DECODING MILLENNIALS

What do they want?

By Susan Kim
Staff Writer

Millennials have spoken: they want food trucks and festivals; bars and restaurants that stay open late; adults-only nights with painting, skating and trivia. And preferably all this on a budget.

After 820 millennials responded to a Columbia Association (CA) survey that closed in August, the CA Millennial Work Group unveiled a summary of those responses at a public event Oct. 18 at the Merriweather Post Pavilion Community Room. Those gathered offered input into future recommendations the CA work group will make to help determine how Columbia can better serve millennials.

What’s a millennial? Though exact definitions vary, for the purposes of the CA, millennials are between the ages of 17 and 35, and they make up about 25 percent of Columbia’s population.

The CA Millennial Work Group are volunteers who met monthly since February to discuss how the CA and Columbia can better satisfy the needs and interests of the millennial population.

The survey covered, among other subjects, how best to communicate with millennials, their most sought-after facilities or programs, and what they are looking for around Columbia.

Survey says?
In a list of ten proposed activities, the most popular

Continued on page 23
Howard County added over 11,000 jobs
Unemployment decreased to 3.6% (tied for lowest in State)
6% increase in number of businesses

"When you bring people together, awesome things happen."
- Allan Kittleman
Fatalities Spur Solutions for Route 1

By George Berkheimer
Senior Writer

With fatalities increasing, the Howard County Office of Transportation released a report recommending safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists on Route 1.

“We have been engaged with the public throughout this project because it is important for us to understand what residents need and the impacts of various options,” said County Executive Allan Kittleman. “We want to make sure we move forward in ways that will benefit them and the surrounding community.”

The county’s US 1 Safety Evaluation along the Route 1 corridor identified four focus areas and concepts for safety improvements at five locations, and corridor-wide recommendations.

Short Term Fix

Howard County Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator Chris Eatough said the county focused on corridor safety after an alarming increase in pedestrian incidents in 2016.

“This was something we wanted to address with some urgency, not something we wanted to wait for ongoing development or long-term studies to take care of or address,” he said. “We wanted to look at where the crashes were happening, what kind of crashes, and how this can be remedied in the short term.”

Armed with a grant from the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the county hired the Columbia-based Sabra & Associates civil engineering firm to conduct the safety study.

Eatough said that land use in the traditionally industrial corridor has changed over the years, with high density residential, commercial and retail uses generating more traffic – and more pedestrians and bicycle commuters.

“The nature of the road has not changed very much, it’s still a motor vehicle focused, big, fast highway,” he said, “That’s where some of the issues are coming.”

All of the congestion and increasing usage by pedestrians and cyclists is creating a dangerous mix. In 2015 there were 14 crashes with two resulting in fatalities and in 2016 there were 10 crashes and four of them resulted in five fatalities.

The county held two public meetings following the release, one at the Savage Volunteer Fire Company in September and one at the Elkridge Branch Library in October, to present the study’s findings and recommendations.

Focus Areas

Focus areas considered in the study were Area 1 between Laurel and Whiskey Bottom Road, Area 2 between Guilford Road and Patuxent Range Road, Area 3 between Assateague Drive and Brookdale Drive, and Area 4 between Greenfield Road and Levering Avenue.

Field evaluations were conducted in late 2017 by a core team whose members included the county’s Office of Transportation, Department of Public Works and Police Department, in addition to the State Highway Administration (SHA)’s Office of Traffic Safety and the Maryland Highway Safety Office.

Members of the county’s Commission on Disability Issues and Multimodal Transportation Board also contributed to the process.

“The themes we got from public comments were non-continuous sidewalks, sparse pedestrian crossings, inadequate lighting and poor pedestrian access to transit,” said Howard County Office of Transportation Planning Specialist Albert Engle.

Recommendations

Among the recommendations for Area 1 are a new traffic signal on northbound Route 1 at Laurel Racetrack Road, a high priority pedestrian activated crossing for bus stops at Brewer’s Court that serve the Howard County Multiservice Center and North Laurel Community Center, sidewalks, and buffered bike lanes.

Area 2 recommendations call for adding sidewalks, crosswalks and walk signals at the Guilford Road intersection, and similar pedestrian facilities at Patuxent Range Road.

Focus Area 3 targets a lack of sidewalks near newly developed retail and residential housing at Montevideo Road, to include a bridge extension or small pedestrian bridge to carry pedestrians safely over Deep Run to the north, as well as moving existing bus stops south of Montevideo Road closer to a new signalized intersection at Port Capital Drive.

Recommendations for Focus Area 4 include pedestrian signal improvements at Rowanberry.

Laurel Hospital Approved for Upgrade

By George Berkheimer
Senior Writer

The University of Maryland Laurel Regional Hospital (LRH) received approval to transform the hospital into a new state-of-the-art health care campus.

According to a filing with the Maryland Health Care Commission, plans will include 24/7 emergency care, short stay overnight care, outpatient surgery and enhanced outpatient behavioral health programs and services.

Construction of the new UM Laurel Medical Center is expected to begin in winter of 2019 and be completed in the spring of 2021, with significant private sector investment anticipated as the surrounding medical campus is developed.

The current building will house health services until construction of the new facility is complete.

LRH’s current inpatient medical/surgical units and inpatient behavioral health services will relocate to the UM Prince George’s Hospital Center in Cheverly later this year. Regulators previously approved the move of LRH’s existing chronic care and inpatient rehabilitation units to the same facility.

At the announcement, newly confirmed City Administrator William Goddard recalled that he began serving as Laurel’s deputy city administrator and director of emergency services on Aug. 1, 2015, the same day that Dimensions Healthcare Services notified the city of its plans to close LRH.

“It was really a moment that defined who we are as a city and a community that cares about our neighbors and our future,” Goddard said. “Through the leadership of our mayor and the hard work of our community and [City Council], I am happy to say the hospital will remain open as we celebrate a new beginning for health care for the citizens of Laurel and northern Prince George’s County.”
Thank you to all of the traveling members of the Howard County Chamber for sharing their trip to Iceland with The Business Monthly. Mimi O'Donnell captured this photo, right. She will receive two tickets to the Baltimore Ravens and Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Dec. 16.

Thank you to all who entered The Business Monthly photo contest in October. At left are some of the photos readers shared with us from places near and far.

Be sure to take The Business Monthly with you to an unusual destination or while you are doing an activity to win the photo contest in November. Entry information can be found on Page 13 of this issue.

The Community Action Council of Howard County wishes to thank its generous sponsors for making the 23rd Annual Holland Awards Dinner on October 18, 2018 such a success. The ballroom at Turf Valley Resort was filled with an amazing energy as CAC welcomed Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, as keynote speaker and honored Vivian Bailey with the 2018 Humanitarian Service Award. CAC serves the most vulnerable members of our community through many programs and services, including early childhood education, food assistance, energy and housing assistance and weatherization. Your support helps make this possible. Thank you again for partnering with CAC. We look forward to celebrating with you again next year.

The Business Monthly in Iceland

Kevin Doyle, Kate Hetherington and Mary Cannon are reading The Business Monthly after a relaxing swim in the Blue Lagoon, Iceland.
Southwest to Expand at BWI Marshall

Southwest Airlines plans to construct and operate a $130 million major aircraft maintenance facility at BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport. Of the cost, Southwest will contribute $80 million, with $50 million coming from the Maryland Aviation Administration for infrastructure improvements, such as utility work and site preparation.

The airline’s first maintenance facility in the Northeast is expected to create 450 construction and maintenance jobs during the next three years, as well as support hundreds of additional maintenance jobs during the next two decades. It will also support Southwest’s more than 120 technical operations employees with performing existing line maintenance work at BWI Marshall.

The facility will encompass an approximately 130,000-square-foot maintenance hangar, aircraft parking apron and office space, and will accommodate three aircraft, with the exterior apron space supporting up to eight aircraft. Pending approval from the Federal Aviation Administration, the preliminary schedule calls for construction to begin in 2019, with scheduled completion in late 2021.

Southwest Airlines started service at BWI Marshall 25 years ago. The airline is the busiest at the airport, serving about 69 percent of its passenger traffic. For calendar 2017, it flew nearly 18.2 million domestic and international passengers at the airport, which is the second-busiest overall in the Southwest system. According to the airline, there are 4,837 Southwest employees at BWI Marshall.

Vote John Liao
Howard County Council District 2

John Will:

✔ REVIVE OUR VILLAGE CENTERS in Oakland Mills, Long Reach to make them vibrant community centers
✔ PRIORITIZE EDUCATION, quality early childhood education, after-school care, language assistance, STEM programs, vocational training
✔ PROMOTE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CREATE JOBS and use our Diversity of Talents to attract and build new businesses (including women and other minority-owned)
✔ PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT and safeguard our schools & community from over development

Your District 9 Team, working with Governor Hogan to represent you in Annapolis.

Senator Gail Bates
Delegate Bob Flanagan
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Authority: Committee to Elect John Liao, Linda Lin, treasurer

Election Day, Nov. 6
Early Voting starts Oct. 25

Community Matters

Authority: Committee to Elect John Liao, Linda Lin, treasurer
One of the biggest names in health care and philanthropy was born in Crofton. And, if an active historic preservation group has its way, the birthplace of Johns Hopkins will be an important attraction in Anne Arundel county.

