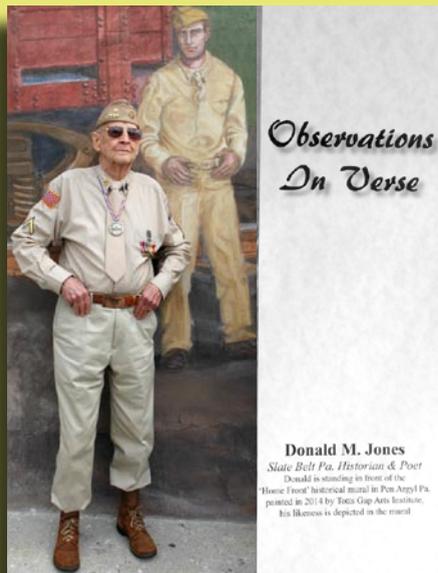


A Poem from the Archives of Donald Jones

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times



RAIN

The other day it rained and I got wet,
With no umbrella, it was my fault, and yet
It spoiled a lovely spring day.
With picnics planned and places to go
The rain didn't help, but I know
Some are pleased to see the gardens grow.
Like most people, I complain
Because of too much or too little rain.
We'd like it to rain when we
have nothing planned
But how silly to think it would
rain at our command.
We're much better off to let
nature work her plan
'Cause in her own way she pleases every man.

Easton Area High School College-bound Students Get Their Savings Matched By BB&T

By Michael Ortoski

BETHLEHEM - Easton Area High School students in a special group working on overcoming the many obstacles lower-income students of color often face when thinking about their futures have a new tool for overcoming those obstacles. The Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley and Easton Area High School have partnered with BB&T to match savings accumulated by students through their part-time jobs. On Wednesday, April 24, at noon, students lined up for the first time at BB&T's branch at 741 South 25th Street in Wilson borough to open their accounts.

The news media is welcome to interview students as they wait in the teller line to open their accounts. Representatives from the partnering organizations will be present to provide details on the program, which was developed to reduce the wide disparity that exists between white students and their counterparts of color. One illustration of the breadth of the disparity is that 79% of white students in Northampton County take the Scholastic Aptitude Test that is so important for college admissions. According to research done by the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium for CACLV, 4% of African-American students and 8% of Latino students take the SAT.

In response to the stunning data in the Consortium's report, "Justice for All: Challenging Wealth Disparity in the Lehigh Valley," CACLV started Generation Next, a formalized program at Easton Area High School that works with inner-city students of color to help them understand how college works, how to pick a school, what to expect and more. The program takes students on a tour of regional colleges and universities, including an overnight trip to Howard University in Washington, DC. Also included as part of the savings program is a series of sessions at which BB&T bankers teach financial literacy.

CACLV operates a wide range of programs designed to improve the quality of life for low-income people in the region. Those programs include the Second Harvest Food Bank, the Sixth Street Shelter, housing initiatives like homeownership counseling and foreclosure mitigation, rehab and new construction. The agency operates entrepreneurial programs that make loans and offer small business training. It also does extensive neighborhood revitalization work in downtown Allentown, south Bethlehem and the Slate Belt, ranging from façade improvements and creating pocket parks to planting trees and streetscaping. Only 20% of its budget comes from government funding, a proportion without equal among more than 1,000 Community Action Agencies in the nation.



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Northampton County Approves \$118,125 for land conservation in Upper Mt. Bethel

By Becky Bartlett

EASTON - At the April 18, 2019 meeting, Northampton County Council approved an Environmental Services Assistance grant in the amount of \$118,125 for land conservation on the Blue Mountain in Upper Mount Bethel Township. An open space program grant has been approved by the Upper Mount Bethel Township Supervisors, as a local match. A recommendation was provided to County Council to protect the County's significant natural features by the Northampton County Open Space Advisory Board at their April 9, 2019 meeting.

"This acquisition is important to protecting not just open space, but wildlife habitat in Northampton County," says Lamont McClure. "These types of purchases are vital to making sure our children and grandchildren have as much access to outdoor recreation as current generations."

The county grant will allow the Nature Conservancy to purchase a Conservation Easement on 127-acres of wooded, very high conservation value of State and Regional significance on the Kittatinny Ridge (Blue Mountain), owned by the Collura family. The property is within an Important Bird Habitat Tier identified by Audubon PA's list of priority parcels for protection of the Kittatinny Ridge, a world-renowned migratory bird corridor and area of resilience to climate change. Within the County's Natural Resources Plan, the conservation easement is within the Martins Jacoby Creek Watershed, a site of regional significance in the Natural Heritage Inventory for Lehigh and Northampton Counties (2013).

This conservation easement will allow the Nature Conservancy to maintain the forest canopy on the Kittatinny Ridge and connect to the adjacent Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the Appalachian Trail, which provides a spring water source for trail hikers. Protecting the Collura property advances the conserving critical landscapes and promoting best management practice goals of the Commonwealth's Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape.

Under the Northampton County Livable Landscapes Program, the Environmental Services Assistance Grant allocates funds for land preservation within the County's natural areas. The purpose of the program is to protect the County's important natural features by assisting municipalities and non-profit organizations to acquire and restore permanently protected lands where resources are found. The Kittatinny Ridge is the last continuous forested ridge remaining in Pennsylvania, and Northampton County Open Space and Livable Landscapes program have demonstrated leadership in conserving this vital landscape since 2007.

Northampton County Receives \$2,671,939 in Grant Money

By Becky Bartlett

EASTON - Lamont McClure announced that the County of Northampton has received \$2,671,939 in allocations from the Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) for the Fiscal Year 2019. These funds can be used for housing, community and economic development activities and assistance for low-and-moderate-income persons and special needs populations across the County. "CDGB money is a key factory in helping our citizens live a happier and healthier life in Northampton County," says Lamont McClure. "Whether it is investing in affordable housing or combating blight, the CDGB funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are desperately needed and greatly appreciated." The funds are separated into \$2,103,140 for Community Development

Block Grants (CDBG) and \$568,799 for HOME Investment Partnerships. The County also has \$10,043,700 in

available Section 108 borrowing authority. Section 108 loans are federally-guaranteed and can be used to leverage existing CDBG funding to access low-interest, long-term financing to invest in Opportunity Zones or other targeted areas.



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