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**RIVERWORKS TO BREAK GROUND  
ON NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**  
**Ceremony will be part of annual Poolesville Day celebration**

POOLESVILLE, Md. — After nearly three years of planning and fundraising, Riverworks will soon break ground on its Performing Arts Center, a major milestone in the art center's mission to cultivate creativity, community, and connection in the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve.

The ceremonial groundbreaking will be held on Poolesville Day, **Saturday, September 20, 2025, at 11:15 a.m.** on the grounds of the Old Methodist Church at **17617 West Willard Road**, immediately following the annual Poolesville Day parade. The ceremony is free, and all are welcome to join the celebration.

Riverworks co-founder Sandy Wright explains that Poolesville Day was the perfect choice for the groundbreaking, and not only because it's the day when community excitement is highest.

"It's the one time we know we can gather all of the supporters who helped make this happen," Wright says. "The neighbors, the friends, the civic leaders, the volunteers, the staff—we get to see all these wonderful people on the most fun day of the year."

Wright is quick to acknowledge the wide-ranging support for the Riverworks Performing Arts Center from government officials at every level, including the Poolesville Town Commissioners, the Montgomery County Council, the County Executive, and the Maryland District 15 Senator and Delegates. At the same time, she's grateful to the local family foundations and the many private, individual donors whose contributions have been essential.

"They saw the potential," Wright says, "and they understood what a permanent home for the arts would mean for this community."

The groundbreaking ceremony officially begins the process of transforming the Old Methodist Church into a state-of-the-art performing arts space. Built in 1826, the church will be restored

and refurbished with indoor seating for around 100 people. To accommodate larger outdoor audiences, custom-designed doors behind the stage will open to face the grassy field. A lobby with restrooms and a “green room” for performers will be added to the north side of the building on the footprint of the current parking lot.

The covered outdoor stage already on site, completed earlier this year, will stay in place for larger, multi-stage events. The grounds surrounding the church will remain undeveloped to honor the history of the Old Methodist Church, which has also served Poolesville as town hall, a pharmacy, and a thrift shop, among other functions, in the past two centuries.

“We’re giving this great old church a whole new life,” says Riverworks co-founder David Therriault. “Buildings like this one don’t stay standing unless you care for them and give them purpose. This church was here before the town was incorporated, and it witnessed raids and skirmishes during the Civil War. We’re making sure it’s central to the ongoing story of this town.”

Therriault further explains that the Performing Arts Center is part of a larger, Riverworks-led plan to make the Poolesville area a destination for creativity, music, and the arts. He envisions continuing to serve the community with classes, concerts, and other programs, while also giving a boost to the local economy by drawing out-of-towners to Riverworks for its restorative rural setting, which is unique among arts centers in the region.

“We’re motivated by this idea of placemaking, where a public space brings the community together,” Therriault says, “but we also hope these buildings and stages and studios that make up Riverworks will be a means to a bigger end. When you leave one of our classes or events, we want you to be inspired to make creativity central to your life. This building won’t be just a place to come hear music. It’s a place for fresh starts, big ideas, and making tomorrow better than today.”

Visitors on September 20 should be aware that on Poolesville Day, Fisher Avenue is closed from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. between Wootton Avenue and Elgin Road. Free parking is available at CVS, Dr. Dillingham Park on Wootton Avenue, and Poolesville High School. See the Poolesville Day website at [www.poolesvilleday.com](http://www.poolesvilleday.com) for more information and a full schedule of free, family-friendly events.

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Established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2022, [Riverworks Art Center](http://Riverworks Art Center) offers a wealth of arts and culture programs in a restorative rural setting, including art classes, introductory workshops,

community roundtables, Storytellers presentations, theater and music classes for children, fine arts exhibitions, outdoor concerts, community festivals, weekly jam sessions, and more.

Riverworks is rooted in the small town of Poolesville, only 40 minutes outside the D.C. Beltway and just half an hour south of Frederick, with Sugarloaf Mountain rising eight miles to the north. The surrounding 93,000-acre Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve offers hiking trails, riverside views, farm-fresh produce, independent restaurants, African American historic sites, Civil War trails, local beer and wine, and more.

In its first three years, Riverworks has hosted more than 200 art classes, programs, and public events, many of them low-cost or free, with the goal of cultivating creativity and connection in the rural corner of Montgomery County and with visitors from across the D.C. region.

To learn more, visit the Riverworks website: [www.riverworksart.org](http://www.riverworksart.org).