and human sovereignty…Americans have gotten up across the country to meet this moment by providing some regulations of their own. Right here in the Free State in Montgomery, Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Howard, Baltimore, and Washington counties, county councils and the people have issued some kind of data center ban or moratorium or regulation. These public countermeasures could not have happened without the energy and the persistence of the people assembled at this conference."

"[There is] cross-partisan, cross-ideological disgust with this rollout of data centers to every corner of the country and this rollout of artificial intelligence to every corner of our lives," said Bill McKibben, Environmental Author and Co-Founder of Third Act. "I hope as a result, we seize the opportunity to really have the discussion that we should have had long ago about whether or not we wanted to do this and how we wanted to do this. If this is the most important technology in history, as its proponents keep saying, then it should be under democratic control; it should be under our control, not the other way around."

The 'People Over Data Centers" event—hosted by Chesapeake Climate Action Network and Nature Forward—featured over 50 speakers and panelists. It followed a wave of election results signaling public resistance to data center development. Across 10 states, 41 data center-related ballot measures were up for a vote in the 2026 midterm elections. In nearly every contest, voters backed restrictions or rejected pro-development measures, with Harwood, North Dakota, the exception. Organizers pointed to those results and the turnout in Baltimore as evidence of growing demands for communities to have a stronger voice in decisions affecting their electricity bills, water supplies, land and public health.

"This was the largest event yet on the East Coast dedicated to fighting data center proliferation," said Mike Tidwell, Executive Director of Chesapeake Climate Action Network. "Voters sent a clear message at the ballot box last week, and more than 500 people brought that message to Baltimore: Our communities deserve a say in whether and how data centers are built. Maryland communities have led the way with temporary, local moratoriums. Now we need to take the time necessary to develop broader, permanent protections for our health, wealth and climate."



PHOTO PHOTO BY BEN ISRAEL, NATURE FORWARD

Community leaders and residents came together to hear policy experts, grassroots organizers, and state and local lawmakers from across Maryland—as well as Congressman Jamie Raskin (MD-8) and environmental author Bill McKibben—address the threat of reckless data center proliferation.

While 90 percent of Marylanders now live in a county or city with a moratorium or ban, all of which were adopted within the last year, those restrictions are local and temporary. Governor Wes Moore also issued an executive order committing to a process for assessing whether data center proposals align with state climate goals. Marylanders are demanding more.

"When neighbors connect across county lines, they can turn isolated concerns into a powerful call for change," said Lydia Lawrence, Director of Conservation at Nature Forward. "This gathering helped build those connections around the things we all depend on: clean water, healthy landscapes and thriving communities. Our water, our land, and our quality of life must not be afterthoughts in data center reform. Maryland needs lasting safeguards that protect those resources and give residents a meaningful voice in decisions about their future."

The "People Over Data Centers" conference connected community members with lawmakers and advocates to discuss data centers' growing impacts on household costs, public health, and Maryland's climate goals. Residents and advocates compared strategies across communities to put residents' needs ahead of unchecked development.

Chesapeake Climate Action Network *is the first grassroots organization dedicated exclusively to raising awareness about the impacts and solutions associated with global warming in the Chesapeake Bay region. Founded in 2002, CCAN has been at the center of the fight for clean energy and wise climate policy in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC.*

Throughout its history, Nature Forward, *first established in 1897 as the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia, has championed nature for all by playing a pivotal role in conserving our region's iconic natural places from development, including the C&O Canal, Dyke Marsh, and, most recently, Ten Mile Creek. Past member and board president Rachel Carson, author of Silent Spring, is credited with launching the now global environmental movement. Nature Forward's nature experts provide hundreds of opportunities each year for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy, learn about, and protect the environment.*

Surprise on the Potomac River: A Fragile Oyster Bonanza

By TIMOTHY B. WHEELER
Chesapeake Bay Journal, bayjournal.com

As dawn painted the sky over the Potomac River, Ed Arnest began another day of oystering. He dropped a small, steel-toothed dredge called a hand scrape into the water. After towing it along the bottom for a few minutes, the Virginia waterman hauled it up so loaded with bivalves that his workboat tipped slightly to that side.