Johns Hopkins founded one of the world’s most prestigious universities and one of the greatest hospitals but his Crofton home had been neglected for so long that two years ago it was being considered for demolition to make way for residential construction. Now, the historic site, which lies about 25 miles south of its like-named institutions, is getting a new lease on life.

Now that the demolition has been derailed, the property, commonly known as Whites Hall, is set to be sold to The Johns Hopkins House, Inc. The nonprofit is raising more than $800,000 to buy the property and rehabilitate it. In addition to righting years of decay and vandalism, the nonprofit plans to create a museum on the property, with the house becoming a country inn to support its operation.

Raising Funds

At present, the nonprofit has a contract to buy the house and is leasing the 13-acre property from residential developer Rick Poulm. “The price of the property is $840,000. We have that figure down to $770,000 and are working on a major fundraising campaign so we can complete the deal,” said Robert Brown, who’s leading the effort. “The motivation of all concerned is wanting to see Whites Hall survive so it’s the best of all worlds for us and for the community.”

He said that the university, the hospital or any other part of the Hopkins organization has been involved. “They’ve wished us well, but have not offered direct help,” said Brown. “We’ve had many alumni come to see the house and they’re upset when they find out the university isn’t involved, and that there hasn’t been any attempt to let the alumni know what we’re doing. Many alumni said they would help, if they only knew.”

Gov. Larry Hogan held a fundraiser at Whites Hall in early October and expressed his support for the restoration project, Brown said.

More to Come?

David Buck, spokesperson for the Maryland Historical Trust, said Brown’s organization “has approached us, but has not yet applied for a grant.”

As for the university, it is already involved with two historic houses: the Homewood Museum, which is on Charles Street in Baltimore at the main campus entrance, and the Evergreen Museum & Library, which is also on Charles Street, about a mile north. “As worthy as the restoration of Mr. Hopkins’ birthplace appears to be,” said Hopkins spokesperson Dennis O’Shea, “we can’t be directly involved, due our longstanding commitments to those other projects.”

But that could change at some point. While the university “has no ideas” regarding any liaison with the Hopkins birthplace today, O’Shea didn’t rule out the possibility of involvement in the future.
Vantage House Hosts Re-Opening

Vantage House recently held a Grand Re-Opening party to celebrate the 28-year-old community’s major renovation and expansion. A ribbon cutting ceremony attracted more than 200 of Vantage House’s residents, community partners, elected officials and other dignitaries.

Vantage House just completed a multi-million dollar repositioning project to align the physical building with the overall needs and desires of those living at Vantage House, including socialization, health, fitness, and connectivity.

“Vantage House is designed around those who live here – not just physically, but with specialized lifestyle offerings,” said Meriann Ritacco, Executive Director of Vantage House. “By listening to what current and future residents want, we are keeping ahead of industry trends while staying true to those who live at Vantage House.”

The project included renovation of dining, living and office areas, the addition of a theater and classroom and expansion of fitness, spa and salon spaces. The popular auditorium was expanded and renovated, as was the arts and crafts center.

The Grand Re-Opening’s brief ribbon cutting ceremony featured remarks by Ritacco, Vantage House Corporate Board President Virginia Thomas and Residents Association Chair Michael Glasgow, State Senator Edward Kasemeyer, Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman, Howard County Council Chair Mary Kay Sigaty, and Howard County Chamber of Commerce CEO Leonardo McClarty.

Vantage House was founded in 1990 and is a nonprofit serving people 60 and older. Managed by Life Care Services, the community includes a variety of living arrangements from studio to three-bedroom. It provides long-term health services available exclusively for residents should they need them. Vantage House is noted for its arts, cultural and educational activities, as well as for resident engagement with the larger community of Columbia.

Last year Howard Magazine named Vantage House the Best Senior Housing Community in Howard County, according to the magazine’s readers. Over 16,000 voters cast ballots in the annual contest which garnered votes for “75 favorites for 2017” in a wide variety of categories from restaurant specialties to physicians.

The ClayGround Donates $10,000 to Old Ellicott City

The ClayGround Studio & Gallery, LLC, known as The ClayGround, donated $10,000 to the Ellicott City Partnership to help business owners, property owners and residents of Old Ellicott City who were affected by the flood of May 2018.

The donation was provided by “the generous patronage of its customers combined with a matching gift from the Koplow Family Foundation,” a media release reported.

The ClayGround began a campaign shortly after the May 27 flood that devastated the town for the second time in as many years. Customers who paid full retail price for pottery, fused glass or mosaic classes offered at The ClayGround were able to designate half of that amount to go towards the Ellicott City campaign. When the funds reached $5,000 the Koplow family, who own The ClayGround, matched that amount to reach the full $10,000 donation.

“While we all enjoy and prefer the good times, when tragedy hits it truly brings people together,” says Michael Koplow. “We are proud of Old Ellicott City and all that it stands for: The history, the culture, the varied experiences – but mostly for the people and community who we consider to be our friends and family. We are fortunate to be able to help in our small way.”
REMAKING DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA
Gregg Fitchitt at the helm for redevelopment

By Susan Kim
Staff Writer

Parents of philosophy majors, take heart: a philosophy major not only got a job, he got the top job.

Greg Fitchitt, the newly appointed Regional President for The Howard Hughes Corporation, majored in philosophy about three decades ago at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif. Now he’s overseeing a $5 billion, 14-million-square-foot redevelopment of Downtown Columbia.

Today, in his office overlooking Symphony Woods, Fitchitt retains a sense of quiet contemplation when he talks about his vision for Downtown Columbia. “Philosophy is a great background for business in that it’s great training for legal documents and legal agreements,” Fitchitt said.

During an interview with The Business Monthly, he said that the real reason he loves philosophy is because it’s about the big picture, “The way we live, the meaning of life.”

Fitchitt believes his philosophy about Downtown Columbia is consistent with Jim Rouse, the founder of Columbia. “Rouse did believe that we could, through the places we build, create better lives for people, allow them to reach their full potential.”

One of Rouse’s core aspirations was that Columbia would be a real city, not just a better suburb. “What was created is a fabulous suburb,” said Fitchitt. “Now, becoming the ‘real city’ is our mission.”

Fitchitt also acknowledged the legacy left by his company’s namesake, the legendary Howard Hughes, another visionary who has shaped Fitchitt’s own philosophy. “He was incredibly ambitious, an innovator, an entrepreneur with all sorts of inventions. I would say my own spirit of entrepreneurism has been growing over time,” Fitchitt added.

California Dealin’

As a young man just out of college in California, Fitchitt fell in love with building and development when he worked for Guess Jeans. What started as a temporary job became a rush as he built 75 mall stores in four years.

“I took stores through the design process, hired an architect, hired a contractor, delivered the completed project. I found my love of this business then,” he said.

Fitchitt then worked for 15 years for the Westfield Corporation, at that time an Australian-based British-American shopping center company with retail operations in the United Kingdom and the United States, before joining Howard Hughes in 2013.

If he looks back fondly on the days when he could build 75 stores in four years, Fitchitt is now turning a much larger, slower wheel. The planned redevelopment of the 391-acre Downtown Columbia is scheduled over the next 20 years.

At full buildout, the project will include three new and reconfigured neighborhoods – Merriweather District, Lakefront District and Central District – and feature more than 14 million square feet of mixed-use development comprised of 4.3 million square feet of commercial office space, 1.25 million square feet of street retail, 6,244 residential units, and 640 hotel rooms, as well as cultural and civic spaces including public parks and trails.

The underdeveloped core of Columbia became the focus of a five-year process that culminated with the Downtown Columbia Plan in 2010, which was approved by Howard County. It guides the development today.

The Merriweather District project, now underway, will offer high-density, mixed-use development with 1.5 million square feet of office space and more than 2,000 residences, anchored by a 12-story, 350,000-square-foot office building that will house the headquarters for cybersecurity firm Tenable.

The Merriweather District area is about 100 acres and, of that, some 65 acres are permanently protected open space. “We are creating Downtown Columbia as a walkable urban place,” said Fitchitt. “We’ve had significant environmental restoration and reforestation of a lot of environmentally degraded land. It’s the picture of smart growth. We have pockets of high density instead of sprawling growth. You can’t have a walkable environment without density.”

Learning curve

Fitchitt candidly admits he didn’t know much about Columbia when he first moved to Maryland. “But you only have to talk to a few people to realize a lot of them are passionate about Columbia. And a lot of them moved here in the early days in the ’60s and ’70s for the ideals that Jim Rouse intentionally created: ethnic and racial diversity, economic diversity,” he said.

Most people in the local area think of Rouse as the father of planned communities; Fitchitt also considers him a forerunner of affordable housing. “Rouse created mixed-income communities,” Fitchitt said. “Today we are taking the Rouse ideals and bringing them into the 21st century with a very progressive and forward-thinking solution for affordable housing downtown.”

There will be 6,244 units built in the Downtown area, and 900 will be “affordable housing.” Affordable housing falls on a spectrum from very low-income units, to low-income, to moderate-income units, Fitchitt explained. “Very low income is considered 30% of area’s median income.”

