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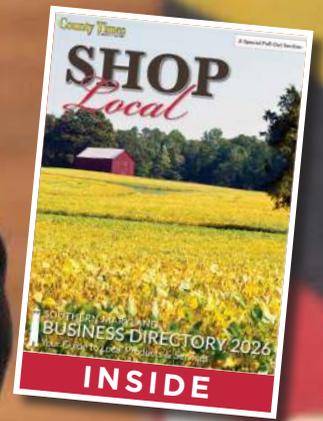
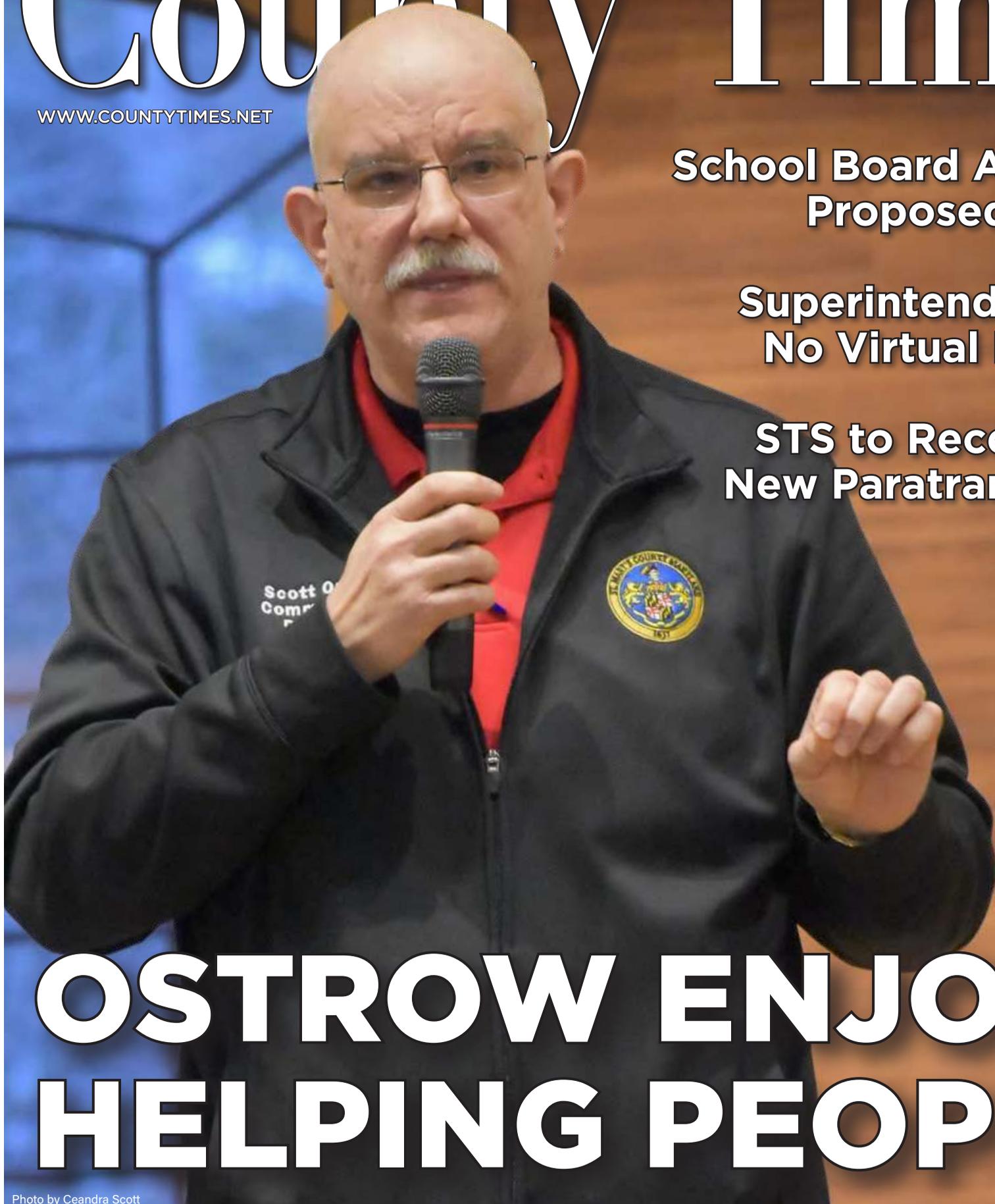
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026

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**School Board Approves
Proposed Budget**

**Superintendent Says
No Virtual Learning**

**STS to Receive Two
New Paratransit Vans**



OSTROW ENJOYS HELPING PEOPLE

Photo by Ceandra Scott

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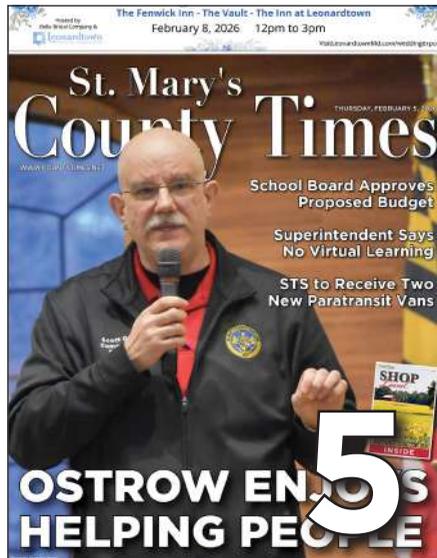
“WE BELIEVE THAT OUR LITTLEST LEARNERS LEARN BEST WHEN YOU’RE STARING THEM IN THE FACE.”
 SUPERINTENDENT DR. J. SCOTT SMITH ON NO VIRTUAL LEARNING DURING SNOW DAYS



LOCAL 5
 School board approves superintendent’s proposed budget



LOCAL 7
 Lawmakers consider major changes to Living Shoreline laws



ON THE COVER
 Commissioner Scott Ostrow files for reelection

WEEKLY FORECAST

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| THU, FEB 5 Mostly Sunny Hi: 34° Lo: 19° | FRI, FEB 6 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 37° Lo: 22° | SAT, FEB 7 Sunny Hi: 25° Lo: 12° | SUN, FEB 8 Partly Cloudy Hi: 27° Lo: 15° |
| MON, FEB 9 Partly Cloudy Hi: 34° Lo: 21° | TUE, FEB 10 Mostly Sunny Hi: 43° Lo: 34° | WED, FEB 11 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 44° Lo: 32° | THU, FEB 12 AM Showers Hi: 44° Lo: 30° |



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Ostrow Seeks Second Term

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Scott Ostrow has filed for re-election as county commissioner in District 4. So far he has no Republican primary opposition. Ryan B. Daniels has filed as a Democrat.

Ostrow was one of the first candidates to file (beaten by a day by Tom Jarboe).

Why run again? "Helping people really," he said. "I like being able to, when people call me and they've got a problem that they need help solving or getting something accomplished, that's really my most favorite part of the job. You know, that's just constituent services."

Ostrow agreed that dealing with the intricacies of government can be daunting. "Yes, that's very true. But that's my absolute favorite part of the job, and I like being out in the community and meeting with people. I'm the only commissioner to consistently do town hall meetings on a regular basis. I've been doing those ever since I was elected. I do one every quarter at Bay District Volunteer Fire Department. And I've also recently started, in addition to that, doing one every quarter at each one

of the senior centers, because sometimes it's difficult for our older citizens to get to Bay District. They deserve the respect. Let's bring the information to them."

What are some of the concerns he's hearing? "It depends on what senior center I go to."

He explained, "If I go to Mechanicsville, up in that area, a lot of the concerns are about STS buses, because there's a lot of the seniors rely heavily upon those." He said people want 24/7/365 service "because some people work on those holidays. The folks that are in grocery stores and things like that, they need to be able to get to work."

He said, "One of the big things at one of my very first town halls was there was a great need for a roundabout in the Westbury (neighborhood). People tend to speed through there."

He lists that as one of his accomplishments. "They're getting a roundabout there because that was a big safety concern."

Ostrow touts the redevelopment of the old Millison Plaza and his work with St. Mary's Square as indications of the rebirth of Lexington Park, including hundreds of new businesses.

"That was a big push of mine when I ran for election that I wanted to revitalize Lexington Park. And I'm working with a lot of the stakeholders. We've accomplished a tremendous amount there."

As to the Navy's concerns about AICUZ (Air Installation Compatible Use Zone), he said, "We want to respect our Navy partners. We want to be able to work with them. They have legitimate concerns, and we want to make sure that we're always taking those into account."

Ostrow, who works for a contractor, believes the Navy's presence is strong.

Which leads to one of his main issues. "We need housing in St. Mary's County, especially affordable housing. And the area to put that in is obviously Lexington Park, Great Mills area. There's a lot going in there."

The level of concern came out when he was reminded of his Santa Claus role during the holidays. If he sat on Santa's lap, what would he ask? "Really, truly solving the housing issue that we have in this community that's huge. We have a real issue with affordable housing. It means different things to different people. What's afford-



Commissioner Scott Ostrow. Photo by Ceandra Scott.

able to me might not be affordable to you or somebody else."

He said people tell him, "I really didn't know about you when you got elected. You made a lot of promises and you consistently delivered on the promises that you've made."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

School Board Approves Superintendent's Budget

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

It was relatively smooth sailing as Superintendent of Schols Dr. J. Scott Smith's proposed budget for the next fiscal year went through its required process.

The school board at their Feb. 3 meeting approved the \$307.4 million budget which represents a \$9.3 million increase or 3.1 percent over the current fiscal year.

Deputy Superintendent of Fiscal and Supporting Services Tammy McCourt observed, "The largest areas of increase are within our instructional salaries and wages of \$3.5 million and special education \$1.8 million, as well as associated fixed charges for the compensation increases of \$2 million directly in alignment with your budget priorities, as well as a \$1 million increase in your student transportation."

The budget includes an ask of \$8.5 million more from the county commissioners.

At a budget hearing several speakers including Education Association of St. Mary's County President Sarah Penrod asked for restoration of five positions that were cut.

She emphasized the health and safety of the schools "and the very real consequences of proposed budget and staffing cuts to operations. Health and safety are not abstract concepts. They're lived realities in our class-

rooms, hallways, and cafeterias every single day. They're the difference between schools that function smoothly and schools that operate in a constant state of crisis. When operational budgets and positions are cut, the impact is immediate and felt throughout the system. Repairs are delayed or insufficiently addressed. Small problems turn into emergencies. We recognize the financial challenges facing the district, and we want to be partners in navigating them. But we are deeply concerned that balancing the budget through cuts to operations creates greater risks and higher costs down the road."

But Smith explained that there was various reason for the cuts, including loss of federal grants and realignment of function.

Board member Josh Guy said, "None of us get any joy out of having to remove positions. But we are in tough times. We have a number of unfunded state mandates that we have to comply with, and we have an agreement with the teachers that we have to meet, and we have the needs of our students that we have to meet. And that's what this budget does. But there is no joy in having to cut positions."

McCourt noted, "We would be remiss if we didn't bring to your attention and to the public's attention again, that there are additional funding needs to support our building infrastructure, programmatic critical of \$2.2 million and programmatic of \$7 million for

a total of \$9.2 million of identified building infrastructure needs that are not included in either you're operating or your CIP budget. So, if additional funds do become available, we have absolutely already identified the needed infrastructure improvements and where those monies would go."

