Greetings,

The market is looking up. We are truly starting to see that growth we’ve been talking about for several months. If you’re one of the growing businesses or if you are hiring for new positions, we’d love to hear about the best business practices that got you there. Whether it be capitalizing on a new market, leveraging your dollars wisely, or going green, there are many ways to keep afloat when times get tough. In this issue, we’ll highlight some growth companies and supply some tips that keep them going through any type of economy.

To learn more about the resources mentioned in this newsletter or to become involved in EDAB activities, please visit the Harford County Office of Economic Development website at www.harfordbusiness.org.

Sincerely,

Eric McLauchlin
Chairman, EDAB

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

C&S WHOLESALE GROCERS

Named the 12th largest privately held company in the nation by Forbes Magazine in 2008, C&S Wholesale Grocers offers wholesale food distribution to grocery chains and large independent food stores throughout the country. With more than 50 locations in 11 states, the company chose Aberdeen, MD for one of its five Maryland warehouses. It also has three locations in Prince George’s County, and one in Cecil County.

The Harford County facility at 1000 Old Philadelphia Road is a 402,000 square-foot freezer space, storing food that is sold to customers around the region, including Safeway, Target, A&P and Giant, as well as a number of independent stores and supermarkets. The warehouse services customers in Washington, DC, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

C&S began operations in Harford County in 1999. Today, the company receives 100 trucks of frozen foods daily and ships out another 100 trucks each day. The Aberdeen facility currently employs 254 people, and is growing with the addition of new customers.

EMERGING FROM THE ECONOMIC RUBBLE

Harford County companies are emerging successfully from the rubble of the down economy. As the recession slowly loosens its hold, companies that saw the region’s potential months ago are now bolstering the local economy.

Nationally, the unemployment rate remained at 9.6 percent in August, virtually unchanged in 2010. Maryland and Harford County continued to track better – at 7.3 percent, although for Harford County, the number appears higher than what we are actually seeing in the market. We have experienced a large number of new employees (transfers as well as new hires) moving into the region, but it may take several months before they are reported as County residents and included in the data.

Statistically, new jobs usually lag behind an improving economy. As the economy trends upward, we often do not see immediate job openings. It takes time for the hiring companies to be strong enough to open the job gates. But when they do, it is because of best business practices they have been following faithfully.

Hiring is happening. Nationally, private sector employment trended up 67,000 in August. The number of long-term unemployed (those jobless for 27 weeks or more) declined by 323,000. Employment in the health care industry increased by 28,000 in August, up from the average 20,000 health care jobs per month during 2010. Mining and construction jobs also increased.

In Maryland, and particularly in Harford County, the Susquehanna Workforce Network has shown an increase in job postings and requests for on-site recruitment. SWN has hosted successful job fairs in Harford County, with a variety of industries represented and local companies hiring for multiple positions.

As a result of the recent Business Appreciation Week, the Office of Economic Development reports that companies are hiring for positions in various disciplines and industries, such as McCormick, which will hire a number of local positions, C&S Wholesale Grocers in Aberdeen, which reported 60 new positions due to Target stores adding groceries, John H. Myers and Son of Aberdeen, which sells building materials, expanding into Harford County because its owners recognized the County’s current and potential growth, and Bala Family Practice, a medical practice in Bel Air, expanding to accommodate growth of 250-300 patients per week.
Headquartered in Keene, NH, C&S Wholesale Grocers provides more than 95,000 SKUs to its customers, and employs over 15,000 people.

These companies and others are ahead of the jobs curve. They will be the first to jump start the local economy. They recommend solid business practices:

- Stay lean in all market situations. Manage personnel and jobs closely to avoid lay-offs. It is more cost-effective to re-train an existing employee than to hire a new one.
- Move budget money around to attack the hot markets. If there is a true growth opportunity, find the funding.
- Don't automatically cut advertising, marketing or public relations dollars from the budget when times get tough. This is when you should keep your name in front of customers. Leverage marketing dollars to get more for your money.
- Get involved in local, established events that target your customer. Targeted marketing is more efficient.
- Use technology. E-mail marketing, websites, and social networking sites are all cost-effective ways to communicate with customers.
- Gain customers by taking advantage of a new market or creating one.

Harford County businesses and the community organizations that support them have the service and the savvy to do all these things. We are recovering sooner, and we are ready for the jobs.

**Hiring Fast Facts**

If your business is ready to hire, here are some tips and resources to get the best talent:

- Use a job posting service that targets your position’s area of expertise.
- Check out ways to match talent with positions using web-based professional communities like LinkedIn.
- Establish a presence at local job fairs - select those that are pertinent to your business or open positions. The Susquehanna Workforce Network regularly holds technology job fairs for technical companies and applicants.
- If you’re a small or start-up company, take advantage of resources offered by places like Harford Community College, the Small Business Association, and the Harford Business Innovation Center (HBIC).
- Get the best talent by adding candidate testing for proficiency in key areas. Organizations like the Susquehanna Workforce Network offer these services.

The 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.