

DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
RESOURCES



february 2014

Green Scene

newsletter



Rushern L. Baker, III
County Executive

The DER Mission

The mission of the Department of Environmental Resources is to protect and enhance the natural and built environments of Prince George's County by enforcing Federal, State and County laws to create a healthy, safe and aesthetically pleasing environment for all residents and businesses of the County.

DIRECTOR'S *Corner*



Dear Friends,

I hope this issue of Green Scene finds you well. Taking our cue from County Executive Baker, in November 2012, DER set a goal to be the best County environmental agency in the State and region. Prince George's County is an amazing place with amazing people, and we must provide top services to ensure our communities are beautiful, clean, healthy and sustainable for generations to come.

One major front in this effort involves managing our waste better - to turn it from 'trash to treasure.' The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has just announced that the recycling rate has jumped 10 points in a year's time. Competitively, we moved from 11th in the State to 3rd...within one percentage point of #1. With new programs coming online in increasing recycling and composting, we have a very good chance of surpassing Harford and Montgomery County for the top spot.

The credit for our ascendancy goes to you. Residents and businesses have been stepping up to recycle. This is great, it reduces the amount of material that we must process at the County landfill (very costly) and we can sell the material to industries that need it (which helps bring some funds back into the County). See the article on page 3 for more information and help spread the word about recycling. If you or a neighbor needs a (free) recycling bin or want to start a recycling program in a church or business, please contact us as we will help.

Another area of our waste management plan where we are increasing our attention is litter in our communities. There are many sources of litter and it requires new solutions that include source reduction, enforcement, community cleanups and outreach, education and engagement at all levels. Some of the articles herein outline some of our tactics for addressing litter, but we will need more. If you have ideas or would like to arrange a volunteer cleanup in your neighborhood, give us a call.

If you have any questions, ideas, concerns, compliments or would like to benefit from one of the services mentioned above, please let us know by calling 3-1-1 or by visiting the CountyClick section of the County website.

We look forward to hearing from you,

- *Adam*
Director

INSIDE *this issue*



County reaches highest recycling/waste diversion rate at **59.44%**



Partnering with neighborhoods to reduce litter

Residents recognized for recycling right



Plastics and water quality

GREEN PAGE: Green Home Improvement



Animal Management Division creates animal cruelty section

DER Welcomes new interim DCAO

Keep up the momentum: Ways to motivate yourself



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

The DER Newsletter is a monthly publication of the Department of Environmental Resources. We welcome employee news, story suggestions, photos and special event articles.

For more information, please contact the Communications Office at (301) 883-5952.

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www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/environmentalresources



County Reaches Highest Recycling/Waste Diversion Rate at

59.44%

Moves from 11th to 3rd in the State for Recycling

Prince George's County residents and businesses are doing their part to keep the County green and on the path to zero waste. According to the latest figures released by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the County's 2012 recycling rate rose to 54.44 percent with an overall waste diversion rate of 59.44 percent; that equates to a 10.33 percent increase over a one-year period and ranks the County third in the State, narrowly behind Harford and Montgomery Counties. The new data surpasses the 50 percent mark for waste diversion that was set the previous year.

"The residents and businesses in Prince George's County have worked hard to increase the waste diversion rate to an all-time high and deserve a pat on the back," says Adam Ortiz, Director of the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources. "We are recycling more, but must also continue to reduce waste at the source by making green decisions every day."

MDE calculates the rate by adding the disposed trash tonnage and the recycling tonnage to provide a total waste number which is then divided by the total recycling number to arrive at the recycling rate. The County saw an increase in recyclable materials comprised of mixed glass (23 percent), mixed plastic (15 percent), corrugated cardboard (11 percent) and composting of mixed yard waste (14 percent). Because of the efforts residents and businesses have made in eliminating waste before it starts, the County received the maximum Source Reduction Credit of 5 percent from MDE. Some examples of source reduction practices include using a mulching lawn mower and leaving chopped up leaves on the lawn, using reusable shopping bags and water bottles and selecting products that contain the least amount of packaging.

