

LAUREL LIVING

The Official Award-Winning Newsletter for the City of Laurel



A Message from Mayor Keith R. Sydnor

As we welcome 2026, I am proud to share this new year with a community defined by its strength, diversity, and sense of possibility. Laurel continues to be a place where history matters, neighbors look out for one another, and progress is shaped by the people who call this city home.

This calendar reflects more than the passing of months - it captures moments, places, and stories that make Laurel special. Throughout the year ahead, we will continue working to strengthen our neighborhoods, invest in our youth, support our seniors, and ensure that Laurel remains a city where opportunity and quality of life go hand in hand.

As Mayor, I remain committed to transparent leadership, thoughtful growth, and meaningful engagement with our residents. Together with the City Council, our dedicated staff, and our community partners, we will continue moving Laurel forward while honoring the values that have guided us for generations. I encourage you to stay informed and connected by visiting www.cityoflaurel.org and following the City of Laurel's official social media pages for the latest updates on meetings, programs, and events.

On behalf of the City of Laurel, I wish you and your family a healthy, prosperous, and fulfilling year ahead.

Keith R. Sydnor

Be sure to pick up your 2026 Municipal Calendar at City of Laurel facilities.



Inside this Edition



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Proudly Serving You!



**Council President
Brencis Smith**
At-Large



**Council President Pro Tempore
Adrian Simmons**
Ward 1



Councilmember James Kole
Ward 1



Councilmember Kyla Clark
Ward 2



Councilmember Jeffrey Mills
Ward 2



**Office of City Administrator
Christian L. Pulley, CPM**
City Administrator
Ext. 2242



**Office of City Administrator
Nekesa Matlock**
Deputy City Administrator
Ext. 2204



**Office of the City Council
Sara Green, City Clerk**
Ext. 2120



**Office of the Mayor
Crystal Hypolite, Chief of Staff**
Ext. 2124



**Budget and Personnel Services
Michele Saylor, Director**
Ext. 2248



**Communications
Natalie Williams, Director**
Ext. 2208



**Economic and Community Development
Jay Meashey, Director**
Ext. 2232



**Emergency Management
Christina Cornwell, Director**
Ext. 2232



**Fire Marshal and
Permit Services
Danny Selby, Director**
Ext. 2195



**Information Technology
James Cornwell-Shiel, Director**
Ext. 2240



**Human Services
Marchelle LeBlanc, Director**
Ext. 2723



**Parks and Recreation
Bill Bailey, Director**
Ext. 2233



**Police Department
Russell Hamill, Chief**
(301) 498-0092



**Public Works
Tim Miller, Director**
Ext. 3205



Profiles of Public Service: The Office of the Mayor **Leadership, Collaboration and Vision for the City of Laurel's Future**

The City of Laurel's success is rooted in a guiding principle that shapes every decision made at City Hall: the citizens come first. Each day, the Mayor's Office works deliberately to deliver responsive, transparent, and effective local government.

At the center of this effort is a strong executive leadership team led by Mayor Keith R. Sydnor and supported by Chief of Staff Crystal Hypolite. Together, they form a unified leadership structure that turns ideas into action and policy into meaningful outcomes for Laurel residents.

As the City of Laurel's Chief Executive, Mayor Sydnor is responsible for setting the strategic vision that guides city operations. The Mayor ensures that ordinances and resolutions adopted by the City Council are faithfully enforced, reviews and signs or vetoes legislation, and presents the annual budget that supports all city services.

Sworn into office on November 27, 2023, Mayor Sydnor has prioritized open government, fiscal responsibility, and community engagement. He believes that good government starts with listening. Through appointments to boards, commissions, and committees, he ensures that residents have a direct voice in shaping the policies and priorities that affect their neighborhoods.

Mayor Sydnor emphasizes it takes teamwork to deliver high-quality service to City of Laurel residents. "I have a great staff. All the department heads are great. They have deputy directors; they manage the city. Without them we couldn't exist. We rely on their expertise and professional knowledge to do the work. They all play a vital role in this system."



WATCH NOW

Go inside the Office of the Mayor and see how leadership and teamwork are shaping the future of Laurel.

Staying Connected

Download My Laurel Maryland Mobile App

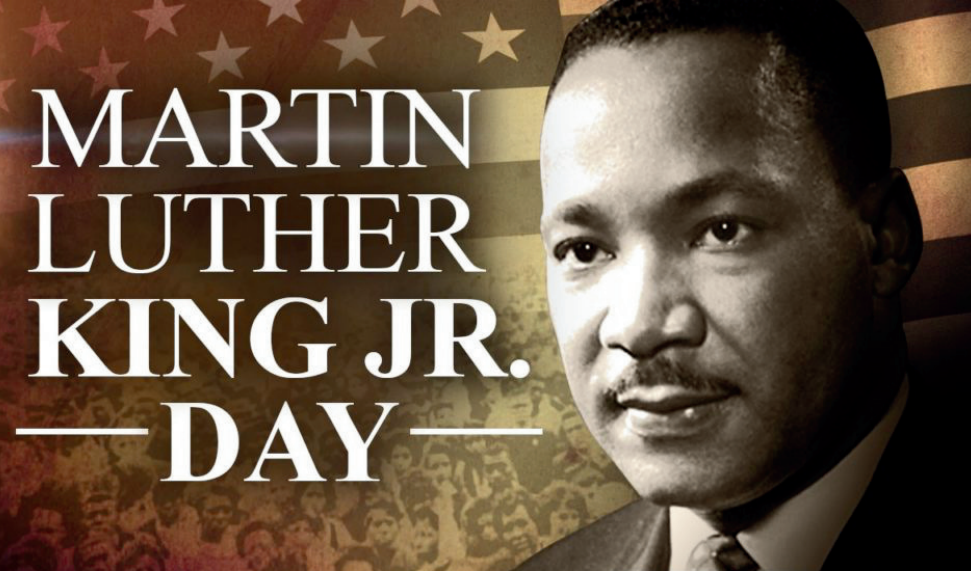
The City of Laurel, Maryland is encouraging residents to download the MyLaurel Maryland mobile app. The mobile application is intended to serve as a direct communication link between Laurel residents and city officials. The app allows users to report issues to relevant city departments and receive timely feedback, track service requests, and stay informed about city council and committee meetings. For more information, go to cityoflaurel.org and search My Laurel Mobile. Stay connected and informed by downloading the MyLaurel Maryland mobile application.



