

# NEWS RELEASE

**For more information, contact:**

Jodie Littleton  
Communications Consultant  
jlittleton@adkinsarboretum.org



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## **ADKINS ARBORETUM COMPLETES SUSTAINABLE FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS WITH SUPPORT OF 2021 RURAL MARYLAND COUNCIL GRANT**

The Rural Maryland Council's Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF), the Pinkard family and the France-Merrick Foundation have supported significant improvements at Adkins Arboretum.

*For the Love of Trees and a Sustainable Future* is a three-prong Adkins initiative to increase the overall energy efficiency of its Visitor's Center and to leverage these improvements into opportunities to engage and educate the community. Last fall, a \$40,000 MAERDAF award helped fund the



installation of a mini-split ductless heat pump system that will provide cutting-edge and high-efficiency heating and cooling. As the Arboretum works toward incorporating regenerative systems into its facilities, this project will ensure a sustainable future for both the nonprofit and the community it engages and supports.

The new system provides superior comfort, lower energy costs, zero emissions and ultra-quiet operation. Because this type of system can be installed in both commercial and residential settings, it also provides opportunities to educate staff and visitors about energy efficiency and the link to preserving natural resources.

Installation of the mini-split system is the first step toward creating a decarbonized and more sustainable Arboretum. To ensure the new system operates at maximum potential, the Arboretum seeks to improve the Visitor's Center envelope—the separation of its interior and exterior spaces—by replacing the building's exterior doors with ADA-compliant doors. The project will eliminate the

substantial gaps in the current doors, provide barrier-free access to the Visitor's Center and improve the building's seal.

The project's final goal is to develop a sustainable energy system by installing solar panels. This initiative will generate electricity to power the mini-split system and other Visitor's Center operations. Signage will inform members and visitors about these multiple and interrelated benefits, as well as the benefits of nature and its link to overall well-being.

Located near Tuckahoe State Park in the heart of Caroline County, the Arboretum strives to inspire environmental stewardship, provide respite and healing and celebrate natural and cultural diversity through the joy and wonder of the natural world. For more information, visit [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org).

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) brings together citizens, community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to collectively address the needs of Rural Maryland communities. RMC provides a venue for members of agriculture and natural resource-based industries, health care facilities, educational institutions, economic and community development organizations, for-profit and nonprofit corporations and government agencies to cross traditional boundaries, share information and address in a more holistic way the special needs and opportunities in Rural Maryland.

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*Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve at the headwaters of the Tuckahoe Creek in Caroline County. For more information, visit [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org) or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.*

**Adkins Arboretum 12610 Eveland Road Ridgely, MD 21620**  
**410.634.2847 [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org) [info@adkinsarboretum.org](mailto:info@adkinsarboretum.org)**