She also said, "St. Mary's County is 23rd out of 24 on per allocation basis, state and local revenues."

"If St. Mary's County Public Schools were to receive the state average, that would result in \$3,245 more, more per student, or \$49.8 million in additional funding," she added.

Smith said, "I can't stress this enough. People want to have full services in their school. They want to have a rich educational experience as well as wraparound supports for the whole child. We are the second lowest funded school system in the state of Maryland. I think we're about \$200 above Carroll County. Imagine what your school system would look like with \$25 million more per year to serve our children. Imagine what the world would look like if we had \$50 million, which is the state average. Constantly, I'm in meetings with other school systems and they're talking about their challenges, and I don't know that people really understand in St. Mary's County the restriction that is placed on us by our current funding levels."



Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith

Smith said, "And so as we send across the street a request for a sizable sum of money, \$8.5 million (more), the most that we've ever asked for in a recurring fashion, that will only move us up a few slots on this chart and that money will go directly, not to add more people, we're decreasing people, but to take care of the people we have who deliver incredible service on behalf of our children every single day."

dickmyers@countytimes.net



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Bill Would Require School Board to Be Elected by District Commissioners Oppose Measure

By Tim Flaherty
Contributing Writer

In Annapolis, a bill has been introduced in the House of Delegates that would require members of boards of education in six Maryland counties, including St. Mary's, to be elected within their own districts and not countywide. The bill, HB 565, was brought to the attention of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County by Deputy County Attorney John Sterling Houser who appeared before the commissioners Tuesday morning with a legislative update.

"I got a real problem with it because it sort of sets the groundwork for future changes to everybody else," commented Commissioners President Randy Guy. "Personally, I'm really opposed to this because it just sets the groundwork. And it's going to happen. It'll be commissioners, everybody, by district only."

Houser reminded the board that similar bills have appeared in the past and went nowhere. "I don't know if it's got the juice to move forward or not," Houser opined of the newly filed legislation.

The bill is sponsored by Delegate Jeffrey Long, Jr. of District 27C. Long, a Democrat, lives in Calvert County, and his district includes northern Calvert and a part of Prince Georges County.

The other Maryland counties included in the bill are Calvert, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, Garrett, and Cecil. All of these counties currently elect some or all of their school board members countywide, according to Houser.

Houser told the board that the bill, if passed, would go into effect October 1st of this year. "I would presume that means this wouldn't take effect (in this year's election cycle)," he said, "but the next election after that."

Long's bill, subtitled The Fair Representation Act, was assigned to the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, and it will have a hearing in Annapolis on February 11th.

After Houser's report, the commissioners voted to have the county attorney draft a letter stating the Commissioners of St. Mary's County's opposition to HB 565 and to send it to the House of Delegates.

Superintendent: No Virtual Learning



Superintendent of Schools Dr. J. Scott Smith shared photos of students playing ice hockey on the frozen-over football field at Chopticon High School.



By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Wonder why St. Mary's County Public Schools didn't go into virtual learning for students while they were off due to the snow and ice?

Superintendent of Schools Dr. J. Scott Smith, in answer to radio and social media chatter, says it's not in the cards while he's at the helm.

At the Feb. 3 school board meeting Smith said, "First of all, we have three days built in for snow, and then we have two other days designated as makeup days. We basically have five days covered. And because of Senate Bill 610 and the Maryland Education Code 7-1032, there are very specific things that you have to do before you go virtual. And the first is we have to talk about it publicly and have a virtual plan that's readily accessible for everybody. We have to publish it on our website.

"And then the virtual education requires that every single student has a one-to-one device in they can take to their house, and that they have reliable internet connection to be able to connect to our programs."

He added, "We are supposed to deliver four hours of synchronous instruction when we're virtual. There is no possible way for us to be able to do that in St. Mary's County. We've put a lot of time and energy. We've partnered with county government. They have done the last mile, the last yard. They've installed high speed internet access, cable internet access to the majority of the homes in the state of Maryland. But we don't have one-to-one devices anymore. We don't assign laptops to pre-K, k, one and two. and we're rolling that up even further because it's an incredible expense to continue to refresh these machines. And we believe that our littlest learners learn best when you're staring them in the face. That's not to say that they don't need to learn keyboarding and all those other things, but we don't plan to have virtual learning."

"We're going to wait, we're going to

watch, we're going to see, but that's why we didn't go to virtual learning. It's not like we can flip a switch and suddenly do virtual learning. And I would also argue that's not really learning. I'd be very interested to see the other counties that they were actually doing four hours of synchronous instruction."

Showing pictures of kids playing ice hockey on the Chopticon High School football field, Smith said, "We were not enjoying it as much. The first day we were at Moakley Street (headquarters) trying to get sidewalks and parking lots cleared so we could come in and get a good assessment of what was going on. Just to remind the public, we have an incredibly dedicated operations and maintenance staff, but we're not built to remove snow."

Smith said, "When it's six inches of packed ice, it becomes, its own thing. So, we don't have access to the contractors until the county releases them. And I have to say the county did an incredible job on the roads to the envy of most other counties in the state of Maryland and other states on the eastern seaboard. If you were able to get out of your driveway and get to the roads, the roads were pretty much clear, and you were able to conduct your business."

Smith noted, "Day two, we're moving this stuff and chipping this stuff with earth-work machinery."

Smith observed, "It took all week and it was backbreaking, sledgehammer and chisels and ice picks and coal shovels. And thank you very much to the Amish community. They also came out and helped clear our areas in the northern end. The whole community came out."

"I know that it was an incredible disruption to everybody's lives. And I know that we're going to have to make some decisions as to the extra day that we took off. We had three days-built in."

The school board will seek approval from the state to use President's Day holiday as a makeup day.

dickmyers@countytimes.net



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New Paratransit Vans to Be Added to Local Transit Fleet

Money Comes from Surplus Fuel Funds

By Tim Flaherty
Contributing Writer

The St. Mary's Transit System (STS) will be buying two new ADA-compliant vans that will enable the system to better serve disabled citizens through its Paratransit Program. The Commissioners of St. Mary's County, on Tuesday, approved a request to make a budget amendment that cleared the way to buy the vehicles. The request came from John B. Norris III, the Director of Public Works, whose department oversees county public transit.

Currently, disabled riders are picked up by the fleet of 15 regular buses that are used across the system. Those buses are much larger and more expensive to operate than the vans, and they require drivers who have a Maryland commercial driver's license (CDL). Finding or training new CDL drivers for the system has been a problem.

"We are committed to finding solutions to not only to the CDL (commercial drivers license) driver shortage," Norris told the County Times after appearing before the commissioners at their regular Tuesday meeting, "but also fuel costs, and to get (vehicles) down some of the narrower driveways some of our seniors have and be able to service them directly rather than have them come out to the public road."

The money for the vans comes from \$195,995 in surplus funds in a state- and federally-sourced fuel account, Norris told the commissioners. By unanimous vote, the commissioners approved the budget amendment that moves the money to a new vehicle



account.

Each of the new vans will have a wheelchair lift with securements for two wheelchairs plus room for several other passengers.

Speaking at Tuesday's meeting, Commissioner Mike Hewitt noted that STS fixed-route ridership has risen 33%, and that Paratransit ridership has swelled by 68% since the county switched to a "free ridership" model last July. "Were these people always in St. Mary's County," he asked, "and needed this service and just didn't use it?"

"Our ridership is counted by trips, not people," replied Allison Swint, the county's Deputy Director of Transportation, who accompanied Norris in front of the commissioners. "So, we could essentially maintain the same amount of people but increase their

rides per day. Multiple locations in a day as opposed to one site, then a ride home"

While making the fund transfer request, Norris added, "The reallocation ensures that we're maximizing our federal and state resources to maintain a high standard of service for our residents."

Norris told the County Times that one of the prospective new vans is "sitting in the dealer's lot waiting for us to buy it." The second van would have to be ordered, and he declined to guess how long it would take to put it in service.

After the money transfer for the new vans was approved, Norris and Swint presented the commissioners with an STS system-wide update and spoke about grants and other funding.

"The dramatic increase in ridership has a silver lining," Norris said, referring to the previously mentioned increases in ridership. "The federal funding is increasing. The substantial increases in federal funding are a direct result of the policy changes because we believe that, if it had not been for fare-free transit, we would not have seen such a dramatic increase in the ridership in either the STS or the Paratransit."

Increases in federal funding for transit systems, such as those in St. Mary's County, are tied to steep increases in ridership. Norris indicated that state and federal funding would increase by more than \$1.2 million due to the ridership increase. This was the primary reason St. Mary's went to the fare-free model last July. Calvert and Charles counties had previously eliminated fares on their transit systems.

When quizzed by the commissioners on when the county might see the extra money land in the bank, Swinton said the increases would be here in time for the 2028 fiscal year.

Norris and Swint also presented the commissioners with plans to create a rider "code of conduct," to update Paratransit ridership eligibility requirements, upgrade dispatch and rider request mechanisms, and develop new ridership tracking software to help plan routes. The commissioners approved of all the plans.

As part of the transit budget discussion, the commissioners approved an operating grant agreement for the current fiscal year with the Maryland Transportation Administration for more than \$4.6 million. It was noted that state and federal funding now accounts for more than 50% of the STS budget.

Legislature Considers Major Change to Living Shorelines Law

By Tim Flaherty
Contributing Writer

Bills that would change how local waterfront property owners are required to address shoreline erosion problems have been introduced in both the House of Delegates and the state Senate. House Bill 613 and Senate Bill 368, both titled "Calvert and St. Mary's Counties - Living Shorelines and Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Measures," aim to simplify the permitting process for property owners seeking to stem erosion of their shoreline. The bills propose giving regulatory control to local soil conservation districts. The House bill is sponsored by a bi-partisan group of 11 delegates from around the state. The Senate version is sponsored by Senator Jack Bailey, R-District 29; and by Senator Kevin Harris, D-District 27.

The bills were explained to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County Tuesday morning by Deputy County Attorney John Sterling Houser during the commissioner's weekly meeting in Leonardtown.



Photo courtesy of Maryland DNR

Currently, a waterfront property owner must demonstrate that a "living shoreline" – natural buffers such as seagrasses or other environmental engineering – is futile in stemming erosion before being allowed to erect solid barriers like revetments and bulkheads. The applications must be made to and approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

"You've got to pursue that living shoreline unless you can demonstrate, to MDE's satisfaction, through a fairly long and rigorous and stringent process, that a living shoreline is not viable," Houser explained. "And it's only then, if you get that waiver,that you would be allowed to proceed with structural shoreline stabilization measures."

The bills would remove MDE from the process in St. Mary's and Calvert County, and instead put the living shoreline waiver process in the hands of local soil conservation districts. Houser says the bills, "...would also empower the local Soil Conservation District to adopt their own regulations."

Commissioner Guy commented that he and Commissioner Eric Colvin, the night before, had attended a Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) Rural Coalition meeting, and Colvin had brought up "that maybe other counties might be interested in this.... the other counties agreed."

At the end of the discussion, the County Commissioners voted to send letters to the Senate and the House expressing their support for SB 368 and HB 613.

The Senate bill is scheduled for a hearing in Annapolis before the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee next Tuesday, February 10th. The House version has been sent to the House Environment and Transportation Committee. No hearing date has yet been announced.