"We have our sights on the top spot for recycling Maryland," said Ortiz. "We have several initiatives that are among the very best practices nationwide for turning trash into treasure." Factors contributing to the increased recycling and waste diversion rates includes the County's introduction of a new food scrap composting program for residential, commercial and institutions, "mining" of materials at the landfill, its Single-Stream Materials Recycling Facility that supports commercial and residential programs, Countywide use of the residential 65-gallon wheeled recycling carts and increased community engagement about waste reduction and recycling.

On Jan. 1, 2014, the County put into effect another eco-friendly measure by announcing it would no longer collect yard waste in plastic bags, but in paper yard waste bags only.

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

Rodney C. Taylor
DER Associate Director

3750 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION (AMD) CREATES ANIMAL CRUELTY SECTION

In September 2013, the Animal Management Division assigned four of its Animal Control Officers (ACO's) to the newly created Animal Cruelty Section. The ACO's in this section investigate complaints of animals not being properly cared for, and since many of the complaints are weather-related, a large number of complaints are received during the colder months. Complaints include animals being maintained outside with either no shelter or improper shelter that is not winterized; animals with no food or water; animals chained outside and near a fence or other items that may pose a choking hazard; animals that appear to be in poor health; and animals that appear to be abandoned. Depending on the severity of conditions found during the investigation of a complaint, animals can be immediately impounded and their owners charged with animal cruelty and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Protection under the law is not afforded only to cats and dogs. AMD responds to complaints ranging from rabbits to livestock. While AMD has always investigated complaints of animal cruelty, having a dedicated animal cruelty section allows the ACO's to handle a cruelty case from start to finish, with the benefits of knowing whether or not an animal is improving with time and care, and allowing for better testimony and chain of evidence should a cruelty case proceed to trial. AMD would like to recognize the ACO's assigned to the Animal Cruelty Section for their diligence in keeping the animals of Prince George's County safe: (from left to right) Tanya Roberts, Samantha Elliott, Kim Montgomery, Kristi Hoover. Keep up the good work!



There is a
PET
out there for
EVERY EMPLOYEE

**AMD OFFERS
DISCOUNTED
ADOPTION FEES
TO ALL COUNTY
EMPLOYEES**

AMD is proud to announce that all County employees are now able to adopt a cat or dog for only the cost of surgery to have the animal spayed or neutered, and the associated pain medication and e-collar. AMD will waive the fees for all shots, testing, microchips and a County license. Cat adoptions, normally \$175, are \$70 for County employees. Dog adoptions, normally \$225, are \$125 for County employees. There will be no charge to adopt an animal that is already spayed or neutered. AMD encourages all County employees to consider adopting a homeless animal and to take advantage of these discounted fees. Please bring your County I.D. with you when you come to visit the animals. Kennel hours and animals available for adoption can be found on our web page at www.princegeorgespets4us.com.



**SPAY SPOT CLINIC
OFFERS "BEAT
THE HEAT" SPAY
PROMOTION**

The Spay Spot spay/neuter clinic, located inside the Animal Services Facility and run through a partnership between Last Chance Animal Rescue and the Animal Management Division, is offering a special promotion with fees even lower than their normal low-cost service. During the month of February, they are offering "Beat the Heat," encouraging owners of female dogs and cats to have their animals spayed before they go into heat as they tend to do once warmer weather is upon us. The special promotion allows owners to have the surgery performed for a mere \$20. There is also a mandatory \$25 charge for pain medication and an e-collar. For those who may not know, female dogs can go into heat every six months, and female cats every three weeks! To stem the tide of puppies and kittens that arrives at the Animal Services Facility every spring and summer, AMD encourages everyone to take advantage of this promotion and "Beat the Heat!"

SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES

Dawn Hawkins-Nixon
DER Acting Associate Director

9400 Peppercorn Place
Suite 610
Largo, Maryland 20774

PARTNERING WITH NEIGHBORHOODS TO REDUCE LITTER

The Volunteer Neighborhood Cleanup Program (VNCP) is a community-sponsored volunteer program that enables DER to partner with civic and homeowner associations, local businesses, and non-profit organizations to improve the quality of life in Prince George's County by reducing litter.