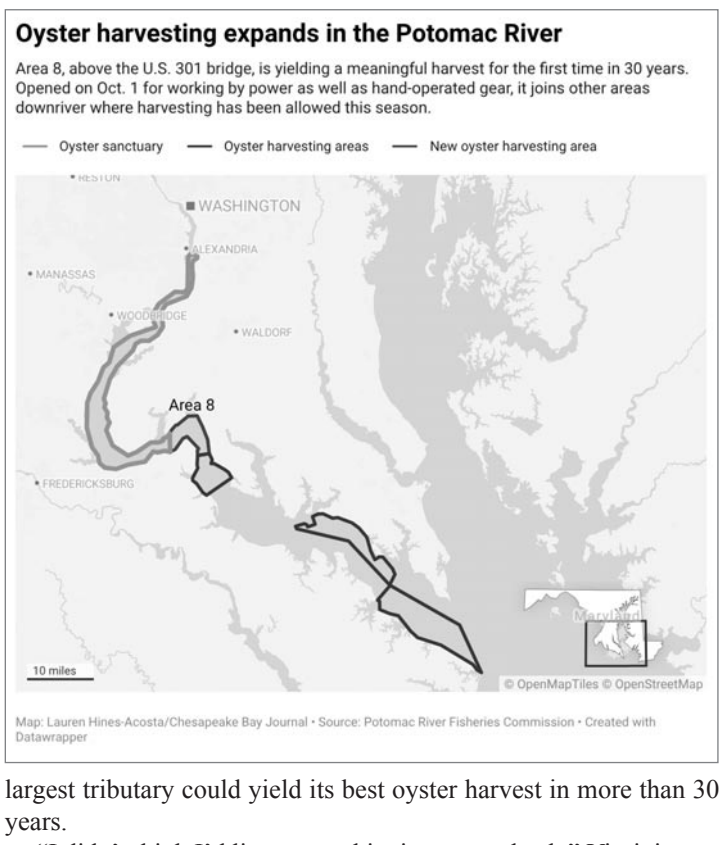
Arnest dumped the dredge's contents onboard and dropped the gear in the water for another tow. As the boat circled, his gloved hands flew over the pile, quickly filling a bushel basket with oysters big enough to keep. Then he shoved the rest overboard, including the occasional wary crab, and winched the scrape aboard with another load.

In a little over an hour on that recent October day, Arnest had harvested his daily limit of eight bushels. By midmorning he was back in Colonial Beach, VA, joining a line of workboats waiting to offload their catch to a tractor trailer bound for a nearby shucking house.

The Potomac is brimming with oysters this fall, most notably a 10-mile stretch of the river above the U.S. 301 bridge where salinity levels have been so low for decades that oysters couldn't survive, let alone grow and reproduce. Dozens of workboats like Arnest's are reaping the surprising bounty there, the byproduct of a rare confluence of natural conditions.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Jim Wesson, a member of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission who spent 25 years working to restore oysters in Virginia's portion of the Chesapeake Bay. He estimated that the area upriver of the bridge, where until a few years ago almost no oysters grew, now harbors several hundred thousands of bushels.

That's good news for the Potomac, which has had its share of bad news this year. Eleven months ago, a massive sewage spill near the District of Columbia prompted a brief precautionary shellfish harvesting closure above the U.S. 301 bridge, even though none of the spill was ever detected that far downriver. Now, the Bay's second largest tributary could yield its best oyster harvest in more than 30 years.



"I didn't think I'd live to see this river come back," Virginia waterman Roger Hill said earlier this fall. "By God, it's great."

Like the rest of the Chesapeake, the Potomac once teemed with oysters, with 678,000 bushels landed in the 1966-1967 season. In 1972, though, Tropical Storm Agnes flooded the river with muddy freshwater, wiping out many reefs. Harvests limped along after that and nearly halted altogether in the early 2000s amid an epidemic of oyster diseases. The commercial fishery has since made a modest recovery, with 50,000 bushels landed last season, the highest since 1993.

Salinity rules

Only a few times since the 1960s, though, has the area above the U.S. 301 bridge produced more than a relative handful of oysters. Bivalves need water with a salinity level of at least 10 parts per thousand (ppt) to grow and reproduce, and that stretch of the Potomac has generally been too fresh.