Community Invited to St. Mary's 2050 Plan Open Houses

St. Mary's County Government's Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM) invites the community to take part in the next phase of engagement for *St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow*, the County's long-range Comprehensive Plan.

A series of Open Houses will be held in February, providing an opportunity to review the first draft of the St. Mary's 2050 Plan and share feedback that will help shape the final version. These sessions are designed to encourage open conversation, gather perspectives, and ensure the plan reflects the priorities and values of those who live, learn, work, and play in St. Mary's County.

Community members are encouraged to save the dates and attend one of the following Open Houses:

- Monday, February 9, 2026
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Lexington Park Library
21677 Franklin Delano Roosevelt Blvd, Lexington Park
- Tuesday, February 10, 2026
5 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Northern Senior Center
29655 Charlotte Hall Road, Charlotte Hall
- Wednesday, February 11, 2026
10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Leonard Hall Recreation Center
23145 Leonard Hall Drive, Leonardtown
- Wednesday, February 11, 2026
5 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Loffler Senior Center

21905 Chancellors Run Road, Great Mills

Please note: If St. Mary's County Government Administrative Offices are closed due to inclement weather on any scheduled session date, that Open House will be canceled and rescheduled for a later date in February. To receive key County announcements directly to your inbox — including inclement weather operational changes — please sign up at: www.stmaryscountymd.gov/news. Additional Open Houses are also planned for March, with dates to be announced.

Can't attend in person? The draft plan and an online feedback form will be posted in early February, allowing residents to review materials and submit comments electronically. Visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050 for updates and access once materials are available.

About St. Mary's 2050

St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow is an update to the County's Comprehensive Plan and will guide future land use and development decisions through 2050 and beyond. The plan will help ensure St. Mary's County continues to thrive while preserving its unique character, natural resources, and quality of life.

Ongoing engagement is a critical part of shaping a shared vision for the County's future.

Press release from St. Mary's County Government

Public Hearing Set on Bay District Fire Tax

The Bay District Volunteer Fire Department (BDVFD) has formally requested authorization from the St. Mary's County Commissioners to hold a public hearing to discuss a proposed adjustment to the Fire Tax rate. The County Commissioners unanimously approved the request, allowing the department to proceed with the public hearing process.

The proposed adjustment would increase the Fire Tax rate from \$0.050 to \$0.056 per \$100 of assessed property value, which represents the maximum rate permitted. The change would bring Bay District in line with the other department fire tax rates.

Based on current assessments, this change would result in an average annual increase of approximately \$23.41 for residents within the 8th Election District served by the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department.

The proposed rate adjustment is driven by rising operational costs, including fuel, firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE), apparatus maintenance, and facility

maintenance and support. These expenses are necessary to ensure the department can continue to provide safe, reliable, and effective emergency services to the community.

A public hearing will be held to present information regarding the proposed Fire Tax rate adjustment and to receive input from the public.

The public hearing will be Feb. 24 at 7 p.m. at Braddock Hall, 46900 S. Shangri-La Drive, Lexington Park.

During the hearing, the department will provide a brief presentation outlining the need for the proposed adjustment and will be available to answer questions and address concerns from community members.

Residents are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussion.

For more information contact Jason Adams at jadams@bdvfd.org or 240-794-2245.

Press Release from Bay District VFD

Identities Sought in Theft Investigation



The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is seeking to identify and locate two suspects in connection with a theft.

On Monday, Jan. 12 at approximately 5:40 p.m. the subjects shown in these surveillance camera images were recorded on video at the California Wawa store selecting several items and exiting without paying. The suspects left the store in a gray Dodge Durango with unknown registration.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact Deputy First Class Joseph Senatore at 301-475-4200, ext. 8163, or by email at Joseph.Senatore@stmaryscountymd.gov. Please reference case #2026-2355.

Tipsters can also submit tips anonymously and may be eligible for a cash reward if the information leads to an arrest.

- Text 847411, starting your message with "SMCSO", add a space, and then your tip.
- Online: Submit a tip through the Sheriff's Office website at www.FirstSheriff.com/tips.
- App: Send a tip directly through the SMCSO app. Download the free app from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store.
- Phone: Call the Crime Solvers line at 301-475-3333.

With Crime Solvers, you never have to give your name. You may be eligible for a cash reward if your information leads to an arrest.

Press release from SMCSO

Trailer Fire Under Investigation



By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating a fire that destroyed an abandoned trailer in a wooded area in Lexington Park. The fire at 21476 Suburban Drive was reported by a neighbor on Jan. 31 at 1:34 a.m. The Bay District Volunteer Fire Department responded, and it took 50 firefighters 30 minutes to bring the blaze under

control. No one was injured.

According to the fire marshal's office, "The incident involved a fire in an abandoned single wide mobile home in a wooded area. The structure was completely destroyed as a result of the fire. Anyone with information about this incident is encouraged to contact the Office of the Maryland State Fire Marshal, Southern Regional Office at 410-414-3600."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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Friday, February 6

- 12:30 am - 5 pm** Last day to Submit Artwork for Youth Art Month
- 9 am - 10 am** Coffee Club with David McDonough at Edward Jones
- 10 am - 7 pm** Visit the Old Jail Museum for a Free tour of this historic building
- 10 am - 7pm** SOF Market's "Fall in Love with Local" weekend sale
- 5 pm - 8 pm** February First Friday opening reception "Let it Snow" at the St. Mary's County Arts Council
- 5 pm - 8 pm** North End Gallery's February Invitational Event and reception
- 5:30 pm - 8 pm** Live Music by Nightcap & Food by Dan D's at Port of Leonardtown Winery
- 9 pm** Join folks 21+ for the "Single and ready to Buck" at The Rex Theatre
- 9 pm - 1 am** DJ Young & Shiesty take over Brudergarten



Saturday, February 7

- 10 am - 2 pm** Book signing with science fiction writer T. J. Barlet at Fenwick Street Books
- 10 am - 5 pm** Visit the Old Jail Museum and Visitor's Center
- 10 am - 7 pm** SOF Market's "Fall in Love with Local" weekend sale
- 2 pm - 5 pm** Live Music by Wall Break & Food by Mouth of the Bay at Port of Leonardtown Winery
- 4 pm - 11 pm** Prime Rib Saturday at Rucci's

Sunday, February 8

- 10 am - 4 pm** Book signing with children's author Jennia D'Lima at Fenwick Street Books. She will be signing her new book "Sunny and the Round Things"
- 10 am - 5 pm** Visit the Old Jail Museum and Visitor's Center
- 11 am - 2 pm** Balanced Paws Pet Care is having a "Smooch the Pooch" Valentine themed pet photo booth benefiting local pets in need
- 11 am - 5 pm** SOF Market's "Fall in Love with Local" weekend sale
- 12 pm - 3 pm** Love in Leonardtown Wedding Expo - The Fenwick Inn, The Vault & The Inn at Leonardtown
- 12 pm - 9 pm** Sunday bucket \$5.00 off special at Olde Town Pub
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Donate Pieces of Local History During Community Day



Have you ever wanted to contribute to a museum exhibit? The St. Clement's Island Museum in Colton's Point and the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum in Piney Point will host "Community Day" on Friday, Febr. 13 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This day allows the public to get involved with the planning of new exhibits by sharing historic documents, photos, and other significant objects related to St. Clement's Island and the Colton's Point area from the 20th century and earlier, as well as objects related to Piney Point and maritime history of the Potomac and Chesapeake.

The museums are seeking information and items about local boat builders; information about the Golden Hotel, the Shirley K Hotel, the Hotel on St. Clement's Island, Tolson Hotel and Swann's Hotel in Piney Point, and the Blackstone Island Canning Company or other oyster companies; photos of the island and the Blackstone Lighthouse or Piney Point Lighthouse; information about living on St. Clement's Island and/or living in Colton's Point or Piney Point; any photos of steamboats at Colton's Point landing; U.S. Coast Guard or U.S. Navy history related to Piney Point; holiday and Christmas décor and decora-

tions, specifically glass ornaments and related items; and more.

Museum staff will be available to scan photos and documents, or photograph objects and people, with the permission of the owner, for potential new exhibits or collections. If you do not have any items that could be applicable but still wish to support the museums, the public is welcome to make monetary donations towards exhibits or other museum programs either in person or online at: <https://friendsmuseumstore.square.site>.

For more information, contact Christina Barbour, St. Clement's Island Museum Manager at (301) 769-2222 or Ken Burke, Piney Point Lighthouse Museum Manager at (301) 994-1471.

For more information on museum hours of operation, programs, events, admission prices, and more, follow our museums on Facebook at:

- St. Clement's Island Museum: [Facebook.com/SCIMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/SCIMuseum)
- Piney Point Lighthouse useum: [Facebook.com/1836LightDivision](https://www.facebook.com/1836LightDivision)

Press Release from the St. Mary's County Museum Division

Museums Searching for Part-Time Captains

The St. Mary's County Museum Division, part of St. Mary's County Government's Department of Recreation & Parks, is searching for part-time captains to pilot the St. Clement's Island Museum water taxi during daily cruises to St. Clement's Island State Park, as well as for other possible cruises throughout the year.

Essential requirements include meeting United States Coast Guard requirements pertaining to small passenger craft;

CPR certification; submission to random drug testing; possession of a Coast Guard Master's license; and a valid FCC Marine Radio Operator Permit (MP), among others.

For more information or to apply, please visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/careers and search "Boat Captain."

Press release from St. Mary's County Museum Division

Registration Opens for Keys to Senior Independence Series

St. Mary's County Government's Department of Aging & Human Services (DAHS) is pleased to announce this year's Keys to Senior Independence series.

Planning for the future can feel daunting, but with helpful information and expert guidance, you can feel more confident about the choices ahead. Have questions about managing your finances as you age? Looking for strategies to stay resilient and adapt to life's changes? Are you concerned about protecting your assets and ensuring your wishes are respected? Whether you are planning for yourself, supporting aging parents, or approaching retirement, this educational series will cover ways to protect autonomy and quality of life.

The Keys to Senior Independence series will be held on Thursdays, March 26, April 9, and April 16, 2026, from 6 – 8 p.m., at the College of Southern Maryland in Leonardtown (Building C, Room 206). This year's presentation topics are:

- **Financial Planning (Thursday, March 26):** Financial advisor, Jeff Linger, of Edward Jones, will help you learn how to make the most of

your money as you age.

- **Mindset for Healthy Aging (Thursday, April 9):** Dr. Trish Davis, a gerontologist at St. Mary's College of Maryland, will share practical strategies to support your mental well-being, manage stress, and stay resilient through life's transitions.

- **Legal Preparedness (Thursday, April 16):** Representatives from the St. Mary's County Bar Association will cover key legal tools – wills, trusts, advance healthcare directives, and more- to safeguard your independence.

Sign up for one session or all three! Certificates of completion will be awarded to those who complete all three sessions. For more information, or to register, please contact Nicoletta Pollice, DAHS Community Programs & Outreach Manager, at (301) 475-4200, ext. 1074, or via email to Nicoletta.Pollice@stmaryscountymd.gov.

For more information on DAHS, please visit: www.stmaryscountymd.gov/Aging or follow DAHS on social media at: www.facebook.com/SMCDAHS

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CSM Recognizes 89 Healthcare Graduates



The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) celebrated a new class of healthcare professionals during the Health Career Readiness Recognition Ceremony on January 15, honoring graduates prepared to enter this in-demand field.

