

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

FEBRUARY 19, 2026 **BERLIN • NORTH WORCESTER COUNTY • OCEAN PINES** **FREE**



TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

A proposed bike and pedestrian bridge over Route 113 could improve safety and connectivity, project leaders told residents at a meeting last week.

Rt. 113 skyway could cost \$15M

Would present safer way to cross highway, but also host of practical obstacles

Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 19, 2026) While a pedestrian bridge over Route US 113 could reunite disconnected communities with Berlin services, officials and residents continue to debate whether more grounded solutions could be a better

approach than the \$15 million skyway.

Last week, Berlin and project leaders invited the community to meetings to learn more about the possibility of a bridge over Route 113, which since its installation in the 1950s has physically divided the town.

The dual highway's width limits safe pedestrian and bike access between east-side neighborhoods and destinations such as schools, health-

care facilities, downtown, parks, and the town's sole grocery store, Food Lion.

In an attempt to address the issue, the Town of Berlin has been studying the feasibility of providing a pedestrian bridge for residents cut off from a safe route to key services.

Project representatives attended the information session last Wednesday. They presented possible bridge locations: Old Ocean City Boulevard, See BRIDGE Page 2

Museum preparing for 250th

Will highlight state's role in creating new country

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 19, 2026) When the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum reopens its doors this spring, it will welcome guests to exhibits celebrating and recognizing the United States of America's 250th anniversary and Maryland's role in it.

On April 1, the Taylor House will reopen for its 2026 spring and summer season. This year marks 250 years since the birth of the United States, when, on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted, and the colonies' political ties to Great Britain were officially severed.

Melissa Reid, Taylor House executive director, said that the museum's new programming was created under the umbrella of the Maryland 250 Commission's Lower Eastern Shore Division. The Maryland 250 Commission "commemorates Marylanders' many contributions to American history through events, programs, and opportunities to serve," its website reads.

One of the new exhibits coming to the downtown facility this April highlights the colonial era in Worcester County and around Berlin. The focus, Reid said, will shift to the lives of everyday people.

"We're looking at more of the regular, everyday people, whose stories are not often told," the director said.

Part of that work has involved re- See TAYLOR Page 12

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Bridge over Rt. 113 wouldn't fix everything

Continued from Page 1

Bay Street, and Germantown Road. Nearby services at the Old Ocean City crossing include Food Lion, medical uses northeast of the intersection, and commercial spots west of the intersection.

At Bay Street, a bridge could improve access to Henry Park and nearby commercial locations like Dollar General. A bridge at the Germantown Road position would allow residents to reach Roadie Joe's, as well as Worcester County sports fields and churches.

However, there was considerable debate over whether a physical bridge is the most appropriate and realistic approach.

Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall maintained that the initiative does not necessarily need to be a bridge, but could

be any kind of endeavor that promotes neighborhood connectivity. He added that if the physical path is chosen, only one of the three possible sites would be selected for construction.

"The focus of the grant was specific to bridging a highway that divides," he said. "A play on words...it is not saying that a bridge is going to go at all three or any of those places."

Timothy Connor, senior manager for transportation at Gannett Fleming Inc., added that while his team was contracted with determining the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge, the actual remedy could be a myriad of combinations, even axing the elevated crossing altogether.

Some attendees suggested that a walkable system with sidewalks, crosswalks and flashing lights would

provide east-side communities a simpler path to reach Berlin's frequented spots.

"All those things are possibilities," Tyndall said.

Patti Stevens, founder of the Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition, was also present last Wednesday, where she spoke to the importance of safe, walkable neighborhoods.

Stevens said that actual, physical pedestrian bridges exist across the United States, and that they offer easy ways for walkers and bikers to cross busy highways. While the construc-

tion could be configurations of crosswalks rather than an overpass, the WCBPC creator maintained that "these kinds of bridges exist all around the country and there's no reason why it couldn't be in Berlin."

Tyndall added that a bridge across US 113 would be the safest option.

Some participants at last week's meeting argued that targeting drivers could help reduce roadway hazards. Adding green spaces or murals, for instance, could encourage vehicle operators to slow down as they take in the area's aesthetics.

The mayor, however, countered that these initiatives wouldn't reach the root of the problem.

"The best practice is to take the bicycle and pedestrian traffic off where vehicles are," he said. "We talk about the idea where you can slow folks down, you can make it look beautiful, I don't disagree, but the fact is it's not truly the highest level of safety. If you're going to take children and ask them to cross a crosswalk, can we make it better? Yes. Can we make it truly, truly safe? Not the best."

There were also some concerns about how those with disabilities could use a potential bridge.

"I am currently one who is walking challenged," said Dean Burrell, Berlin

See MUST Page 3



TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Berlin residents were invited to a meeting last week where officials provided more details regarding a proposed bike and pedestrian bridge over Route 113.

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Pine Tones Chorus prepares for community performance

(Feb. 12, 2026) Twice a year, the Pine Tones Chorus (PTC) performs an engaging local concert combining old favorites and fresh material alike.

On Thursday, March 5, PTC will be holding a first rehearsal to prepare for its Spring concert, Pine Tones Goes to the Movies.

The variety of musical selections include Somewhere Over the Rainbow, 42nd Street, Moon River, and When You Wish Upon a Star. The chorus consists of musically proficient amateurs with a professional sound. They combine commitment and FUN to produce musically high-quality shows.

The first rehearsal is an opportunity for interested folks to try out the group, meet other singers, ask questions, and decide if it's a good fit. Musical training and experience are highly valued, but not necessary. If you love to sing, they welcome you and

will help you become the singer you want to be.

There will be 14 rehearsals in preparation for the June 5 performance of Pine Tones Goes to the Movies. As a service to the community, PTC prides itself on performing at assisted living and senior centers throughout Worcester County in the weeks before the concert.

Contact Jenny Anderson at 443-655-5636 or Dave Holloway at (610-213-7472 with any questions. Email: pinetoneschorus@gmail.com. Follow PTC on Facebook or @pinetoneschorus.

Funding for this event is in part provided by the Worcester County Arts Council, Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, organizations dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

Must be usable by everyone

Continued from Page 2

Town Council Vice President. "...I might walk up to the thing and say, 'I'll take my chance crossing the highway.' I would like to have that especially considered."

Tyndall maintained that project leaders intend to ensure a bridge is usable to all.

"[Burrell] is correct because it's important that if that is the route that we take, we make it accessible to folks and not overly obstruct it, because we don't want you to have to walk down to Tripoli Street to be able to obtain a bridge on Bay Street," he said. "But we do have to be understanding of the engineering side, too."

Money for the reconnection project has posed some challenges. As Connor stated last Wednesday, if the town opts to construct a physical bridge over US Route 113, the project cost could soar well beyond \$15 million.

In August 2025, the municipality announced that nearly \$1 million of federal funding previously awarded for the Connecting Neighborhoods initiative had been rescinded. While Berlin received the initial \$250,000, Congress eliminated the remaining \$950,000 in a budget reconciliation bill passed in July.

Following the cuts, Berlin began working with the Maryland Department of Transportation to identify alternative funding sources. MDOT later let the town know that it had located \$643,000 in unspent earmarked federal funds that could be redirected to the Route 113 project. However, the municipality was required to provide a 20% local match to accept the money.

While MDOT gave Berlin two years to complete the match, town officials

said at the time that they were given only two days to decide whether to claim the dollars.

At the same time, Worcester County had already awarded Berlin \$113,000 for a separate Rails and Trails project, but those funds were restricted to that purpose. To meet the match stipulation, at the end of last summer, Berlin formally asked the Worcester County Commissioners to repurpose the funding for the Route 113 effort.

Ultimately, a commission majority voted to reallocate \$24,000 from the Rails and Trails funding pot toward the Route 113 initiative.

Combined with \$104,000 already available, the \$24,000 brought Berlin to its minimum 20% match of \$128,000.

Still, officials maintain that the current balance is nowhere near where the project needs to be. However, when asked last week how the project would be funded, Tyndall said it would likely be a collaboration among the municipality, the state, and the federal government.

"Keep in mind it's a federal highway system," he said. "A state highway that helps maintain it, and a municipality. So, there's probably going to be some form of a partnership. To think we're going to spend \$15 million for a bridge in the Town of Berlin by ourselves, not going to happen. We cannot do that without partnerships."

