

Area libraries have big fun besides books



School system narrows good art to Six Picks

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Eagles stay perfect in pool

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Charles County, Maryland

Tier map fight hits hearing

■ Pro-growth, green forces battle at meeting

By ERICA MITRANO
Staff writer

Tractors paraded around the parking lot of the Charles County government building Tuesday night, signaling the support of the farmers who owned them for a land use plan they think will preserve the value of their land.

But inside the La Plata hearing room, the plan's opponents outnumbered its

supporters more than 2-to-1, with those speakers citing the cost of new infrastructure and damage to the environment as they urged the county commissioners to preserve land and slow development.

At the end of the hearing, the commissioners deferred for 10 days any action on the draft "tier map," keeping the record open for people to submit comments in writing.

The map, drafted as required by the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 — the "septic bill" — divides all land

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Schools budget asks \$23M more

■ Richmond cites teacher pay, security issues

By GRETCHEN PHILLIPS
Staff writer

In order to maintain school operations while compensating teachers and beefing up security, Charles County Public Schools will ask the county for an additional \$23 million.

Superintendent James E. Richmond's proposed operating budget for 2014 is a 7 percent increase from last year, totaling \$339.6 million.

The school system, based on the proposed budget, will rely heavily on the county because funding from the



Richmond

state is estimated to be only a slight increase of \$1.5 million.

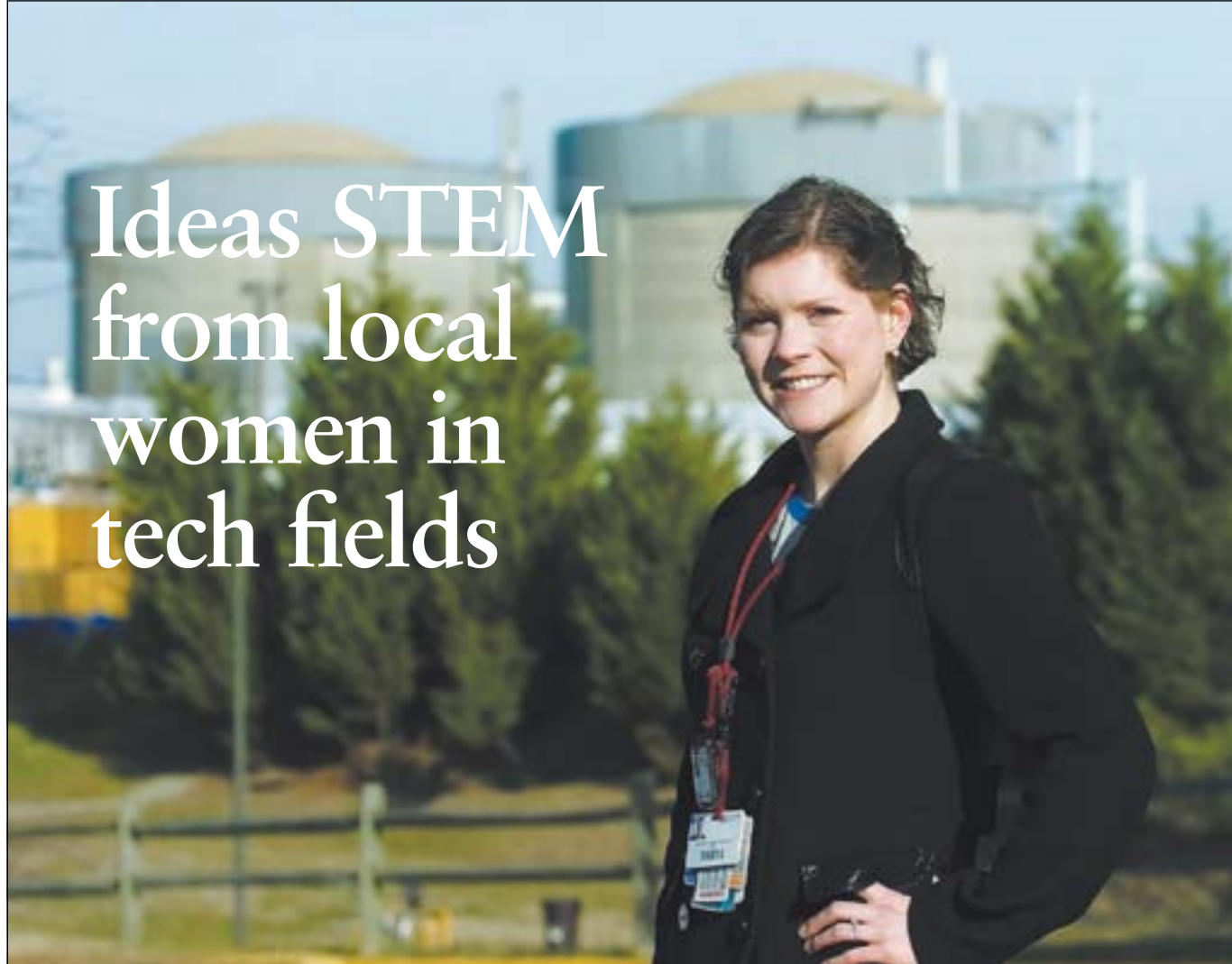
Paul Balides, assistant superintendent of finance, said Tuesday