Through this program, DER has worked with a variety of schools, churches, the Boy Scouts of America, the Department of Corrections' Community Service Unit, municipalities and volunteer groups to cleanup vacant lots, parks, common areas and streams.



It was just a little over half a century ago, when President Kennedy challenged us not to ask what our country can do for us, but rather ask what we can do for our country. The citizens of Prince George's County have an opportunity to meet this challenge in their own backyard.

As anyone who has ever volunteered knows, the satisfaction and pride that comes from helping and giving back to one's community can be self-fulfilling and life changing. By working together, the VNCP can bridge old and young neighbors together and help promote a great sense of pride and ownership in communities throughout the County. The VNCP has been especially popular and helpful to middle and high school students who are required to perform community service hours as part of their learning experience and graduation requirements.

The Sustainable Initiatives Division will provide interested communities with technical assistance and materials such as trash bags, gloves and depending on availability, may also include roll-off containers. Each year VNCP contributes to the hauling of tons of debris from our communities and streams and makes our County cleaner and environmentally friendlier.

All communities are encouraged to join forces with DER to reduce litter. If your community is interested in participating in the VNCP, please contact the Sustainable Initiatives Division for more information at (301) 883-5834 or to coordinate a clean-up event, please contact our program manager, Mr. Udomah Ohiri at ucohiri@co.pg.md.us.



Sponsored by:

Jeffrey M. DeHan
DER Acting Associate Director

9400 Peppercorn Place
Suite 610
Largo, Maryland 20774

PLASTICS AND WATER QUALITY

Litter pollution from plastics is a challenge facing each neighborhood in Prince George's County. DER is partnering with all stakeholders to reduce the use of plastics, prosecute those who litter and increase recycling. These efforts and more will help beautify our communities and help us meet EPA pollution requirements.

As of Jan. 1, 2014, Prince George's County's Yard Waste Composting Facility at Western Branch will no longer accept yard waste in plastic bags. This new County law prohibits the use of plastic bags for yard waste collection which now means that yard waste such as leaves and branches that were once collected curbside in plastic bags, will no longer be accepted unless they are packed for pickup in paper bags or reusable containers with sturdy handles and tight-fitting lids that are marked "YARD WASTE."

Plastic bags clog the machinery used to shred the yard waste debris. Once shredded by machinery, the small pieces of plastic travel airborne very easily, littering the facility and neighboring properties, including the Western Branch tributary. Besides this, plastic bags found in our landfills consume valuable space set aside for garbage and trash, and contribute to the amount of trash found in local waterways—streams and rivers. Just how does plastic contribute to the pollution of our waterways?

It begins at the landfill where trash—items made from plastic—is discarded. From here, the plastic follows several paths to our waterways. It can travel airborne to a stream bank where wind blows it into the water. Or, it can travel with stormwater (rainfall or snowmelt) directly into a stream. Occasionally, the materials used to manufacture plastic goods (nurdles) are improperly disposed of and end up in a waterway. Nurdles are thought to act as a transport medium for endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the marine environment.

Since plastic does not biodegrade, it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces; it is easily ingested by fish and other marine life—entering the human food chain. Numerous species are known to be adversely affected by plastic marine debris, especially endangered marine turtles who mistake plastic bags for jellyfish. Even birds can accidentally feed on plastic that floats on the water, mistaking it for food. Many times this ingestion can lead to death. Fishing line, hooks, and nets, carelessly discarded, can wrap around fish and birds completely debilitating them.

Whether it is bags, lines, bottles, or nurdles, plastics are an environmental problem that can be managed as well as a resource that can be conserved.