The mayor added that, to determine what any potential funding relationship would look like, the town must first have a plan for how best to address the Route 113 issue, whether that is a physical bridge or a crosswalk system.

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Planning Comm., attorney discuss process

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 19, 2026) The Berlin Planning Commission is considering new, clearer procedural guidelines after staff raised concerns about incomplete application submissions that can create confusion for town officials and developers.

During last week's planning commission meeting, planning staff let the body know that developers are often submitting partial project information by the deadline. This can cause issues when applicants then present additional materials at public hearings that were never shared with staff, the commission, or the public beforehand.

"One of the things I wanted to bring up to the commission ... you all have the power to issue rules and regulations and processes as part of how this body works," planning legal consultant Emily Morris told the planning commission.

"I would suggest that we may want to consider putting in place some kind of guidelines as to how things are submitted to you that kind of clarifies some of the confusion we're having on the staff level, and you're level, to understand what is being expected to be in the packet of information, when it's going to be expected, and

rules about what to be presented by applicants at the meeting."

Commission members said the details presented should be limited to what the applicant submits by the deadline, ahead of the hearing.

Morris said that some developers fail to do that, and that a set of process standards should clarify this.

"You all don't get the benefit of seeing things in advance and having staff give you our thoughts," the legal consultant added.

The discussion focused on the commission's authority to establish internal rules governing the submission of materials and timing. While some members wondered if that authority rests with the Town Council, staff noted that the commission's statute authorizes it to adopt procedures for how it conducts its operations.

Staff proposed establishing clear submission standards, including written notices to applicants informing of missing information and realistic review timelines. The commissioners agreed that better record-keeping, particularly written communication, would help protect the town and reduce disputes.

In particular, the staff should send the applicant a formal letter in situations when submissions are incom-

plete.

Staff added that insufficient plans can lead to much longer review times. Currently, developers are required to submit proposals no later than 30 days before the hearing. Morris said some applicants submit less detailed notes, making it hard for staff and planning commission members to review the information.

One suggestion was to create a public-facing flowchart showing each step in the review process and estimated timeframes. This would provide applicants with clearer expectations.

"When I look at the steps of the planning commission and how you go from the initial meeting to final approval, it's there, but doesn't say how long it's going to take, and if you're saying that I'm submitting it on Jan. 15th for the Feb. 16 meeting, I expect to make it," commission Chair Matthew Stoehr told staff. "That flow chart says, no, we need to be at step six with all this information 30 days before we get there. That might give you guys more credence and power."

The conversation follows a Historic District Commission meeting, at which Atlantic Hotel owners John and Michelle Fager and facility general manager Laura Stearns admitted

they failed to obtain proper HDC approval and the appropriate permits for landscaping work.

The issue was raised again at last week's Town Council meeting, where Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall acknowledged that the town code is not always clear, which can lead to confusion, as seen at the HDC meeting. As Morris emphasizes, vague town guidelines can also create issues with planning commission applications.

As such, the mayor said that an internal working group will be launched to ensure that processes are easily understood and followed. That team will include Town Administrator Mary Bohlen, Tyndall, Town Attorney David Gaskill, Morris, Planning Director Ryan Hardesty, Stoehr, HDC Chair Norman Bunting, Board of Zoning Appeals Chair Joe Moore, and councilmembers Jay Knerr and Jack Orris.

At the conclusion of the planning commission meeting, the body agreed that while staff and consultants handle technical matters such as stormwater and utilities, the commission still needs sufficient time and complete information to evaluate projects against the town code and determine whether they are a good fit for Berlin.

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Work continues on old golf course

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 19, 2026) Restoration efforts at the former Bay Club golf course continue, as officials work to strengthen public access and recreational activities at the preserve.

That project has now been expanded even further with the newly acquired parcel on Evans Road.

The Lower Shore Land Trust and state officials held an information session on Thursday, Feb. 12, to update community members on the work underway to transform the former golf course, now known as the Libertytown Branch Tract, into a recreational hotspot.

During the community update, Alex Clark of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) said the state has officially closed on a roughly 40-acre property located on the southeastern edge of the Libertytown tract.

DNR finalized the acquisition of the land in the fall of 2025 using funds from the conservation initiative, Program Open Space. The parcel connects directly to the 672-acre Libertytown Branch Tract. The Libertytown Tract, formally the Bay Club golf course, was purchased with assistance from the land trust and transferred to DNR ownership in 2023.

With the 40-acre addition, land restoration and recreational opportunities for Worcester County residents has been expanded.

Officials said that the new land provides a more direct link to Berlin than the existing access point on Libertytown Road.

"It's a better connection with Berlin than Libertytown Road," Clark said. "...It will be a better connection for recreation."

Plans for the site include establishing a combined meadow and tree planting, along with a small parking area measuring approximately 70 by 70 feet. The lot will be smaller than the main parking area on Libertytown Road and is designed primarily for visitors coming from outside the immediate area, Clark said.

Work is also underway on the main Bay Club property itself. Clark said DNR crews will begin smoothing out portions of the old golf cart pads this winter, using small gravel stone to create a more natural surface suitable for non-motorized use, such as walking, biking, and horseback riding.

By early spring, officials hope at least part of the trail system will be usable. The Friends of Libertytown Branch and the Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Committee are planning to host a Celebrate Trails

Day-style event on April 25, giving the public a chance to explore the evolving landscape.

"With any luck, by April or so, we are hoping to have some portion of the trail in a more usable state," Clark said. "The Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition, they want to do a Celebrate Trails Day at the end of April. They want to have an event on this property. I made them aware that's going to be a work in progress, but they want to see the future of what the trail system will become."

The meadow areas will take time to fully develop. Officials explained that new meadows typically require about three years to establish, with periodic mowing early on to control invasive weeds. The environmentalists added that guests should not expect a picture-perfect meadow by this summer.

While recreational access is expanding, hunting will continue to be allowed on the property. Clark emphasized that the trails are intended for both hunters and other users, though he encouraged visitors to wear bright colors during hunting seasons and avoid the opening hunting weekends if possible.

In addition to trails and meadows, conservation leaders hope the site will become a hub for citizen science. Officials noted that birders and naturalists can log species sightings on platforms such as eBird and iNaturalist, and organizers are exploring hosting future "bioblitz" events to document plants, animals, and fungi across the property.

Community members interested in staying involved can follow updates through the Facebook group Friends of Libertytown Branch, as the transformation of the former golf course into a regional conservation and recreation space continues. Meetings are also hosted quarterly at the Berlin Library.

Emergency bill to continue livestock housing creation

State environmental team works to fix lapsed permit

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(Feb. 13, 2026) Maryland lawmakers heard testimony this week on an emergency bill aimed at allowing chicken house construction to resume while the state updates an expired environmental permit.

"Time is money. It's costing money because it's blocked up like a dam," said Wicomico County farmer and realtor Rusty Molnar, speaking Tuesday in support of Senate Bill 371. He testified before the Senate committee on Education, Energy and Environment that the resulting backlog of livestock housing projects extends beyond construction into commercial lending and local permitting.

Before constructing any new livestock housing – also known as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, or CAFOs, in government jargon – state law requires farmers to obtain a water quality permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment, or MDE.

Such permits are issued under the umbrella of a statewide General Discharge Permit, one that sets environmental rules for animal feeding operations, and ensures farmers don't discharge pollutants into local waterways. It serves as a master permitting template that individual farms enroll under rather than negotiating separate agreements.

That five-year general permit expired in July. For now, without an active general permit in place, MDE cannot issue new CAFO permits.

Existing farms are allowed to carry on operations under administrative See ENVIRONMENTAL Page 7



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Environmental worries shared

Continued from Page 6

extensions, but brand-new projects have to wait – effectively placing a seven-month freeze on new livestock housing statewide.

Senate Bill 371 would repeal the requirement that farmers must have a permit in hand before building new livestock housing, allowing projects to move forward while MDE finalizes its new general permit. As an emergency bill, it would take effect immediately if passed.

Bill sponsor Sen. Mary Beth Carozza (R-38, Worcester) said the months-long regulatory bottleneck has created roughly \$35 million in stalled construction. The poultry industry alone contributes more than \$5.4 billion annually to Maryland's economy, she added.