Eight years into what is a planned 30 years of development for downtown Columbia, Fitchitt said he’d like to complete this project in less than 30 years. Here, he will see his children grow up, commuting 10 minutes from his home in Ellicott City. “It’s a great place to raise a family,” he said. “The county has one of the best public school systems in the country.”

As for the future of Downtown Columbia, he said, “Overall, people are seeing more and more the benefits that come with developing the Downtown. We have more great restaurants: Cured, 18th and 21st, Lupa, We have the Soundry, doing very well as a music venue.”

In his day-to-day work of number-crunching, managing people, and tracking a massive project, Fitchitt returns often to a philosophy that stands on the shoulders of Rouse. “Rouse saw Columbia as a garden for growing people. That philosophy is at the heart of what I do every day: Columbia should be designed for the people.”
Entegra Systems Acquires Southern Cross Engineering

Entegra Systems Inc., a leading provider of advanced technology, integration, and analytic solutions and services for the defense and intelligence communities based in Hanover, acquired Cruzeiro Associates Inc. d/b/a Southern Cross Engineering.

Southern Cross Engineering, headquartered in Ellicott City, develops solutions for mobile device management, satellite communications, and data analytics for U.S. government customers. The company has expertise in systems and communications engineering, signals analysis, software development, natural language processing and understanding, data analytics, data science, and linguistics.

"The solutions and capabilities offered by Southern Cross Engineering are strong complements to the innovative solutions and services offered by Entegra Systems. Southern Cross’s customer base exposes us to new markets and mission-critical initiatives," said Dean Johnson, CEO of Entegra Systems, of the September acquisition.

"We have tremendous respect for Entegra System’s leadership team and are extremely proud to be joining them," said Renee Bishop, owner, president and CEO of Southern Cross Engineering. "Its highly respected reputation, diverse customer base and breadth of contracts will afford us many new opportunities."

"The larger company of 150 employees will create a broader spectrum of exciting projects for the newly-formed team," said Ed Bishop, Southern Cross Engineering, senior vice president.

Ed Bishop will become part of the leadership team of Entegra Systems.

RTHC Raises Funds

Rebuilding Together Howard County (RTHC) held a fundraiser at Hystéria Brewing Co. in Columbia in October to raise funds for the organization that helps elderly and others stay in their homes by providing home repairs. Welcoming the attendees were Ann Heavner, executive director, and Marcia White. The funds will be used to purchase building supplies to help members of the community remain in homes that are "safe, warm and dry."
A farm with pumpkins, turkeys and Christmas trees is busy in autumn but that’s not the whole story. At TLV (as in Triadelphia Lake View) Tree Farm, of Glenelg. Owner Jamie Brown serves multiple roles – marketer, financial analyst, buyer, meteorologist among others – while confronting Mother Nature. He recently spoke with The Business Monthly.

By Mark R. Smith
Senior Writer

What’s your busiest time of the year?
We’re busy all year, but the busiest months are still November and December.

How does your pumpkin crop look this year?
I lost about 90 percent of it to the rain, as did all of the other farmers on the East Coast. I had to bring in most of our stock from the Midwest.

How many trees do you sell during the holidays?
Last year, we sold 3,000 Christmas trees. We’d love to sell 5,000, but it’s hard to plan far enough in advance when it takes seven years to grow a tree.

How do you prepare for tree season?
Every year, I buy 10,000 seedlings and six tons of fertilizer. Then we have to mow in between the trees every two weeks, with three heavy-duty mowers that cost about $20,000 each.

Why did you get into the turkey market this year?
Only one other farm in Howard County produces turkeys and I think the county has grown enough to accommodate another. So, we invested $180,000 in a new barn this spring, and received 2,500 turkeys this past June. Now, we’re accepting orders for Thanksgiving at the farm, at farmer’s markets and online.

Are farmer’s markets effective marketing?
No, because there are too many of them. When we started going that route 30 years ago in Oakland Mills, there were 17 vendors; now there are many more markets with about a dozen vendors at each. Only so many can make money. If there are too many vendors offering one type of produce, like veggies, it won’t work. If people would travel 10 miles to a central location once a week, that would be much better than having several markets scattered around the county.

How has “farm-to-table” affected your bottom line?
It’s helped. It’s made the public more aware of local farms and what produce is available to them.

What are your thoughts on the organic movement?
I don’t believe in organic farming because some of the organic farmers are using more chemicals to kill bugs than I do within an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system. Also, when you read about organic tomatoes and greens, for instance, they don’t have the nutrients that farms using IPM offer. The public doesn’t read enough about this topic. Organics are not only not really better for you, they may not have much nutritional value as IPM products. That’ll draw an argument, but that’s how I feel.

Tell us about your Farmer Brown Camp.
We started it two years ago. A former middle school teacher of mine, Charlie Ashcraft, is retired and helped me do October tours; two years ago, we realized the need to educate children and consumers about how farming works. It’s gone well. The first year we had 18 kids and we had 35 this past summer. It costs $300 per kid; for adults, our one-day camp is $50 per person and $80 per couple.

What’s your take on the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act?
The federal government has to work on the J-1 Visa Act. Many farmers are having trouble finding help to work on their farms. We have three people working here now; ideally, we’d be employing six or seven workers.

What about the 2018 Farm Bill?
Hopefully, trade agreements will boost commodity prices. The government is subsidizing farmers, mostly in the Midwest, for soybeans and corn. Hopefully, that will keep them going and next year will be better. I’m more on the retail sales side, so it doesn’t affect me much.

How has TLV changed?
We’ve been here since 1896. During my era, we’ve expanded our offerings every year. In the ‘80s, we were a dairy farm, but we sold the cows in 1983; we planted the first Christmas trees in 1985, so in 1992 TLV became a tree farm. During the interim, we also grew vegetables, hay, straw and commodities, which we still do on our 89-acre farm; we rent the remaining 700 acres from other farmers who are no longer farming, but hold farmland in preservation zones within a 12-mile radius of TLV.

What is your greatest challenge?
Dealing with Mother Nature. This year, she has taken a higher toll on our business. The rains cost us about $150,000 in products. In this industry, estimating your gross revenues is always a crap shoot. However, in 2019, there could be a draught. That’s why we diversify.

How often has a developer offered to buy the farm?
Never, since we’ve been in preservation since 1982. My parents did sell some of the land years ago for $1,300 per acre; now, the price would be $40,000 an acre. But it’s not for sale, anyway. I want my family to take it over.

Have you ever thought of getting into another business?
No. Farming is in my blood.
School Boosting Crofton Home Values

By Mark Smith
Senior Writer

While Crofton High School isn’t slated to open until fall 2020, Aidan Surlis, Jr., knows that the promise of having its doors open is already boosting home values. A quick check of the numbers confirms that fact.

“At our office, we’re in consensus,” said Surlis, Realtor with Team Surlis of ReMax Leading Edge, in Crofton. “Every month, we track active listings; since early 2017, that number has trended down from about 40 per month to about 25 per month,” he said. “That’s about a 20% decline in the number of available homes, compared to about two years ago. That’s due to increased demand that’s already resulted in about a 10 percent rise in prices.”

To compare, “During the last recession, about 75 listings stayed on the market for six months each,” he said, “with only about 10 selling each month.”

The reason for today’s hot market? “Every buyer coming into Crofton has the new high school at the forefront of their minds,” said Surlis.

Classic Crofton

In the original section of Crofton, known as “The Triangle” (since it’s bound by routes 3, 424 and 450), Surlis expects the activity and rise in prices to become especially pronounced.

“The point of entry into the [original] Crawford section should rise from about $400,000 to $440,000, maybe higher, no matter the condition of the property,” he said, noting the school will allow “young families to grow up here without the separation of the current high school.”

That’s because its Crawford section students have been bused several miles to Arundel High School, in Gambrills, for more than 50 years; in more recent times, the other two-thirds of The Triangle (which is comprised of the two Levitt sections of Crofton Parkway) have been sent to South River High School, which is 11 miles away, in Edgewater.

Scott Smolen, also a realtor with Leading Edge, agrees. “The rise in home values has already started. We talked about it with appraisers about 18 months ago, when [buyers] saw that the school was really happening.”

Smolen also noted that new schools offer options older schools don’t, the new high school in Severna Park as an example. “During the Severna Park open house, the public could see that its weight room rivals that of some colleges. They also saw the theatre, the library and the computer lab,” he said. “Everything is cutting edge.”

“In addition,” said Smolen, “there are always plenty of teachers who want to work at a new school.”

More New Records?

In addition, Bob Johnston, COO of the Anne Arundel County Association of Realtors, said today’s county report card is a healthy one.

“The numbers in Anne Arundel are above state and national figures, across the board,” Johnston said. “May 2018 was our best May ever, with 926 houses sold; in fact, every month this year has been close to a record.”

As far as Crofton surge goes, he’s riding the bull, too, with one caveat.

“I think some of the sellers have anticipated [the price gains] a little far in advance,” he said, “which recently has resulted in some price reductions.”

Route 1 Safety Solutions Needed for Pedestrians

Continued from page 3

Drive, improved lighting and a pedestrian activated crossing at Dr. Patel Drive, and pedestrian improvements at Levering Avenue.