Available on the
App Store



GET IT ON
Google Play



A Day On, Not a Day Off

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service Event Scheduled for January 19th

The City of Laurel is proud to host its annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, and Mayor Keith R. Sydnor and the Laurel City Council invite residents to participate on Monday, January 19, 2026, from 10:00am - 2:00pm. The event will take place at the Laurel Multiservice Center Gymnasium, located at 204 Fort Meade Road. This meaningful day honors Dr. King's legacy through service, unity, and community engagement.

This year's Day of Service will partner with Mayor Sydnor's Adopt-A-Senior Program, focusing on supporting Laurel's senior residents. The event will begin with a remembrance program at 10:00am, featuring guest speakers and musical selections by the Laurel High School Choir, followed by a hands-on volunteer activity assembling care packages for local seniors.

To support this initiative, the City of Laurel is seeking community donations to help assemble 200 care packages for local seniors. These contributions are essential to creating packages filled with items that provide comfort, warmth, and encouragement during the winter months. The following items are needed:

- Warm blankets
- Moisturizers and lip balm
- Winter items such as gloves, scarves, socks, and knit hats
- Hygiene products, including soap, baby wipes, and shampoo
- Entertainment items such as puzzle books, coloring books, and movies
- Inspirational messages, including cards, letters, photos, or quotes to show our seniors care and appreciation

In addition to donations, we are seeking volunteers to assist with item collection and/or participate on the day of the event by helping assemble care packages and support program activities. Those interested in volunteering or donating are asked to contact Carreen Koubek at ckoubek@laurel.md.us or 301-725-5300 ext. 2109. Together, we can honor Dr. King's legacy by making a meaningful difference in the lives of our senior residents—because this is a Day On, Not a Day Off.

Donate items and/or Sign-Up to Volunteer Today!



Laurel's Gift To You **Free Christmas Tree Pick Up**

The City of Laurel's Department of Public Works will begin Christmas tree pickup service every Wednesday starting January 7, 2026. Christmas trees must be placed at the curb by 7:00 AM on collection days, or preferably the evening before.

To make sure that no trees are overlooked, booking a pickup is highly recommended. Residents can easily schedule a pickup by adding their address to DPW's tree collection list by calling 301-725-0088 or sending an email to DPW@laurel.md.us.

When trees are waiting to be picked up by DPW, please remove any tinsel, lights, and decorations. They should also not be placed in plastic bags.



Supporting Financial Wellness **Free Tax Assistance Returns to Laurel for the 2026 Tax Season**

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program in Laurel, MD, provides free tax preparation services for qualifying individuals, including those with low-to-moderate incomes, persons with disabilities, and limited English speaking tax payers, seniors 60 years old and older, and students. Local organizations, such as Touch Stones Financial Wellness and Making Change, are facilitating tax preparation services.

Touch Stones Financial Wellness

City of Laurel, Craig A. Moe MultiService Center
204 Ft. Meade Rd., Laurel, MD 20707
Phone: (443) 292-2162
Email: vitatouchstones@gmail.com

Start Date: February 1 to April 15, 2026

Mondays 4pm-7pm
Wednesdays 4pm-7pm
Saturdays 10am-2pm

Eligibility:

To qualify, you must make \$69,000 or less, be a person with a disability, be a limited English speaking taxpayer, or be 60 years or older.

✓ Document Checklist (What to Bring)

- Identification: Photo ID for each filer
- Tax IDs: Social Security cards or ITIN letters for yourself, spouse, and all dependents
- Income Forms: All W-2s, 1099s, and other income statements
- Health Insurance: Forms 1095-A, 1095-B, or 1095-C
- Deductions: Childcare provider information (Name/TIN), education expenses, etc.
- Banking: Account and routing numbers (a voided check is best) for direct deposit
- Past Returns: A copy of last year's tax return

Note: If filing jointly, both spouses must be present to sign.

What to Bring:

Proof of identification (photo ID) for each filer, Social Security cards or ITIN letters for yourself, your spouse, and all dependents, all W-2 forms, 1099, and other income forms, Information for all deductions/credits such as childcare provider's name/TIN, education expenses, proof of health insurance coverage (Forms 1095-A, B, or C), a copy of last year's tax return, banking account and routing numbers (a voided check is best) for direct deposit of your refund, if married and filing jointly, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.