"This significant negative impact does not account for the incalculable losses of on-farm income, real estate transfer, banking fees, equipment feed sales, and resulting government revenue," she told the committee Tuesday.

MDE Secretary Serena McIlwain acknowledged the permit expiration in testimony Tuesday but assured lawmakers the bill would not weaken environmental safeguards.

"Unfortunately, my agency did lapse on the permit. I won't get into the reasons why, but I can tell you and assure that will not happen again," she told the committee. "No facility can operate until it meets our environmental protections, period, point blank."

When reached for comment about a timeline for completion, MDE spokesman Jay Apperson told OC Today-Dispatch that the agency is working to get it done as soon as possible. "We recognize that having a new permit in place is critical for both the economy and ecology of our agricultural communities," he said.

The bill also had support from a

state grain producers' association, the Maryland Farm Bureau, and the state's agriculture department.

Grayson Middleton, government affairs manager for the Delmarva Chicken Association, told lawmakers the bill "is simply fixing a regulatory glitch that no one has noticed until now."

"I ask that you please give our farmers the much-needed assurance that this will not happen again," he said.

Opponents warned the measure skirts environmental safeguards and sets new precedents for agricultural construction.

Annie Richards, with the environmental advocacy group ShoreRivers, said a farmer's discharge permit isn't just a piece of paper, but the mechanism that enforces oversight over environmental protocols like manure storage standards, stormwater controls, and nutrient pollution.

"We are discussing a retreat from the Clean Water Act that will set a precedent for a 'build first, permit later' standard," she said.

Environmental advocates also raised concerns about transparency in the permitting process, saying months of public information requests about the lapse went unanswered. They argued the solution should focus on accountability within MDE.

Others testified that MDE could have avoided the need to change state law altogether by issuing individual permits to farmers that matched the conditions of the expired general permit.

Notably, CAFO rules apply not just to chicken houses, but to pig farms, dairy farms, and cattle operations statewide.

The poultry industry alone contributes more than \$5.4 billion annually to Maryland's economy, according to Carozza.

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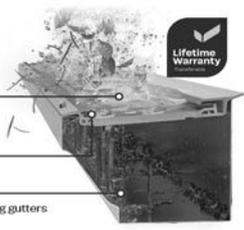
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Experts say oyster market is in a depression

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(Feb. 19, 2026) Oysters aren't disappearing from the Chesapeake, but buyers might be.

Even as state environmental officials say the oyster fishery is booming, watermen say low demand for Maryland's signature shellfish is driving down prices, prompting lawmakers to seek relief.

"Oysters are doing great, but it's the market. The market has just been depressed," said Sonny Gwin, president of the nonprofit Waterman's Association of Worcester County.

Gwin also runs a retail seafood market in Ocean City, where sales of oysters in the shell and shucked have "probably been cut in half." He said prices by the bushel that typically range from \$45 to \$55 have dropped to \$35 or less.

"I couldn't even tell you what the reason is for," Gwin said. "The watermen I know that are oystering are having a hard time with it because they're only going two or three times a week and the price isn't where they'd like to see it. The price needs to go up."

Weather conditions haven't helped. A statewide deep freeze reportedly has limited oystermen to a handful of fishing days all season,

which runs from Oct. 1 to March 31.

Against that backdrop, Sen. Mary Beth Carozza (R-38, Worcester) introduced legislation aimed at stabilizing the industry by adjusting where oysters can be harvested. Senate Bill 875 would launch a five-year pilot program to open specific areas of the Chesapeake on a rotating basis.

At the federal level, Eastern Shore Congressman Andy Harris is asking the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, to step in and declare an economic fishery disaster. Harris is urging the agency to use the money to provide financial help to Maryland oystermen from its own proprietary disaster relief fund for fisheries.

"There's several factors in play," Harris (R-1st) told OC Today-Dispatch this week. "Obviously, the weather's been bad, but we also have restrictions on harvesting and sanctuary waters in the Chesapeake Bay. We have foreign competition for oysters. And, when you combine all three, it's really resulted in a disastrous season for the Maryland oystermen. We're asking NOAA to take that into consideration."

Foodborne illness concerns also may have dampened demand. Last year, a salmonella outbreak tied to raw oyster consumption sickened 64

people in 22 states, including one in Maryland, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Maryland's watermen have dealt with supply issues in the past, especially when disease and over-harvesting wiped out the Chesapeake Bay's oyster population 20 years ago, culling the population to about 2 billion adult oysters.

But the fishery rebounded as of 2024, thanks to less disease, strong reproduction, and continued harvest restrictions. Today, the Chesapeake has more than 7 billion adult oysters and 5 billion juveniles, or spat. The state also just completed a long-term oyster restoration project in the bay.

"There's been nothing but positive news on the oyster fishery. The population stats, the spat we've seen, it's been really encouraging," said A.J. Metcalf, a spokesman for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Now, it's a demand problem – one that Robert T. Brown, Sr., head of the Maryland Waterman's Association, says is relatively new to his industry.

"We need to be able to get a sale," he said. "We've got everything coming back but the market isn't anywhere what it used to be years ago."

There could be a generational shift

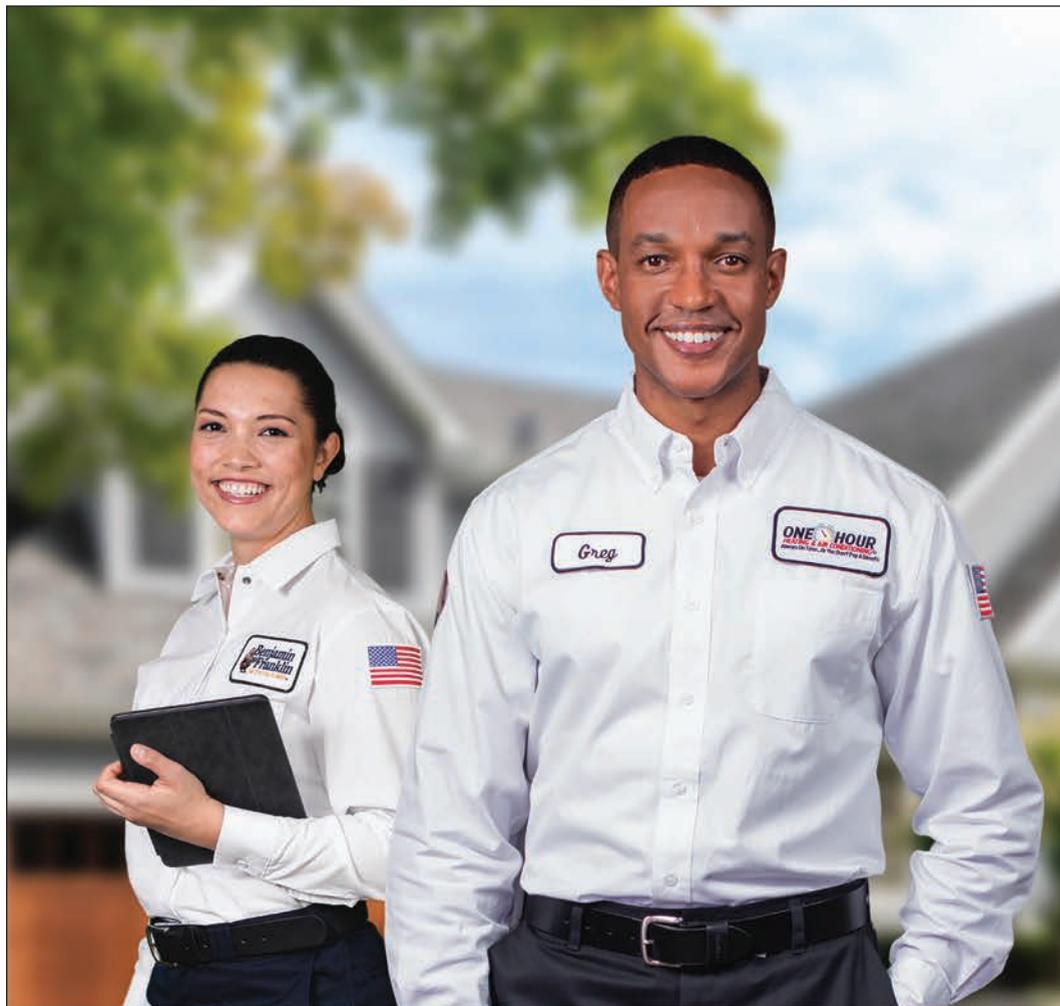
happening, he said: young adults simply aren't buying or eating as many oysters as their parents and grandparents. Brown indicated Gen Z buyers don't seem to know the difference between raw or Rockefeller, and they sure don't want to shuck any.