Water monitoring records going back decades show that salinity there has rarely gotten higher than 10 ppt. Oysters can die if the salinity level drops below 5 ppt for more than a short time, and periodic freshets have pushed salinity close to zero in spring and summer, a crucial time for reproduction and growth.

Like ancient ruins, though, a trove of shells remained behind from a nearly forgotten time when oysters once thrived in that stretch of river. Six years ago, fisheries managers went prospecting above the bridge. Their sampling found no live oysters, but multiple "lumps" of shell rising from the river bottom, which they estimated could fill 700,000 to 1 million bushels if dredged up.

With shell in short supply Baywide for aquaculture and restoration, managers considered taking those shells for use elsewhere in usually saltier water. They did remove a relatively small quantity but decided to leave the rest alone. That proved fortuitous. In 2023, a prolonged dry spell raised the salinity to a level ideal for natural reproduction. The oysters downriver produced a bumper crop of larvae, many of which apparently drifted above the bridge and settled as spat on the shell-covered lumps.

In another piece of good luck, salinity has remained elevated enough since then for those oysters to survive and grow. Now, Ingrid Braun-Ricks, the fisheries commission's assistant executive secretary, estimates that the oysters above the bridge could help boost the river's total harvest by 50% in the season that began Oct. 1.

Thirty to 40 boats worked above the bridge in early October. As word spreads about how they did, officials expected that number to grow. The commission issued oyster licenses last season to about 260 individuals using about 120 boats, according to Braun-Ricks.

"We've been given a gift horse. We definitely want to take advantage of it," said Billy Rice, a longtime Maryland waterman who sits on the bi-state commission that regulates commercial and recreational fishing in the Potomac.

A bigger harvest brings in more revenue for the fisheries commission from oyster licenses ($300 per person) and a $2 per bushel tax—money that can augment the group's limited budget for replenishing and restoring reefs.

It's a fragile gift from nature, however. Managers and watermen alike are acutely aware that the current salinity (11.2 ppt at the bridge in mid-October) is way above normal. Those oysters, produced and sustained the past three years by a rare run of prolonged

See **SURPRISE** *Page* **A6**



PHOTO CREDIT DAVE HARP/CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

A shucked oyster harvested from the Potomac River in 2026 looks plump and healthy. Officials hope that this season will be the best in more than 30 years.

The Prince George's Post

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Business and Finance

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

I Got an Overpayment Notice from Social Security; What Should I Do?

By AMAC Foundation Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: I received a letter from Social Security saying they overpaid me $12,703 in SS benefits. The letter said "We reduce Social Security benefits if you receive a government pension. We reduce benefits by two-thirds of the amount of your pension. Your benefit is less than two-thirds of the pension. For this reason, we cannot pay you."

FYI, I do receive a pension based on work not covered by Social Security taxes. My problem is that I don't fully understand this. This could be correct, but it doesn't seem right to come back wanting money I didn't ask for. I appreciate your time in getting back and letting me know if there is anything else I could be doing, or if they are entitled to go ahead and get the SS payments back. Thanks. ***Signed: Confused about Owing Social Security***

Dear Confused: From what you have shared, it appears that Social Security has determined that you were subject to a rule called the "Government Pension Offset" (GPO). FYI, the GPO was a provision which reduced Social Security spousal and/or survivor benefits for anyone who had a "non-covered" government pension (that is, a pension earned without contributing to Social Security). It's likely that SS paid you full benefits, but that the GPO should have reduced (or eliminated) the benefits they paid, had they known about your "uncovered" government pension. And that is likely the source of the $12,300 overpayment notice you received.

However, the GPO rule was repealed in January 2025 and no longer applies. In other words, those who have a "non-covered" government pension (a pension earned without contributing to SS) are now no longer subjected to reduced benefits under the GPO. The repeal legislation also provided for retroactivity back to January 2024, so the notice you received from Social Security was probably referring to SS benefits you received prior to 2024. If that is the case, then the notice you received is likely accurate and would need to be repaid. However, if the notice is referring to spousal or survivor benefits you received after December 2023, then it would be in error.

