Greetings,

We've been hard at work keeping ahead of the issues and recommendations for the positive economic growth of the County. This year promises to be one of continued change and growth, with new jobs, new companies and new opportunities.

In this issue of EDAB e-news, we're spotlighting a partner that is a true business advocate: the Chamber of Commerce. While many Chambers function solely as the tourism offices of their local towns, the Harford County Chamber of Commerce is a strong business network that provides valuable points of access into the business community, education opportunities and legislative positioning. While you may know of the Chamber, we're sure you'll learn something new about its services by reading Vanessa Milio's article and the Chamber Fast Facts in this issue. Don't miss the Business Spotlight, highlighting another community partner.

For information on becoming involved in the Harford County Chamber of Commerce, visit www.harfordchamber.org. To learn more about EDAB and become involved, visit www.harfordbusiness.org, or contact me.

Regards,

Eric McLauchlin
Chairman - EDAB

Business Spotlight: Motile Robotics, Inc.

Research and development firm Motile Robotics, Inc. (MRI) sponsors the Chamber STEM scholarship. The company's team of professionals in aerospace engineering, material science, mechanical, electrical and computer engineering offer expertise in robotic design, materials science, machine learning and mechanical design to a variety of clients. MRI's website describes its vision: To develop bio-inspired technologies that enhance the ability of engineered platforms to look, act, and move like creatures of nature, and to produce a new generation of affordable motile robotic systems that can negotiate challenging environments in step with humans and other animals.

The company's headquarters in Joppa, MD, is designed for research, product development support and analytical experimentation for micro-and nano-scale technologies. The Robotics Experimentation and Conference Facility, partially funded by the United States Army Research Laboratory, features experimentation and demonstration environments that include simulated urban dwellings, jungles and all-terrain. An environmentally controlled laboratory allows simulations of rain, light and wind. MRI's research includes small-scale combustion and hybrid propulsion systems, micro-scale biomimetic platform design, nano-scale multifunctional material design and intelligent, cognitive-based software design. Among its robotics research efforts are the exploration of materials, mobility, intelligent controls, aeromechanics and dynamics. MRI's Mechanics Division offers mechanical design, project management, rotating equipment reliability consulting and assembly and fabrication.

For more information, visit MRI's website at www.motilerobotics.com.
Collaborating for a Community Connection

By Vanessa Milio

Business retention. It's a goal that every community sets, a challenge that each community faces. We know that businesses will thrive in an environment that offers a connection - both to other businesses and to customers. Companies are successful if they have the necessary resources to make those connections in good times and in difficult times.

In Harford County, a variety of organizations provide strong networking, education, financial and legislative support. To create a business-friendly environment, it's important for these resources to work together, making services available to small and large businesses alike. It's also important to communicate their availability. These strategies simply help to attract and retain businesses in the area - a primary goal of the Economic Development Advisory Board and the Office of Economic Development.

The Harford County Chamber of Commerce and EDAB/OED present a strong business resource in this community. Unlike many Chambers that are strictly tourism-driven, or those that are actually part of the economic development office, the Harford County Chamber of Commerce is business-driven, working hand-in-hand with the Office of Economic Development, offering a resource for growth. Together the two organizations help businesses find a way to make that community connection.

The Harford County Chamber of Commerce is the largest in Maryland, with nearly 1,000 active members representing more than 750 businesses. These businesses cross all sectors - from financial and real estate to daycare and nonprofits, defense contractors and government entities to Main Street retail and restaurants. While the Chamber can't be all things to all people, it can present many options. In fact, in the last year, the Chamber has significantly increased the number of events offered to its members. The number of new members joining is higher than in the last three years, suggesting that even in the midst of a recession, companies are still finding value in the services provided.

The Chamber programs are designed to contribute to the area's economic development by supporting workforce needs. By working with the Office of Economic Development, programs can reach more than just Chamber members and can benefit the county-wide goals for a strong workforce. For example, the Chamber's Education Foundation works to provide scholarships for high school students and adults who will be furthering their education to contribute to the local workforce. The Foundation, an independent 501c3, raises awareness and funds and reviews scholarship applications for awards in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), manufacturing, engineering, returning adults, veteran re-entry, and teacher education. The Chamber also sponsors a scholarship through Harford Community College for a medical/healthcare student. Through generous funding from area businesses, these scholarships are critical to insuring the local workforce continues to be cutting-edge. The scholarships position the sponsoring companies as community and business leaders, and the applicants are spotlighted as part of Harford County's knowledgeable workforce talent pool.

Additionally, the Chamber offers at least three networking events each month at different locations around the County. The breakfasts, lunches and after-hours events allow members to make local contacts and learn from guest speakers in a relaxed atmosphere. Businesses can find points of access into the community through these networking events, as well as at Business-to-Consumer Expos at Harford Mall and an annual Business-to-Business Expo.

Businesses will also find legislative support through the Chamber's Legislative Committee. The Chamber is a registered lobbyist with the State of Maryland and advocates on behalf of business at the county and state levels. Through its membership with the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber partners on larger state issues and with the NMTC on federal issues.

The networking, education and legislative resources work together with the County efforts, each relying on the other and supporting a business-friendly environment. Together, these organizations create the community connection a business needs to be successful in the County.

Note: Vanessa Milio is CEO of the Harford County Chamber of Commerce, and works closely with EDAB and the Office of Economic Development

Chamber Fast Facts

- The Harford County Chamber of Commerce represents 750 businesses in the region. 80% are located in Harford County, 12% in Baltimore County and the remaining 8% in other counties.
- Many of the Chamber members are the County's largest employers, such as Upper Chesapeake Health, Rite Aid, SAIC, Constellation Energy, Wegman's, M&T Bank, PNC Bank and Harford Community College.
- Locally based and local chapters of non-profit organizations represent a notable portion of the Chamber members, including ARC, Anna's House, CASA, Army Alliance, American Cancer Society, Harford County Public Library, Harford Family House and March of Dimes.
- The Chamber of Commerce can be found in and around Harford County in promotional materials, lobby displays, on the web and on social networking sites.
- Working with various community organizations including EDAB and OED, the Chamber of Commerce keeps its members updated on issues such as higher education and the potential research park, infrastructure, tourism funding and environmental protection in partnership with businesses.
- The first Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1599 in Marseilles, France. The oldest English-speaking Chamber is New York City's, established in 1768.
- The Chamber of Commerce network is the largest business network globally. Approximately 13,000 chambers are registered in the official Worldchambers Network registry.
The Harford County Economic Development Advisory Board consists of a number of subcommittees - including technology, workforce development, finance, tourism, and land use - dedicated to the positive growth and Economic Development of Harford County.