The ceremony recognized 89 graduates across seven healthcare fields, including Dental Assistant, Certified Administrative Assistant, Phlebotomy Technician, Certified Clinical Medical Assistant, Community Health Worker, Certified Personal Trainer, and Certified Nutrition Coach.

Each graduate received a certificate to commemorate this accomplishment, and a pin symbolizing their entry and acceptance into their chosen field.

CSM President Dr. Yolanda Wilson congratulated the class for their hard work and determination, emphasizing the powerful impact they will have as they step into their careers.

"You are entering professions that strengthen communities in real and lasting ways," Dr. Wilson said. "Candidates, you are ready for this moment. You are prepared for the responsibility that lies ahead, and you are needed now more than ever."

Healthcare remains one of the nation's fastest-growing and in-demand fields. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the industry employed more than 22.5 million workers in the U.S. in 2024, an increase of about 4.5 million jobs since 2014. This makes it the largest, and fastest growing employer, of any industry sector.

Kelly Winters, Executive Director of Workforce Development, said this growth makes now an ideal time to enter the field, and assured the graduates this opportu-

nity will also make a difference by helping others.

"Your work will help keep health systems running, improve access to care, and strengthen the well-being of our communities," Winters said. "That is meaningful work, and it is work that matters."

The Workforce Development Healthcare programs combine career-focused training and hands-on, clinical experience to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and industry-recognized credentials necessary for a successful career. The programs open pathways for students to enter the healthcare workforce or continue into higher learning.

Health Programs Chair Candi Hume congratulated the graduates on their achievements and highlighted the vital role they will play as they address critical healthcare needs in the region.

"Our graduates are not only equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel but also embody the compassion and integrity that are the hallmarks of this noble profession," Hume said.

In closing, Winters offered two pieces of advice as they step into their careers:

"First: Own the profession you're entering. Healthcare depends on individuals who show up prepared, reliable, and patient-centered," Winters said.

"Second: Stay curious. Healthcare evolves quickly, and continued learning is how careers advance. CSM is always here for your next credential."

Find more information on the variety of healthcare programs on the Health Pathways webpage.

Press release from CSM

Leadership Group Studies Regional Housing Challenges



Lifestyles of Maryland CEO Sandy Washington and other experts discuss local efforts to address housing challenges. Also pictured: Amy Ford, moderator (St. Mary's County Library); Michael Bellis (St. Mary's County Housing Authority); Craig Cohen (CRG Companies), and Jimmy Hayden (RE/MAX One)

The Leadership Southern Maryland (LSM) Executive Program Class of 2026 convened in January to study the region's critical housing and human services challenges. They heard from industry leaders about the needs and concerns of children, low-income families, homeless residents, residents dealing with mental and behavioral health issues and domestic violence, and the limited stock of affordable and workforce housing in Southern Maryland.

Pure Play Every Day Executive Director and LSM Board of Director Patty Stine introduced the executives to the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Assessment. ACE Assessments raise awareness of how children's experiences of domestic violence, parental behavioral health issues, and economic insecurity can impact their ability to thrive in adulthood.

Participants spoke with human services, behavioral health, and housing specialists about challenges Southern Marylanders face in accessing the many community resources available to support them, securing affordable housing, and having reliable transportation.

Associate Judge of the Circuit Court of St. Mary's County, the Hon. Amy Lorenzini, provided a judicial education brief and described special initiatives of the court, such as the Family Law Court Help Clinic, which provides free legal assistance with family law matters and the Family Recovery Court Program that offers assistance to parents with substance abuse or mental health issues.

Leadership Southern Maryland's flagship Executive Program is an interactive and life-enriching nine-month, tuition-based "behind-the-scenes" experience designed to enhance the collaborative abilities of our region's top senior professionals. LSM is now accepting applications for the Executive Program Class of 2027. We welcome mid- to senior-level executives representing diverse geographic locations, industries, professions, and other backgrounds who are committed to addressing the community needs of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties.

For more information, visit www.leadershipsomd.org.

Press release from LSM

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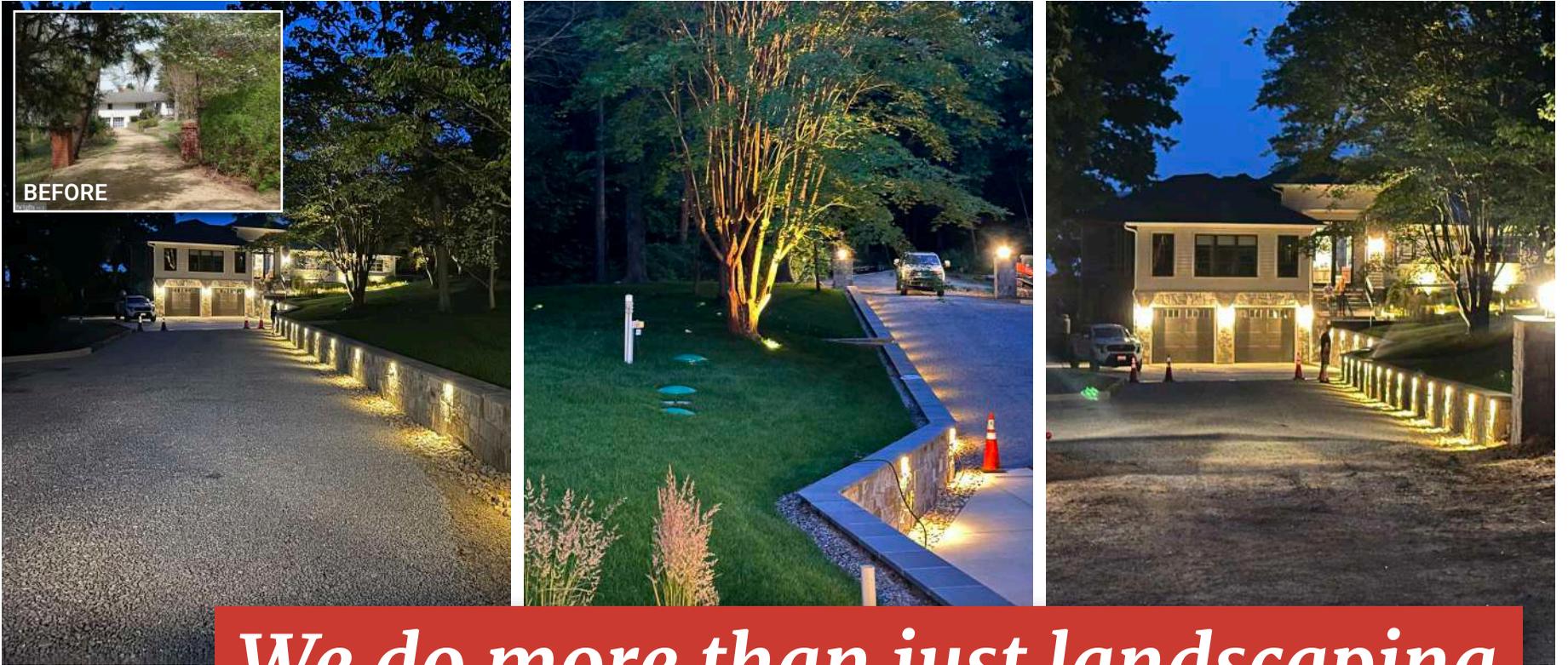


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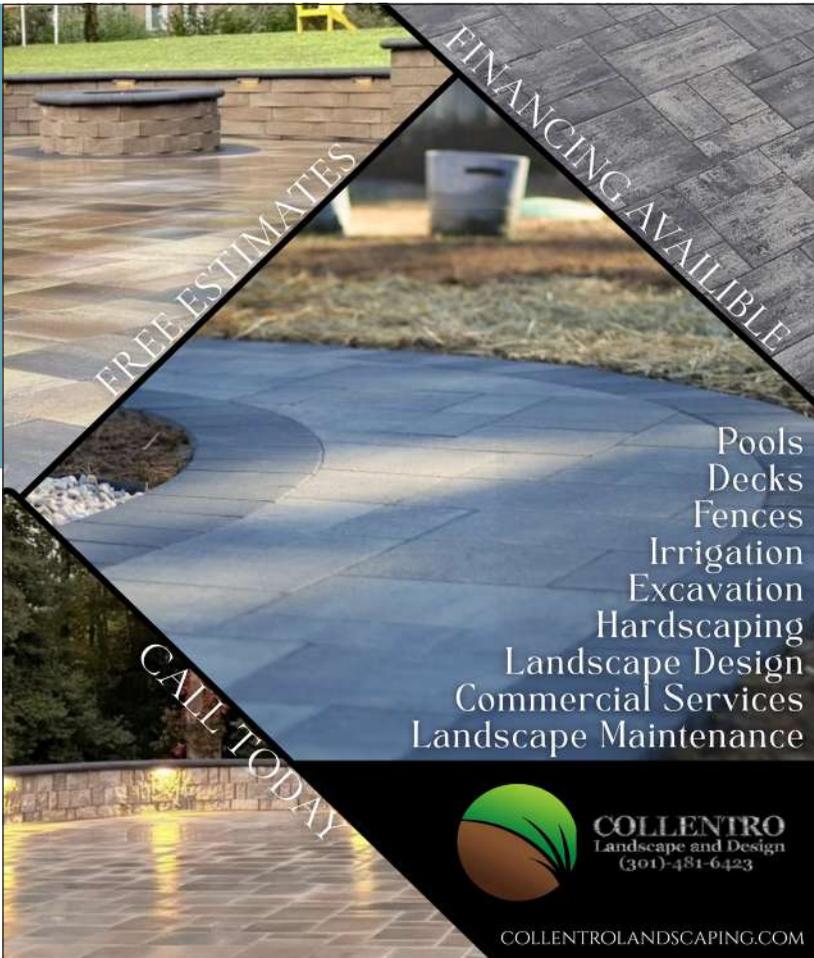
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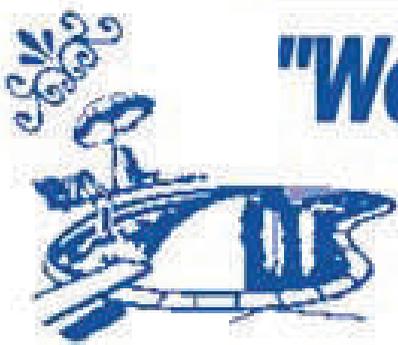
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In Remembrance

To schedule an obituary in the County Times, submit text and picture to aldailey@countytimes.net by noon on Tuesdays for publication on Thursdays. Any submissions received after this deadline may run in the following week's edition.

Joyce Green, 88



Joyce Green, of Mechanicsville, Maryland, passed away on January 26, leaving behind a legacy of love, family, and togetherness that will be cherished always.

Born on July 19, 1937, to Thelma and Raymond Tennyson in Clements, Maryland, Joyce was welcomed into what became a large and loving family of nine children. Growing up in such a close-knit household helped shape her deep appreciation for family, connection, and shared time, which were values she carried with her throughout her life.

Joyce is survived by her daughter, Mary Jo Sargent, and her husband, Bob Sargent; her son, Dave Welch, and his family; her grandchildren Michael Casper, Jackie Mehl, and Casey Quade; and her great-grandchildren Jaylyn Boyd, Tyler Mehl, and Kylee Quade.