"I'm not saying they don't like them – when they go to the grocery store, they want something they can just pop into the oven, pretty much," he said. "We need to be able to get this younger generation eating them and we need to get them on more of the menus in the restaurants."

At Waterman's Seafood in West Ocean City, the going rate for oysters is about \$80 for 100 count – twice what they used to cost, according to Tre'Von Cooper, who's manned the seafood counter here for eight years.

He said oysters typically move seasonally – sales peak at the holidays and bottom out until a springtime comeback. Cooper, 28, also agreed that many people around his age just aren't into oysters.

"I absolutely believe that's true, man," he said. "We didn't really grow up eating oysters. We didn't really have that oyster taste for ourselves. I eat a few here and there but I'm not going out to a restaurant to buy oysters to eat for an appetizer, personally."



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County citizens notified by Md. to repay jobless funds

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(Feb. 13, 2026) Maryland has notified more than 1,300 Worcester County residents that pandemic-era unemployment payments issued in error were not recovered in time – and now the state is saying it needs to get that money back.

About \$8.47 million in individual unemployment payments for Worcester County have been flagged for recovery, as the state's Department of Labor (DLLR) works to recoup more than \$807 million in overpayments statewide through its Division of Unemployment Insurance.

Out of 1,369 notices sent to Worcester County residents, the median overpayment was \$2,608 and the largest single overpayment tied to a county address was \$44,830, according to the results of Public Information Act requests from OC Today-Dispatch to DLLR.

Statewide, more than 180,000 claimants were notified of the overpayments in December. Notices went out electronically through the state's BEACON unemployment system, with paper copies mailed as well.

Because the bulk of that money came from federal pandemic relief under the CARES Act in 2020, most funds recovered will go back to the federal government.

Not everyone who gets a notice will be required to repay the money. The state says claimants may appeal the determination, request a hardship waiver, or report identity theft.

The Department of Labor also says it cannot provide a breakdown of affected claimants by industry sector or worker type, leaving it unclear which job sectors were most impacted.

Employers are not affected by the recovery effort. The state says unemployment insurance tax rates are unchanged, and any state-level overpayments recovered will be deposited into the Maryland Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, after being "overwhelmed" by the surge in unemployment, the administration of former Gov. Larry Hogan stopped pursuing overpayment collections, according to the Department of Labor.

The state also launched a technology platform "that did not meet residents' and employers' needs," according to Sabrina Steel, the department's director for unemployment insurance.

That pause in collections was caused in part because of a lawsuit. In November 2021, the state was sued for failing to notify residents of their right to appeal overpayment determinations.

That case, Gorres et al. v. Robinson, led the state to pause overpayment collections for about 20 months while it rewrote regulations and fixed its BEACON system to add appeal and waiver rights.

Though the suit was settled in December 2022, the delays created a backlog of unaddressed cases. Many older claims aged out of the legal window for recovery because collection notices must be issued within three years of the original overpayment.

As a result, about \$760.7 million in unemployment payments are no longer considered legally collectible and cannot be recouped, according to a Jan. 6 audit by the Department of Legislative Audits.

State auditors also reported systemic weaknesses in oversight that made it harder to catch fraud or improper claims. The Department of Labor says it is now addressing those issues and pursuing recoverable overpayments where the law allows.

The department was unable to provide a specific figure in response to public information requests but said "a large portion" of cases "may be due to fraud, given the significant rise in fraud seen during that time period, including fraud through identity theft."

Overpayment recovery is a standard part of providing unemployment insurance, the department also said, and may occur for several reasons, including unreported wages, changes in work availability, or identity theft or fraud committed by a third party.

Nationally, federal watchdogs such as the Government Accountability Office have estimated tens of billions in fraudulent payments tied to pandemic-era unemployment programs.

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Taylor House gears up for nation's 250th

Continued from Page 1

searching the history of the homes and lives of everyday Berlin residents during the colonial period. Additionally, Reid said that amateur archaeologist Liz Davis has explored her family's property east of Berlin for decades using metal detectors and has uncovered numerous artifacts across multiple sites, including a colonial-era site.

Some of these objects have been donated to the Taylor House for the exhibit. Reid added that archaeologist Aaron Leventhal has aided the program leaders in identifying the artifacts. Rough pottery, for instance, was discovered and will be featured.

"[Leventhal] can take a piece of pottery that's two inches long and he told us like, 'Oh, this is a milk pan, or this is a chamber pot...And then Liz Davis had also uncovered more smaller, delicate pieces, and he was able to tell us, 'That's probably a salt-glazed crock,'" Reid said.

Also revealed on Davis' family land is a piece that likely originated in England. According to Leventhal, even after the Revolutionary War, an American market for British porcelain was still active.

"Even though we were no longer a British colony, there was still a market, so we have a piece of china, a tiny

scrap, that probably came from a dish or a saucer that was part of that British porcelain made specifically for the American market," Reid explained.

Another fresh exhibit at the museum will highlight Berlin during the 1970s, before the community became what it is today—a thriving downtown district with shops, restaurants, and a bustling crowd.

A peek into the Atlantic Hotel restoration will be included. Photographs will show the work taking place, and information will be available about the people involved in the preservation effort.

"We want people to understand that one of the focuses on the America 250 was the idea of community and coming together for things, and I think Berlin is a perfect example of how a community came together to restore what was there and highlight the history that Berlin had, with an eye toward the future as well," Reid said.

The executive director added that the exhibits celebrating America's 250th anniversary have been a two-year project. Part of the initiative included gathering information about the colonial era, something Reid said has been a missing piece at the museum. The program team used the

book "Breadbasket of the Revolution" to provide additional insight into what Berlin was like during this period.

Reid said the book describes Delmarva's role as an important food supplier for the revolution.

To celebrate the new exhibits, on April 1, the museum's opening day, the facility will feature the colonial-style band, Ampersand. The concert is free to attend and will kick off at 11 a.m.

Reid said that she hopes the new exhibits will re-center the Taylor House as a historical museum. She added that the facility has spent a few years focusing on events to "get their name out there" and structure itself as a downtown staple. However, the house's leaders plan to use Maryland's 250th anniversary as an opportunity to remind residents and visitors that it is, first and foremost, to tell the stories of the Town of Berlin.

"It's time to pivot and remind people that, yes, you can come to a concert on the lawn, or the Peach Festival, or the Book Festival, but the purpose of all of those events is really to focus on the fact that we are a museum," Reid said.

"We are hoping to reorient people to, we're not just for events. You want to come because, while events are one



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The Taylor House Museum, located in downtown Berlin, prepares to launch new exhibits to celebrate the US's 250th birthday.

way to help us tell the stories of Berlin, we are also a repository of historical artifacts, photographs, and oral histories. We are trying to put the focus back on the museum."

To do that, Reid added that each event will now open with historical information about Berlin.

Additionally, on April 18, during the Taylor House's annual pig roast, the center is hosting a "Museum Comes Alive" event. The facility identified four Berliners whom organizers believe are vital to the town's history, and on April 18, actors will present information about these individuals.

The figures include Mary White, a contemporary to the Covingtons, the original builders of the Taylor House; the Rev. Charles Tindley, a black See NEW Page 13

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Berlin's historic commission signs off on routine repairs

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 12, 2026) Several routine restoration projects received approval during a recent meeting of Berlin's Historic District Commission, allowing work to move forward on two historic properties.

The body met on Feb. 4. One of the approvals involved the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum. The request was presented by museum Executive Director Melissa Reid, who explained that the project focuses on repairing wood rot along the building's exterior.

Reid said the work will include replacing deteriorated wood on portions of the siding and the front porch, particularly around window frames where moisture damage is common. The repairs will not include full siding replacement. Instead, a selection of damaged sections will undergo restoration.

