



At left:
Newspaper editor
J.W. Hamel

At right:
Almetta Clyburn
Welsh, one of Ker-
shaw's founders

T I M E L I N E



Wreaths Across America Dec 18 in Kershaw

KERSHAW – Kershaw is hosting the 13th annual Wreaths Across America memorial to honor the town’s deceased servicemen and servicewomen.

The 30-minute service will start at noon at the Kershaw City Cemetery, 190 Kirkland Ave on December 18, 2021.

“This is our 13th year,” said Gary Sowell, who leads the effort and raises the funds to help pay for the wreaths that are placed on 500-plus veteran markers in the Kershaw cemetery each holiday season.

Kershaw is one of 13 Wreaths Across America locations in South Carolina. Others include the Beaufort, Florence and Fort Jackson national cemeteries.

Arlington National Cemetery hosts an event as well.

Sowell, who is a former state trooper and captain of the Civil Air Patrol, said "that veterans' markers at Kershaw City Cemetery date back as far as the Civil War and they include enlisted soldiers and officers from every military branch."

"This is to honor the service and sacrifice to show that they have not been forgotten."

Last year, Wreaths Across America placed more than 1.2 million wreaths on veterans' markers around the world.

The wreaths cost \$15 each, and the \$8,000 Sowell raises each year is allocated to pay for them. The town of Kershaw also assists with \$1,500 toward the project.

"The Town and the community really step up and support this effort and that says a lot about Kershaw," said Sowell.

To purchase wreaths (\$15 each), or whatever you can contribute, send tax-deductible donations to Gary Sowell, 3516 Kershaw Highway, Kershaw, SC 29067. Wreaths must be purchased by Nov. 30. Make checks payable to Wreaths Across America. For details, call Sowell at (803) 427-0607.

What's in the Build Back Better bill for rural America

Today the House passed a \$2 trillion social spending and climate bill 220-213, with all Republicans and one Democrat, Rep. Jared Golden of Maine, opposed. It goes to the Senate, where changes are likely to satisfy Democrats Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona.

"The package retains most of its original major elements, including funding for clean energy, universal prekindergarten, subsidized child care, and billions more for health care, affordable housing and elder care," The Wall Street Journal reports. "Many of these programs are set to expire within several years, a deliberate effort to lower the package's top-line price. Making the programs temporary as opposed to permanent also represents a bet by Democrats that future voters will vote for candidates who promise to renew them. The package would be financed by changes to the corporate tax code, including a new corporate minimum tax, while raising taxes on high-income individuals."

Here's some of what's in it that affects rural America:

\$555 billion for climate, including "320 billion in 10-year expanded tax credits for residential and utility-scale renewable energy, transmission, electric vehicles and clean-energy manufacturing; \$105 billion to boost resilience to the effects of climate change, such as wildfires and droughts; \$110 billion to grow U.S. supply chains for renewable energy technology; and \$20 billion to motivate the government to purchase cutting-edge energy technologies," the WSJ reports.

\$200 billion to extend the expanded child-tax credit through 2022.

About \$200 billion for four weeks of paid parental, sick or caregiving leave, starting in 2024.

\$150 billion for providing at-home medical care for seniors and disabled Americans.

\$18 billion for "job-promoting investments to ensure those living in rural America, on tribal lands, and our insular areas have access to clean water and reliable and efficient renewable energy, says the Agriculture Department. T"his funding will also support investment in renewable biofuels infrastructure important to farmers and our fight against climate change, and flexible funding for rural community growth." That includes \$9.6 billion in debt relief for farmers and \$1 billion for farmer loan modifications. It also includes more than \$1.3 billion in assistance and support for underserved farmers, ranchers and foresters.

\$2 billion for agricultural research and infrastructure. Click here for a detailed breakdown.

\$5 million through Sept. 30, 2031, for audits and other oversight to make sure USDA spends all that money on what it's supposed to. USDA has been widely criticized for sparse oversight.

About \$27 billion for programs to help prevent and fight forest fires, restore forests and promote tourism in under-served areas. That includes the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps, modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the Great Depression.

\$28 billion for conservation, including support for farmers.