The best way to find out would be for you to file an appeal to Social Security, e.g., a "Request for Reconsideration" (form SSA-561), which will cause an independent review within Social Security to see if you are, indeed, required to repay those SS benefits, or whether you should pay something less (or nothing at all). Just remember that when you actually received the SS benefits in question is the key factor—if you had a non-covered government pension while receiving SS spouse or survivor benefits before 2024, then the overpayment notice you received is likely valid. If not, an appeal as I described above should resolve the issue for you.

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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MGM National Harbor Names Chris Gumiela as President & COO

Accomplished hospitality and gaming veteran returns to MGM National Harbor to usher in next era of entertainment destination

By PRESS OFFICER
MGM National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Nov. 9, 2026)—MGM National Harbor announced today the appointment of Chris Gumiela as its President & Chief Operating Officer (COO). His appointment follows the retirement of President & COO Melonie Johnson. Gumiela will oversee the property's day-to-day operations, provide strategic direction with a renewed focus on employee engagement and community relations.

Gumiela brings more than 20 years of experience bridging physical and digital gaming environments. He previously served as Vice President of Marketing at MGM National Harbor from August 2017 through July 2020. Since 2021, he has served as Senior Vice President of Interactive Operations at MGM Resorts. In this role, he directed critical omnichannel alignment between the digital BetMGM business and land-based resorts, served on the five-member Steering Committee for LeoVegas, and was appointed to the MGM Resorts Capital Committee in 2026.

"I'm thrilled to be back in the DMV and look forward to expanding the ways MGM National Harbor serves as an entertainment capital for our region and a pillar in community engagement for Prince George's County," said Gumiela.

The role as President & COO marks a homecoming for Gumiela. Joining the leadership team shortly after the MGM National Harbor's opening, he played a pivotal role in establishing the resort's brand identity, driving nearly $1 billion in property-wide revenue, and forging vital community and civic partnerships. He later expanded his regional impact as Vice President of Marketing & Advertising for the Regional Portfolio, overseeing marketing strategy and operational efficiencies for both MGM National Harbor and Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City.



PHOTO COURTESY MGM NATIONAL HARBOR

Chris Gumiela

Gumiela first joined MGM Resorts in 2006 as a member of the Management Associate Program (MAP), gaining extensive cross-functional training in all areas of hotel and resort operations at Mandalay Bay. During his time with MGM Resorts, he has steadily risen through key leadership roles, including Slot Marketing & Analytics Analyst, Casino Marketing Manager, Director of Operations for Corporate Marketing, Executive Director of Corporate Marketing Operations, and Vice President of Brand Strategy for Monte Carlo Resort & Casino (now Park MGM).

Located in an unrivaled setting, MGM National Harbor *offers stunning panoramic views of the Eastern shore of the Potomac River in Maryland. The $1.4 billion LEED® Gold Certified resort sits a short distance from Washington, D.C. to the north and historic sites, including George Washington's Mount Vernon estate across the river in Virginia. The 24-story, 308-room resort features premier amenities and experiences for locals as well as visitors from around the world including a dynamic two-level casino with over 160,000 square feet of space that includes slots, table games, and poker; a world-class spa and salon; an entertainment theater with flexible seating for up to 3,000; high-end branded retail; 50,000 square feet of meeting space; and restaurants from renowned local, national, and international chefs. MGM National Harbor is owned by MGM Resorts International (NYSE: MGM). For more information, visit mgmnationalharbor.com or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.*

Andrews Federal Credit Union Hosts Anniversary Celebration Honoring the Passage of Eric's ID Law

By NATALIE TATE
Andrews Federal Credit Union

SUITLAND, Md. (Nov. 9, 2026)—Andrews Federal Credit Union was honored to host a celebration marking the anniversary of Eric's ID Law, recognizing an important milestone in Maryland's efforts to increase awareness, understanding and inclusion for individuals with nonapparent disabilities.

Eric's ID Law gives Marylanders the option to voluntarily identify a nonapparent disability on their driver's license, identification card or moped operator's permit. The law, signed by Governor Wes Moore in 2025, is intended to provide individuals with a way to communicate a nonapparent disability in situations where greater awareness or understanding may be helpful.

