Greetings,

Last month, the Office of Economic Development celebrated Business Appreciation Week with visits to Harford County businesses and recognition of various milestones. We saw businesses of all sizes and met with start-ups as well as established national chains. During that week, the bus tour, “StartUp Maryland - Pitch Across Maryland” kicked off a statewide business pitch competition at the HEAT Center.

The opportunities for potential entrepreneurs are huge right now - from the new Entrepreneurs Edge program featured in this month's article by Jim Richardson to the pitch competition itself. Entrepreneurialism is being encouraged across the nation to help spur the economy. While the majority of start-up businesses have revenue of less than $50,000, there is that small group that shows signs of huge growth. Could it be you? In this month's EDAB e-news, you'll learn how some local entrepreneurs got started, and how they used their resources to make their businesses successful. Don't miss the listing of County resources in the Fast Facts section.

If you'd like more information or would like to get involved in EDAB, please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

Eric McLauchlin
Chairman
EDAB

Energizing The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
By Jim Richardson

Entrepreneurism is getting a shot of energy throughout the nation. Initiatives like the StartUp America program and StartUp Maryland are intended to accelerate growth of jobs through successful start-up businesses. These programs are connecting resources for entrepreneurs to assist them in gaining access to capital, mentoring and revenue opportunities.

After all, entrepreneurial businesses have a ripple effect on the economy. If successful, they not only make money for their owners, they also create jobs. For example, the latest Forbes Magazine list of the 400 richest people in America includes entrepreneurs Andrew and Peggy Cherng, who founded restaurant chain Panda Express. The restaurants employ 21,000 people. Convenience stores owned by entrepreneurs Tom and Judy Love employ 10,000 people.

For every successful entrepreneur, the economy is strengthened. In our area, entrepreneurialism is making a significant contribution. The Washington, DC metro area has 49 companies on Inc. Magazine's list of the 500 fastest growing private companies in the U.S. Maryland has 18 companies on the list.

Maryland also ranks among the top states in America for women- and minority-owned businesses. It is number one in the percentage of women-owned firms, at 32.6 percent. In Harford County, that number jumps to 34 percent. For women-owned firms with employees,
Maryland ranks sixth, with 7.4 percent. The state ranks second in African-American-owned firms with nearly 20 percent. Approximately 10 percent of Harford County businesses are owned by African-Americans. Maryland is ranked seventh and twelfth, respectively, for Asian- and Hispanic-owned firms as a percentage of all firms.

Harford County has already built a strong foundation for local entrepreneurs, offering resources that help jump-start businesses and keep them growing. A variety of County entities offer programs for training, mentoring, lending and facilities for eligible entrepreneurs. We know there are many more start-ups out there - from people with good ideas who just don't know where to turn, to small and family-owned businesses who need a boost to get in the black.

Through the County's newest program, Entrepreneurs Edge, these County entities will work together to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem and make it easier than ever to be successful. The Harford County Office of Economic Development partnered with other County resources to design a program that offers a one-stop shop to help entrepreneurs grow. The Harford County Public Library, Harford County Chamber of Commerce, Harford Community College (HCC), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Harford Business Innovation Center (HBIC) each provide resources and training that can guide a business on the road to profitability and growth.

Since its September announcement, more than 40 start-up businesses have signed up for Entrepreneurs Edge at the Harford County Public Library. The library offers necessary data to build business plans and resources for support. These budding entrepreneurs will also receive training on best business practices, business plan development, incorporation status and action plans from the Office of Economic Development. The Harford County Chamber of Commerce will help them bring their businesses to market when initial start-up capital is in place. Those that need further market research and guidance will be assisted with “incubator” services from HBIC. Ongoing quarterly training programs at HCC will help support these new businesses in areas where they need resources.

The success of a fledgling business is predicated on the business ecosystem in which it exists. It requires a combination of the right social, global, technological, competitive and economic environments. By combining the resources of County organizations that have already established these environments, we can strengthen and energize the entrepreneurial ecosystem. We are building an entrepreneur-friendly environment that will result in an economy that continues to thrive.

Sources: Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development website at http://www.choosemaryland.org/ebostats/Pages/Rankings.aspx
http://www.forbes.com/forbes-400/gallery

Business Spotlight: Total Urgent Care

“There’s no better place to start a business than Harford County,” contends Bruce Lewis, co-owner of Total Urgent Care in Edgewood. Lewis, along with his wife, Theresa, caught the entrepreneurial bug in 2004, opening a facility for occupational healthcare, or workplace medicine, as he calls it. The objective was to provide health care services to employees of local businesses for workplace injuries, drug and alcohol testing and general health and well-being.

While Lewis admits the initial years were slow going, he attributes the start and success of his business to “Divine Intervention.” After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in biology, working as a researcher at Johns Hopkins and returning to school to become a physician assistant, Lewis kept researching, questioning and studying the marketplace. When a venture with a local hospital fell through, he knew it was time to see if his own idea of workplace medicine would be viable.

Bruce and Theresa Lewis tapped the many resources in Harford County to build their business. Networking through the Chamber of Commerce, taking tips from the Small Business Development Center, and getting guidance from the Office of Economic Development, they were able to bring on various clients, including companies at APG and local, national and international businesses. Total Urgent Care started with three employees in 2004 and grew to seven by 2008, requiring a move to a new building. Now, the company is actively hiring in anticipation of a 2013 expansion into the general healthcare arena. The facility will increase its hours to include weekends and extended evening hours beginning in January. Lewis says Total Urgent Care will compete effectively in the consumer health marketplace thanks to both a robust marketing plan and a population of well over 35,000 people just in the Joppa/Edgewood area.

Total Urgent Care’s keys to success: faith and relationship building within the community. *Even through
the economic downturn, we grew because we not only had faith in God, but we had faith in the community," Lewis says. "We focused on customer service, delivering it with a smile."

Total Urgent Care was recently awarded the Bridging the Gap Achievement Award from the Greater Baltimore Committee for outstanding contributions to the growth and expansion of the minority business community in the Greater Baltimore region. For more information about Total Urgent Care, visit www.totalurgentcare.com.

### Entrepreneurial Fast Facts

- Entrepreneurs Edge Contacts:
  - Harford County Office of Economic Development - [www.harfordbusiness.org](http://www.harfordbusiness.org)
  - Harford County Chamber of Commerce - [www.harfordchamber.org](http://www.harfordchamber.org)
  - Small Business Development Center - [www.hardford.edu/sbdcc](http://www.hardford.edu/sbdcc)
  - Harford Business Innovation Center - [www.harfordbic.com](http://www.harfordbic.com)
  - Harford Community College - [www.hardford.edu](http://www.hardford.edu)
  - Harford County Public Library - [www.hcplonline.org](http://www.hcplonline.org)

- More than 25 percent of all Marylanders have founded or partnered in a new business at some point in their careers. That number jumps to 47 percent if we add investors, employees or family members involved in a new business start-up.

- One third of all owners started their businesses in 2008 or later.

- Of the start-ups still operating today, 10 percent have revenue over $250,000 per year. Three percent hit more than $1 million in revenue.

- About 15 percent of the Maryland population, or 650,000 people, are actively thinking about starting a business.

- The top reasons given by entrepreneurs in Maryland for starting a business were:
  - To make money - 18%
  - To pursue something they are good at/their passion - 18%
  - The desire to be their own boss - 12%
  - Saw a market or niche - 10%

Sources: Harford County Office of Economic Development; Statewide Survey of Business Owners, commissioned by Greater Baltimore Technology Council, Maryland Dept. of Business and Economic Development, Fall 2011

**David R. Craig, Harford County Executive**

*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*