Caring for Laurel's Pets Low-Cost Veterinary Services Return to the City



Low-cost veterinary services are returning to the City of Laurel through a new partnership between Helping Every Animal Receive Treatment (H.E.A.R.T.) and Laurel Cats, bringing a mobile veterinary clinic directly to the community. The collaboration, supported by Mayor Keith R. Sydnor, Councilman James Kole, and the City of Laurel, aims to address the growing gap in affordable animal care following the rise in veterinary costs since COVID and the recent relocation of Spay Now's low-cost clinic out of Laurel.

Led by former Anne Arundel County animal control director Robin Catlett and veterinarians Dr. Mazzurco and Dr. Muller, H.E.A.R.T. operates a mobile clinic designed to reach communities where the need is the greatest.

The partnership marked a milestone on Tuesday, December 16, with a soft opening at the Laurel Parks and Recreation maintenance complex on Sandy Spring Road. Laurel Cats and its rescue partners had more than 20 cats spayed and neutered. Additional clinic sessions are scheduled for January, with plans to open services to the public for both cats and dogs in the near future. Organizers say the effort represents a major step forward for animal welfare in Laurel, demonstrating how community collaboration can restore essential services and improve outcomes for pets and their families.

Residents are encouraged to get involved to help make the clinic a permanent resource in Laurel. H.E.A.R.T. is accepting donations of clean towels (hand towels and especially large bath towels), which can be dropped off at the Laurel Cats food bank at 1200 Sandy Spring Road and labeled "HEART." The organization is also seeking weekday volunteers for roles ranging from check-in and animal transport to surgery prep, recovery assistance, cleaning, and laundry, with Spanish-speaking volunteers especially needed. Those interested in volunteering can email info@heart4animals.org.



The Craig A. Moe Laurel Multiservice Center, in partnership with Taking Care of Our Neighbors is looking for volunteers to help with their winter shelter from January to March 2026. Volunteers will be helping with meals, hospitality, and overall support. If you or anyone you know can help keep our vulnerable community members warm during the chilly winter nights, please call 301-974-3010 or email info@laurelmsc.org.



**WARMING CENTER
VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

JANUARY - MARCH 2026

info@laurelmsc.org

Laurel Multiservice Center, 204 Fort Meade Rd. Laurel, MD

Helping Neighbors Stay Warm

Laurel Multiservice Center Accepting Adult Clothing Donations

Beginning on January 14th, the Craig A. Moe Laurel Multiservice Center will be accepting clothing donations for adults every Wednesday!

The Multiservice Center opened their clothes distribution site, The Clothes Closet, in 2024 and began accepting gently used items for those in need. The new process, which includes a set date and time for accepted drop-offs, comes from the manpower that was needed to help sort through these donation items based on seasonal needs.

"One of our partners offered to sort through our donation items and return what we are in need of based on the season," Marchelle LeBlanc, the Director of the City of Laurel's Human Services Department, said of the donation process. Once the items are returned to the Multiservice Center, they will be put in the Center's Clothes Closet. Those in need can access The Clothes Closet during the Multiservice Center's operating hours: Monday through Friday from 9am to 6pm.

Those that wish to donate can check the Laurel Multiservice Center's website or social media pages to see what they are currently accepting and bring plastic bags containing clean, gently used adult clothing to the Multiservice Center (204 Fort Meade Rd., Laurel, MD) between 9am and 1pm. Someone from the Multiservice Center will be onsite to load the donated items onto a Department of Public Works vehicle to be sorted.

For questions regarding how to donate or for more information, visit the Center's website: www.laurelmsc.org, call 301-974-3010, or email: info@laurelmsc.org.

Items Needed for Adults:

- **Sweaters, Hoodies, and other warm long-sleeved shirts**
- **Jeans, Sweatpants, Long Johns/Thermals, and other warm long pants**
- **Winter Coats and Heavy Jackets**
- **Hats, Scarves, and Gloves**



Drive Sober. Stay Safe.

A Holiday Reminder That Lasts All Year

The City of Laurel regularly shares sober driving information around each holiday, including details, promo codes, and campaign reminders. Community members are advised to keep an eye out for these posts during major holidays.

As many are recognizing Dry January, the message of safe and sober choices continues. Whether you're choosing to abstain from alcohol for the month or simply want to make responsible decisions when drinking, residents are encouraged to plan for a safe ride, designate a sober driver, or use rideshare services.

The City of Laurel and the Laurel Police Department remain committed to roadway safety and thank the community for helping keep Laurel's streets safe during the holidays, throughout Dry January, and all year long.

For more information about sober driving initiatives, visit wrap.org/soberride or follow the City of Laurel on social media:

Instagram: [cityoflaurelmd](https://www.instagram.com/cityoflaurelmd)

X: [cityoflaurel](https://twitter.com/cityoflaurel)

Facebook: [laurelmaryland](https://www.facebook.com/laurelmaryland)

In Memory of **Fred Frederick, Jr.**

— *A Friend of the City of Laurel* —

February 4, 1931 — January 7, 2026



The City of Laurel extends its heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and employees of **Fred Frederick, Jr.**, who passed away on January 7, 2026.

Mr. Frederick opened his business in the City of Laurel in 1958, and for decades he proudly served generations of residents. What began as a dealership grew into far more than a trusted institution and a cornerstone of Laurel's economy.

Known for his strong work ethic, integrity, and unwavering commitment to service. Mr. Frederick built relationships that extended well beyond commerce. He created jobs, mentored employees, and fostered a sense of trust and reliability that residents came to depend on for decades.