Anacostia River, Bladensburg Waterfront Park



WASTE MANAGEMENT

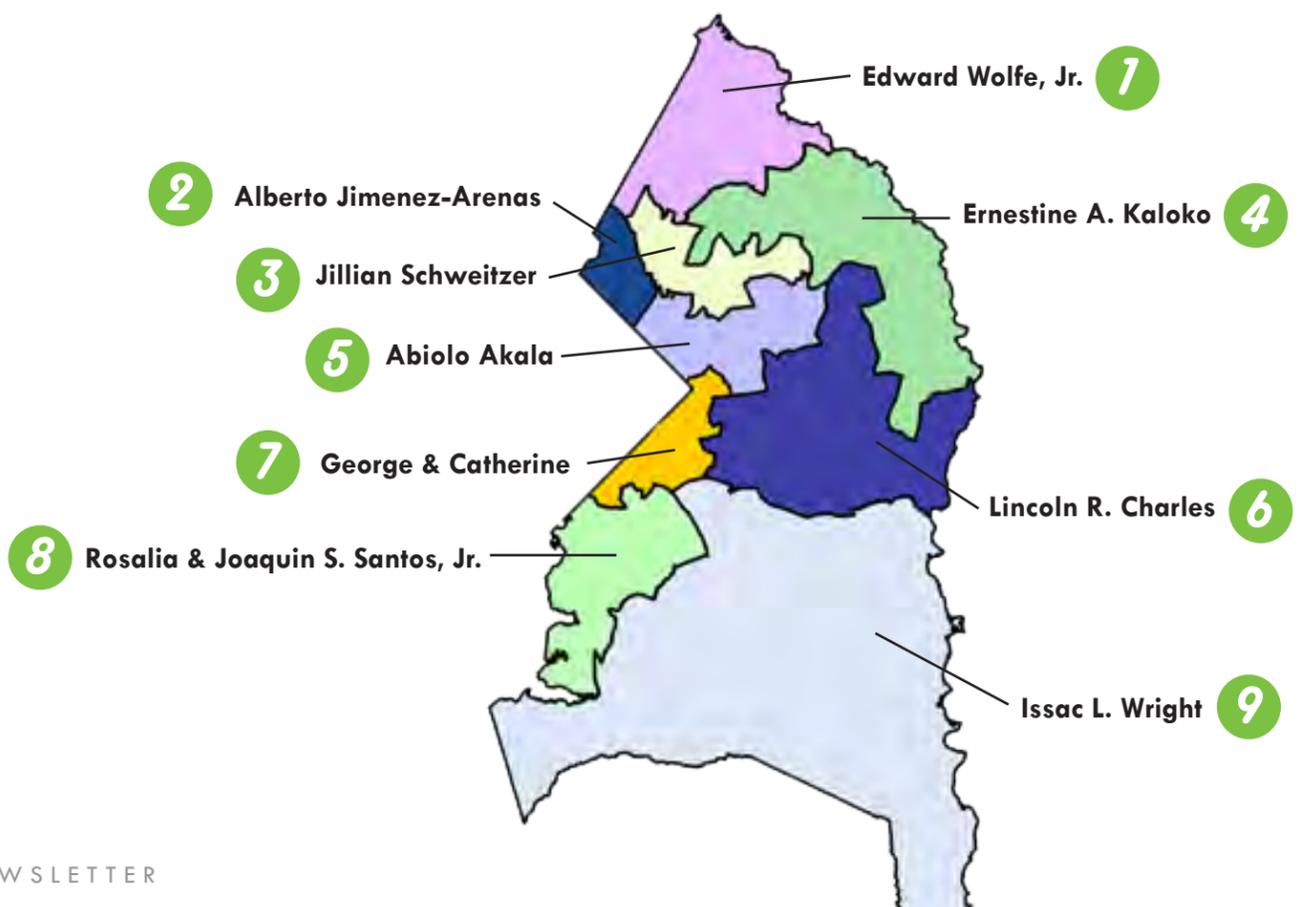
Darryl L. Flick
DER Acting Associate Director
3500 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20774

RESIDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR RECYCLING RIGHT

Nine environmentally conscientious households are being recognized for their commitment to recycling. These individuals are the winners in this year's Recycle Right contest, conducted between Nov. 15 and Dec. 6, 2013, in recognition of America Recycles Day, (ARD). ARD is nationally recognized annually on Nov. 15. The purpose is to generate awareness and celebrate the importance of protecting our natural resources through recycling.

One household from each of the nine councilmanic districts was randomly selected by staff within the Recycling Section to be recognized for their recycling efforts. Staff visits recycling districts on collection days to conduct random observations. Recycling carts and bins are evaluated for proper placement at the curb, cleanliness and appropriate materials in the recycling receptacles. As tokens of appreciation winners receive a prize package, which includes a reusable water bottle and tote bag in addition to a certificate of recognition signed by the Director. Many thanks to these residents for not only recycling but Recycling Right!