For the anniversary celebration, Andrews Federal welcomed local, regional and state leaders, advocates and community partners to its Suitland headquarters for the anniversary celebration, including:

- Madam Joy Thomas Moore, mother of Governor Wes Moore
- Lieutenant Governor Aruna K. Miller
- Maryland Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman
- Maryland State Delegate Kym Taylor
- Maryland State Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins
- Prince George's County Executive Aisha Braveboy

The gathering also recognized the advocacy of Eric Carpenter-Grantham and his mother, Linda Carpenter-Grantham, and their work in inspiring legislation that supports individuals with nonapparent disabilities.



PHOTO COURTESY ANDREWS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Andrews Federal Credit Union hosted a celebration marking the anniversary of Eric's ID Law. For the anniversary celebration, Andrews Federal welcomed local, regional and state leaders, advocates and community partners to its Suitland headquarters for the anniversary celebration.

"At Andrews Federal, we are committed to serving our community, providing resources and support to those in need," said Kenneth Orgeron, President and Chief Executive Officer of Andrews Federal Credit Union. "We are proud to provide a space to commemorate the passing of Eric's ID Law, to encourage greater understanding for those with nonapparent disabilities, and to celebrate people like Eric and Linda Carpenter-Grantham as they seek to make a difference and create a more inclusive, understanding community."

Founded in 1948, Andrews Federal Credit Union *has grown to serve more than 165,000 members in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and military installations in central Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. For more information about Andrews Federal, visit andrewsfcu.org.*

Cybercrime from A1

reports coming in, the percentage of people that lost money and the amount of money they're losing was significant," Lanning added.

According to the 2025 IC3 report, investment scams cost the public by far the most money with over $8.5 billion being lost in 2025 nationwide. Lanning said that these investment scams require a significant amount of time and trust to be built between scammer and victim, and that these crimes usually result in more money being lost.

Phishing was the most commonly reported cybercrime in Maryland—over 5,500 phishing or spoofing complaints were reported in Maryland in 2025 and these crimes cost Marylanders slightly over $6 million, according to the 2025 IC3 report.

For comparison, there were around 1,400 investment scams reported in Maryland, but these scams cost Marylanders over $184 million, according to the 2025 IC3 report.

Lanning added that employment scams, most often perpetrated through text or email, are one of the riskiest scams for young people. She said that employment scams for remote jobs were a major contributor to a spike in online scams that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Per person, Maryland is among the hardest-hit states

In complaints and losses per 100,000 people, Maryland ranked within the top ten at eighth for complaints and ninth for losses in 2025. Looking at the number of complaints and losses, cybercrime is up nationally and Maryland ranks 17th in complaints and 15th in money lost.

Marylanders reported an average of 310 scams per 100,000 people, and over $6 million lost to scams per 100,000 people in 2025.

The FBI Field Office in Baltimore attributed this high rate per 100,000 people to the fact that Maryland is a relatively wealthy state. "Marylanders have more to lose and as a wealthy state are likely more heavily targeted by scammers," the Baltimore Field Office wrote in a statement to CNS.

The Baltimore Field Office also stressed that IC3 report numbers are influenced by a multitude of factors, and that only a small fraction of the total fraud is reported to the IC3 and counted in their report.

Maryland is not the only jurisdiction in the U.S. that has high rates of cybercrime per capita. Washington, D.C. ranks number one in both complaints and money lost per 100,000 people.

Washington has ranked first or second in both the number of online fraud victims and money lost per capita since the IC3 report began tracking statistics for cybercrime in 2023. Washington's 2025 numbers are actually down significantly from 2024, when the FBI reported that over $41 million dollars were lost on average per 100,000 people.

The per-person average returned to $14 million per 100,000 people in 2025, but that number is still $5 million higher than the second highest state, California.

The FBI Washington Field Office attributed this to Washington's small population, which means that the District's per-capita numbers can be swayed easily by a small number of large-dollar complaints.

"While the total number of complaints submitted from D.C. has remained relatively consistent year to year, the total dollar losses reported in certain fraud categories—such as business email compromise, investment fraud, cryptocurrency-related scams, and tech-support fraud—have been substantially higher," the Washington Field Office said in a written statement to CNS. "Those higher reported losses increase the overall per-capita figures."

