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THE GARRETT COUNTY REPUBLICAN

Main Office
The Garrett Co. Republican
P.O. Box 326
211 E. Green Street,
Oakland, MD 21550-0326

Phone: (301) 334-3963
Fax: (301) 334-5904
Hours: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Website:
therepublicannews.com

NEWSROOM

Editor
Trevor King
tking@therepublicannews.com
304-415-3489

Staff Writers
Brenda Ruggiero
bruggiero@therepublicannews.com

Claire Sullivan
csullivan@therepublicannews.com
301-334-3963

Sports Editor
Trevor King
tking@therepublicannews.com

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Soil Conservation cooperators' dinner held in Bittinger

From Staff Reports

BITTINGER — The Garrett Soil Conservation District held a cooperators' dinner on Nov. 15 at the Bittinger Mennonite Gymnasium. Farmers and landowners from around Garrett County attended the event.

Also attending were Michael Calkins, Maryland Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary of Plant Industries and Pest Management; Suzy Daubert, the Maryland State Conservationist for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Senator Mike McKay, and Keith Potter, Maryland Department of Agriculture Resource Conservation District Operations Manager for Western and Central Maryland.

Garrett County Farm Queen Haley Klotz was also in attendance.

Rodney D. McKenzie Sr. was awarded the Garrett Soil Conservation District 2024 Conservation Newcomer Award for outstanding conservation efforts to protect soil and water. McKenzie runs a beef cattle farm in the Finzel area.

The GSCD 2024 Conservation Cover Crop Award was presented to Kenton and Holly Bender of Oakview Ridge Farm in Accident. The Benders received the award for their dedication to protecting the land from erosion and nutrient runoff through cover crop installations on their farm over the span of many years. Oakview Ridge Farm is a dairy operation. It was featured in the Maryland Farm and Harvest MPT series in 2014.

Suzy Daubert spoke about funding for NRCS programs. NRCS assists Maryland farmers and landowners with cost-share grants to cover conservation practices, including things such as water, fencing, structures, grazing, forestry, energy audits, and high tunnels.

Chad Bucklew, NRCS District Conservationist, and Seth Metheny, MDA Garrett District Manager, presented a program about services available to Garrett County residents and the accomplishments of the GSCD this past year.

For FY24, MDA provided \$266,573.97 in cost-share funding for Garrett County producers through the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost Share program (MACS). NRCS approved contracts in the amount of \$1.183 million cost-share for Garrett County farmers and landowners.

In October, MDA announced that MACS can now provide prorated funding for farms with one or more animal units. Previously, farms with fewer than eight animal units did not qualify for MACS. This change is intended to make more funding available for smaller family farms.

In conjunction with the dinner, the Garrett Soil Conservation District held a 50/50 raffle and a ticket auction to raise money for community outreach. Businesses donating to the auction included: Rigidly Rafters, Firefly Farms, Fischer Auto, Sam's Agway, Brenda's Restaurant Group, Monteroft Farm, Naylor's Hardware, Fun Zone, Advance Auto, Uno's Restaurant, Manor's



Submitted photo

Suzy Daubert, NRCS Maryland State Conservationist, addresses area farmers and landowners at the Garrett Soil Conservation District cooperators' dinner on Nov. 15.

Home Center, and Lowes. Community Outreach projects that the GSCD supports include the GSCD Scholarship fund, Envirothon, 4-H Fair Contest, FFA, and other community engagement and conservation education programs.

GSCD will be awarding two \$1,000 scholarships to area students pursuing a degree in Agriculture, Natural Resources, or a related field in 2025. Students are encouraged to go to https://garrettscd/scholarship/ for more information. The scholarship will open for applications around February 2025.

In addition to money raised at the dinner, GSCD is holding a Fruit Tree and Bush sale to support its outreach. Trees and bushes can be ordered online now and picked up in mid-April 2025.

The dinner was prepared by Bittinger Mennonite Church. GSCD also



Submitted photo

Seth Metheny (right), MDA Garrett District Manager, presents the 2024 Conservation Cover Crop Award to Kenton Bender of Oakview Ridge Farm.