"We periodically do a walk-around the building every year to check and see what we've got and we have noticed multiple places where there is rot, usually around the window frames," Reid told the HDC. "And then...there is some wood that needs to be replaced on the front porch as well."

HDC member Carol Rose, who recused herself from the discussion for being a participant in the Berlin Heritage Foundation board, noted that the Taylor House is under an easement with the Maryland Historical Trust. This means all restoration

work must follow strict preservation standards.

Reid confirmed that the materials being used will match the original construction.

"The materials we are using are exactly the same as those that are already there," she said. "It's wood. It'll be replaced like with like."

A staff report adds that the parts of the building's siding, shutters, porch railing, and attic window will be fabricated in cedar wood and "replicated to match existing historic elements."

After a brief discussion, the commission voted to approve the request.

The commission also approved a roof replacement project at the downtown property Victorian Charm, along with several residential units above it. The request was presented by Edward Reid, who manages the property.

Reid said the existing roof has reached the end of its lifespan and will be replaced by Delmarva Roofing and Coating. The project will not involve demolition of the existing structure, or any cosmetic changes.

The initiative will consist of a white TPO (thermoplastic polyolefin) membrane installed over the current roofing system, to provide moisture protection. The scope of the work, according to a staff report, does not alter the roofline, pitch, height, or architectural character of the structure.

The project was approved by Berlin's Historic District Commission.

New exhibits to join collection

Continued from Page 12
minister from Berlin; Calvin B. Taylor, the museum's namesake and founder of present-day Taylor Bank; and Mary Humphreys, a doctor of botany, and now the name of the property's arboretum.

"The actors will be spread out in different places in the museum on

April 18, the day of the pig roast," Reid said.

She said the new exhibits will remain in the museum for at least five years, giving residents and visitors ample time to view them. They will officially be accessible on the Taylor House's opening day this spring, Wednesday, April 1.

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Snapshots



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

CLUB DONATION

The Ocean City Surf Club recently donated \$2,000 to the Rise Up Foundation of Worcester County to support their mission in helping our youth experience a positive environment. Pictured, from left, at Rise Up's Berlin location at The Dispatch Center are Patrick and Velda Henry, Co-Executive Directors of the Rise Up Foundation; Tommy Vach, President, Ocean City Surf Club; and Rusty Ruszin, Vice President, Ocean City Surf Club.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

SOUTH POINT OFFICERS ELECTED

At the annual membership meeting of the South Point Association, the following officers were elected for 2026. Pictured, front row from left, are Rick Martello, Director; Diane Stelzner, Secretary; and Bob Rubenstein, Vice President; standing, from left, Alec French, Director; Michael LeCompte, President; Brian Julian, Treasurer; and Eric Fiori, Commissioner.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

GUEST SPEAKER

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City welcomed Rick Stephens recently as its guest speaker. A proud alumni of Worcester Technical High School, Stephens has dedicated over 41 years as the welding instructor and serves as the SkillsUSA lead advisor. He has received numerous accolades, including being named the SkillsUSA National Educator of the Year in 2019.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

CANDIDATE SPEAKS

Democratic Club Worcester County President Charles Tarr hosted Randi White at a recent meeting at the Ocean Pines Library branch. White is a candidate for the Congressional District 1 Seat in the US House of Representatives.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

OC LIONS WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Ocean City Lions are excited to have four new members. Pictured, from left, are OC Lions' Secretary Greg Cathell with new Lions Mark Heistand, Steve Heistand, Lisa Capecci, Eileen Bumba and Lions' President Steve McMillan.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

DONATION PRESENTED

Worcester County Developmental Center Executive Director Stephanie James (left) recently received a \$1,000 donation from OC Lions Club Past President Scott Stark. The center's mission is to empower adults with developmental disabilities to be productive, responsible, and participating members of the community.

Obituaries

L. ALLEN DAVIS

Salisbury

Lloyd Allen Davis, 84, of Salisbury, passed away at Coastal Hospice at the Lake on Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026.



L. Allen Davis

Born in Wicomico County on Dec. 27, 1941, he was the son of Lloyd P. Davis and Gladys M. Chance. He was preceded in death by his wife, Connie, in 2018.

After honorably serving in the U.S. Army, Allen attended and graduated from Goldey-Beacom Business College. He then began a long professional career in the insurance business in Maryland and Virginia. He retired after 30 years from People's Life Insurance and L. Allen Davis agencies.

After retiring from the insurance business, Allen and Connie opened Subside Deli in Salisbury in 1995. Allen retired and closed the deli in 2021.

Allen, known as Mr. Subside Man, was famous for his sense of humor, story-telling abilities and cherished time spent with family and friends. Throughout his life, Allen was active in civic organizations, especially Lions Clubs where he served as President and in 2016, he was inducted into the Salisbury Lions Club Hall of Fame.

Allen is survived by his three children, Pamela Lynn Green (Steve) of Berlin, Lori Anne Roberts (Chris) of Martinsburg, W.Va., and Patrick Allen Davis (Kristen) of Pittsville; seven grandchildren, Steven Salvatore (Trang), Beckett Green, Carson Green, Caden Roberts, Kylie Roberts, Reagan Davis and Peyton Davis; and great grandchildren, Zoe and Lana Salvatore.

He was also preceded in death by loving family members who raised him, John Edward "Ed" Whittington, Sr. (2014) and Frances Irene Fisher Whittington (2017), and his siblings, John Davis, Betty Davis and Lynn Davis and Eddie Whittington (2019).

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, Feb. 21, at 10 a.m. at the Holloway Funeral Home in Salisbury with a visitation beginning at 9 a.m. Interment will follow at the Powellville Cemetery. A reception will follow.

Contributions in his memory may be made to Powellville United Methodist Church, 35606 Mount Herman Road, Pittsville, Md. 21850 or Coastal Hospice, PO Box 1733, Salisbury, Md. 21802.

Arrangements are in the care of Holloway Funeral Home, PA, 501 Snow Hill Road, Salisbury, Md. 21804. Please visit www.hollowayfh.com to express condolences to the family.

THEODORA ANN SPADACINO

Berlin

Theodora "Teddy" Ann Spadacino, age 91, passed away on February 11, 2026, in Berlin, Maryland. She was born on November 1, 1934, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to the late Leonard S. Ruggiero and Ann (Civitate) Ruggiero.



T. Spadacino

Theodora "Teddy" graduated High School from St. Francis Academy in 1952 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. From there, she attended college at The University of Pittsburgh and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. She got her teaching degree and became a Catholic Grade School teacher. Teddy moved to the Washington DC metropolitan area in the early 60's. Her first teaching job was at St. Jane Frances DeChantal Catholic School in Bethesda, MD. The first class she taught there, she taught 63 students. Teddy also taught at other Catholic schools around the Montgomery County area. She taught at St. Elizabeths in Rockville, Our Lady of Mercy in Potomac and Holy Redeemer in Kensington MD. Teddy was dedicated and devoted to her teaching career. She loved teaching.

Teddy met her husband Paul in the 60's through a mutual teaching friend. They got married on October 22, 1966. Both Teddy and Paul were very involved in their careers. They had 1 daughter Ann Michelle who was born on January 22, 1973. Teddy and her family lived in Rockville MD and then later moved to Bethesda. In 1996, Teddy and Paul moved to Ocean City, MD. Teddy had 3 grandchildren (Paul, Christian, and Faith) whom she lived with in her final years. They were her pride and joy. Teddy loved children. Teddy loved her family and friends. She loved to entertain and was always "The hostess with the mostess." She had a "Million Dollar Smile." Teddy loved her tea and her favorite cookie (Biscotti). She also loved her doggies and kitties. Teddy also loved Culture and Arts. She loved going to the Kennedy Center to listen to The National Symphony. Teddy loved to travel. She would often talk about how she went to Italy 3 times and got her rosary blessed by 3 Popes. Even though Teddy was from Pittsburgh, she became a fan of The Washington Redskins (Commanders) because of her husband Paul. Teddy enjoyed going to the games at RFK through the years and even went to a Super Bowl in 1984. One of the final blessings she

left behind was a beautiful home for her family. Christian, her grandson would often refer to her as "24karat Grandma." Teddy's favorite saying is "Make your own Sunshine." Teddy was a DEVOUT CATHOLIC and loved to pray the rosary. She practiced her Faith every day. Teddy will be forever in our hearts.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her beloved husband Paul J. Spadacino.