“These are higher priority recommendations in high crash rate areas, and they are implementable as one- to two-year time-frame projects,” Eatough said. “We don’t have cost estimates for all the recommendations because they are too early stage to estimate at this point.”

Nevertheless, the county is exploring a cost sharing partnership with the SHA and also has funds available in its US 1 Corridor Revitalization budget from fees paid by developers in lieu of constructing required improvements at certain developments.

“We’re talking to SHA to figure out if we can get these moving with the county money,” Eatough said.

Local ReMax Realtors Aidan Surlis, Jr. and Scott Smolen get a look at the new Crofton High School construction. The school is slated to open in the fall of 2020.

One of the most dangerous sections of Route 1 in Elkridge lacks sidewalks, adequate lighting and marked crossings to provide safety for pedestrians.

Next Steps

SHA Assistant District 7 Engineer Puskar Kar said his office is now reviewing traffic and safety issues that can be addressed through small-scale solutions like traffic signals, pedestrian crossings, and improvements to sidewalks and lighting, “things that don’t cost millions of dollars but could cause an improvement.”

Another inexpensive fix the county recommends is decreasing the maximum speed on the roadway from 50 mph to 45 mph and limiting speed changes to increments of only 5 mph.

“We’d also like some simple signal modifications,” Eatough said. “After improvements have been implemented we will continue to monitor. We want to see those crash numbers go down.”

The window for public comment on the draft report closed on Oct. 25 and the county will finalize the report and move forward with implementation.

“In addition, the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning is moving forward with a master plan effort for the US 1 corridor with the goal of developing an amendment to Howard County’s general plan, Plan Howard 2030,” he added, guided by previous studies and initiatives specific to Route 1.
A View to the Future at Tipton Airport

Anne Arundel Group Looks to Boost Local Air Travel

By Mark R. Smith
Senior Writer

It’s been a good year at Tipton Airport in Anne Arundel County. One sign of visible progress is the $3 million T-hanger, where 22 planes are housed, toward the west end of the runway.

Even better, the T-hanger was leased before it was built. But that expansion is only part of airport manager Mike Wassel’s vision for Tipton, the general aviation facility that operates adjacent to Fort Meade and as a reliever facility for BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport. Even given its smaller size, it generates $18.8 million annually in economic impact, according to the Washington, D.C.-based Alliance for Aviation Across America (AAAA).

So dream on, Wassel does. While such upgrades rely on significant government funding – a substantial amount of the money for the T-hanger project came from the Federal Aviation Administration, and took years to garner – he and the Tipton Airport Authority (TAA) board forge on as they work to make Tipton everything it can be.

Financial Impact

The first step, Wassel said, is to foster within the local business and government communities a greater understanding of general aviation airports and what they bring to the community in the way of jobs and revenue. Notably, Tipton employs 193 people and pays salaries of nearly $13 million annually, according to the AAAA.

Another of Wassel’s main hopes for the 366-acre Tipton Airport has been the extension of its runway, which is structurally sound, but needs to be expanded from 3,000 feet to 4,200 feet on land that is owned by Tipton but impacts the adjacent Patuxent Research Refuge. Such an extension would allow the airport to accommodate planes like the Beechcraft King Air 200, a larger corporate aircraft that needs more room for takeoffs and landings.

That issue, which would require removing an estimated 70 acres of trees that stand on both ends of the runway, has been ongoing for years. Wassel said that while the lines of communication have remained open concerning the FAA’s $230,000 environmental assessment, there hasn’t been much movement.

Wanted

Also on the wish list at Tipton, which was built in the early 1960s, is another T-hanger; three more regular large hangers to complement the four existing structures; and the replacement of its terminal, with the addition of modern amenities. Wassel is hopeful that upgrade would include four staff offices, a larger conference room, planning and quiet rooms for pilots, a community room, a car rental facility and a restaurant with catering services.

If the TAA can eventually make those upgrades happen, said Eric Flamino, chairman of the board and airport client, Tipton can really show off its inherent advantages. “We’re hoping the assessment is done in a year,” he said. “The refuge can’t give the airport access the land. We need the Environmental Determination from the FAA.”

Mike Wassel, manager of Tipton Airport, oversees a facility that generates $18.8 million annually in economic impact, according to the Alliance for Aviation Across America.

Continued on page 13
Aviators Search for Lower Cost Flight Alternatives

Continued from page 12

Aviators Search for Lower Cost Flight Alternatives

Tipton employs 193 people and pays salaries of nearly $13 million annually, according to the AAAA.

service aircraft.

Also, it costs more to fly out of BWI Marshall, he said. “The pilot also has to deal with its size and [the smaller planes] are not the type of aircraft that BWI makes money on.”

A request to interview Ashish Solanki, director of the Office of Regional Aviation Assistance for the Maryland Aviation Administration, for this article was denied.

By Comparison

The next moves in the local industry will be interesting, with the combination of Tipton’s potential, the business community’s wants and needs, funding issues and the shortage of not only pilots but maintenance technicians and trainers.

So, how does Tipton compare to other general aviation facilities? “That’s a great question but difficult to answer,” said Sean Collins, eastern regional manager for the Frederick-based Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association.

Collins said Tipton “is in a difficult spot in terms of the government airspace, but aside from having a small runway and a need for more hangers, it’s a high functioning facility. It has a great reputation and it’s in an affluent area. It also [hosts] DH Aviation [a maintenance provider], a flight training school and two flying clubs, which encourages participation, thus tapping into the pilot shortage.”

And, again, convenience. “We all know what it’s like to go to Dulles International, Reagan National or BWI Marshall and stand in line. It’s miserable,” said Collins, “but general aviation airports offer relief.”

Tipton employs 193 people and pays salaries of nearly $13 million annually, according to the AAAA.

Not Too Expensive

Those costs, Flaminio said, are less than what the general public assumes they would be, and he’s hopeful that getting the word out will get more people interested in flying, especially given the dearth of trained pilots available to businesses and other entities.

On that note, Mike Waibel, associate vice president with Linthicum-based Michael Baker International, agreed that Tipton’s has vast potential that “isn’t really being tapped.”

Waibel feels what’s happening at the airport now “is very good, but it’s obviously limited in that there are few business clients who fly in on a twin-engine aircraft, like the Beechcraft King Air 200,” a 12,500-pound plane.

He also said that the new T-hanger selling out immediately “was a testament to Tipton’s potential. Twenty-two people had checks in their hand the first day, and I’ve been told that would happen again if we can build another one. There are many high tech instruments in those planes” and they need appropriate shelter.

Waibel also commented that the general aviation offerings at BWI Marshall may eventually make the convenience of Tipton even more important. “We don’t know the future of general aviation at BWI Marshall,” he said. “It only has one runway for general aviation service, and it may be modernized and upgraded to serve commercial
WHERE DOES IT ALL GO?
Are you recycling or ‘wish-cycling’?

By Susan Kim  
Staff Writer

First eat the pizza. Then eat the residue that sticks to the box. Then recycle.

Really, here’s the dish on pizza boxes: it depends on the saturation level, explained Richard Bowen, recycling program manager in Anne Arundel County: “If the box has a couple of tiny grease spots, that can go in your recycling. If it has sauce and cheese on the bottom panel, rip off the top and trash the saturated side. There’s no reason to throw the whole box away.”

Why is Wish-Cycling Growing?

What happens to the pizza box next? It’s collected by a variety of contracted private haulers, who take it directly to the Waste Management Recycle America facility in Elkridge. This facility handles recycling from Anne Arundel and Howard counties.

There, the pizza box gets dumped onto its first conveyor belt, which runs past four human sorters – the facility employs 41 sorters who work eight-hour shifts – and they begin to pick out what amounts to the absurd things people should never have put in their recycle bins to begin with.

In under a minute, the sorters pick out a mangled metal-and-plastic Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle saucer-sled, the lining to what must have been a trench-sled, the lining to what metal-and-plastic Teenage sorters pick out a mangled bins to begin with.

“absurd things people should shift – and they begin to sorters who work eight-hour erers – the facility employs 41 runs past four human sort-

Today, the “wish-cycle” rate is about 16 percent, Taylor said, perhaps because more people are recycling but, at the same time, they are either uneducated or apathetic about what can and can’t go into their bins.

Back to the Pizza Box…

After the initial sorting, the pizza box rides another conveyor belt and enters a screener that, in an action that looks like a pinball machine, bounces stuff around to shake out items of a certain size and weight. During this phase, recyclables are separated into more recognizable categories – newspaper, other paper, cans, cardboard – and again fed onto conveyor belts, where human sorters once again pick out items that don’t belong.

The pizza box is then baled into a square that stacks into tractor trailers with the perfection of a Rubik’s cube. The Elkridge facility bales 900 tons of material a day. Where does it go?

A lot of cardboard goes to Vietnam, India and Egypt, said Bowen, whereas it used to go to China. “Currently, China has a one percent contamination level requirement which is really difficult to meet,” he said. In this case, “contamination” means items that aren’t cardboard have nonetheless been placed in a cardboard bale.