Mr. Frederick's legacy lives on through the many lives he touched, the families he supported, and the lasting impact of his dedication to the City of Laurel. His contributions helped shape the character of our business community and reflected the very best of Laurel's spirit.

Rest in peace, Mr. Frederick.

Your contributions and dedication to Laurel
will never be forgotten.

— City of Laurel —



Something To Sing About Laurel High School Choir Wins Radio Contest

The holiday season just got a little brighter for Laurel High School. The Spartan Singers have officially claimed first place in 97.1 WASH-FM's Christmas Choir Competition, earning the coveted title of the best high school choir in the DMV.

After receiving an email from the radio station, choir director Kevin Lewis, who has led the program since 2018, asked the students if they wanted to participate. "We said we would give it shot, and we just did a recording, and the rest was kind of history," he said.



The Spartan Singers' rendition of "Carol of the Bells" captivated listeners, securing them a \$5,000 prize for the school's music program and an exclusive invitation to perform live at "Miracle on 34th Street, The Musical" at Capital One Hall on December 27, 2025.

This incredible achievement was powered by strong community support, with votes flooding in from residents, alumni, and local leaders. The prize money will help cover travel and expenses for 11 Spartan Singers selected for the Maryland All-State Chorus—a record-breaking milestone for Laurel High School. Just three years ago, only two students made All-State for the first time in school history. While Lewis can share information about music and programs in Maryland, the students' dedication makes the magic happen. "It's a testament to the work that they're putting in and the support that they give each other," he said. The momentum doesn't stop there. The Spartan Singers are riding a wave of success:

- 27 students earned spots in the PG County Honors Chorus this year, up from 22 last year and just 10 the year before.
- Recent performances have gone viral on TikTok and Instagram, drawing thousands of views.
- Their winter concert played to a packed house—a dramatic turnaround from previous years.

"We are truly grateful for 97.1 WASH-FM; we are grateful to the City of Laurel, to our fantastic Mayor Keith Sydnor, our principal Michael Dinkins, our department chair Francis Hammond, and a community of friends and family who helped to get us to this point, so thank you all so much," said Lewis.

"This is an extraordinary achievement for Laurel High School and a moment of pride for our entire community," said Keith R. Sydnor, Mayor of the City of Laurel. "The Spartan Singers have shown what is possible when talent, dedication, and community support come together. Their success on a regional stage reflects the excellence of our students and the strength of Laurel's arts programs."



Happy New Year!

Dear Laurel Community,

As we welcome the New Year, I want to extend my warmest wishes to each of you and your families for a happy, healthy, and prosperous year ahead.

The start of a new year gives us an opportunity to reflect on where we have been and to look ahead with renewed hope and purpose. I am grateful for the resilience, dedication, and sense of community that continues to define the City of Laurel. Whether through civic engagement, volunteerism, or simply being a good neighbor, you play an essential role in making our city a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

In the year ahead, the City Council remains committed to working collaboratively to address the needs of our residents, strengthen our neighborhoods, and support responsible growth while preserving the character of our community. I look forward to continuing to serve you and to working alongside my colleagues, city staff, and our residents to move Laurel forward.

On behalf of the Laurel City Council, I wish you a joyful New Year filled with peace, opportunity, and success. Thank you for your continued trust and engagement.

Warm regards,



The Honorable
Brencis D. Smith
Council President | Laurel City Council
Council Member At-Large
City of Laurel, MD



The City of Laurel invites elementary and middle school students to participate in the 2026 Black History Month Essay Contest, themed “A Century of Black History Commemorations.” This year marks the 100-year anniversary of Black History Month (1926–2026), offering students a meaningful opportunity to explore its significance and lasting impact on American history and culture.

“Black History Month has served for a century as a powerful reminder of the contributions, resilience, and achievements of African Americans,” said Keith R. Sydnor. “This essay contest gives our young people the opportunity to reflect, learn, and express what Black history means to them and how it continues to shape our future.”

Essay Topic

Students should respond to the theme **“A Century of Black History Commemorations,”** exploring the importance of Black History Month and how learning about Black leaders, innovators, and everyday heroes has shaped their understanding of history.

Eligibility

- Elementary School Students
- Middle School Students
- Students must reside in or attend school within the City of Laurel

Essay Requirements

- Elementary School: 250–400 words
- Middle School: 400–600 words
- Original student work
- Typed or neatly handwritten submissions accepted
- Include student name, grade, school, and parent/guardian contact information

Submission Deadline: February 18, 2026. Submit essays electronically to laurelmayor@laurel.md.us or deliver in person to the Mayor’s Office, Laurel Municipal Center

Awards & Recognition

Winning students will receive Mayoral Certificates of Achievement and be recognized during the City of Laurel’s Black History Month Program. Selected essays may also be displayed or read during the program. Parents, teachers, and school administrators are encouraged to support student participation in this meaningful educational opportunity.

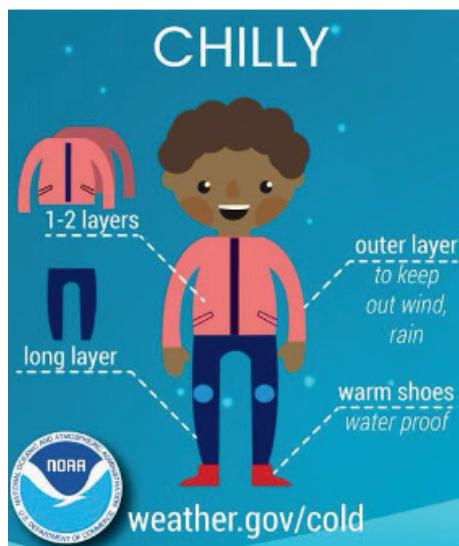
About the City of Laurel

The City of Laurel is committed to celebrating diversity, promoting education, and honoring the contributions of all communities through inclusive programming and civic engagement.