She is survived by her daughter – Ann Michelle Spadacino; son-in-law – Munther S. Haddad; goddaughter – Jennifer Sanders; and her grandchildren – Paul A. Haddad, Christian S. Haddad, and Faith N. Haddad.

A viewing and rosary service will be held at The Burbage Funeral Home in Berlin, Maryland on Monday February 16, 2026, from 4:00-6:00pm. Later in the week, a Mass will be held at St. Jane Frances de Chantal Catholic Church in Bethesda, Maryland on Thursday February 19, 2026, at 10am. Following the mass, there will be a procession to her burial site at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Silver Spring, Maryland to take place at 1:30pm. Letters of condolence may be sent to the family via www.burbagefuneralhome.com. Arrangements are in the care of The Burbage Funeral Home – Berlin.

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Opinion

Please send all letters and other editorial submissions to editor@baysidegazette.com by 5 p.m. Monday.

Pedestrian bridge talk should shift its focus

The continuing conversation about the possibility of having a pedestrian bridge built over Route 113 to connect the main portion of town with its east side has been doing exactly that for quite a while — continuing and continuing.

As a symbolic connection of black and white Berlin, divided as they have been for generations by 140 feet or so of blacktop, grass and guardrails and vastly different cultural and social experiences, the bridge would serve that purpose exceptionally well.

But from a practical standpoint? Probably not.

For one thing, the question has to be asked how much foot traffic would this bridge actually see? And at what cost? In addition, as Councilman Dean Burrell pointed out, people disinclined or unable to walk to and over the bridge are likely to opt for convenience over safety and cross at street level.

And while crossing the highway via a bridge overhead is safer than a ground-level crossing, using a bridge will require pedestrians to walk a much greater distance. How much greater is an engineering question that will depend on the structure's elevation, the slope of the bridge sections leading to the center and whether the bridge must be ADA compliant, so individuals such as Councilman Burrell can use it.

The bridge might not need to be ADA compliant if disabled individuals have other means to cross the highway, which, of course, they do and which may be made much safer at considerably less expense.

The situation might be different if government — that's local, state and federal — was so flush with money that it didn't have to differentiate between essential projects and desirable ones, but that is not the case now and it's difficult to predict when that situation might change.

Right now, solving the Route 113 pedestrian safety problems requires shifting the focus of these continuing discussions to what can be done to provide the most people with the most convenient, most accessible and most practical solution.

Letters

Register Democrat to vote this June

Editor,

The primary is coming up in June. Maryland only allows voters registered as Democratic or Republican to vote in the primary. If you are not registered or are registered as Independent, Libertarian, Green or Constitution Party, you may not vote in the primary.

The Worcester County Democratic Committee's main focus is discovering, training, backing, and electing Democratic candidates. We strive to create a strong and connected Democratic community. As a member of the Worcester County Democratic Committee, I urge you to please consider registering as a Democrat so you can cast a ballot in June for your preferred choice for governor, state senator, district delegate and district com-

missioner.

The candidate filing deadline is Feb. 24. It's time to learn about the Maryland candidates and make an informed decision on June 23, 2026. If you aren't sure how to find out who is running for what, Democratic clubs are a great resource, and I'm going to tell you about two of them in our county.

The Democratic Women's Club (DWC) is a vibrant network of women and men who work to elect Democrats, advocate on state and local issues of importance, and educate our community on critical issues. We also offer opportunities for members to meet new people and to volunteer and give back to the community. The Democratic Women's Club usually meets the fourth Monday of each month at the Berlin Library from 9:30am to noon. This month's meeting is 2/23 and the speaker is from

the Ocean City Art League.

The Democratic Club of Worcester County strives to promote participation in the Democratic Party through registration, voting, social gatherings, educational activities, publicity and fundraising. The Democratic Club of Worcester County meets the fourth Thursday of most months at the Ocean Pines Library from 6pm to 8pm. This month's meeting is 2/26 and our speakers are Susan Buyers and Toby Perkins from Indivisible.

You don't have to be a member to attend these meetings; all are most welcome! Please come and check us out. I believe you will find we are a caring and respectful community with much more in common than our differences.

*Tish Michel
(Worcester County
Democratic Committee and
Democratic Women's Club
board member)*

Non-profit seeking hygiene products

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 19, 2026) Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services is asking county residents to donate to its "Hygiene Drive" to help community members in need. The program runs until the end of February.

According to organizers, the drive aims to raise awareness among neighbors who may be struggling to afford basic necessities. Jennifer Leggour, WYFCS executive director, said efforts like this provide critical supplies that some would otherwise lack access to, while also strengthening community connections.

"A drive like this heightens awareness about our neighbors who are struggling," she said. "With that, it brings the community together to help one another."

WYFCS has hosted similar drives for many years when a specific need is identified. Leggour said the organization has historically rotated among collections of food, clothing, and

hygiene products, depending on what is most pressing at the time. This year's focus is on personal care items.

The greatest needs include period products, body wash, underwear, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, laundry detergent, and youth hygiene items. WYFCS is also requesting other high-demand products, including diapers, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, hand sanitizer, lip balm, hair combs and brushes, and dental floss.

The official end date for the drive is February 28. However, Leggour said that donations are welcome year-round and will be kept in the organization's storage pantry for ongoing distribution.

In addition to the hygiene drive, WYFCS will be participating in the Souper Bowl event at West OC Taphouse on Sunday, February 22, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. The event is a soup-tasting contest with a \$20 admission fee, with proceeds benefiting WYFCS and its programs.

WYFCS is a 501(c)3 private non-profit that provides mental health and community care services throughout the county. The organization's many programs are available on its website at <https://gowoyo.org/>.

Additionally, WYFCS is also preparing for its largest annual fundraiser, the Luau at Sunset Grille, scheduled for June 4, from 5 to 8 p.m.

The event is \$35 per ticket and includes a buffet meal, a signature Teaser's Bar cocktail, a party favor, and access to a variety of games.

Donations for the hygiene drive can be dropped off at the WYFCS office at 124 N. Main Street, Suite C, anytime Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., the Berlin Library at 13 Harrison Avenue during its regular hours, or the Ocean Pines Library at 11107 Cathell Rd. during its normal hours of operation. Community members can also contribute through the organization's Amazon wish-list at bit.ly/givewyfc.

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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County seeks conservation easement funds

Worcester completes two applications for grant program, asks for millions

By **Brian Shane**
Staff Writer

(Feb. 19, 2026) Worcester County plans to ask the state for nearly \$6 million to purchase easements on existing farms and woodland to preserve them from development in the next fiscal year.

The county has submitted two grant applications to the Rural Legacy Program, one for \$5.1 million in easements within the Dividing Creek area and another for \$700,000 in the Bishopville-Showell area.

County planning manager Katherine Munson told commissioners at their Feb. 3 meeting that their focus is on funding easements for those two areas due to "dwindling remaining landowner interest" in the Coastal Bays Rural Legacy Area.

Because planners had to designate one priority zone while submitting two applications, it gave funding preference to the Dividing Creek area, Munson also said.

For that zone, county planners are eyeing 10 properties on 2,068 acres of land, adding to more than 67,000 acres already preserved in the Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area.

Because the Dividing Creek zone straddles the border of Somerset County, Worcester County plans to submit a joint application with Somerset County and the Lower Shore Land Trust.

The largest easement tract in this application is 324.8 acres, for which the Snow Hill-area property owner would receive \$750,000. The going rate is \$3,000 for an acre of farmland and \$2,000 for an acre of woodland, according to the county's application.

Planning officials said they hope to protect about half the remaining undeveloped land in this area, writing in a grant application that "there are 4,500 acres left to protect to get us to that goal."

Planners also want to secure \$700,000 worth of easements in the Bishopville-Showell Rural Legacy Area. That's a new easement zone for the state program that was created last year. It already includes nearly 12,000 acres of forest and farmland ease-

ments.

Nine property owners for the Bishopville-Showell zone expressed interest in the 2027 round of easements, for a total of 453 acres. The largest easement in this allotment would be for a 65-acre tract on Ames Road in Bishopville, valued at \$275,000 to \$300,000.