Cardboard – notwithstanding the new regulations from China – is still the most marketable recycling commodity. But the most valuable bale is actually aluminum cans, said Taylor. “Paper is used to make new paper, but the fibers get broken down,” he explained, “whereas the aluminum can – a lot of cans go to Alcoa — comes back pretty perfectly as an aluminum can. It’s the perfect recyclable.”

What we often label as cardboard is actually “old corrugated containers,” or two flat exterior layers of paper. Last year, old corrugated containers were worth $104.72 per ton, according to Recycling Today.

Though it’s harder to sell recycled bales to China, in fact other markets are available, said Taylor, “and some Chinese paper mill groups have actually bought U.S. paper mills. It’s a global business and a constantly changing marketplace.”

As the bales get loaded onto trucks, Taylor said the best rule of thumb for residents is, when in doubt, don’t just drop an item into your recycle bin and hope for the best.

“We’re here processing this stuff, and every day is different,” he said. “You put that bin on the curb, and it goes away, and people get mad when it doesn’t. Try to think about what has happened when you come home and that bin is empty.”

RECYCLING RULES

To learn how to be a better recycler, visit the county website:

In Anne Arundel County, visit: https://www.aacounty.org/departments/public-works/waste-management/Materials_Accepted

In Howard County, visit: https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Bureau-Of-Environmental-Services/Recycling
Standards Lacking for Cybersecurity

By George Berkheimer
Senior Writer

Adequate cybersecurity measures are difficult enough for any business to achieve. When it comes to the privacy and protection of customer data, the lack of a national standard means companies must adhere to different requirements for each state they do business in.

Cybersecurity insurance presents a logical choice for companies looking to protect themselves from the consequences of a data breach, but even so, exclusions and evolving threats leave policyholders vulnerable.

The Cybersecurity Association of Maryland (CAMI) shone some light on where these problems overlap at a Sept. 27 Breakfast Club event hosted by the University of Maryland University College at the College Park Marriott & Conference Center in Hyattsville.

Presenters Howard Feldman, a partner in the Whiteford, Taylor and Preston law firm’s Baltimore office, and Cyber Risk Expert Mike Volke of PSA Insurance & Financial Services of Baltimore, led the discussion.

Throughout the United States, cybersecurity laws and regulations change nearly every day, said Feldman. “Lawyers like well-settled principles of law,” he said. “That’s what having a stable legal and regulatory market promotes, but [in this environment] it’s hard for businesses to plan, adjust and know what to do.”

So far, Feldman said, Congress has only taken a sector-by-sector approach as different problems arise, while it has been the states themselves that have thought more globally. That disconnect has resulted in a labyrinth of consumer notification laws and regulations for large retailers like Target or Home Depot to follow when they experience a data breach.

“If you represent companies that do business nationwide or state to state … it’s a real pain to try to comply with all 50 state laws,” he said.

Default Standard

Members of the European Union (EU) began enforcing the data privacy and protection requirements of the organization’s universal General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May this year.

In the months that followed, the state of California enacted the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018, something Feldman considers troubling because the hastily written law has already been amended and is expected to be amended several more times before taking effect in early 2020.

Companies doing business in the state and collecting data from California consumers — meaning virtually every company in the United States — will have to comply with the legislation.

“Unless Congress acts, that’s going to become the default law for the country for data security,” Feldman said.

Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger, representative for Maryland’s 2nd Congressional District, acknowledged that California has a powerful economy, but said he believes local officials will fight for what is best for their own citizens and business community.

“I’m confident we can all work together toward robust data privacy standards,” he said. “More effort at the federal level to make sure these issues are ironed out before the California law goes into effect would certainly be common sense.”

Cyber Insurance

According to Volke, cybersecurity insurance policies can be useful tools that provide forensics experts, legal obligation reviews and other resources in response to a cyber attack, and can also cover costs associated with system damage, malware removal and lost revenue due to business interruption.

The product is still in its infancy, however, with industry experts still struggling to figure out how to underwrite risk without the means to do an intrusive network assessment or require customers to provide one.

While insurers can monitor what a company does to control risk, there’s no way to monitor a completely dynamic threat environment.

“[The GDPR] may be a very onerous standard, but at least you have one standard that applies across the entire European economic group,” Feldman said.

Ruppersberger, however, cautioned against rushing legislation based off the European model, despite its positive privacy measures.

“I am glad more American businesses are proactively protecting online users – like the Cybersecurity Tech Accord and other [measures] — without a legislative intervention,” he said. “Consumers over the last few years are learning so much more about how much of their personal data is held, traded, and sold by the private sector, such as Google and Facebook, and many are demanding to know more about how their data is used. That should push us to create better solutions for our constituents.”

“[The main issue has been committee jurisdiction],” he said. “Issues like cybersecurity and technology policy are very hard to tackle in Congress because the fault lines lie across many different committees. This is why I’ve co-sponsored legislation to fix how issues such as cyber are delegated in the House.”

Too Many Cooks

Many industries in the United States have lobbied Congress to establish national cybersecurity privacy and data protection standards for a number of years.

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UMBC Upset Win Expands Reach

ESPN Broadcasting Helps Students and Awareness

By Mark R. Smith
Senior Writer

The UMBC Retrievers rocketed to the top of the sports world last year during March Madness when they made history by knocking off the number one seeded University of Virginia Cavaliers. Now their presence on ESPN is growing and it’s having an economic impact.

UMBC is in year three of the America East Conference (AEC) agreement with ESPN. The Baltimore County college is seeing the growth that was predicted when its deal to broadcast with ESPN3 and ESPN+ was signed.

The agreement calls for UMBC to broadcast and/or stream 40 events this season. While most of the programming will be seen on over-the-air ESPN3 and the inexpensive streaming service, ESPN+, the university is expanding into broadcasts of fall sports as well as basketball.

Now, just as the UMBC men’s basketball squad is coming off its stunning upset of the University of Virginia in the first round of the 2018 NCAA Tournament, an underlying story about how its broadcasts attract attention to the university is being told.

Top of the Line

The AEC’s deal with ESPN “has dramatically changed what we do, from a budget standpoint,” said Steve Levy, sports information director with UMBC, recalling how he “used to broadcast about 20 games each season on Q1370 (the sister station of WCBM). We bought airtime from the station for two-and-a-half hours per broadcast,” which, at the back end of the contract in 2015-16, cost the university about $30,000–$40,000 a year.

But since 2016, it’s been a new approach. “We’re planning 40 broadcasts on the ESPN networks, with 17 each of men’s and women’s basketball, and now soccer and volleyball, too.

That’s great, but it isn’t cheap. The cost of the 40-game broadcast package is “well north of $300,000,” Levy said.

“We aimed for the top of the line production,” he said, alluding the equipment and talents of UMBC alumnus Eli Eisenberg and his VPC Productions, of Reisterstown.

“Most of the cost is paid for from UMBC budgets. While the sale of season tickets are outpacing last year’s numbers, ticket sales and paying for broadcasts don’t have to do with each other.

“This is Division 1, but it’s small Division 1,” said Levy. “What we want to do is benefit our Media and Communication Studies Department, and much of this effort is for our students. It’s been a slow developing major, but once we lit this spark, we wanted to make this a student-run initiative.”

Learning How

Eisenberg explained the setup that a small school like UMBC needs to broadcast games. “We have camera equipment and a truck comes from Niles Media Group [of Kansas City]. It provides the level of quality needed for the broadcasts.”

UMBC, said Eisenberg, “doesn’t own its equipment, though some schools do. They wanted a medium-sized truck, and they want us to manage it while training students and alumni.”

With VPC’s industry veterans shadowing the growing group of 10 (or so) students (out of a crew of 20) that will be working the games, “it’s no different than an athletic team. The senior staffers aren’t pressing many buttons and we’re training these students so well that the folks at ESPN back in Bristol [Connecticut], the network’s headquarters can’t tell if there is a student behind the camera or a long-time professional. And UMBC adding to its schedule,” Eisenberg said, “is a great interim step that will eventually lead to streaming of spring sports, too.”

Best in Show

While the AEC still handles its own streaming for certain sports, "the ratings are nowhere near what they are for the ESPN streams. There are people who live their lives in the ESPN portal," said Sean Tainsh, the AEC’s associate commissioner for content strategy.

That’s due, in part, to affordability. ESPN+ is only $4.99 a month and ESPN 3 is free for many cable subscribers. And ESPN garners a fair share of eyeballs: the UMBC-University of Vermont AEC championship game drew 45,000 unique viewers from streaming, plus 380,000 unique TV viewers.

The next step will be, ‘How do we make this good for potential large advertisers?’" Tainsh said, “We want Madison Avenue to notice.”

Key is to this approach is marketing the school to prospective students and their families. "Given the demand for live sports programming, we’re hopeful that this approach will make money, too" he said.

The potential of streaming “has always anticipated partnerships, and business models, like this,” said Allison Dollar, CEO of the Santa Monica, Calif.-based Interactive Television Alliance. “There’s an insatiable demand for sports programming on all levels. In this instance, the major networks and carriers save money, entry-level professionals get valuable experience, consumer brands and niche sports get reach into local, passionate fan bases, and everyone wins.”

Eisenberg agreed. “It’s a great opportunity to showcase UMBC’s program on a national level and it’s the same polished look as the bigger ESPN networks.”