Preparing for the Winter

Winter Weather: Hard to Predict, Easy to Plan For

Winter weather can look very different across the State of Maryland. Each year is unique – some covered in snow; others just extremely cold or windy. Winter hazards can include dangerously low temperatures, strong winds, snow, ice, sleet, and freezing rain. These hazards can cause power outages, damage, injuries, and death. However, there are plenty of ways to prepare so that the winter months can be enjoyed safely. For more information about winter weather preparedness, visit **Ready.gov** or **Weather.gov**.



Cold-Related Health Risks

Exposure to cold weather can cause frostbite and hypothermia, which can be life-threatening, especially to infants, small children, and the elderly. Understanding how to protect the body from excessive exposure to cold conditions is crucial when working outside or participating in winter activities. The following dressing guidelines can assist in reducing the risks associated with cold temperatures and low wind chills:

- Use light-weight and comfortable fabrics that trap the air warmed by the body.
- The first layer for cold weather exposure should keep you warm and dry. The best materials include synthetic fibers, which dry quickly and “wick” wetness away from the skin effectively.
- Clothing should be comfortable, light-weight, durable, and windproof. It is important to note that additional insulating layers may need to be added if the activity level tapers off.
- Outerwear should be appropriate for the activity, allow for ventilation, block the wind, and reduce heat loss.
- Cover your head, hands, and feet. Wear a hat and gloves that are breathable and waterproof. Footwear, including socks, should be durable, waterproof, and breathable. The tread should provide good traction, designed to grip the snow and ice.

Indoor Heating and Carbon Monoxide Safety

Throughout the winter season and during power outages, people look for alternative ways to heat their homes. Although space heaters, fireplaces, and generators can be useful, they can be extremely dangerous. According to the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), space heaters account for approximately 1/3 of home heating fires and 80% of home heating fire deaths annually. Below is a list of safety precautions that should be used with heating equipment:

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from any heating equipment.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.
- Clean and inspect heating equipment annually.
- Turn off portable heaters and extinguish fireplaces before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Test smoke alarms monthly.

During the winter months, carbon monoxide (CO) exposures and poisonings occur more often due to the use of furnaces and heaters. CO is often referred to as the “silent killer” as it has no smell, taste, or color. Protect yourself and family by practicing indoor heating safety, understanding the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, and installing CO detectors. Symptoms of CO poisoning include: headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, mild confusion and shortness of breath.

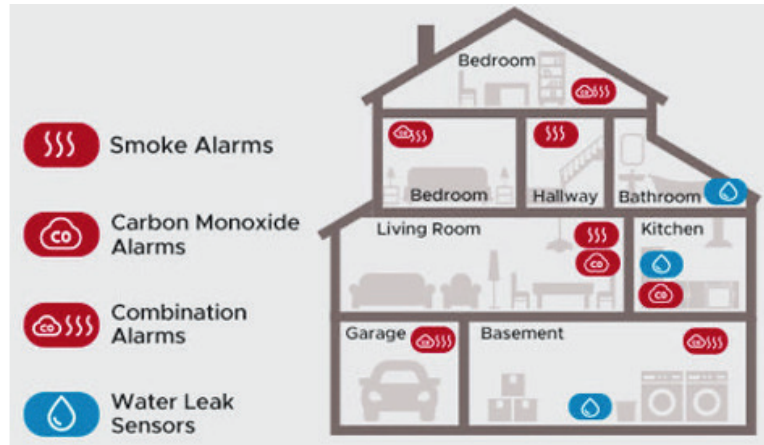
If you are experiencing symptoms of CO exposure or poisoning, call 9-1-1 and seek medical care immediately. Healthcare professionals can check CO levels in your blood and treat you with oxygen. If you are unsure about exposure to CO, contact poison control 24 hours every day at 800-222-1222.



It is recommended that CO detectors be installed on every floor of your home. The detector should be placed near sleeping areas and be loud enough to wake you. If your CO detector sounds, do not ignore the alarm and perform the following actions:

- 1** Evacuate your home and move all people and pets towards fresh air.
- 2** Call 911 and report that you have an active CO alarm.
- 3** Wait for responders to check your home and make sure it is safe to reenter. Just because the alarm stops, does not mean it's safe. The source of the CO could still be producing gas.

Home Safety Product Placement Guide



Winter Travel Safety

In 2023, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 302 fatal traffic crashes and an estimated 22,293 injury crashes that occurred when snow/sleet conditions were present.

When operating your vehicle in winter conditions, remember to slow down. It's harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface. It is also important to increase your following distance enough so that you'll have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you. Additional safe driving tips include:

- Avoid using cruise control in wintry conditions.
- Steer in the direction of a skid. When your wheels regain traction, you won't have to overcorrect to stay in your lane.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly.
- Increase following distances.
- If possible, avoid stopping when going uphill.

Preparing yourself and your vehicle is key to safe winter travel. In addition to annual maintenance, you can winterize your car in the following ways:

- Test your battery; battery power drops as the temperature drops.
- Check the tread of your tires and replace if less than 2/32 of an inch.
- Check tire pressure; like your battery, tire pressure is affected by temperature drops.
- Replace your wiper blades, if needed.
- Add wiper fluid that is rated for -30 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid frozen gas lines.