Artificial intelligence fueling cybercrime

AI-related fraud cost Americans over $893 million according to the IC3. The 2025 IC3 report documented over

See **CYBERCRIME** *Page* **A6**

EarthTalk® Q&A

When Will Plug-In 'Balcony' Solar Panels Come to the U.S.?

By Bridget Ng | November 3, 2026

Dear EarthTalk:
Are plug-in "balcony solar" panels finally coming to America, and could renters really generate useful electricity with them?
—Gary Polton, New York, NY

Typically ranging from 400 watts to 1,200 watts of power output, plug-in balcony solar panels are small, portable systems that offer decentralized energy for renters, apartment dwellers and those who cannot afford rooftop arrays. Once plugged into a standard wall outlet, panels convert sunlight into household electricity via micro-inverters, which transform direct current (DC) electricity into alternating current (AC). They are already widespread in Europe, where Germany alone has over one million installed.

As of October 2026, 10 states have enacted legislation to enable plug-in solar use: Utah, Maine, Virginia, Colorado, Maryland, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont, New Jersey and California. These laws permit plug-in systems without utility pre-approval, marking a wave of regulatory reconsideration and action now involving about half the states in the U.S. As Bright Saver co-founder Cora Stryker explains, while plug-in solar isn't explicitly illegal in many places, current laws "were intended for rooftop systems five to 20 times as large." Consequently, residents in states without enabling legislation often face interconnection applications and fees, making the process of installation both onerous and financially challenging. This could soon change: in early October 2026, Congress introduced the first federal balcony solar bill. If passed, it will require all state public utility commissions to consider rules of access and offer rebates for low-income households.

Plug-in solar is generally best understood as a supplement rather than a replacement for normal electricity services. A single 180W panel can generate up to around 270 kWh per year, helping offset baseline consumption by powering "always-on" appliances such as fridges, Wi-Fi routers and other standby devices. Jeff Meyer, energy expert and writer for "The Independent", cautions that "It will not deliver the same savings as a larger rooftop array," adding that not every property will have the right outdoor space, sunlight or permissions. However, a standard balcony kit can provide between $13 and $50 per month in savings on the low end, or $40 to $50 per month in high-rate states like New York and Hawaii.

To support the push for plug-in solar legislation, individuals can sign petitions, contact state representatives, and join organizations like Solar United Neighbors in advocating for change. Other strategies include donating to support energy freedom and writing to local newspapers to raise awareness of what electrical engineer Josh Pearce describes as a democratization of clean power: "the appeal of being able to make your own electricity, and for less money than you can buy it from a utility."

CONTACTS: Driving Plug-in Solar Legislation State by State, brightsaver.org/is-plug-in-solar-legal; Tell your state leaders to cosponsor a bill deregulating plug-in solar, climateactionnow.com/featured-action/?can_vv_campaign_id=131839&can_action_source_id=28422.



PHOTO CREDIT: NIKOLAI TWIN, CC BY 4.0.

"Balcony" solar panels that you plug into an electrical outlet & generate your own power are widely available in Europe but not in the U.S.

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

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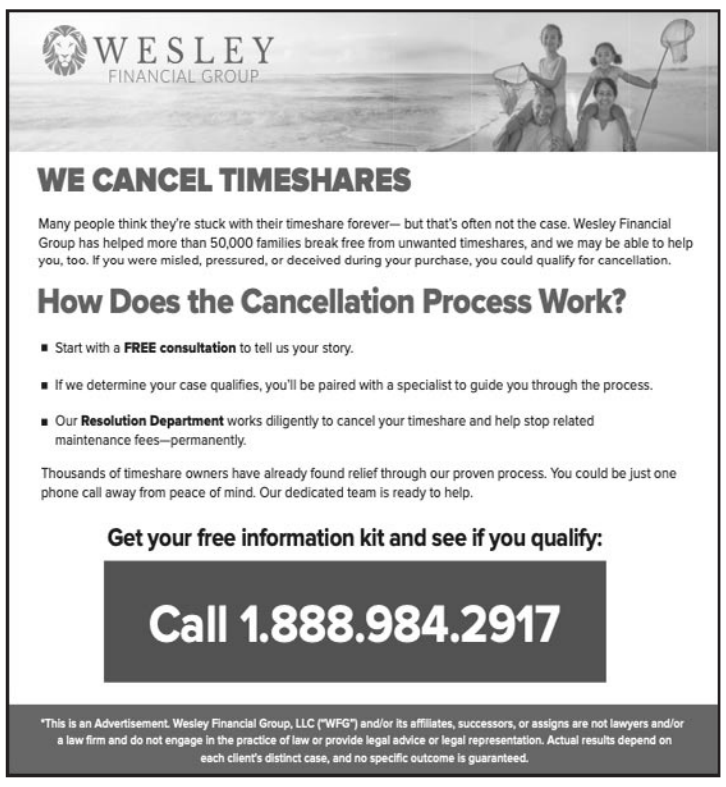
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Surprise from A4

