Greetings,

Harford County is growing up and EDAB is pleased to be a part of the strategic plan for what it will become. This month, we're sharing a bit of insight resulting from the University Research Park Feasibility Study and Business Plan Development, commissioned by the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor. We're asking you, the County's business, government and education leaders and influencers, to begin thinking about a brand image for our area. EDAB e-news looks at the possibilities for "place making," as identified in the study. In the coming months, we'll delve deeper into the other three areas put forth by the study: land use, technology and education. Each area was thoroughly researched and brainstormed for growth programs, resulting in some interesting findings we're sure you'll want to read about. Fast Facts will provide an overview of the study results, and this month's Business Spotlight reflects the "live, work, play" progression.

For more information on EDAB and its role in advocating for positive economic growth in the County, or to become involved in EDAB, visit www.harfordbusiness.org.

Sincerely,

Eric McLauchlin
Chairman
EDAB

Growing up in Harford County
by James Richardson, Director, Harford County Office of Economic Development

If you're a Harford County native, you'll recall the growth the County experienced as it developed from rolling farmland to a vibrant, high-tech community. If you're new to the region, you can see and feel the continued progress around you. The County has gained recognition for the APG region and its technology-driven businesses. Development within the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC) is one of the obvious results of our controlled growth tactics and well-planned pathway to strategic development. But where do we go from here?

The business, education and government partners in Harford County are all poised for growth. Each has taken advantage of resources presented by APG, BRAC restructuring, an expanding contractor community and higher education and training opportunities at the University Center. The next level involves using these resources to attract and retain a technology-savvy workforce, improve our land use plans and implement university cooperatives. The planning and strategy must continue. But first, we need to ask ourselves, "What do we want to be when we grow up?"

What vision and purpose will guide Harford County as it matures into a vital business, arts, education, sports and government center? It must be a purpose in which everyone believes and a vision that is commonly shared. It is a brand image. California has its Silicon Valley, North Carolina has its Research Triangle. We can position Harford County as a technology hub, but we must answer: "What is the true 'claim to fame' that will bind its business, education and government partners in a common purpose?"

The recent University Research Park Feasibility Study and Business Plan Development, commissioned by the CSSC, provides a foundation for the County's brand. The study focuses on three development challenges: growing the regional industry base, addressing workforce expansion and fostering "live, work, play" progression within the County. If effectively addressed, these challenges will set the tone.

The study identifies the gaps in technology development in the region and recommends six specific ways to fill them, including collaborative partnerships between businesses, education and transportation entities. It provides insight for "place making" or destination branding of the County for business, education and government alike. According to the study, the APG region is "evolving more along the lines of a technology district with technology hubs..." more so than a "park." Because APG has two posts six miles apart and technology businesses have sprouted across the County, we must think County-wide for a "place making" effort.

After identifying the challenges to the community, the researchers conclude that planning activities should leverage broad partnerships across military, state, university and County resources. They examined best practices as models and encouraged applying them with modifications specific to our region. The models will then influence key decisions related to funding and governing programs with common platforms.

When we know what we want to be when we grow up, the common vision and purpose make it much easier...
to put the right programs in place. The Economic Development Advisory Board is an ideal environment for coordinating the many pieces into a unified image. In fact, the study recommends that EDAB create performance metrics to measure increasing the technology base, addressing workforce development, tracking job openings and capturing more highly skilled workers.

To begin this effort, on November 1, EDAB will be one of the participating partners in “Connect Harford,” an event for business and community leaders and influencers. “Connect Harford” will offer these leaders a forum to provide input on and interact about what they’d like to see the region become as it matures. The event will be a data-collection occasion, with instant polling and thought-leadership opportunities. It is designed to help create and communicate a clear vision for everyone, so we can nourish the needs of a community that wants to grow up.

Note: Look for upcoming articles that explore the various sections of the University Research Park Feasibility Study and Business Plan Development in-depth, focusing on land use, technology and higher education. Complete study results and recommendations can be found at www.harfordbusiness.org and www.cssc-apg.com.

Business Spotlight: Harford Community College

A vibrant part of both the education and business communities, Harford Community College (HCC) has reinvented its image and vision on its way to becoming a national higher education leader. The College serves nearly 10,000 full-time and part-time students through credit courses, and another 15,000 non-credit students each year. HCC continues to add programs to meet the needs of the community and advance workforce development within the business sector.

HCC’s Cybersecurity program, recognized as a National Center of Academic Excellence by the National Security Agency, prepares students for the fast-growing field of information systems security. Students can earn an associate’s degree that will transfer to a four-year institution, or they can take non-credit courses that benefit them in a corporate environment.

In an innovative partnership with Towson University, HCC will afford Harford County students the ability to earn bachelor’s degrees in a variety of disciplines without ever leaving Harford County. Beginning in September 2014, students with an associate’s degree can major in business administration, information technology, early childhood education/special education, elementary education/special education, psychology, or sociology/criminal justice. Advanced degrees in these disciplines will be available through the University Center. HCC officials emphasize both the convenience and the cost savings versus other four-year colleges - a full course load is estimated at just $3,000 a year.

HCC has also broken ground for Darlington Hall, the future home of the Nursing and Allied Health program. One of the fastest-growing sectors in today’s business world, the health education programs will further enhance community workforce development. The College also offers specialized training for companies with workforce development requirements through its Continuing Education and Training division.

HCC will host “Connect Harford,” a thought-leader forum for County business, government and education entities. Through a partnership with the Dresher Foundation, along with several other area organizations, the half-day symposium will provide the opportunity for conversation and brainstorming about maximizing Harford County’s potential. Mark your calendar for November 1 and visit www.harford.edu/connectharford for more information.

Fast Facts: Study Results Overview

• The University Research Park Feasibility Study and Business Plan Development identified six program development activities:
  o Outreach to companies doing business with APG
  o Commercialization services to APG regional inventors
  o Educational partnership clearing house
  o Advance specialized institutes for cybersecurity and chem/bio university collaborations
  o Talent connector for students and residents
  o Advanced transit-oriented mixed-use development hubs
• Program activities will leverage partnerships across military, state, university, industry and County resources.
• Programs will engage private sector and APG organizations to work collaboratively.
• Best practices from Dayton Development Corporation, Oklahoma’s 12E Innovation to Enterprise program, Innovative Arkansas, Suburban MD Technology Council, Air Force Institute of Technology, Ohio Third Frontier, Massachusetts Life Sciences Center and Pittsburgh Digital Greenhouse are among the models used for program recommendations and implementation.
• The feasibility of these initiatives counts on the broad support of the APG region.