Properties eligible for Rural Legacy conservation must have development potential. In exchange for a buyout, no residential development will ever be allowed on the land.

The landowner will still hold title to their segment of preserved property, and the county will hold the easement, which runs with the property. It can take up to two years for a property to be selected for a Rural Legacy Area easement.

Funding for the land preservation program doesn't cost Worcester County a penny. It's paid for by Program Open Space, a state initiative that's funded by a tax on real estate transfers.

Final approval to release any Rural Legacy funds comes from the state's Board of Public Works – a three-person oversight panel consisting of Maryland's governor, comptroller, and treasurer – only after getting a full report on applicant properties, according to Munson.

However, she added that the future

of the program is somewhat uncertain, given the state's \$1.5 billion revenue shortfall now being addressed by the governor and General Assembly.

Last year, the Board of Public Works did not give Worcester County any Rural Legacy grants. Its most recent appropriation came in 2024, with \$800,000 in funding to launch the Bishopville-Showell zone, the county's first new Rural Legacy Area since 2008.

At the meeting, County Commissioner Chip Bertino asked Munson whether the program's land-protecting efforts conflict with Gov. Wes Moore's public push for increased affordable housing statewide.

"These are areas that have been well-established as areas we want to protect because of the natural resources and the agricultural resources, and I don't see that focus changing," she replied.

County Administrator Weston Young added that it was unlikely any housing would be developed in the swampy soils of the Dividing Creek area, saying the landscape's "severe limitations" would make it challenging to develop property.

Overall, Worcester County has protected more than 13,000 acres of its developable land under the state's Rural Legacy Area program.

Pines eateries to host job fairs

(Feb. 19, 2026) The Ocean Pines Yacht Club, Beach Club, and Clubhouse Bar & Grille are inviting job seekers to visit their upcoming Job Fair at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club.

The fair will take place in the Yacht Club's upstairs ballroom on Saturday, March 21, and again on Saturday, April 4, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. each day.

All three locations are hiring for all positions, including front of house, back of house, management, culinary, and events. Seasonal and year-round opportunities are available.

Benefits include competitive pay, flexible scheduling, beautiful waterfront work environments, and opportunities for growth within Ocean Pines locations.

Applicants are encouraged to bring their resume, bring a friend, and come prepared to interview on the spot.

For more information, contact Sarah Ash, public relations coordinator for the Ocean Pines Association, at sash@oceanpines.org or 443-940-5296.

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Calendar

Please send calendar items to editor@octodaydispatch.com by 5 p.m. Monday. All community-related activities will be published at no charge.

Thurs., Feb. 19

OCEAN CITY FILM FESTIVAL PREVIEW NIGHT

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 7-9:01 p.m. A night of selected short films from the OC Film Festival Season 10 catalog. Free and open to all. Content not rated by MPAA.
ocmdfilmfestival.com, 410-524-9433

EASTERN SHORE SEWISTS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10 a.m. Promoting the needle arts through sewing education, activities and textile crafts. For artisans of all skill levels. 410-641-0650, worcesterialibrary.org

LITTLE EXPLORERS: FOSSILS

Delmarva Discovery Museum, 2 Market St., Pocomoke City, 10 a.m.-noon. Enjoy learning all about the world of paleontology and digging for fossils. Cost is \$10 for children and \$5 for adults. Sign up: <https://www.ococean.com/event/little-explorers%3a-fossils/2593/>.

PLAY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Join in for a variety of activities and toys. Play and socialize with other families. For ages 2-5 years. 410-632-3495, worcesterialibrary.org

STORYTIME: 'IF YOU GIVE A MOUSE A COOKIE'

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Crafts, songs and stories. For ages 2-5 years. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

LETS MAKE ... GRANDMOTHER'S FLOWER GARDEN COASTERS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. The Gardens will be unique to the maker and can be used in many ways. All materials provided. Register: 410-641-0650,

SILENT BOOK CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 3 p.m. Bring your current read or borrow one. The first 50 minutes will be spent silently reading, the last 10 minutes can be used to mingle and discuss your read. 410-524-1818, worcesterialibrary.org

TOILE REIMAGINED

Maryland's Coast - Worcester County Tourism & Economic Development, 107 W. Green St., Snow Hill, 4:30 p.m. Join in for an adult craft program and learn how to blend modern art with historic patterns and textures. 410-632-3495, worcesterialibrary.org

LEGO MASTERS CHALLENGE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines

Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Join in for a Lego challenge event. All material provided. For ages 6-11 years. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

DRY PANTRY

Thursdays - St. Paul United Methodist Church, 405 Flower Street, Berlin, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. For those in need of resources such as paper products, laundry products, baby items, and personal care items. Limits apply. 410-641-0270

Fri., Feb. 20

FANDOM FRIDAY: ROMANTASY

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Drop in any time for crafts, quizzes and discussions about the monthly topic. For ages 12-18 years. 410-524-1818, worcesterialibrary.org

PLAY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Join in for imaginative play and social interaction. For ages 0-5 years. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

OC MAHJONG CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join in for a fun morning of playing tile Mahjong. Feel free to bring your own tile set. All adults are welcome. 410-524-1818, worcesterialibrary.org

BOOK DISCUSSION: 'I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS' BY MAYA ANGELOU

Oaked at The Globe/Tiki Tim's, 12 Broad St., Berlin, 2 p.m. Pick up the book at the Berlin branch circulation desk and then join in for a lively discussion at Oaked at the Globe. 410-641-0650, worcesterialibrary.org

MESSY ART

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 3:30 p.m. Dress for the mess and explore some open-ended, process art. For families. 410-641-0650, worcesterialibrary.org

WINTER CASH BINGO - RBVFC AUXILIARY

Rehoboth Beach Convention Center, 229 Rehoboth Ave., 5-9:30 p.m. Tickets \$25. Win your share of \$2,600 in cash for bingo games. Plus, win extra cash by playing ball games, pull-tabs and the 50/50 raffle. Proceeds supports the Rehoboth Beach Volunteer Fire Company. 610-999-6410

KIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BINGO

Fridays - Knights of Columbus, 9901 Coastal Highway, behind St. Luke's Church. Doors open at 5 p.m., bingo starts at 6:30 p.m. Light snacks available before bingo and at intermission. 410-524-7994

Sat., Feb. 21

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: GREATEST HITS, VOL. 1 - SATURDAY SHOWING

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., Ocean City, 7-9 p.m. Tickets \$25. Join us for a performance of this uproarious, satirical Broadway classic! Tickets: <https://canvas.artleagueofoceancity.org/classes/2862>. 410-524-9433

TOWN OF OCEAN CITY JOB FAIR

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 9 a.m.-noon. The job fair will provide you with access to supervisors seeking talented candidates in every discipline. Admission is free.
<https://www.ococean.com/event/town-of-ocean-city-job-fair/2628/>, 410-289-8924

FAMILY POETRY READ-ALoud

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Families are invited to share their poems or works, listen to other young poets and enjoy light refreshments. Event also recognizing the winner from the "Winter Quill Poetry Contest." 410-208-4014

DEATH OF A GANGSTER - MURDER MYSTERY DINNER

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 5 p.m. A 1920's Mafia Marriage Murder Mystery. \$85 for show and buffet. Dinner at 5 p.m. and show at 6 p.m. Actors chosen from audience. Costumes requested but not required. Tickets: 410-641-7052.