And that’s how it was feasible for UMBC’s administration to offer what Levy called "great financial and personnel support" in this endeavor. “The AEC sports department said we have the best broadcasts in the conference," he said. After what happened against last March against Virginia, this marketing approach will help us move forward.
A thriving agricultural community is woven into the fabric of our county. For some, farming and making a living from the land is a daily experience. Farming also is significant to our business community. During this harvest month, “By the Numbers” looks at data about rural life in our community.

### Down on the Farm

#### ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

- **381** Farms (four more than a decade ago)
- **$100** Average cash rent price for non-irrigated cropland and pasture.
- **$19,670,000** Average market value of products sold annually. Crop sales represent 84 percent of that, while livestock is 16 percent.

#### HOWARD COUNTY

- **1920s**
  When the Howard County Farm Bureau was established to help local farmers with the cooperative buying of seed and fertilizers. The Farm Bureau gradually evolved into the areas of education, marketing and insurance. Technology became a major part of the bureau’s focus as did the work of extension agents from the University of Maryland. The bureau is still considered a family organization with one membership per family.
- **293** Farms (42 fewer than a decade ago)
- **25** Of Howard County’s total land area of 161,394 acres about 25 percent is farmland.
- **$31,883,000** Average market value of products sold annually. Crop sales represent 87 percent of that, while livestock is 13 percent.
- **$30** The weekly cost of a Community Supported Agriculture vegetable, herb, and flower share at Clark’s Elioak Farm in Ellicott City.

#### TURKEY & CHICKEN

- **20,000** Turkeys sold at Maple Lawn Turkey Farm each year.
- **10-50** pounds Average weight of fresh turkeys sold for $2.40 per pound.
- **1.5** pounds Average turkey consumed per meat-eating adult on Thanksgiving.
- **600** million Chickens produced in the Delmarva region alone.
- **3** Times more chicken Americans eating now than they did 50 years ago.
- **$1** billion Chicken production topped this for the first ever during 2017.

**By Susan Kim, Staff Writer**
Popular Governor’s Coattail Voter’s to Set Course for

By Len Lazarick

Will it be coattails or a Blue Wave Nov. 6? Will Gov. Larry Hogan become just the second of Maryland’s rare Republican governors to win reelection and carry with him a slew of GOP candidates to reshape State House politics? Or will a Democratic Blue Wave, energized by women angry over the Brett Kavanaugh nomination, the #MeToo movement and President Trump in general, sweep Republican incumbents away?

Elections have consequences, for businesses and average citizens alike. Here’s what we know about the electoral landscape, and what these newly elected officials will face in the next four years.

Referendum on incumbents

Re-election bids are referendums on incumbents, particularly the very visible chief executives of counties and states.

“We can do better,” is Democrat County Councilmember Calvin Ball’s constant refrain at the multiple stages on which he has appeared with Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman. At times combative, at times subdued, the two tangle over mostly the same issues that put them at odds over the past four years – sanctuary county (which Kittleman vetoed), downtown Columbia financing (the TIF Ball opposed), public campaign funding (which voters approved over Kittleman’s objections), and particularly funding for schools, many of which are overcrowded.

“Howard County is underfunding the school system budget,” insists Ball, who has a doctorate in education. Kittleman responds, “I have fully funded things that happen in the classroom,” meaning teacher salaries – at the expense of other items.

The executive has not given the school board its full request – executives often don’t, irked at giving over half their budget to school systems they don’t control.

But Kittleman notes that the county council on which Ball serves approved his budgets four years in a row, and did not restore any school system cuts, as they are allowed to do – as long as they increase the tax rate or cut other items to do so.

School funding a key issue

School funding is a key issue for Democrat Ben Jealous in the governor’s race as well, as it is for all candidates. He promises to raise teacher pay by 29 percent, establish pre-kindergarten for all students paid for by legalizing and taxing recreational use of marijuana, and to enhance career and technical education. Hogan’s constant comeback is that he has funded over $25 billion in school aid, a record for any governor – since the budget increases every year and is thus “record” spending.

Hogan “doesn’t have a plan for education funding,” Jealous repeatedly asserts.

The Jealous plan is drawn directly from the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. The commission is set to make its final recommendations to the governor and legislature by the end of the year. The 25-member commission has lopsided representation by education advocates, officials and Democratic leaders. The 2016 law creating it gave the governor little say over who would serve and only one business executive does.

The commission was tasked with revising the 2002 education formulas. Their recommendations are almost a year overdue, and it has yet to put a price tag on its proposals. They will likely cost billions and also mean substantial changes in how Maryland schools are structured.

Hogan has refused to commit to funding its recommendations. Early indications are that wealthy counties like Anne Arundel and Montgomery might have to cough up much more, 44 percent for Anne Arundel and 60 percent for Montgomery. That’s what a group of consultants recommended two years ago, saying Maryland schools needed $2.9 billion more in state and local aid, a figure often cited by Democratic leaders and the state teachers’ union. In the consultant’s report, Howard County actually gets off easy with a recommendation that its local funding go down 5 percent while its state funding increases by 42 percent.

Teacher pay is also an issue in the race between Anne Arundel County Executive Steve Schuh and Democratic challenger Steuart Pittman, who promises to pay them more. Schuh says he’s already done that and wants to do more.

Jealous, Ball and Pittman have all been endorsed by the teachers’ union.

Lockbox

The importance of education in these races is shown by Hogan’s ads touting his support of the “Hogan Lockbox” on the November ballot, a constitutional amendment requiring all casino revenues be used for education on top of any of the $6.3 billion in annual school aid formulas the legislature has mandated.

The lockbox idea was actually conceived by the teachers’ union and Democratic legislators; Hogan proposed a less-restrictive measure, but eventually embraced the Democrats proposal which is expected to pass easily.

Hogan’s willingness to embrace Democrats’ bills as if they were his own enrages Democratic leaders but one of his strengths among Democrat
Popular Governor’s Coattails or a Potential Blue Wave?

Maryland Nov. 6 election

Attorney General Brian Frosh (D) and Craig Wolf (R)

Election day is Nov. 6 in Maryland. Candidates have been contacting voters for months Key races include Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman (R) and Calvin Ball (D); Governor candidates Ben Jealous (D) and Larry Hogan (R); and Maryland

and independent voters, even as his moves to the center annoy some of his right-wing supporters.

Crossing party lines

On websites, yard signs and campaign mailers, Republican candidates proudly flaunt their “Hogan Endorsed” stickers, hoping the governor’s popularity will rub off. But it is also part of Hogan’s “Drive for Five” initiative to boost Republican numbers in the state senate to make it harder for Democrats to override his vetoes, to filibuster bad bills and to give Republicans more sway when key bills are threshed out.

Hogan’s popularity is even being used as a protective shield where key Democrats are targeted for defeat. One local example popped up in District 9B race where Democrat Courtney Watson is challenging GOP Del. Bob Flanagan, one of the few House seats where Democrats think they might pick off a Republican.

Watson put out a mailer touting her efforts to help Old Ellicott City after the first devastating flood in 2016. The mailer brazenly includes a picture of her accepting an award for her leadership for that, but some of the problems may have been Hogan’s inability to reduce as many of the taxes he promised in 2014.

“We’re going to cut wasteful spending and roll back as many of these 40 O’Malley-Brown tax increases as we can,” Hogan said the night he won the 2014 primary.

There are many factors that help or hinder economic growth. But the Tax Foundation has continued to rank Maryland 40th among the states in business tax climate during the Hogan years, and Virginia has stayed ranked at 22nd.

Hogan has been able to nibble at the edges of Maryland’s high personal income taxes, gaining some relief for retirees and first responders. He may try harder in the next four years if reelected, though that could make hik-
What are your predictions for the elections in Maryland? It is a question I am often asked.

I have a hard enough time uncovering the facts of what has already happened — who did what to whom and why, what's true and what's not — without trying to predict the future.

Here's a pretty safe prediction: The election will be over Nov. 7, thank God. But we learned with the June primary that vote counting can go on for weeks.

Here's another safe prediction: Less than half of the Marylanders eligible to vote — citizens 18 and over — will cast ballots.

eligible to vote — citizens 18 and over — will cast ballots.

Don’t these close votes show that every vote counts?

A Howard County Councilmember lost by six votes in his Democratic primary. The votes of 1,900 Republicans and hundreds of independents who voted didn’t matter at all in that race.

The 12,285 Democrats who voted for state Sen. Guy Guzzzone in District 13 didn’t really matter either; nor will the thousands more who will vote for him in the general election matter. He is totally unopposed for re-election. All he needed to do is vote for himself.

Too many choices

And what about that daunting three-page ballot we got in the mail recently? I have 44 candidates to choose from in 18 races, and even I know little or nothing about five or six candidates. How do you choose four candidates out of the eight for school board? I’ve seen them in several forums, and had trouble picking a fourth. (By the way, they’re a pretty intelligent, well informed lot; you can’t go much wrong with any of them.)

Many choices for obscure offices certainly deter some voters. Why are we still electing the clerk of the courts and the registrar of will? When government was small, they were once important offices, but now they are simply administrative functionaries of the courts.