Finally, you never know when you will encounter winter weather or an emergency road closure. Preparing a winter car emergency kit is extremely helpful should you become stranded. A kit should include the following items:

<input type="checkbox"/>  Flashlight & Extra Batteries	<input type="checkbox"/>  Blankets/Sleeping Bag	<input type="checkbox"/>  Extra Clothing Hats, Mittens, Parkas, Boots
<input type="checkbox"/>  First Aid Kit	<input type="checkbox"/>  Non-Perishable Food Granola Bars, Dried nuts, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>  Sand/Kitty Litter Used for Traction
<input type="checkbox"/>  Snow Shovel	<input type="checkbox"/>  Bottled Water	<input type="checkbox"/>  Cell Phone & Charger
<input type="checkbox"/>  Ice Scraper with Brush	<input type="checkbox"/>  Booster Cables	<input type="checkbox"/>  Flares/Triangles & other Bright Objects

Ensuring Safe, Clean Water for Residents

Free Water Service Line Checks in Laurel

WSSC Water is participating in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's enhanced Lead and Copper Rule, a nationwide public health initiative focused on identifying and removing sources of lead from drinking water systems. As part of this effort, WSSC Water will be conducting free water service line verification visits at selected homes within the City of Laurel in the coming weeks.

These visits are designed to confirm the type of pipe material that connects individual Laurel homes to the public water system. Verifying this information helps ensure service lines are safe and supports the long-term health and well-being of Laurel residents.

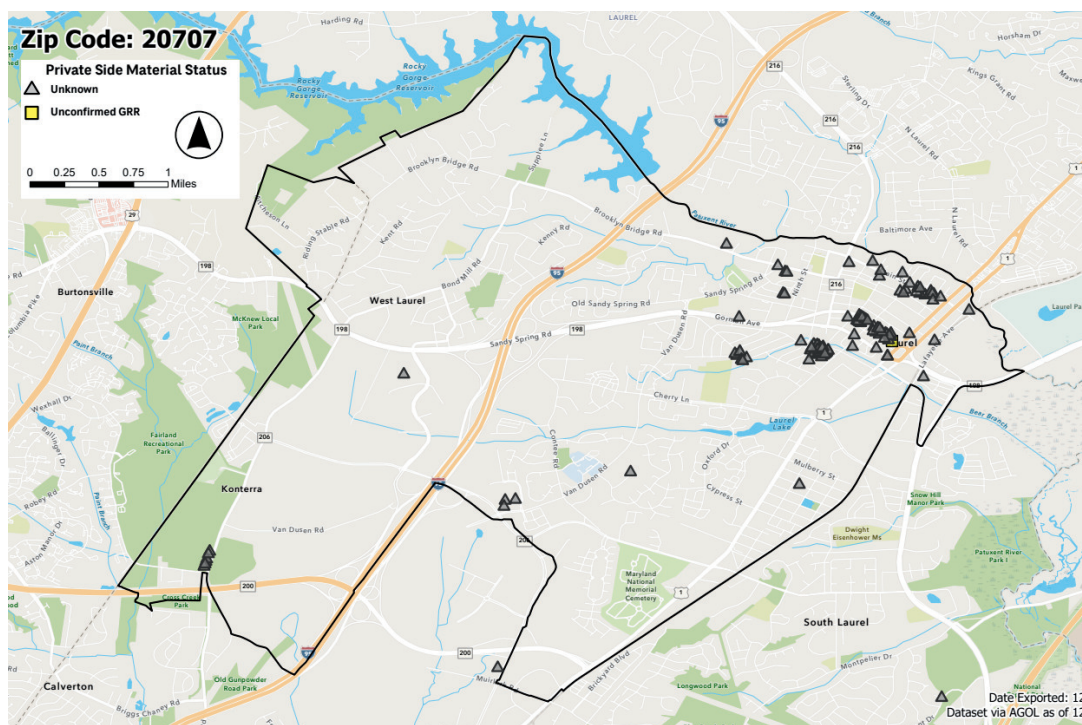
Clearly identified WSSC Water contractors will begin knocking on doors starting this month. Contractors will be wearing WSSC Water hard hats and carrying official WSSC Water photo identification badges. Homeowners will be asked to complete a short permission form allowing contractors to briefly enter the home to verify the pipe material, typically located in a basement, utility room, or crawl space.

Following the inspection, the contractor—Lead Free Group—will share the verification results directly with the homeowner. If no one is home at the time of the visit, a door hanger will be left with instructions on how to schedule an appointment or complete the verification using WSSC Water's online pipe type survey.

Even if a water service line is found to contain lead, it does not necessarily mean there is lead in the drinking water. WSSC Water carefully filters and treats all drinking water to ensure safety and quality, and all water leaving WSSC Water's filtration plants is lead-free.

Laurel residents can learn more about this public health initiative or verify their home's pipe materials by using WSSC Water's Self Survey Tool or visiting www.wsscwater.com/pipeype. WSSC Water is also available to provide virtual or in-person informational sessions upon request.

The City of Laurel and WSSC Water thank residents for their cooperation as this important work moves forward to help protect public health and maintain safe, high-quality drinking water throughout the community.