Joyce found joy in the simple pleasures that brought people together. She loved playing cards and dominoes, especially when those games turned into moments of laughter, storytelling, and friendly competition. These gatherings were never just about winning or losing they were about togetherness, memories, and the comfort of family.

She also had a deep love for traveling, embracing new places and experiences. Joyce

was delighted to share stories from her journeys with those she loved. Whether traveling near or far, she treasured the connections she made and the memories she brought home, adding to the full life she lived.

Family and friends were truly the center of Joyce's life. She cherished time spent with her loved ones, whether during special occasions or quiet everyday moments. Her presence brought warmth and familiarity, and she had a gentle way of making everyone feel welcome, valued, and loved.

Joyce will be remembered for her kindness, her steady spirit, and the love she so freely gave. Someone who showed care through her actions and her time. Her life touched many and her passing leaves a space that cannot be filled, but her love will continue to live on.

Though Joyce is no longer with us, the memories she created will remain forever in the hearts of her family and friends. Her spirit will be felt whenever loved ones gather, shuffle a deck of cards, set up a domino game, share travel stories, or simply spend time together just as she loved to do.

Joyce Green will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

The family will receive friends on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM, I Our Lady of The Wayside Catholic Church, Chaptico, MD, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 AM with Father Chip Luckett officiating. Interment will be private.

Condolences may be made to the family at www.mgfh.com.

Arrangements provided by the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

Bobby Anderson, 86



Robert Lewis Anderson, Jr., lovingly known as "Bobby" or "Bobby Boy", of Clements, Maryland, passed away peacefully on January 29, 2026, at Hospice House, surrounded by his loving family. He was 86 years old.

Bobby was born on December 4, 1939, in Clements, Maryland, to Robert Lewis Anderson, Sr. and Lucy Mae (Hurry) Anderson. A lifelong resident of Clements, Bobby was deeply rooted in the community he loved and served so faithfully. He graduated from Margaret Brent High School in 1957 and began his working life at Hurry's Store for his Uncle Jimmy Hurry. He later worked as a feed salesman for Bowman Brothers before returning home to the family business.

Bobby spent an extraordinary 60+ years behind the bar at Anderson's Bar in Clements, where he became much more than a bartender. He was a trusted friend, a lis-

tener, and a source of laughter and wisdom for generations of patrons. Affectionately known by many as the "Mayor of Clements", Bobby was a true pillar of the community, always ready with a story, a smile, and a good dose of humor.

On February 2, 1961, Bobby married his love, Frances Dianne (Ellis) Anderson. Together they shared 65 wonderful years of marriage, building a life centered on family, friendship, and hard work. Bobby was a devoted father to four children: Catherine Pamela Clarke (JD) of Clements, Maryland; Christina Lynn Hurst (Jim) of Clements, Maryland; Joseph Blair Anderson (Connie) of Clements, Maryland; and the late James Craig Anderson (Tara) of Clements, Maryland.

Bobby was an avid supporter of the local softball community, proudly sponsoring teams throughout his career and forming many lasting friendships along the way. He also supported local shuffleboard and dart leagues, always encouraging camaraderie and community spirit. When he wasn't at the family bar, Bobby could often be found working on his tobacco farm, a testament to his strong work ethic and love for the land.

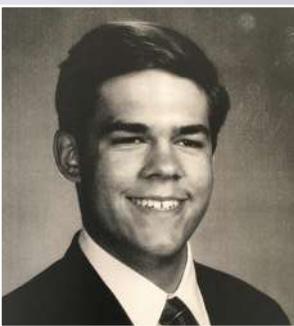
He greatly enjoyed traveling with his wife, Dianne, and dear friends, Donnie and Isabel Williams, as well as rabbit hunting with his good friends and especially his late friend, Elmer Nelson. Bobby was a devoted supporter

Continued on page 14

IN MEMORY OF

JOHN WILLIAM (CHRIS) BETZ, JR.

1970-2024



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For details and to place your notice of remembrance, call 301-373-4125 for assistance.

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In Remembrance

Continued from page 13

of Sacred Heart Church, where his steadfast faith and generosity played an important role in sustaining the church community.

Bobby was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Lucy Anderson, and his beloved son, James Craig Anderson, and his grandson, Travis Andrew Davis. In addition to his wife and children, he is survived by his sister, Virginia Mae Pierce (Johnny); his cherished grandchildren, James, Leroy Pilerton III, Caitlin Anne Clarke, Daniel Joseph Clarke, Shannon Lynn Stone, Samantha Marie Anderson, Taylor Nicole Davis, , Dustin Blair Anderson, Davey Alan Anderson, Olivia Nicole Carr, Emma Grace Anderson, and his adored great-grandchildren, Cora May Pinkerton, Carson Alvey Pilkerton, Brielle Stone, and Ada Stone.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 11:00 AM in Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bushwood, MD, with Father Stephen Wyble officiating. Interment will follow at Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery, Bushwood, MD.

Pallbearers honoring Bobby's life will be Bruce Barnes, Roy Guy, James Pilkerton III, Dusty Anderson, Davey Anderson, and Josh Piece. Honorary pallbearers will be Bill Bailey, Don Purdy, Jennings Anderson, Bert Anderson, Jamie Tennyson, Robbie Tennyson (godchild), George Gibson III, and Todd Gibson. Their presence reflects the deep friendships and family bonds that meant so much to him throughout his life.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Bobby's memory to the 7th District Rescue Squad, St. Mary's Nursing Center, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, or ACTS.

Condolences may be made to the family at www.mgfh.com.

Arrangements provided by the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

Kitty Parlett, 88



Catherine Ann Mattingly Parlett, lovingly known as "Kitty," passed away peacefully on February 2, 2026, surrounded by devoted family, loving caregivers,

and her adored cat and faithful companion, Woodley.

Kitty was born on September 17, 1937, in Loveville, Maryland.

Kitty was a wonderful daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, and faithful friend. She lived a life centered around family, love, and deep devotion to those around her.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, John Knight Parlett, Sr.; her parents, Mary Pauline and Joseph Woodley Mattingly; and her siblings, Jake Francis Mattingly and Diane Marie Hall.

Kitty married her high school sweetheart, John Knight Parlett, on August 20, 1954. They were just 16 years old when they began a remarkable love story that lasted over 50 years, until John's passing in 2005. Together, they built a life full of laughter, resilience, and unwavering commitment.

They raised their large family on Green Manor Farm in Charlotte Hall, Maryland, where Kitty created a home filled with warmth and joy. A devoted and loving mother of seven children (she was just 23 years old when her youngest was born), she had a rare gift for making each child feel uniquely cherished. To this day, every one of her children knows, without a doubt, that they were her favorite.

Kitty's love extended far beyond her immediate family. She delighted in her role as a grandmother and great-grandmother, finding immense joy in every new generation.

She is survived by her seven loving children and their spouses: John Knight, Jr. (Betsy), Joseph Lawrence (Michele), Cathleen Parlett Moeller (Robert), Cynthia Parlett Pickett (Ron), William Timothy (Cindy Burch), Robert Wayne (April), Julie Parlett DeCesaris (Hugo).

She is also survived by 21 grandchildren: John Knight Parlett III, Jill Parlett Koziol, Matthew Thomas Parlett, Kevin Mattingly Parlett, Joseph Lawrence Parlett II, Michael Francis Parlett, Jacob Andrew Parlett, Kyle Robert Moeller, Luke Woodley Moeller, Garrett Lawrence Moeller, Kristin Pickett Vasilj, Parlett Pickett Fritz, Marshall Mattingly Pickett, Ashley Parlett Konya, Jessica Parlett Smith, Robert Wayne Parlett II, Hailey Anne Parlett, Zachary Mark Parlett, Alexandra DeCesaris Pantelides, Gabrielle DeCesaris Brickey, Catherine DeCesaris Fowler. She is further survived by 27 great-grandchildren, and many cherished nieces and nephews.

Kitty will be remembered for her gentle spirit, unwavering love, deep faith in family, and her remarkable ability to make everyone around her feel special. Her legacy lives on in the countless lives she touched and the generations she helped shape with her love.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, February 12, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM, with prayers recited at 7:00 PM in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday, February 13, 2026, at 11:00 AM in St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 21370 Newtowne Neck Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

A private burial will take place at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad,

- 28120 Old Flora Corner Road, Mechanicsville, MD 20659, <https://surl.lu/gkhvdj> and/or
- St. Mary's Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 21585 Peabody Street, Leonardtown, MD 20650, <https://surl.li/icniri>.

Condolences may be made to the family at www.mgfh.com.

Arrangements provided by the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

St. Mary's Community Calendar

To submit your event listing to go in our Community Calendar, please email timescalendar@countytimes.net with the listing details by 12 p.m. on the Monday prior to our Thursday publication.

Fri, Feb 6

Annual Designer Bag Bingo & Raffle

St. John's School, Hollywood MD;
5:30-10:30 p.m.

Excitement is in the air! St. John's School Designer Bag Bingo is back for our 8th year! We have great purses, great sponsors, great raffle baskets and a great time at this event. This year we are able to offer pre-paid admission to the event! Please contact designerbagbingo@sjshollywood.org with any questions on information how to reserve a ticket in advance! Doors open at 5:30 pm and excitement starts at 7pm. Please come early as this event has sold out in prior years. Food and drinks will be available for purchase during the event.

Sat, Feb 7

Band of Brothers and Sisters

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9 a.m.

PTSD/Suicide Prevention Group of So. Maryland, offers support for all Veterans in need of our services, as well as support for the local community. We provide help with VA

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Sun, Feb 8

Love In Leonardtown Wedding Expo

Downtown Leonardtown
12 noon-3 p.m.

Leonardtown is thrilled to announce it will host its first-ever Wedding Expo hosted by Bella Bridal Company and the Leonardtown Business Association. This premier event will showcase everything couples need to plan their perfect day. The Expo will take place across several beloved local venues—The Fenwick Inn, The Vault, and The Inn at Leonardtown—each featuring a variety of talented wedding vendors, from florists and photographers to caterers, planners, and more. Attendees can explore wedding trends, connect with professionals, and get inspired to create their dream ceremony and reception.

Admission is free, and all are welcome to attend. For event details and

attendee registration please visit, www.VisitLeonardtownMd.com/weddingexpo

Quarter Auction Benefit

St. Mary's County Fairgrounds
Tolerance Hall
42455 Fairgrounds Rd., Leonardtown
1-3 p.m.

Southern Maryland Vacations for Vets annual Superbowl Sunday auction.

Doors open at noon. Auction starts at 1 p.m. Regular bidding paddles are \$3 each, 2 for \$5, or 3 for \$7. Please bring your quarters for bidding. All in paddles will be available for \$45 each and include a bid on every program item.

Other Info: Enjoy a brown bag auction 50/50 raffle, and concessions on site.

For more information or to make reservations please call 240-416-4224.

Mon, Feb 9

Red Cross Blood Drive

2nd District VFD & RS Social Hall
45245 Drayden Rd., Valley Lee
1:30 to 6 p.m.

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CROSS or visit www.redcrossblood.org/ to download the blood donor app.

Ongoing

North End Gallery's Invitational Show

Leonardtown
Month of February

2026 launches a new quarter century full of challenges and new perceptions in the world of art. North End, entering its 40th year, showcases a wonderfully talented group of artists, and for the month of February; they will be joined by over 40 regional artists from the area in the gallery's 16th Annual Invitational Show. This show is always exciting, presenting new work in all mediums, including glass, jewelry, fiber, sculptural, clay, scratchboard, metal, wood, photography, ink and watercolor, serigraphy, oil and acrylic, and more.