The 2013 Recycle Right Contest winners are listed below by Council District.



DER WELCOMES NEW INTERIM DCAO

On Jan. 17, 2014, Carla Reid, the Prince George's County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Economic Development and Public Infrastructure (ED&PI) resigned from her position to pursue other opportunities. Ms. Reid was instrumental in achieving one of the Administration's top priorities of streamlining the permit process as well as development and implementation of the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE). As one of the agencies under her authority, DER will miss her leadership and appreciate all of the support she provided to our endeavors.



In the interim, Aubrey Thagard will assume the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) position. Mr. Thagard is a native of Jackson, Mississippi with nearly 20 years of experience in public policy development, urban planning and economic development, having worked in Mississippi, Georgia and the District of

Columbia. Mr. Thagard earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications from Mississippi Valley State University and holds a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Jackson State University. He also completed the John F. Kennedy School of Government Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program at Harvard University and obtained a graduate certificate in public management from George Washington University's Certified Public Manager program in 2007. He is a former Adjunct Professor of Urban Studies Program at Savannah State University and has lectured at several universities. He is the author of several published works about urban planning.

Mr. Thagard joined the Prince George's County Executive's Office in January 2011 after a successful tenure at the District of Columbia's Office of Planning. He joined the Office of Planning in 2002 as a neighborhood planning coordinator, and was the senior planner east of the Anacostia River. He was the lead planner for a number of major planning initiatives including the St. Elizabeth's Hospital East Campus Framework Plan and the Pennsylvania Avenue, SE Corridor Plan. He was also a contributing author for the District's Comprehensive Plan. While at the Office of Planning, Mr. Thagard created and managed the Capital Planning Unit, which provided technical assistance and research to select agencies on their Capital Improvement Plan budgeting issues.

GREEN

Home Improvement

There are so many advantages of having a greener home environment. Eco-friendly homes can save you money on your energy bills, keep your loved ones healthy, help to conserve the earth's natural resources and reduce waste.

Anyone can have a healthier greener home, it just takes a little planning and some research. Decorating with eco-friendly materials is practical, better for your health and does not cost a lot of money contrary to popular belief. Below are a few ideas to get your home greener.

- 1 Use natural fabrics such as cotton and wool when covering cushions or pillows.
- 2 When selecting carpets or rugs an all wool carpet is a good choice. Wool carpets are made without harsh dyes and chemicals and are biodegradable.
- 3 Buy plantation shutters as they are less likely to collect dust and allergens than draperies.
- 4 In the kitchen, select glass door cabinets as they don't absorb odors or emit toxins.
- 5 Solid wood is a good alternative to vinyl or plywood. Vinyl contains formaldehyde which can emit toxins into the air.
- 6 Instead of painting walls use faux grass cloth to get that textured look.
- 7 Buy organic cotton sheets, towels, blankets, or throws as organic cotton is grown using methods that have less impact on the environment. Organic cotton is grown without the use of toxins and pesticides.
- 8 Purchase an air purifier to remove airborne particles and toxic gases.
- 9 Transform your home into a greener one by using low VOC (volatile organic compound) paint. Regular VOC paint has harmful chemicals and solvents when they are dry and released into the air.

KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM: WAYS TO MOTIVATE YOURSELF

Fostering and maintaining a work environment that results in high quality work and increased productivity is a challenge for most organizations. Producing a highly motivated workforce not only requires action on the part of management but also on the part of employees. To reinforce and promote your professional growth and development, there are steps you can take to motivate yourself that may lead to rewards and increased opportunity for challenge in the workplace. Here are some steps you can take to motivate yourself.

Take on New Challenges

Request assignments that challenge your skills and capabilities to stimulate growth. Stretch beyond what you have done in the past. Volunteer to lead a team project or initiate a work-group focused on a policy or operational issues that needs to be improved.

Track Activities and Accomplishments

Review the activities you have completed over a certain period of time and record how the effort you put forth was recognized and/or rewarded by others (i.e., supervisors, colleagues, etc.).