See Where Testing Will Take Place in Laurel

The highlighted areas on this map show where clearly identified WSSC Water contractors will be knocking on doors in the coming weeks to conduct free water service line verification.

A Call to Action for the City of Laurel

Mayor Keith R. Sydnor invites returning citizens, clergy, business owners, law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, educators, and high school students to take part in a **community-wide roundtable discussion** focused on addressing critical issues impacting our youth and identifying practical, workable solutions.

January 21
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Joseph R. Robison Laurel
Municipal Center
8103 Sandy Spring Road
Laurel, MD 20707

Please RSVP at:
laurelmayor@laurel.md.us



Congratulations!

Joseline Peña-Melnyk
Speaker of the House

A Valued Friend of the City of Laurel **Maryland Makes History With First Afro-Latina Speaker of the House**

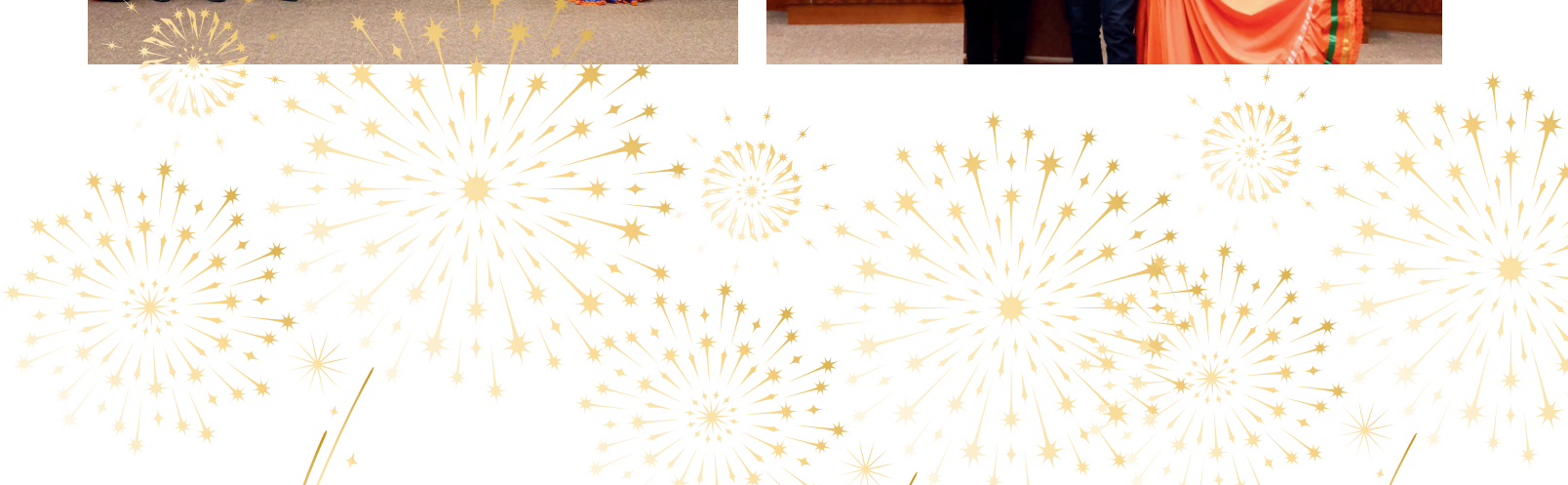
"On December 16, 2025, the State of Maryland made history by electing Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk as the first Afro-Latina woman to serve as Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates.

I was proud and honored to witness this historic moment by invitation of our Speaker, who also serves as my State Representative for Maryland's 21st Legislative District.

Moments like this remind us that America is great but we are at our greatest when we intentionally include, uplift, and accept diversity at every level of leadership. Representation matters, and Maryland continues to lead from the front by example.

Let's keep winning, Maryland. Progress happens when leadership reflects the people it serves.

And let us never forget: America was built by immigrants, on stolen land. Acknowledging our full history strengthens our commitment to equity, justice, and a more inclusive future." ~ *Mayor Sydnor*





2025 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT COMMUNITY GATHERING AND YEAR-IN-REVIEW (RESCHEDULED)

**Thursday, January 29, 2026
6:00 - 8:00pm**

**Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center
Council Chambers
8103 Sandy Spring Road**

**Join us for food, community, and a look at the
sustainability progress made in the
City of Laurel during 2025!**



PEOPLE



PLANET

SCHEDULE:

- 6:00pm - Meet and Greet
- 6:30pm - Highlights and progress of the 2025 Sustainability Initiatives
- 7:00pm - Community Updates
- 7:30pm - Community discussions, Q&A and 2026 goals



PROSPERITY



**PEACE &
PARTNERSHIP**

**Everyone is Welcome! Come Learn, Share, and
Help Shape Laurel's Sustainable Future!**

RSVP by Jan. 23rd: mblair@laurel.md.us

Cleared for Takeoff!

Laurel Youth Earn FAA Drone Certifications

After 10 weeks of intensive training, hands-on flight experience, and safety instruction, the City of Laurel's inaugural Youth Drone Certificate Program successfully concluded, with all three participating students earning their Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Level 1 Drone Certifications.