The gallery opens the show on Tuesday, February 3rd, with the reception and opportunity to meet the guest artists on Friday February 6th from 5 to 8 p.m. The show runs through Sunday March 1st.

★ ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library UPCOMING EVENTS



Christylez Bacon: Black History Month Celebration

Join Grammy-nominated progressive hip-hop artist and multi-instrumentalist Christylez Bacon for a high-energy performance celebrating Black History Month! Lexington Park Library on Saturday, February 7 from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Register on www.stmalib.org. Christylez combines rhyming, storytelling, and call and response choruses with diverse instruments (djembe, acoustic guitar, human beat-box) to deliver a message of cultural acceptance and unification blending traditional elements of musical styles from jazz to hip-hop. This Black History Month special event is presented in partnership with the NAACP St. Marys County Branch 7025 and the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions.

Veterans Book Group

A book discussion series for veterans led by Vietnam Veteran Wayne

Karlin. Registration required on www.stmalib.org; space is limited. This book discussion series is tailored for veterans and their families. Service members of all eras, their spouses, and adult children are welcome. Author and retired college professor Wayne Karlin will lead us through conversations about books written in very different styles but connected by themes of war, courage, love, honor, and trauma. Meetings will be held at Lexington Park Library on the first Saturday of the month from 2-4 p.m. This month the Group will meet on Saturday, February 7. Supplies are limited; participants may pick up a copy of the book one month before the meetings.

Roadside Native Plants

Tired of overlooking the beauty right outside your window? Barbara Martín of the St. Mary's County Garden Club will show you why plant identification is a rewarding skill! This discussion focuses on various native plants commonly found in areas like roadsides and old fields.

You'll gain a practical understanding of basic botany and learn how to apply this knowledge to the plants in your own yard. Barbara will share photos of unique local finds and discuss how these resilient natives can contribute to a healthier home landscape. Leonardtown Library on Tuesday, February 10 from 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Vision Boards to Growth Journals: Dream, Achieve, and Record

Transform your vision board into a personalized growth journal, documenting progress, and reflecting on experiences. Learn a traditional bookbinding technique as you sew and customize a reading journal that reflects your personality. Lexington Park Library, Saturday, February 14 from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Valentine Coloring Pop Up!

Choose from a variety of materials to color in a selection of small, adorable valentines. Share them with anyone you

care about! Enjoy some music, mingle and chat with others who stop in, and embrace how good it feels to spread a little love. Charlotte Hall Library on Saturday, February 14 from 2 - 3 p.m. Intended for tweens and teens, no registration.

Heart Crayons

Join us for a fun and eco-friendly craft where creativity meets sustainability! In this hands-on activity, participants will learn how to recycle old or broken crayons by melting them into colorful heart-shaped molds. These vibrant creations can be used as new crayons, keepsakes, or thoughtful gifts for friends and family. Through this activity, participants will explore color mixing and the concept of reusing materials in creative ways. Other mold designs will be available as well. Lexington Park Library on Saturday, February 14 from 1 - 3 p.m. Intended for children of all ages. Register on www.stmalib.org.

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Calvert Community Calendar

To submit your event listing to go in our Community Calendar, please email timescalendar@countytimes.net with the listing details by 12 p.m. on the Monday prior to our Thursday publication.

Thu, Feb 5

Song Circle

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
6-7:30 p.m.

Whether you're a musician, singer, or just love to hum along, this event is for you. Lead or learn folk and acoustic tunes in a casual, welcoming jam session. Bring your instrument, voice, or enthusiasm. Spectators are welcome to come enjoy the music, energy, and community spirit! 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Awful Artworks: Poor-traits

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
6-7:45 p.m.

Have you ever looked at an art project and thought "I could do that," but you in fact could not do that? Let your creativity flow without worrying about an end product! This Awful Artworks will be all about creating portraits! Join us for an exploration of art in all its forms! We will provide the art materials (if you have art supplies gathering dust, bring them to share), you provide the creativity. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Fri, Feb 6

First Fossil Friday!

Calvert Marine Museum
1-4:30 p.m.

Fossil hunters, bring your fossil finds from Calvert Cliffs or other local areas to be identified! This service is provided for free; however, admission fees apply for access to CMM exhibits.

RenFest 2026 Auditions

Southern Community Center
20 Appeal Ln, Lusby
6-9 p.m.

Wanter! Actors to play roles in the beloved Robin Hood tales and beyond! If interested in a fighting role, you will be asked to learn basic, on-the-spot fight tutorials. All roles will also be asked to participate in our finale.

There will be three opportunities to audition for this show! Additional auditions will be:

- Saturday, February 7, 1 p.m.—4 p.m.

- Sunday, February 8, 1 p.m.—4 p.m.
Be prepared to arrive on time and stay for the entire audition slot.

The audition will consist of on-the-spot improvised scenes, and if interested in a fighting role in the Robin Hood story, you will be asked to perform basic, on-the-spot fight tutorial. While group songs will be taught during rehearsals, singing is not required at the audition, and no one will be expected to sing solos.

Sat, Feb 7

Valentine Makers Market

Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
9 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Valentine Maker's Market offers a curated selection of handmade and locally produced goods, making it a destination for thoughtful Valentine's gifts. Shoppers can browse a wide range of products, including small-batch chocolates, jewelry, leather goods, pottery, clothing, and more, from both indoor and outdoor vendors, all featuring homemade, handmade, or homegrown items crafted with care. Food trucks will be on site. Admission to the market area is free. Well-behaved pets on short leashes are welcome outside. Learn more at www.annamariiegarden.org.

Weed Wackers

Myrtle Point Park
9 a.m.-12 Noon.

Potomac Tidewater Land Trust meets the first Saturday of every winter month.

Time to grab your family, your pruners, loppers, hand saws, or your favorite tool and join the Weed Warriors this winter season. Get some fresh air and light exercise. Eye protection and work gloves recommended. Bottled water and snacks provided courtesy of The Good Earth Natural Foods Company, Leonardtown. We love our volunteers!

Questions? Frank@ptlt.org 301-862-3421 or 301-247-3285

Sun, Feb 8

Creature Feature

Calvert Marine Museum
10:15-11:15 a.m.

Meet a mystery animal not normally on display at the museum. Each month, the CMM Education team highlights a different creature found in local estuaries. Take-home coloring pages available. Included with museum admission.

play at the museum. Each month, the CMM Education team highlights a different creature found in local estuaries. Take-home coloring pages available. Included with museum admission.

Mon, Feb 9

Resumes and Interviewing Skills

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Offered by Maryland Department of Labor, American Job Center, this is an interactive workshop for resume and job interview help. Registration closes three days before the event. To attend this class you must register with MWE. Create an account online at mwejobs.maryland.gov. Once registered click "Quick Registration" to enroll. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tech Help Drop-in Hour

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
5:30-6:30 p.m.

Learn how to troubleshoot and fix your tech problems with Calvert Library! Need help with your devices? Drop in to Calvert Library's open tech hours! We are pleased to offer personalized assistance with basic tech requests, computer and internet basics, e-Readers, Libby, Microsoft Office or Google apps, personal devices and more! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-186.

Book Discussion

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
6:30-7:30 p.m.

Celebrate Black History Month with a discussion of one of the most influential books of the past 100 years, "Kindred" by Octavia E. Butler. Dana's 26th birthday celebration ends when she's ripped from 1976 California and thrust onto a Maryland slave plantation in 1815. Her mission: keep alive the white boy who will grow up to assault her ancestor—because without him, she'll never be born. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tue, Feb 10

SEEDCO- Maryland Health Connection

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Got health coverage? SEEDCO can help you get it! Maryland Health Connection offers no-cost and low-cost health insurance. Second Tuesdays of the month. All plans include doctor visits, hospitalization, emergency visits, preventative care, prescriptions, mental health and maternity coverage. Southern Region Hot Line: 855-339-3007; Maryland Health Connection Call Center: 855-642-8572. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Feb 11

Veteran Services Program

Southern Pines Senior Center
20 Appeal Lane, Lusby
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Are you a veteran or close family member looking for assistance? ServingTogether will be on hand to provide support for Calvert County service members, veterans and military families. Walk-ins are encouraged. No appointment is necessary. Visit <https://servingtogetherproject.org/calvert> for more information.

Job Seeker Resources

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

MD Labor Workforce - Veterans Services will be available in person to meet with those seeking employment-related support and community service information. This event focuses on Veterans Services. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Bilingual Conversation Hour: Spanish-English

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
6:30-7:30 p.m.

Come join us for a fun hour of bilingual conversation! 30 minutes in English and 30 minutes in Spanish! We will get to practice our English and Spanish Conversation Skills! 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

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The County Times is a weekly newspaper providing news and information for the residents of St. Mary's and Calvert County. The County Times will be available on newsstands every Thursday. The paper is published by Southern Maryland Publishing Company, which is responsible for the form, content, and policies of the newspaper. The County Times does not espouse any political belief or endorse any product or service in its news coverage.

To be considered for publication, articles and letters to the editor submitted must include the writer's full name, address and daytime phone number. Submissions must be delivered by 4 p.m. on the Monday prior to our Thursday publication to ensure placement for that week. After that deadline, the County Times will make every attempt possible to publish late content, but cannot guarantee so. Letters may be condensed/edited for clarity,

although care is taken to preserve the core of the writer's argument. Copyright in material submitted to the newspaper and accepted for publication remains with the author, but the County Times and its licensees may freely reproduce it in print, electronic or other forms. We are unable to acknowledge receipt of letters. The County Times cannot guarantee that every letter or photo(s) submitted will be published, due to time or space constraints.

CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of January 12, 2026 – January 18, 2026, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 2,469 calls for service throughout the community, including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health: 55
- Disorderly: 9
- Domestic: 24
- Motor Vehicle Crashes: 30
- Patrol Checks / School Checks: 1215
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles: 30
- Traffic Complaints: 54
- Traffic Stops: 465
- 911 Hang-Ups: 60
- ARRESTS: 48

Property Destruction: 26-003842 On January 12, 2025, Deputy Grabill responded to the 1400 block of Knight Avenue in Dunkirk for a report of property destruction. The complainant reported that unknown suspect(s) unlawfully entered the victim's property and caused extensive damage to the interior. Deputies observed a shattered sliding glass door, six broken windows, and multiple inappropriate writings on the interior walls. The estimated value of the property damage is \$4,300.



Morton Kendo Perry



Curt Julian Johnson

Theft: 26-003833 On January 12, 2025, at approximately 8:28 a.m., Deputy Morgal responded to Results Fitness, located at 1990 Chaneyville Road in Owings, for the report of a suspicious person. Upon arrival, deputies observed a vehicle with a broken passenger-side window. The vehicle owner reported her purse had been stolen and her bank card had been fraudulently used. Further investigation led deputies to the Park and Ride located at 5434 Southern Maryland Boulevard in Lothian. **Morton Kendo Perry**, 43, of NE, Washington, D.C., and **Curt Julian Johnson**, 30, of SE, Washington, D.C., were located seated inside a vehicle displaying stolen registration tags. Two purses were found behind the vehicle—one belonging to the Results Fitness victim and another connected to a vehicle break-in reported in Anne Arundel County. During a search of Perry, deputies located Suboxone for which he could not provide a valid prescription. Both men were charged with Theft Scheme (\$100 to under \$1,500), Theft (\$100 to under \$1,500) from a motor vehicle, Rogue and Vagabond, Theft of a Credit Card, and Malicious Destruction of Property (value less than \$1,000). Perry was additionally charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis.