Create Mini-Goals

Deciding what you need to accomplish may seem more manageable if you create specific goals or a plan for getting work accomplished. Divide your main goal into smaller components.

Seek Feedback

You cannot and should not work in a silo. Request periodic feedback from your supervisor to ensure that you are on the right track in the performance of your work assignments. Knowing that you are doing what is expected of you (or exceeding expectations) can be a motivator. Feedback also provides an opportunity for corrective action on your part, if necessary.

Don't Procrastinate

Putting off the unpleasant parts of your job will only make them worse. If there's a task you're really dreading, get it done first thing in the morning. Not only will you feel much better once it's done, but you also won't have it hanging over your head all day. Plus, once you've polished off a difficult job everything else will seem easier by comparison.

Remember Your Triumphs

Whenever you do something remarkable, write down a summary of your success and stick it up on the wall or the side of your computer monitor. When you're feeling down, look over the list of your past successes and remind yourself that the next big success is just around the corner.

Maintain a High Level of Self-Confidence

Have confidence in your ideas and self-worth. Remember that you, like your co-workers, have ideas and skills that are unique and valuable that contribute to the success of your work.



Brown Bag

LUNCH SERIES

Join your colleagues each month to discover the NEW DER!

The DER Brown Bag Lunch Series is presented and facilitated by your colleagues and is open to all DER employees.

02.20.14
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
1801 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD
1st floor Conference Room

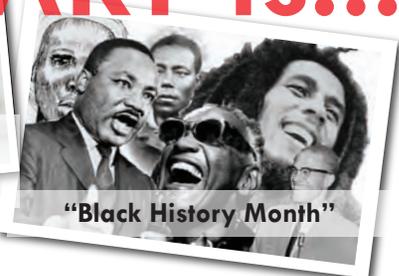
03.20.14
SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES
12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
9400 Peppercorn Place
4th floor, Conference Rm 410
Largo, MD

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

FEBRUARY is...



"Beat the Heat"
Cat Neuter Month



"Black History Month"



saturday 02.01

Electronics Recycling Acceptance Site - 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
11611 White House Road
Upper Marlboro
(301) 883-5045

Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site - 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
11611 White House Road
Upper Marlboro
(301) 883-5045
** Also open Thursdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.*

thursday 02.06

Low-Cost Wellness & Vaccine Clinic
12 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Spay Spot Clinic
Animal Services Facility
3750 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro
(301) 254-8151
** Open the first and third Thursday of every month*

friday through sunday
02.07 - 02.09

Suburban Maryland Spring Home Show
11 a.m. – 8 p.m.
The Show Place Arena
14900 Pennsylvania Avenue
Upper Marlboro
(855) 528-5304

saturday 02.08

Animal Shelter Volunteer Orientation
10 a.m.
Animal Services Facility
3750 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro
(301) 780-7220

Electronics Recycling Acceptance Site
8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site
8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

saturday 02.15

Electronics Recycling Acceptance Site
8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site
8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

02.17 COUNTY HOLIDAY
President's Day

thursday 02.20

Vehicle Show Cause Hearing - 9 a.m.
9400 Peppercorn Place
Conference Room 550
Largo
(301) 883-5955

West Laurel Civic Association
7:30 p.m.
16601 Supplee Lane
West Laurel Community Building
Laurel
301-317-0917

Low-Cost Wellness & Vaccine Clinic
12 p.m. – 3 p.m.

saturday 02.22

Electronics Recycling Acceptance Site
8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site
8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

monday 02.24

Pet Loss Grief Workshop
6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Animal Services Facility
3750 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro
(301) 780-7220

wednesday 02.26

Commission for Animal Control Hearing - 9:30 a.m.
Animal Services Facility
3750 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro
(301) 883-6009

Animal Shelter Volunteer Orientation
6 p.m.

thursday 02.27

Vehicle Show Cause Hearing - 9 a.m.

Comprehensive Community Cleanup
Beltsville (Phase 1)
(301) 883-5822

02.24 - 03.07

***In the event of inclement weather, please refer to the County's Web site for office closures and delays.*

FEBRUARY | 2014

calendar of events