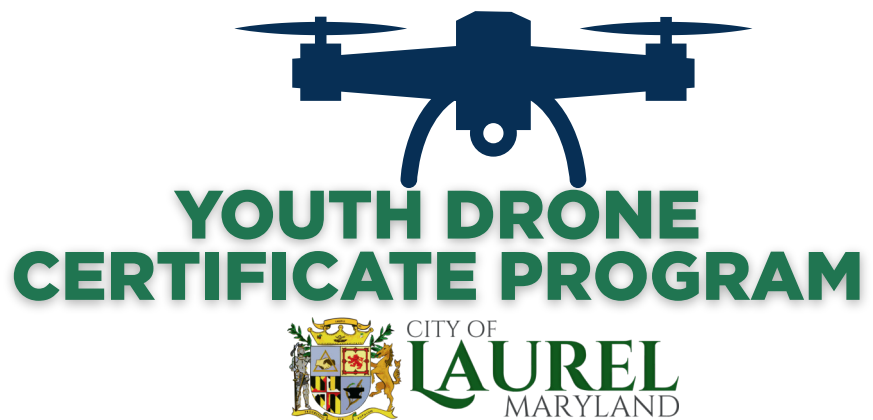
In recognition of their achievement, Mayor Keith R. Sydnor formally honored Nelson Paulo, Robyn Wood, and Yusra Ali during the December 15 Mayor and City Council meeting, where he presented each participant with a certificate commemorating the successful completion of Laurel's first-ever Youth Drone Certification Program.

The program, launched in October by Mayor Sydnor in partnership with Alpha Drones USA, provided students with comprehensive instruction in drone flight operations, safety protocols, FAA regulations, and real-world applications. The certification marks a major milestone for participants, opening doors to future educational and career opportunities in technology, aviation, media, engineering, and beyond.

As the students move forward with FAA certifications in hand, their accomplishment highlights the impact of career-focused education and the City of Laurel's commitment to empowering youth through innovative programs. The Youth Drone Certificate Program concludes on a high note, celebrating student achievement and the possibilities that lie ahead.



Click here to watch Mayor Sydnor acknowledge drone program participants on our YouTube channel, @LaurelTVOfficial, under the January 2026 Newsletter playlist.



Details on 2026 applications coming soon.



LAUREL POLICE CITIZEN'S ACADEMY

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

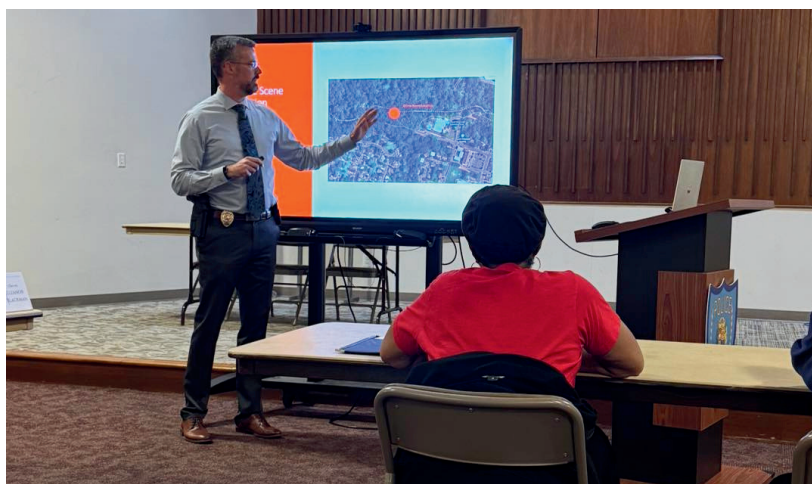
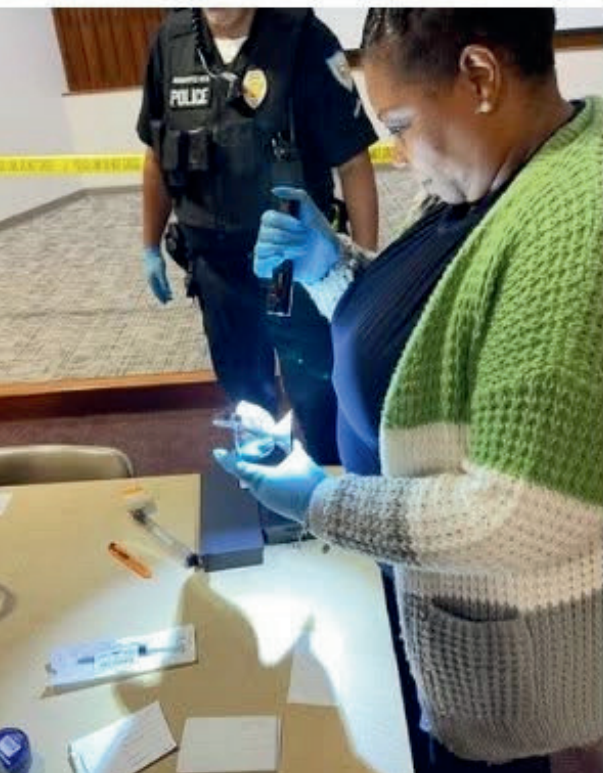
CLASSES BEGIN
FEBRUARY 12, 2026

DEADLINE TO APPLY
FEBRUARY 10, 2026

EMAIL APPLICATION TO
LGUENIN@LAUREL.MD.US



811 5th Street, Laurel, MD. 20707



THE CITY OF LAUREL
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS &
RECREATION PRESENTS



Free Indoor @7pm
MOVIE NIGHT

FRIDAY
JANUARY 23
Lilo & Stitch (2025)

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 20
Elio

PARTNERSHIP HALL @ 811 5TH STREET
POPCORN, CANDY, AND WATER AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.CITYOFLAUREL.ORG/PARKS