CDS Violation: 26-005558 On January 17, 2026, at approximately 2:31 a.m.,



Ryan Gerald Dailey



Rose Marie Migliaccio

DFC Huy observed a vehicle traveling erratically in the area of Plum Point Road and Cox Road in Huntingtown and initiated a traffic stop. The driver was identified as **Ryan Gerald Dailey** of Laurel, and the passenger as **Rose Marie Migliaccio**, 36 of Prince Frederick. A records check revealed Dailey had an active warrant for his arrest through the Maryland State Police. A search of Dailey incident to arrest revealed a cut straw containing white powdery residue (suspected cocaine), and \$834 in U.S. currency. A search of the vehicle revealed two used needles with suspected heroin residue and additional drug paraphernalia. A search of Migliaccio revealed a used needle containing suspected heroin concealed inside her bra. Both individuals were transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia. Dailey was also charged with CDS: Possession – Not Cannabis.



Adam Joseph Slankard

Road in Lusby, following a reported robbery. Investigation revealed that **Adam Joseph Slankard**, 31, of no fixed address, approached a DoorDash delivery driver parked in the 200 block of Town Square Drive in Lusby. Slankard knocked on the driver's window, punched the victim in the face, and snatched a \$5 cash tip while demanding, "Give me your money." He then fled across the parking lot. Deputies located Slankard a short time later at the Cliffs Motor Inn in St. Leonard. He was taken into custody without incident and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center. Slankard was charged with Robbery, Second-Degree Assault, and Theft under \$100.



Z Ira Jenkins

Fleeing and Eluding: 26-003927 On January 12, 2026, Master Deputy Wilder responded to the area of Patuxent Point Parkway and northbound Route 4 for the report of a hit-and-run collision involving a black Mercedes SUV. The vehicle fled the scene and was later located on HG Trueman Road in Lusby, where the driver refused to stop and fled from deputies. The SUV traveled in the opposite lane of traffic, failed to stop for a red light at Rousby Hall Road, nearly striking other vehicles, and continued through multiple residential streets before driving into the front yard of a residence in the 12100 block of Susan Lane. The driver fled into the residence but was later taken into custody without incident. The driver was identified as **Z Ira Jenkins**, 35, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and was charged with Fleeing and Eluding, Neglect of a Minor, and Reckless Endangerment.

Theft: 26-004103 On January 13, 2026, Deputy Campbell responded to the 200 block of Jendan Way in Prince Frederick, for the report of a theft. The complainant reported sometime between 10:30 a.m. on January 12 and 4:30 a.m. on January 13, unknown suspect(s) stole all 4 tires and wheels off the vehicle while it was parked outside the residence. The estimated value of stolen property is \$7,000.

Theft: 26-004140 On January 13, 2026, at 7:54 a.m., Deputy Hill responded to the 200 block of Jendan Way in Prince Frederick, for the report of a theft. The complainant reported sometime between 9:25 p.m. on January 12 and 7:54 a.m. on January 13, unknown suspect(s) stole all 4 tires and wheels of the vehicle while it was parked outside the residence. The estimated value of stolen property is \$2,250.

Theft: 26-004192 On January 13, 2026, Deputy McIntosh responded to the District One Station located at 10500 Southern Maryland Blvd in Dunkirk, for the report of a theft. The complainant reported sometime between 2 p.m. on December 30 and 4:50 p.m. on January 5, unknown suspect(s) stole a TaylorMade golf club set from a vehicle parked in the 500 block of Salisbury Blvd in Prince Frederick. The estimated value of stolen property is \$4,500.

Theft: 26-004561 On January 14, 2026, DFC Sturdivant responded to the District One Station located at 10500 Southern Maryland Blvd in Dunkirk, for the report of a theft. The complainant reported sometime between January 1 and January 13, unknown suspect(s) stole the front license plate off the vehicle. The estimated value of stolen property is \$50.

Theft: 26-005374 On January 16, 2026, Deputy McIntosh responded to the CVS Pharmacy located at 10095 Ward Road in Dunkirk for a reported theft. The complainant advised an unknown suspect entered the store, placed a large quantity of shampoo and conditioner into a white trash bag, and fled through the front door without paying. The estimated value of the stolen property is \$450.



Donnell Maurice Little

Resisting Arrest: 26-005098 On January 15, 2026, DFC Parks observed a suspicious vehicle driving slowly through the parking lot and blocking the flow of traffic at the Walmart located at 150 Solomons Island Road in Prince Frederick. The driver abruptly exited the vehicle and approached the deputy in an agitated manner, refusing

to identify himself and taking a fighting stance. The male was belligerent and continued to yell at deputies while resisting their efforts. The driver was identified as **Donnell Maurice Little**, 40, of Gibsonville, NC, and was taken into custody. A subsequent investigation revealed the vehicle was displaying a fictitious temporary registration tag. Little was issued multiple motor vehicle citations and charged with Resisting Arrest, Obstruction, and Failure to Obey a Lawful Order.



Donnell Maurice Little

Indecent Exposure: 26-005202 On January 16, 2026, DFC Mister responded to the Calvert County Detention Center, located at 325 Stafford Road in Prince Frederick, for a reported sexual assault. During the investigation, **Donnell Maurice Little**, 40, of Gibsonville, North Carolina, was observed masturbating in front of a health care employee. Little was charged with Indecent Exposure.



Marvin Charles Dickerson

Theft: 26-005291 On January 16, 2026, Deputy Hill responded to 75 Sherry Lane in Prince Frederick for the report of a theft. The complainant reported a male, later identified as **Marvin Charles Dickerson**, 41, of Prince Frederick, was observed concealing a bottle of Paul Masson peach-flavored brandy valued at \$13.99 in his pants before leaving the store without paying. Deputies located Dickerson in Prince Frederick, where he admitted to the theft. He was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with Theft: Less than \$100.

Theft: 26-005374 On January 16, 2026, Deputy McIntosh responded to the CVS Pharmacy located at 10095 Ward Road in Dunkirk for a reported theft. The complainant advised an unknown suspect entered the store, placed a large quantity of shampoo and conditioner into a white trash bag, and fled through the front door without paying. The estimated value of the stolen property is \$450.

Editor's Note: The above arrests are not an indication of guilt or innocence as the cases have not been adjudicated.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to call the Sheriff's Office at (410) 535-2800 and reference the case number provided. Citizens may remain anonymous thru the 'Submit a Tip' feature on the Calvert County Sheriff's Office mobile app. To download, visit <https://apps.myocv.com/share/a39520678>. Tipsters may also email ccsotips@calvertcountymd.gov

County Announces CRRF Awards

The Calvert County Department of Community Resources is pleased to announce the fiscal year 2026 Community Reinvestment & Repair Fund (CRRF) awardees. The CRRF program will distribute \$547,469 to local organizations providing critical services across Calvert County, including youth development, education, behavioral health, homelessness prevention, community safety, workforce development and reentry support.

The FY26 awards reflect Calvert County's continued commitment to supporting community organizations and strengthening the programs that serve residents every day.

"These investments directly support programs and services that meet community needs," said Jennifer Moreland, director of Community Services. "We are proud to partner with organizations that demonstrate strong capacity, measurable outcomes and a sustained commitment to the well being of Calvert County families."

Deputy Director Jacquelyn Culver emphasized this year's funding reflects extensive community feedback and a thorough review process. "The FY26 awards are the result of careful evaluation, community surveys and data-driven prioritization," she said. "These organizations play a vital role in expanding services and building stronger pathways for youth, families and vulnerable residents."

Award announcements follow a competitive application cycle with proposals to address the funding priorities of:

- Education and after-school programs
- Behavioral health and crisis response
- Community childcare and recreational services
- Housing and homelessness prevention
- Job training and workforce development programs



Jennifer Moreland, director of Community Services

- Transportation improvements in high-density areas
- Truancy and absenteeism intervention programs
- Programs serving residents impacted by incarceration

Calvert County will work closely with funded agencies to finalize grant agreements, budgets, timelines and reporting requirements. Agencies will receive direct communication outlining next steps, including payment schedules and documentation expectations.

For more information about CRRF, future funding cycles or to view the full awardee list, contact the Calvert County Department of Community Resources at 410-535-1600, ext. 8803, or visit www.calvertcountymd.gov/CRRF.

Press Release from Calvert County Government

Public Hearing Set on Dunkirk Plan

The Calvert County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 7 p.m. to receive and consider public comments on proposed updates to Draft Chapter 1: Town Centers and Draft Chapter 3: Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan Update of the Master Plan of Town Centers.

The hearing will take place in the Commissioners' Hearing Room at the Calvert County Administration Building, located at 150 Main St. in Prince Frederick.

Residents and other interested persons are encouraged to review the updates in advance. Draft documents may be viewed online at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/DunkirkTownCenter, by contacting the Department of Planning & Zoning at 410-535-1600, ext. 2356, or via email at TownCenterUpdate@calvertcountymd.gov.

Written comments will be made part of

the official record if received by close of business Tuesday, Feb. 17. Submit written comments to TownCenterUpdate@calvertcountymd.gov or to the Planning Commission, 150 Main St., Prince Frederick, MD 20678.

The meeting will be streamed live on the county's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/CalvertCountyGov. Individuals may also listen or comment by phone:

- Dial-in: 872-216-2953
- Meeting ID: 299 248 548 964 4
- Passcode: PX2gm3va
- Request to Speak *9

For more information, contact the Department of Planning & Zoning at 410-535-1600, ext. 2356.

Press release from Calvert County Government

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Fowler Announces Candidacy for State Senate

Promising to be an independent voice for the people of Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties, while delivering pragmatic solutions to Maryland's most urgent challenges, prominent regional attorney Jason Fowler has announced his candidacy for the 27th District seat in the State Senate.

Speaking before a large crowd of supporters in Prince Frederick, Fowler characterized his candidacy as one driven by the desire to build a better state for his children and the next generation. "Maryland is at an inflection point. The choices we make today, in this moment, will largely determine the lives my children, and yours, can look forward to in the decades to come," he said. "This campaign will be about speaking to the needs of the 27th District, and offering new ideas that can, and will, help our state achieve its fullest potential."

Fowler is a practicing family and business lawyer who serves along with his wife and law partner, Tamara, as founding principals of the Prince Frederick firm of Fowler and Fowler. He attended Georgetown University Law Center and St. Thomas University, School of Law for his Juris Doctor Degree, and was admitted to practice in the State of Maryland in 2014. The Fowlers live in Prince Frederick with their children, Zoey, Zachary and Zara.

Fowler focused much of his announcement speech on the crises of affordability and poverty that has severely compromised Maryland's quality of life. "Ours is one of the wealthiest states in the nation, yet nearly 700,000 Marylanders and one in every six children experience hunger on a regular basis," he said. "Our state is the best place 1 in America to live, work and raise a family, and yet it is also a state that is now priced beyond the reach of families who can no longer afford to stay."

Fowler pledged specific actions to address the energy affordability crisis, in which ratepayers across the state have seen their electricity costs soar to unprecedented levels. He promised to support the repeal of Senate Bill 1 – the controversial legislation, passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2024 – that eliminated private sector competition and allowed the public utilities to operate as monopolies within their service territories.

