Greetings,

We hope you had a restful, yet productive summer. EDAB is back in full swing this month as we gear up for tourism events, business programs and much more. This issue of EDAB e-News highlights one of our core efforts for economic development: creating a business-friendly environment in Harford County. Some of the County's programs have been under a microscope this summer, but you'll find the facts here. Read our main article about maintaining a healthy economy and review the key points about the Workforce Technical Training Grant in our Fast Facts section. In Business Spotlight, see how one business grew and prospered because of this assistance, and how it brought jobs to the County. Your business could benefit too!

If you'd like more information on any of the programs that support business growth, contact the Office of Economic Development.

Sincerely,

Eric McLauchlin
Chairman
EDAB

Maintaining Harford’s Healthy Economy

By Eric McLauchlin

There has been a lot of talk lately about a “business friendly environment” in Harford County. Companies relocating or expanding look for it. Smart economic development executives seek to create it. Programs are in place to support it. Recent media coverage has catapulted one company and program into the spotlight, spurring a debate that runs the risk of missing the bigger picture. Quite simply, to continue economic growth, Harford County must implement programs that will attract profitable businesses, which in turn will generate jobs and support the local economy.

Companies choose where they will locate based on the potential to make a profit there. We are fortunate to have several companies who have made Harford County their U.S. headquarters. These companies, whether foreign or domestic, have employees from around the country and the world who travel frequently to our area, stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants and spend money in our county. These businesses have invested in our workforce. We have a program to invest in theirs: The Workforce Technical Training Grant (WFTTG).

The WFTTG is one of the many efforts the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) and the Office of Economic Development have designed to create and maintain a healthy business environment. The program helps employers accelerate technical training to employees. Some key facts about WFTTG:

- In the last three years, more than 60 businesses were approved to receive grants, and over 1,300 employees upgraded their technical skills.
- All Harford County businesses may apply for a grant through the WFTTG program.
- To be eligible, companies must conduct technical training to enhance their productivity. For many businesses using this program, employees with new technical skills have been promoted (job retention), leading to job opportunities for new hires (job creation).
- Training was often conducted by the staff at Harford Community College, and supports their efforts to be responsive to industry needs.
- It is important to note that these companies are reviewed and selected by a committee of business leaders, business analysts and business owners who represent EDAB and the corporate community. Additionally, not only does the WFTTG provide training opportunities to the selected business employees, it also offers more opportunities to County residents and to educational institutions through support of technical classes and seminars.

This program is but one of many in a growing infrastructure designed to support workforce talent and companies of all sizes in Harford County. We need programs like this if we expect our local economy to grow and prosper. We know that companies have options and they will move to neighboring counties and even other states for better opportunities, taking those jobs, taxes and residents with them. Rather than cower from robust and industrious programs like the WFTTG, the community should recognize that such programs are a solid demonstration that Harford County is serious about business retention, business attraction and the creation of jobs at all levels. We should support the programs that promote well-planned business growth and the race for an expanding employment base. They are an opportunity to remain attractive in an intensely competitive environment.
As owners and employees of Harford County businesses, we need to realize and communicate the big picture. Maintaining a healthy economy is a top priority for growth and prosperity.

**Business Spotlight: E-Moxie Data Solutions, Inc.**

When Chris Stone and Matt Pramshufer had the idea to start E-Moxie seven years ago, they were competing against the kid down the street who liked to fiddle around with websites. Today, the web design market is full of new technology trends and professional competitors. Suffice it to say E-Moxie Data Solutions, Inc. is among them. Based in Havre de Grace, E-Moxie has grown from a two-person shop to a full service web design and mobile application development company consisting of seven employees and a full portfolio of local and national clients. The company's revenue has shown double digit growth every year for the past three years, despite the economic climate.

Stone attributes part of the company's success to training and development programs that are necessary for a web development firm to stay competitive. Some of this training was made possible by the Workforce Technical Training Grant program through the Office of Economic Development. Stone seized the opportunity to apply for the grant, and E-Moxie was selected to receive it. Stone says it specifically helped them thrive. “Training is crucial for us. We need to be constantly learning new skills and keeping up with fast-moving development trends, and this grant helped offset some of our training costs,” Stone said. The company does in-house training and participates in educational community conferences.

As E-Moxie trained its employees, the business grew, requiring additional staff. Currently, the seven full-time employees and two interns are designing successful websites for clients, who in turn are prospering. Local clients are reaping the rewards of E-Moxie's technical and design training, and contributing to the local economy. E-Moxie is hiring even more people as they continue their upward trend of success in Harford County.

For more information on website development, visit [www.e-Moxie.com](http://www.e-Moxie.com).

**Fast Facts**

- Creating a business-friendly environment is vital for the County and requires the cooperation of businesses, county government, civic groups and individuals. When businesses thrive...
  - taxes are lower for everyone
  - communities are sustained
  - jobs grow
  - the economy is maintained
- Despite a down economy nationwide for the last four years, Harford County has shown economic growth through job opportunities and new companies locating here. In addition to the 8,200 direct jobs resulting from BRAC, an estimated 10,000 new jobs were generated indirectly by other companies in the County.
- A business-friendly environment begins with the mission to encourage growth in the County. Companies demand access to a strong workforce, educational programs, tax benefits and land use options. By providing programs that support business growth, Harford County can remain competitive both for existing companies and those exploring new locations.
- Programs designed to support business growth include
  - Workforce Technical Training Grant (WFTTG)
  - Fast Track
  - Financing Alternatives (Economic Development Opportunity Fund, Community Block Development Grant)
  - Technology Opportunities and Incubator Program

**Workforce Technical Training Grant (WFTTG) is...**

...designed to accelerate the delivery of technological training to the Harford County workforce.

...available for application for any Harford County business. The application can be found at [www.harfordcountymd.gov](http://www.harfordcountymd.gov). Companies representing every business sector apply each year, and the program is traditionally oversubscribed each fiscal year.

...reviewed by a committee of business leaders, business analysts and business owners who represent EDAB and the corporate community.

...based on businesses meeting specific criteria, including a demonstration of the direct economic impact to the County and an indirect economic impact in job creation.

...a successful tool for business growth in Harford County. In the last three years, more than 60 businesses were approved to receive grants, and over 1,300 employees upgraded their technical skills.

**Sources:** Harford County Government, [www.harfordcountymd.gov](http://www.harfordcountymd.gov); Harford County Office of Economic Development, [www.harfordbusiness.org](http://www.harfordbusiness.org)

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*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.