By the way, another fairly safe prediction: Wayne Robey will be re-elected Howard County Clerk of the Court. No, not the former police chief, county executive and Senate majority leader Jim Robey, his son Wayne. Can’t say as I’ve seen or heard from his Republican opponent, Marlena Jareaux.

Democratic legislators fall over themselves to make it easier to vote — early voting, same day registration, registration at the MVA, absentee ballots even if you don’t vote. But turnout never increases very much, except by population growth.

How about more competitive elections? How about open primaries as exist in many states so that the hundreds of thousands of Republicans and independents (unaffiliated voters) get a voice in Baltimore City, Montgomery and Prince Georges counties which haven’t elected a Republican in decades. How about no voter registration at all, as a few states do?

Better candidates in some races will help turnout, too, but it must be said that Howard and Anne Arundel counties have a generally smart and competent field in both parties.

And finally, another fairly safe prediction: After Nov. 6, state and local government will not change very much or very fast.

Traffic on Routes 29 and 100 will not improve, mass transit will not magically appear, schools crowding will not suddenly be reduced, at least while your kids are there, the achievement gap between the races will persist, and taxes will not go down much, if at all. You want predictions? These are pretty safe predictions, too.

No change in Congress

Is it safe to predict U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin will win reelection? He was first elected to the House of Delegates 52 years ago at the age of 23, in 1976 he became the youngest speaker of the Maryland House, U.S. House of Representatives in 1986, U.S. Senate in 2006. He is now 75 and never lost any of the 18 elections he's run in, the very definition of a career politician.

Cardin was already a committee chairman when I started covering Annapolis in 1976; he may stay in office longer than I stay writing. He is a liberal Democrat, a thoughtful legislator and a very nice man.

For the second election in a row, Cardin has been gifted with another millionaire opponent running as an independent, Neal Simon this time, in addition to an underfunded Republican, Towson University professor Tony Campbell. Cardin has little fear of Simon, an unknown investment adviser from Montgomery County who will only spend a few million dollars to split any anti-Cardin vote. Rich guys who want to start out in public life at the top of the ladder do not do well in Maryland. To win, you have to spend the kind of big bucks David Trone has — $16 million to date for the 6th Congressional District seat.

What about Larry Hogan you say? It was not by choice that Hogan is not a career politician. He ran for Congress twice, once in 1981 and again in 1992, coming closer than anyone before or since, to defeating Rep. Steny Hoyer, who’s been in office as long as Cardin. Hogan also worked for his father as Prince George’s County Executive.

As for the rest of the congressional delegation in their contorted districts, I dare you to name their Republican opponents without looking at your sample ballot. Gerrymandering works.
Council Candidates Debate Issues

By George Berkheimer
Senior Writer

Candidates running for County Council in four of Howard County’s five councilmanic districts weighed in on major issues during a September debate moderated by the Howard County League of Women Voters.

Every seat on the council is up for grabs in the general election on Nov. 6.

District 3 Democratic candidate Christiana Rigby is running unopposed and did not participate in the event.

District 1

District 1 Republican candidate Raj Kathuria said he supports the watershed plan proposed by County Executive Allan Kittleman (R) and current District 1 Councilman Jon Weinstein (D), adding that he would like to see some of the facades of buildings targeted for removal moved to the new Hudson parking area.

His challenger, Democrat Liz Walsh, said county government should do more to engage federal and state partners in working toward a comprehensive solution.

She also proposed tax incentives and other programs to help property owners maintain open space, as well as residential and commercial incentives to improve existing stormwater infrastructure.

Both candidates shared similar views on supporting the county’s immigrant population, but Kathuria said he does not support making Howard County a sanctuary county; Walsh did not specifically address the sanctuary issue.

Both approved of efforts to increase the amount of taxable commercial property in the county in order to reduce the tax burden on residents, increase access to housing for low-income families, and reduce crowding in schools.

District 2

Addressing the county’s low commercial tax base, which is currently slightly more than 17 percent, District 2 Democratic candidate Opel Jones recommended an assessment of the current tax level.

“Tax increases scare me,” he said, adding that he could not promise a particular stance on the issue. “I’m going to do what makes sense for all of the county. I’m not antidevelopment and not for fast or speedy development. I’m for smart growth of the county.”

His Republican challenger, John Liao, said the county should prioritize developing more commercial and more retail space.

“We need to have a huge focus on the Columbia Gateway Business Park,” he said. “I’m against any unnecessary development, especially in District 2. We are absolutely out of places for development except for Gateway.”

Each District 2 candidate took a veiled swipe at the opposing party’s candidate for County Executive.

As a councilmember, Jones said, “What I would not be in favor of is taking a stance on something before the public has input, like our [current] county executive has done several times.”

Liao charged that overdevelopment under sitting Democratic District 2 Councilman Calvin Ball’s leadership “has led to overcrowding in our schools, increased violence in our village centers and deterioration of our shopping centers. Mr. Jones has already taken money from developers and will be a continuation of this runaway train of development.”

District 4

Partisan differences were most pronounced in the District 4 debate, with Republican contender Lisa Kim asserting that “adult [immigrants] coming to Howard County don’t necessarily need any help provided to them by the government because there are a lot of nonprofits and community organizations here that offer help.”

She said the government’s role should focus more on immigrant children, making sure they understand English well enough to learn to their full potential.

Democrat hopeful Deb Jung said county government needs to provide resources for adults as well, particularly those who don’t speak English very well.

“I think our county government needs to provide better language access to government services,” she said.

Discussion of public transportation took a twist, with Kim questioning the need or public desire for transit that connects Columbia with the City of Baltimore and Washington, DC.

“I can tell you people hop the bus or train into the nice areas of Prince George’s County and rob houses while people are at work,” she said.

Jung said she not only supports a Bus Rapid Transit link between Columbia and Montgomery County, but would also recommend a similar link to get workers from Columbia to and from Fort Meade to help alleviate congestion on MD 32.

Jung took the position that opioid drug abuse should be viewed as a disease and recommended more options for residential treatment, while Kim advocated for more diligent work on the prevention side.

Both agreed that stormwater management is a countywide concern and isn’t just limited to Ellicott City.

District 5

Republican candidate David Yungmann said the rural character of District 5 is threatened primarily by fake farming – described as moving manufacturing businesses into western Howard County under the guise of farming – and huge institutional uses such as churches, schools and similar developments that generate traffic and require infrastructure commitments.

“I oppose any western expansion of the Planned Service Area, but the ownership of open space needs to be sustainable,” he said. “We need to find ways to remain agricultural but make those uses flexible, financially sustainable, and interesting to the next generation.”

According to Democratic candidate China Williams, “Doing a responsible job with development will address a lot of the growing pains that we’re having. We have excellent social services in our county but there are major economic and demographic forces coming down on us from outside our county that are going to make it very difficult to maintain that level of service, so we’re going to have to be really creative.”

Williams said she supports the current policy of county police cooperating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement only in criminal matters, while Yungmann said he would have voted against Council Bill 9, which would have designated the county as a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants.

On the subject of school security, Williams recommended a policy of smaller class sizes for teachers to identify at-risk children, and advocated for having strong mental health support services in schools and better collaboration with other services.

Yungmann said he favors a rapid response team with a combination of law enforcement officers, educators, mental health professionals and counselors. “Teachers, counselors, principals and other kids know who the threat population is. We need a group of professionals they can hand off that case so that they can do early intervention.”
Schuh, Pittman in Competitive Race

The race for Anne Arundel County Executive is surprisingly competitive if the only public poll on the contest is to be believed.

The Anne Arundel Community College poll taken in early October found incumbent Republican County Executive Steve Schuh at 38 percent versus Democratic challenger Steuart Pittman at 33 percent, with 25 percent undecided.

That result is surprising because other questions in the very detailed survey by Professor Dan Nataf’s Center for the Study of Local Issues show Schuh should be in great shape for re-election.

More than half the poll respondents (57 percent) said the county was “headed in the right direction,” up 10 percent since Nataf’s spring poll. Three-quarters of those surveyed (75 percent) said the local economy was “excellent” or “good,” up 7 points from the spring, and gave it higher scores than for the state and national economy. There was a slight improvement since the spring in their personal economic condition as well.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents strongly or somewhat approve of the job Schuh is doing.

Hogan runs far ahead of Schuh

In one of the most startling findings of the new poll, Republican Gov. Larry Hogan, the hometown boy who’s lived and had his real estate business in Anne Arundel for many years, is getting 68 percent of the vote. Democratic nominee Ben Jealous got a pathetic 14 percent.

Why is the Republican governor who has endorsed Schuh running 30 points ahead of him in their home county?

The main explanation is that Democrats are splitting their vote. Almost half of Anne Arundel Democrats (45 percent) are supporting Hogan, and only 29 percent support Jealous. But Pittman is corralling 60 percent of the Democratic vote.

There are other factors at work in a county that has had a Republican county executive for three terms now, primarily concerns about local issues over which voters may believe the county executive has more control.

On reducing traffic congestion, 71 percent say it’s gotten worse; on managing growth and development, 55 percent say it’s gotten worse; on reducing the opioid epidemic, 52 percent say it’s gotten worse; and on making life more affordable in the county, 40 percent say it’s gotten worse.