"Anyone with a basic understanding of economics knows that the elimination of competition and the creation of monopolies will inevitably result in higher consumer prices, and Maryland's electricity markets are no exception," said Fowler. He also called for the accelerated development of Maryland's nuclear and geothermal energy capabilities as a way to reduce our dependence on out-of-state and fossil fuel generated electricity. "These emerging energy sources are renewable and they are ours," said Fowler. "We must do a better job of investing in our local sources of clean power."

Pointing out that Maryland lawmakers will confront a \$1.5 billion budget deficit



Jason Fowler

even as neighboring states such as Virginia boast multibillion surpluses, Fowler called for a new fiscal and economic approach for the state. "There are those who believe that the measure of one's commitment to an issue can only be measured by how much they are willing to spend toward its implementation. That, respectfully, is nonsense," said Fowler. "We can and must demand better results from those institutions we sustain through our tax dollars. We must manage taxpayer dollars as carefully as we would manage our own."

"Above all, we must acknowledge that we can no longer count upon the federal government as our fiscal and economic backstop," he added, noting that Maryland lost 25,000 federal jobs in 2025 because of President Trump's cuts to the federal government. "We must act now to build a more stable, predictable and welcoming environment for our private sector, so Maryland businesses can create jobs, generate tax revenue and support one another."

Finally, Fowler acknowledged the challenges that Maryland has faced at a time when the Trump Administration is violating core constitutional principles and basic human rights. He vowed to use his Senate seat to defend Maryland's values. "I will fight like hell to safeguard those programs that provide food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, and education for children in my district, regardless of what is on their birth certificate," he said.

"This is the United States of America, whether Donald Trump and his acolytes like it or not, and these are basic necessities that every human being deserves."

Maryland's primary election day is June 23, 2026. Fowler said that time is of the essence and asked each of his supporters to take an active role in his candidacy. Each of us, doing our part, can leave our children a state that will be better tomorrow than it is today," he said. "It is in the pursuit of that dream that I begin this good fight and humbly ask that you join me in the arena."

Press release from Fowler for State Senate

Is a Data Center Coming to Calvert Cliffs?

County Prepares for Eventuality

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Although rumors have been rampant for months, for the first time there's been a public acknowledgement that Constellation Energy may be eying their Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant property for a data center.

The admission came from Commissioner Buddy Hance during the board's Jan. 28 meeting following an hour-long report from an official of a Virginia county about their experiences with data centers there.

The announcement comes amid environmental and economic concerns by some countians about the impact on the water table and increased energy costs for consumers from the energy-guzzling data centers.

The commissioners agreed to consider Hance's proposal to restrict data centers. His proposal is:

"To mandate that any data center coming to Calvert County use a closed loop cooling system because that greatly reduces the water that they need."

"We ban any data center from drilling a well for cooling purposes."

"Mandate that they collect all roof runoff for cooling so that we don't have issues with storm water runoff and give some extra order to use for their cooling capacity."

"That they pay all infrastructure costs related to any project they might bring forward."

At the suggestion of Commissioner Mark Cox, the condition was added that the data centers use Tier 4 diesel generators.

As an afterthought, Hance also added that the county investigate the hiring of a consultant to negotiate with whatever data center operator proposes to come into the county.

At the insistence of Commissioner Mike



Commissioner Buddy Hance

Hance, the decision was delayed until a Feb. 10 work session to give the commissioners a chance to consider other restrictions.

Whatever is decided would have to be incorporated as a zoning text amendment in the county zoning ordinance.

Mecklenburg County, Virginia has just 30,000 people and was reeling from the loss of their tobacco culture (like Calvert) and a detention center (unlike Calvert).

They embraced data centers when the first one came to take over the jail site.

The local official said his county has thrived with data centers, using the tax revenue to replace aging schools. He said the county has received economic benefit from then.

He said the centers use lake water and energy from local electric companies that are state regulated. He admitted electricity rates have gone up but said that was everywhere.

Hance observed there wasn't much in common between the two county situations.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Two Men Convicted in Robbery

On January 30, 2026, Samuel Giles, 55, of Washington, DC, entered a guilty plea to robbery in Calvert County Circuit Court and received a sentence of 5 years incarceration in the Maryland Division of Corrections. A co-defendant, Darnell Marquis Atchison, also of DC, previously pleaded guilty to the same offense and received 5 years of active incarceration.

The convictions arose from an incident that occurred on May 4, 2025. On that date, two masked men entered the Town Center

Market in Dunkirk and accosted the store clerk. They then stole boxes of cigarettes and rolls of quarters and fled the store. Ultimately, Giles and Atchison were identified as the perpetrators by Calvert County Sheriff's detectives and arrested in DC.

This case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Christopher J. Monte.

Press release from Calvert State's Attorney

Grenis Seeks Second Term

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

During the first term of school board member Lisa Grenis, she (and Jana Post) often were on the losing end of 3-2 votes.

Now, with a full complement of like-minded conservatives, Grenis is more able to accomplish her agenda. She recently filed for reelection for a second term.

The retired teacher said, "I actually look forward to serving another term on the County Board of Education and providing students with the best education possible."

She added, "We've made tremendous progress already, and we're going to continue prioritizing academic excellence in everything we do."

Regarding the controversies over the board decisions on DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) she said, "No matter what decisions are made, you're not going to make everyone happy."

She moved at one point last year to take inclusion out of the mission statement.

She explained, "Inclusion is a strategy. We have lots of strategies that will lead us to academic excellence. Inclusion is a strategy that will help achieve our goal. Our mission is academic excellence."

So why the controversy then? "I don't think people understand. They think because it's not in our mission statement, that it's not important, including students, especially students with disabilities. It's a priority."

She agreed that "perhaps" the controversy has diverted attention away from other important issues. "I can only speak from my perspective. My mission remains academic excellence for our students."

She added, "I can tell you that achievement, according to the scores, is up. According to the discipline reports we receive, referrals are down. So, we're heading in the right direction. Do I think we're where we want to be? No! That's why I want another four years to ensure we continue on this road to improvement."

What's left to do? "We face budget challenges ranging from teacher retention, making sure classrooms are not overcrowded, staffing shortages, transportation and equipment needs. The key is transparency and knowing where to prioritize spending."

Of the teacher shortage, she said, "This is definitely a national issue. It's not just Calvert County. It's happening across the country."

She added, "I think it's several things. With the new Blueprint mandates, teachers

will be on a new salary scale. Should that help recruit and retain teachers?" But will that be enough? We're dealing with behavior issues that could lead to losing teachers. We have to make sure our teachers are supported and our support staff as well."

She comes to the job with a strong educational background. "I've served in a teaching capacity of some sort for six years. I've served as not only a classroom teacher, but a specialist. So, I have a good connection with teachers throughout the county who I try to keep in touch with so that I understand what their issues and concerns are, and I take those issues and concerns to our superintendent to see if he can facilitate change."

She explained, "As a first-grade teacher, you're teaching all subject areas. As a learning specialist, you work more with teachers than you do students. And I worked in that capacity as well."

Is there any fun being on the school board? "What I enjoy most is going and visiting the schools. We're doing so many things well in Calvert County, and those things need to be celebrated, and it is an absolute privilege being part of those celebrations. I love when teachers reach out to me because something special is happening in their building, and they would like to have



Lisa Grenis

a board member present. And it's just an absolute honor to be representing the board in that capacity. I try to attend absolutely anything that I'm invited to. And that is the fun of this job."

So far Grenis is the only candidate to file for the At-Large seat.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Superintendent's Budget Asks \$15M More

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Interim School Superintendent Dr. Marcus Newsome has presented a proposed \$303.25 million budget that is \$15 million more than the current budget, or a 5.3 percent increase. It calls for \$6.7 million more from the county.

The budget is sure to be controversial because it includes a number of new positions, including four new administrators. The increased staff are in line with recommendations made by an efficiency study that will be formally released on Feb. 12. The budget is balanced with a significant use of fund balance.

Newsome on Jan. 29 said of the county request, "We had a budget meeting today. And they (the county commissioners) are experiencing a number of fiscal challenges themselves. And so, we know this is going to be a stretch, and that there'll be lots of conversations between representatives from the county and our school staff to see where we can end up."

The school board will vote on the budget on Feb. 26 and send their recommendation to the county commissioners.

Newsome, quoting from the study, said, "The theme is academically strong, fiscally

responsible."

Newsome said, "Our focus is going to be on continuous improvement. We must first start with the Blueprint, which is a state mandate, and I just wanted to share that we are making steady progress in implementation, starting with the early childhood access opportunities for our students, investment in our teachers and the career ladder, developing career pathways and college readiness, providing additional resources to our students in need and meeting all the regulatory mandates."

Newsome said, "There are some opportunities for growth here. We have discussed earlier in the school year that there's a lot of room for growth for mathematics achievement. There are opportunities for us to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students experiencing economic disadvantage, students from historically underserved groups."

He added, "These are some of the financial stressors that we're facing right now. The expanding Blueprint mandates, insufficient staffing to meet increasing pressures on our schools, student safety and well-being. Rising legal costs, enrollment declines. There's some structural negative impact on the school district as a result of that, transportation costs, and aging school facilities."

He explained, "We want to make sure that we align our resources with strategic priorities, invest in high student impact success so that we see return on investment."

Newsome then dropped what many may consider a bombshell from a study that is aimed at efficiency. He said, "The efficiency report is going to drive much of our work going forward in the next budget" adding, "One of the findings was that we are inefficient because we are understaffed in many areas of our school leadership."

The study proposes the addition of four administrators and a number of other staff additions, which are reflected in Newsome's budget.

He explained, "We had chiefs; two of them would be moved to deputies, so we would have a deputy superintendent for schools and learning and a deputy superintendent for operations and support. And then the director for teaching and learning would be moved to an executive director. You'll also see four... new positions."

The new positions would be offset by savings in some other areas. For instance, he said, "The elimination of 13.5 non-instructional positions through attrition. We don't have 13.5 people leaving next year, but we do believe that we can reduce that number



Interim School Superintendent Dr. Marcus Newsome

by six next year."

He added, "Public Works (the consultant) estimates that we can actually reduce transportation and its costs by more than \$12 million over the next three years. Our team believes that that estimate is really high. I believe it's probably closer to \$6 million, but I would take that."

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| THU, FEB 5 Sunny Hi: 33° Lo: 21° | FRI, FEB 6 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 36° Lo: 22° | SAT, FEB 7 Mostly Sunny Hi: 26° Lo: 12° | SUN, FEB 8 Partly Cloudy Hi: 26° Lo: 15° |
| MON, FEB 9 Partly Cloudy Hi: 33° Lo: 22° | TUE, FEB 10 Mostly Sunny Hi: 42° Lo: 33° | WED, FEB 11 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 43° Lo: 32° | THU, FEB 12 AM Showers Hi: 43° Lo: 30° |

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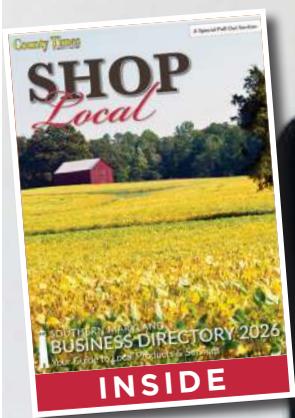
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