COASTAL WILDS GALA: A FUTURE FOR CONSERVATION

Bethany Beach Ocean Suites Residence Inn, 99 Hollywood St., 6-10 p.m. Animal ambassador meet & greets, buffet, cash bar, live music, more. Cocktail attire with animal print encouraged. Tickets: <https://pos.coastalwilds.org/coastal-wilds/checkout/default/addtocart/add/572.302-829-1549>

OCEAN PINES FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 9 a.m. to noon. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Also featuring family-friendly activities, music and unique shopping experiences. Open to the public, year round. 410-641-7052, <https://www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/farmers-artisans-market>

Sun., Feb. 22

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: GREATEST HITS, VOL. 1 - SUNDAY SHOWING

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 4-6 p.m. Tickets \$25. Join us for this rendition of this satirical, uproarious Broadway classic. Tickets: <https://canvas.artleagueofoceancity.org/classes/2863>. 410-524-9433

SEWING FOR A CAUSE

Sundays - Buckingham Presbyterian Church, 20 S. Main St., Berlin, 10:30 a.m. to noon. Learn how to sew while making a difference. 410-641-0234

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

Sundays - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 10 a.m. www.jw.org

Mon., Feb. 23

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF WORCESTER COUNTY MD

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 9:30 a.m. Hear Rina Thaler and Jessica Bauer, of Art League of Ocean City, speak about this non-profit organization. Visitors and prospective members welcome. <https://dwcmd.org>

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Songs, stories and giggles. For ages 0-2 years. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

STORY TIME: DONUTS

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Crafts, songs and stories. For ages 0-5 years. 410-524-1818, worcesterialibrary.org

PARENTS & PARTNERS BEHAVIOR PARENT TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Worcester County Board of Education, 6270 Worcester Highway, Newark, 11:30 a.m. Presenter will be Dr. Kelly Wells. Special education families learning behavior techniques in and out of the classroom. Bring your own lunch. Drinks and desserts provided. Pam Green, 410-430-3923

THE HENRY HOTEL: HISTORY, PROGRESS, FUTURE

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 4-5 p.m. Join in for a presentation on the history, progress, and future of the Henry Hotel. 410-524-1818, worcesterialibrary.org

AFTERSCHOOL ART

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. This month the group will be learning about abstract art. For ages 6-11 years. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

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Calendar

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T.O.P.S. OF BERLIN - GROUP #169

Mondays - Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 5-6:30 p.m. Take Off Pounds Sensibly is a weekly support and educational group promoting weight loss and living a healthy lifestyle. Rose Campion, 410-641-0157

BRIDGE

Mondays - Ocean City 50plus Center, 104 41st Street, Ocean City, 12:30-3:30 p.m. Reserve a spot: Tish, 410-804-3971. www.Worcoa.org/oceancity

DELMARVA WOMEN'S A CAPELLA CHORUS

Mondays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 6:00-8:00 p.m. All ladies who love to sing invited. Elissa, 410-641-8050; on social media; or delmarvachorus.org.

OVEREATER'S ANONYMOUS

Mondays - Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 7-8 p.m. No dues or fees. 410-459-9100

Tues., Feb. 24

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Songs, rhymes and stories. Stay after to socialize with other families. For ages 0-2 years. 410-632-3495, worcesterlibrary.org

OC KNITTING GROUP

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Bring whatever project you happen to be working on. 410-524-1818, worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME: SPACE

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 10:30 a.m. Stories,

songs and crafts. For ages 0-5 years. 410-957-0878, worcesterlibrary.org

CROSS FARMS POP-UP FARMERS MARKET

Tuesdays - Flower Street Field across from Henry Park, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Accepting Maryland Department of Agriculture FMNP (WIC & Seniors) Checks and Maryland WIC Fruit & Vegetable Checks. Also offering a "Produce Bucks" program, which doubles purchases for eligible residents. <https://www.facebook.com/theberlinfarmersmarket>.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

Tuesdays - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 7 p.m. www.jw.org

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY

Tuesdays - Worcester County Health Department, 9730 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3:30-4:30 p.m. TOPS is a weekly support and education group promoting weight loss and a healthy lifestyle. 410-289-4725

OC KNITTING CLUB

Tuesdays - Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m.

ARGENTINE TANGO PRACTICE

Tuesdays - Experienced dancers and others interested in watching or learning more are welcome, 7-9:30 p.m. No partner required. Info: TangobytheBeach.com.

ZUMBA TONING TUESDAYS

Tuesdays - Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 5:30 p.m. Zumba with optional light weights. zumbajoyceoc@gmail.com

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT AND WELLNESS GROUP

Tuesdays - Holy Trinity Cathedral,

11021 Worcester Highway, 2-2:45 p.m. Use the weight loss program/app/plan of your choice. Free and open to everyone. 410-641-4882, www.htcanglican.org/activities.

BEACH HEROES-OC

Tuesdays - Volunteer beach clean-up group meets from 9-10 a.m., year-round. Trash bags, grippers and gloves provided. Check the Facebook page "Beach Heroes-OC" for weekly meeting locations. All are welcome.

Wed., Feb. 25

COFFEE & CRAFTS: ANYTHING GOES!

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join in every month for a new craft. Materials provided. Limit 30. 410-524-1818, worcesterlibrary.org

PUZZLE SWAP

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 1-7 p.m. Bring your gently used puzzles and leave with new-to-you puzzles. Don't have a puzzle to exchange but still want one? That's OK too. All puzzles must be complete in their original box. 410-641-0650

'SCORCHY'S CORNER: WANDERING OUR DELMARVALOUS LAND' VIDEO SERIES

Museum of Ocean City, 217 S. Baltimore Ave., 2-3 p.m. Held Wednesdays, Feb. 4-March 4. Offering audiences a nostalgic journey across Delmarva with host Scorchy Tawes. Preregister: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1978305907223?aff=oddtcreator>.

'GUY' BLUFORD JR. AND MAE JEMISON: FIRST AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SPACE

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 2 p.m. Try building your own hovercraft to test in the wind tunnel. For ages 6-11 years. 410-

957-0878, worcesterlibrary.org

COLONIAL PAPER BAG PUPPETS

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 4:30 p.m. Celebrate MD 250 by creating a puppet pal in period accurate clothing. All supplies provided. For ages 6-11 years. 410-524-1818, worcesterlibrary.org

AMERICA'S BOATING COURSE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 5:30-9 p.m. Held in three sessions: Feb. 25 and 27 from 6-9 p.m. and Feb. 28 from 9 a.m. to noon. Registration at 5:30 p.m. This course is free. NASBLA approved and meets state requirements. alpaughmt@gmail.com, 302-218-9474

KIWANIS CLUB MEETING

Wednesdays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. Last Wednesday of the month meetings are offsite and information can be found on the website and Facebook. www.kiwanisofopoc.org.

CASH BINGO

Wednesdays - Ocean City Elks Lodge 2645, 13708 Sinepuxent Ave. Door open at 5 p.m., bingo starts at 6:30 p.m. Food available before bingo and at intermission. Open to the public. 443-605-5028

ONGOING EVENTS

FREE TAX PREP

AARP is offering free tax preparations to the public. AARP Foundation Tax Aides will be available at the following libraries: Mondays in Ocean Pines; Wednesdays, Berlin; Fridays, Pocomoke City; and Saturdays, Ocean City. By appointment only: 443-584-5661, aarp-foundation.org/taxaide.



OPEN HOUSES

Feb. 19 - 26



DAY/TIME	ADDRESS	BR/BA	STYLE	PRICE	AGENT/AGENCY
Fri-Mon 11am-4pm	Heron Harbour, 120th St., Bayside	1BR/2BR/3BR/4BR+	Condos, Towns & SF	-	Nanette Pavier/Holiday Real Estate
Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd., West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family from	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Sat & Sun, 11am-3pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd., West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family from	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Saturday 10:30am-12:30pm	6803 Atlantic Ave #4H, Ocean City	1BR/1BA	Condo	\$425,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	205 125th St #208B, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$499,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	2108 Points Reach Price, The Point, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$499,900	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	9167 Old Ocean City Rd, Berlin	4BR/2BA	Single Family	\$679,900	Power of 2 Team/ Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	29 Pinehurst Rd, Ocean Pines	4BR/2BA	Single Family	\$429,900	Power of 2 Team/ Hileman Real Estate
Saturday Noon-2pm	11500 Coastal Hwy #1614, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$569,900	Lauren Bunting/Keller Williams Realty
Saturday 1-3pm	6305 Atlantic Avenue #301, Ocean City	3BR/3.5BA	Condo	\$1,495,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 2-4pm	100 White Horse Dr, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$399,900	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 2-4pm	12048 Pimlico Lane, Berlin	3BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$949,900	Power of 2 Team/ Hileman Real Estate
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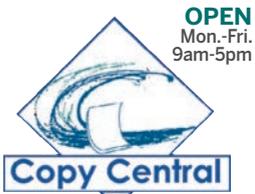
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