that state funding is tied to enrollment, county wealth and population of students receiving free and reduced-price meals.

Though the county saw an increase in FARMS students, the lack of enrollment increase would likely keep state funding low, he said.

While Balides said there

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Laurel Wright of Hughesville is a chemistry analyst at the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant.

Staff photo by DARWIN WEIGEL

Ideas STEM from local women in tech fields

By LINDSAY RENNER
Staff writer

Historically, the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics have drawn most of their employment base from men. Even today, women are still somewhat discouraged from entering the traditionally male-dominated market.

A study conducted by the Economics and Statistics Administration department of the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2011 showed that while women have made huge strides in the job market overall, they still hold less than 25 percent of STEM jobs nationwide. In 2009, 6.7 million men held STEM jobs, while 2.5 million women found employment in the fields.

Despite the sizeable gender gap, women in Southern Maryland work every day to show that it is possible to attain STEM success as a woman.

Paving the way for others

Pennie Drinkard always knew that



Staff photo by TIN NGUYEN

Pennie Drinkard, left, founder of the Advanced Visions System Inc. in Indian Head, and marketing manager Sheila Zattau oversee consulting projects for private businesses and local government contracts.

she wanted to work in engineering.

Growing up in Indian Head, Drinkard, the daughter of an engineer, said she and her siblings were exposed to "the tinkering

of an engineer," and so she was never really raised to believe her capabilities only lay in one area, as she feels might be the case for many young women.

"I think a lot of times young girls don't know that they have the capability because traditionally young girls aren't socialized or steered in that direction," Drinkard said. "It's not that they can't or don't want to do it. The opportunities just aren't presented to them."

Drinkard also credited her lifelong interest in part to her private education, which she felt never discouraged her from pursuing the field.

"I was very fortunate to have my very first job with a design firm, and so I had that exposure. One of the owners of the company, a woman, encouraged me to go ahead and pursue my engineering degree, so it was very nice for me to have that opportunity."

Although Drinkard no longer works directly as an engineer, she manages engineering projects at Advanced Vision Systems Inc. in Indian Head. Drinkard was trained in electrical engineering and

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General Assembly starts with pomp, ceremony

■ Throngs return to Annapolis as session begins

By HOLLY NUNN and DANIEL LEADERMAN
Staff writers

The Starbucks on Church Circle in Annapolis ran out of pastries by 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, a sign that lawmakers, the staffs that serve them and the lobbyists who try to woo them were back to work.

But the first day of the 433rd session of the Maryland General Assembly involved few official duties, other than electing the leadership in the Senate and House of Delegates and listening to speeches by visiting dignitaries, including Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) and some of Maryland's congressional delegation.

Pre-filed bills also were introduced in both



Staff photo by GREG DOHLER

Megan Jenny of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network speaks during a rally Wednesday at Lawyer's Mall in Annapolis calling for a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing for natural gas in Maryland. Activists displayed two samples of water (left) from Pennsylvania communities that they say were contaminated by the natural gas drilling.

Miller: Wind power bill will pass

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chambers; 87 in the Senate and 60 in the House. There was reference to the long legislative season of 2012.

"It seems like we just left here," said Del. Adrienne A. Jones (D-Baltimore), as she accepted the post of speaker pro tem for the 10th time, opening the legislative session.

It's been less than five months since the legislature adjourned the second of two special sessions in 2012. Under normal circumstances, the legislators part ways in mid-April and don't see each other again until January.

After being chosen unanimously as speaker of the house for the 11th time, Del. Michael E. Busch (D-Anne Arundel) spoke about how he spends the evening before each session

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Innovator honored

Program earns college technical award

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Death penalty repeal mullied

O'Malley promises bill; foes predict referendum

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