\$10 billion for child nutrition programs, which would make 9 million more children eligible for free school meals.

\$200 million for additional pandemic relief payments to frontline grocery workers.

A pathway to legal residence, but not citizenship, for undocumented immigrants. About 7 million of the 11 million undocumented in the U.S. could apply for work permits, permission to travel abroad, and state driver's licenses. "To qualify, immigrants must have arrived before Jan. 1, 2011, and lived here ever since. Work permits would be valid for five years, and could be renewed one time, extending protections through September 2031," The Washington Post reports.

Restoration of more than 400,000 green cards that went unused because of bureaucratic or pandemic-related delays.

A fee on methane emissions and funding to help facilities lower such emissions.

Enhanced subsidies for health insurance through Affordable Care Act exchanges would be extended through 2027. They are now set to expire after 2022. "The changes would mean more people would continue to remain eligible for subsidies and lower-income people would also continue to see more generous subsidies," the WSJ reports.

Subsidies in 2022-25 for the 4 million uninsured Americans in the 12 states that haven't expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

Many Medicare recipients would pay less out of pocket for health care, and the program would cover hearing care for the first time.

Consumers with private insurance would never have to pay more than \$35 for insulin before a deductible is applied.

A \$2,000 a year cap on out-of-pocket costs for the voluntary prescription drug benefit, starting in 2024.

More than \$18 billion for the first three years for universal pre-kindergarten. "After that, the program would be funded with a 90% federal, 10% state split in the fourth year, then 75%-25% in the fifth year and 60%-40% in the sixth year. The program would end after six years," WSJ reports. A coalition of conservative religious groups opposes the measure, saying a non-discrimination clause could disqualify them.

About \$100 billion over three years to address child-care shortages and raise workers' wages by building new facilities, training teachers, and subsidizing low- and middle-income families' child-care expenses. "After the first three years, the entitlement expands to nearly all families. It guarantees that no family making less than 250% of their state's median income would pay more than 7% of their income on child care," the WSJ reports. "Families making less than 75% of their state's median income would pay nothing. The program ends after six years."

For the first time, the federal government would be able to negotiate the prices of some medications covered by Medicare. The measure would begin with 10 drugs starting in 2025 and will increase.

\$150 billion for affordable housing, including \$65 billion to repair public housing, \$35 billion for rental assistance and \$15 billion for affordable housing grants through the Housing Trust Fund. The plan will also provide down-payment assistance for first-time home buyers whose parents are also not homeowners.

The bill is notable for how much funding will go to rural and agricultural interests. The American Farm Bureau Federation opposes it; President Zippy Duvall said in a statement the bill would hurt rural America because it "raises taxes and spends more taxpayer money at a time our country can afford to do neither."

However, a diverse group of conservation, agricultural, and sporting groups voiced their support for the bill. Conservation funding in the bill "underscores the central role that farmers, ranchers and private forest owners play in addressing the climate crisis," Aviva Glaser, the National Wildlife Federation's senior director of agriculture policy, said in a statement. "This transformative investment into popular and effective USDA conservation programs and practices will create jobs, support rural communities, reduce emissions, and create benefits for soil, water, and wildlife."

Written by Heather Chapman Posted at 11/19/2021 11:44:00 AM The Rural Blog

NOVEMBER '21

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|----------|
| | 1 STEM Challenges (K) 3:30 | 2 Storytime and Crafts (K) 3:30 | 3 Storytime and Crafts (L) 10:30 | 4 STEM Challenges (L) 3:30 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 STEM Challenges(K) 3:30 Teen Night(K) 4:30-6 | 9 Storytime and Crafts (K) 3:30 | 10 Storytime and Crafts (L) 10:30 | 11 Veteran's Day All Libraries Closed | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 STEM Challenges (K) 3:30 | 16 Storytime and Crafts (K) 3:30 | 17 Storytime and Crafts (L) 10:30 | 18 STEM Challenges (L) 3:30 | 19 Teen Night(L) 4:30-6 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 HAPPY THANKSGIVING All Libraries Closed | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 STEM Challenges (K) 3:30 | 30 Storytime and Crafts (K) 3:30 | | | | |