Submitted photo

Chad Bucklew (right), NRCS District Conservationist, presents the 2024 Conservation Newcomer Award to Rodney D. McKenzie Sr.

provided a stew made with local produce from ALL Produce, Backbone Food Farm, PhilMar Produce, Lynndale Produce, DeBerry Farm, MeMe's Mini Market Farm, and Woodland Garden Botanicals.

The GSCD Cooperators' Dinner was a yearly event until 2020, when it was cancelled due to COVID. This marks GSCD's first

dinner since 2020. More information about GSCD can be found at https://garrettscd.org.

To support GSCD's outreach projects, including the scholarship fund, community members are asked to visit https://garrettsoilconservation.org for information about the GSCD Fruit Tree and Bush sale.

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning: Tips from the GCHD

by Eli Reed ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

OAKLAND — The Environmental Health Office of

the Garrett County Health Department reminds everyone that home heating appliances can be a source of poisonous carbon monoxide gas.

Carbon monoxide, or CO, is an odorless, tasteless, colorless gas that can be fatal when inhaled. It is sometimes difficult to determine if carbon monox-

ide is the culprit because its symptoms are similar to the flu and allergies. Low levels can cause nausea, dizziness, weakness, and muscle aches. Higher doses can impair judgment, cause paralysis or coma, and potentially death.

Carbon monoxide exposures especially affect unborn babies, infants, and people with anemia or a history of heart disease. According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, there are more than 250 carbon monoxide deaths every year associated with the use of combustion appliances in the home.

Every year, nearly 5,000 people in the United States are treated in hospital emergency rooms for carbon monoxide poisoning.

Any fuel-burning appliance in the home is a potential source of carbon monoxide. When appliances are kept in good working condition, they produce little carbon monoxide. Problems arise when fuel-burning appliances are inadequately maintained, improperly operated, or improperly vented.

Common sources of carbon monoxide include the following: gas, oil or wood-fueled appliances, furnaces, wood stoves, fireplaces, coal stoves, charcoal grills, cooking ranges, water heaters, kerosene heaters, portable generators, and automobiles left running in closed garages.

Kerosene space heaters are of particular concern in our county since many residents use this type of auxiliary heat during power outages caused by adverse weather and winter storms.

Kerosene heaters should be used with extreme caution; they are not meant to be a primary source of heat.

Make sure these heaters are vented to the outdoors and are equipped with oxygen depletion sensors.

If a gas or kerosene heater must be used in an emergency, keep doors open to adjacent rooms of the house and crack open a few windows. This allows enough air for proper combustion and reduces deadly carbon monoxide levels.

The most important way to reduce the risk from carbon monoxide is to keep all fuel-burning devices well-maintained and inspected for safety. Experts recommend having your fuel-burning systems inspected by a trained professional every year.

Always operate a fuel-burning device for its intended purpose, make sure it has been installed correctly, and remember to vent these devices outdoors.

Carbon monoxide detectors can be installed in the home for continuous monitoring of dangerous CO levels. These devices are similar in appearance to smoke detectors and are powered by household electrical current or self-contained batteries. They are available at most hardware or department stores, averaging in price from \$20-\$40.

Most local fire departments can test carbon monoxide if it is suspected that there is a potentially dangerous amount of CO present in the home. The Environmental Health office can direct to the appropriate fire department for those interested in having their home tested.

For more information concerning carbon monoxide safety tips or other indoor air quality concerns, call Environmental Health at 301-334-7760.

STEPHEN'S TABLE IS BACK! Pull up a chair. Take a taste. Come join us. Life is so endlessly delicious. -Ruth Reichl. STEPHEN'S TABLE at ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN OAKLAND UPSTAIRS FELLOWSHIP HALL Join Us for Supper! THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19 5:00-6:30PM Bring your family, bring yourselves and come enjoy a meal with your friends in the community. FREE OF CHARGE. GARRETT TRANSIT WILL BE PICKING UP AT: • The Meadows | 600 P Street - 4:15pm • Oakwood East | 110 A Street - 4:30pm • Underwood South | 201 E Mason Street - 4:45pm • Glades West | 200 Glades Square - 5:00pm TO HELP YOU GET HERE! (Return will be 6:30pm) The Episcopal Church in Garrett County

HAPPY 11TH BIRTHDAY BENTLEY DUANE GNEGY!! WE LOVE YOU! LOVE PAPPY KEVIN AND GRANDMA TAMMY