dry weather, could be in jeopardy if heavy rains or snow produce another freshet.

"If we have a bad storm or if we have a hurricane, these oysters are gone," said Arnest, president of the Twin Rivers Waterman's Association on Virginia's Northern Neck.

Get 'em while they last

For that reason, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission decided to encourage watermen to harvest as much as they can from that vulnerable area. The eight-member panel voted to open it to all oyster gear, including powered hand scrapes, on Oct. 1, while areas below the bridge would open to power gear a month later, on Nov. 1. They also extended the harvest above the bridge to the end of April, a month beyond the normal season closure on the rest of the river.

"We've got to ride this horse," Rice said during the commission's September meeting, "because I've never seen an opportunity like this in my life."

Wesson wanted to go one better. He recommended increasing the daily harvest limit from 8 to 10 bushels, suggesting that might leave fewer oysters behind at the end of the season, when they would be at risk of dying from a weather-driven drop in salinity in spring or summer.

Others said they worried that increasing the harvest limit could produce a glut of oysters, prompting seafood businesses to stop buying any from watermen for one or more days a week—as has happened before.

"You can only catch what you can sell," acknowledged Robert T. Brown Sr., president of the Maryland Watermen's Association. But he said he favored increasing the daily harvest limit, arguing that those two extra bushels would help watermen cover their higher fuel and gear costs.

The market for oysters, though, started this season not much better than the last one ended. Potomac harvesters were being offered $40 per bushel by oyster processors at the beginning of October. That's the same price, Arnest recalled, that they got 15 years ago.

It didn't seem to put many off.

"I don't know about the market," said Hill, the Virginia waterman. "But I know there's oysters out there to be caught, and they ought to be caught."

Brown added another reason to harvest as many as possible now. Besides the threat of freshwater killing the shellfish bonanza above the bridge, Brown said he worried that the continued high salinity could trigger another flareup of the two oyster diseases that devastated the Bay's bivalve population from the 1980s through the early 2000s.

"MSX and Dermo are facing us square in the eyes," he warned.

In the end, the commission decided to leave the bushel limit as is for now but agreed to revisit the issue later in the season.

Cybercrime from A5

22,000 cybercrime complaints nationwide, which it linked to AI.

According to the FBI, AI can be used by criminals to create official-looking phishing emails, generate believable dialogue in romance or confidence scams and can even be used for voice spoofing, or to create voice deepfakes, which can fool applicants during fraudulent employment scams.The IC3 report began tracking instances where AI was used in online scams or fraud in 2025.

In Maryland, 485 scam complaints, costing Marylanders $21 million were identified as AI related in the IC3 report.

"AI has changed the game for scammers," Lanning said. "It's just so much easier to create professional-looking emails that don't have grammatical errors anymore."

Investment scams, extortion scams and personal-data breach scams, were the top three most common cybercrimes where AI was used, followed by phishing scams.

According to Lanning, it's hard to tell based on victim reports if AI was used in an online scam. Lanning also said that there is a stigma around speaking about online scams and that these scams can be traumatic events for the victims.

"We're trying really hard to do work to reduce that stigma, so that people are not embarrassed, that they're willing to report it, they're willing to talk to people about it, and get the help that they need," Lanning said. "Because it is underreported and the more information we have the more we can do."

If you think you've been scammed online, you can report it to:

- The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at ic3.gov.
- BBB Scam Tracker at bbb.org/scamtracker.