Pounding Schuh on development

Pittman has been pounding Schuh on overdevelopment, traffic issues and the campaign dollars from developers that has helped fuel the incumbent’s million dollar campaign. He did that again at the Oct. 18 debate hosted by the Capital newspaper that brought out over 600 people.

Schuh doesn’t disagree that there’s been overdevelopment in some areas of the county, particularly townhouses and apartments, but he blames that building on zoning decisions made by the county council and previous executives 10, 20 and even 30 years ago.

He rejects the notion that the executive in the general development plan currently under revision can somehow “down-zone” the density on a property without compensating the owner.

Schuh is also well aware that as Pittman said in the Capital debate, “traffic sucks.” But of the 100 worse roads and intersections in the county, 74 of them are state highways, he points out. Schuh just got a commitment from the state transportation secretary to study those problems - but of course any real improvement is years away.

Schuh said in an August interview that about 20 percent of his campaign contributions come from the development community, and he will not accept money from any business with a permit or a lawsuit pending before the county.

Pittman actually gives Schuh credit for his work on the opioid epidemic. When he first took office four years ago, Schuh declared it an emergency and has pursued a number of strategies he says are beginning to work.

Agreement on staff, salaries

The two men agree that that there ought to be more police officers, more firefighters and more teachers in the county, and that all of them ought to be paid more. But Schuh insists that can’t happen as quickly as Pittman proposes without raising taxes by $200 million a year, a figure the Democrat scoffed at.

Schuh’s campaign has already launched negative mailers and radio ads saying Pittman would raise taxes in the very tax-adverse county.

Pittman says his endorsement by the Fraternal Order of Police, the police union, helped push Schuh to negotiate a 15 percent pay raise for officers over the next two years. Schuh counters that he’s been endorsed by the unions for sergeants, lieutenants and sheriff deputies.

Pittman has also gained the endorsements of the teachers’ union, which brought out some of the loudest and most boisterous supporters at the Capital debate. And continuing their fierce differences from the 2014 primary, former Republican county executive Laura Neuman has endorsed Pittman. She was appointed to the job by the county council (back by three Democrats and one Republican) over Schuh and other candidates in 2013 to fill out the term of John Leopold, who went to jail after being convicted of misusing his office.

“Unfortunately, Steve Schuh put most of the Leopold machine on his campaign payroll, then brought them back into county government — with raises!” Neuman said in a statement. “Steve Schuh has overseen the return of pay-to-play politics and big taxpayer giveaways to corporate developers.”

Pittman, an articulate South County horse farmer who’s never run for public office, is not likely to benefit from any kind “blue wave” of Democratic voters, based on the results of the Nataf poll. It found Republicans even more energized than Democrats, with little synergy from Jealous at the top of the ticket.
Millennials Want More Socialization Opportunities

Continued from page 1

among millennials (81 percent) was “food truck centered events or festivals.”

The next most popular events were “bars/restaurants that stay open late” (60 percent) and “adult only nights” (58 percent).

Millennials also wanted improved communication and engagement from the CA, with the preferred platforms being Facebook and email. They reported they want to be more involved in the community, but would rather be on a task force or engaged in a specific project than serve on a board.

When asked what Columbia most needed, millennials requested more opportunities to socialize, convenient places to walk to (and reasons to go) and gathering areas that feel updated, innovative, and new.

Response to the survey was heaviest from people ages 31-35 (43 percent), and lightest from those ages 17-20 (7 percent). Seventy-four percent of respondents live in Columbia, 31 percent work in Columbia, and 20 percent both live and work in Columbia. During the Oct. 18 event, the CA collected cards to gather further input.

Recommendations to come

Some of what Columbia’s millennials are requesting or suggesting may not fall under the CA’s purview, noted Jason Jannati, chairperson of the CA Millennial Work Group. But knowing better what this population wants will help to make future recommendations, said, Jannati, 32, an Oakland Mills High School graduate who is chief development officer for Power52 Energy Solutions, a corporation that focuses on developing, financing, and constructing clean energy solutions.

“The first thing that stuck out to me was how wide that age range is: 17-35. We needed to look at different needs,” Jannati said. “I know I have a different need set than somebody right out of college and we wanted to be aware of that.”

The most significant difference coloring the preferences of millennials is whether or not they have kids, said Jannati: “Everything changes when the strollers get involved.”

The survey is the first-ever in-depth look that CA has taken about millennials, said Jessica Bellah, a CA community planner.

“We’ve looked at older adults. It was time to look at what young adults need because they are a pretty large contingent of the population. And we want to have millennials themselves guide the process,” Bellah said.

More input sought

The survey results — and the ensuing recommendations — will give businesses as well as the CA the opportunity to engage with millennials, said Bellah. In looking at which CA facilities most appeal to young adults, the survey found the Supreme Sports Club got higher ratings because it’s open 24 hours, seven days a week to meet a wide range of work and family schedules.

“With this population, timelines need to be broadened,” she said. “Millennials go into work early and come home late. They have longer commuting times. The want classes and facilities that are open to meet their hourly needs.”

Bellah pointed out that entrepreneurs might note that many millennials seem to want more non-chain restaurants. “This is not something the CA offers but could be a window of opportunity for a startup business.”

Columbia is often cited as a great place to live, work and play, but millennials would like more chances to identify with the “play” aspect, said Jannati.

Bellah added: “When we ask what attracts people to Columbia, we found people love the trees, the pathways, the environment. What people want is an urban core and a great landscape.”

Hogan Announces $12M in Safety Grants

As part of ongoing efforts to prevent traffic crashes and save lives on Maryland roads, Gov. Larry Hogan announced that $12 million in federal highway safety funds will be granted to approximately 90 agencies and organizations across the state with the goal of reducing crashes and related injuries and deaths.

In 2017, there were 557 deaths as a result of traffic crashes in Maryland. The funds distributed through the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration’s Highway Safety Office will help fund the following traffic-safety efforts. They will include the following.

• Increasing the use of seat belts in all seating positions;
• Preventing impaired, aggressive and distracted driving;
• Increasing the safety of pedestrians, motorcyclists and bicyclists;
• Promoting the correct use of child passenger safety seats;
• Funding overtime enforcement of Maryland’s traffic laws;
• Supporting police training for highway safety and traffic enforcement; and
• Increasing capability and efficiency of Maryland’s traffic data systems.

Maryland’s five-year Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) guides the funding of traffic safety-related projects. It will be used by state and local agencies, and nonprofit groups, to address the strategies set forth in the plan for meeting the Toward ZeroDeaths goal of cutting the number of deaths on Maryland roads in half by 2030.
The retail bicycle industry is experiencing a perfect storm. Import tariffs of 25 percent for steel and 10 percent for aluminum took effect in June, followed by a 10 percent tariff in September for all imported bicycles, parts and accessories, with the exception of helmets. Come January, that figure jumps to 25 percent.

“Our biggest concern is not knowing what’s going to happen, and the lack of ability to make plans,” Obriecht said. “In the worst case scenario, I’ll have to rearrange my business model.”

Maryland’s Cost
It’s not just retailers like Obriecht who are feeling a pinch.

The United States Chamber of Commerce estimates that the emerging trade war threatens $639 million in exports in Maryland alone, where international trade supports 812,700 jobs.

Maryland’s export figure includes $13 million in products exported to Mexico, $29 million to Europe, $73 million to Canada, and a staggering $525 million to China.

According to the U.S. Chamber’s website, the three hardest hit Maryland products include $11 million in sauces and mixed condiments, $9 million in upholstered seat covers with wooden frames, and $6.4 million in breads, pastries, cakes and puddings, all destined for Canada.

Maryland Chamber President & CEO Christine Ross addressed the tariffs in a statement, noting that steel and aluminum tariffs will make the state less competitive in an industry responsible for hundreds of thousands of jobs.

“Manufacturing organizations and the Port of Baltimore will be hit twice as hard with the automobile tariff,” she said, which levies a 25 percent tax on every car imported from the European Union. “The Port of Baltimore is one of the nation’s most diverse ports with automobiles as one of the key imports. Increasing tariffs will have a noticeable impact on the economy through increased costs of business resulting in increasing unemployment.”

Unintended Consequences
For consumers, the tariffs come at a bad time ahead of the holiday season, but economically speaking, they represent a percent hit Maryland products are all destined for Canada.

The hardest hit Maryland products are all destined for Canada.

Continued on page 25
Maryland’s export figure includes a staggering $525 million to China.

grabs of consequences, both intentional and unintentional. 
If you want to be political, we’re skirting the Second Amendment,” said Roger Kashlak, Professor of International Business at the Sellinger School of Business at Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore.

[ Tariffs] will eventually suppress the sale of guns because of the steel and aluminum that go into guns and ammunition.”

In a letter to United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Walmart’s Senior Director for International Trade and Supply Chain Sarah Thorn said tariffs could impact a significant number of common consumer items that are not easily replaceable.

“The immediate impact will be to raise prices on consumers and tax American business and manufacturers,” she wrote.

Retailers like Walmart, Target and Home Depot operate on low margins and may find themselves forced to raise prices, Kashlak said, “but a store like Nordstrom that works on very high margins won’t necessarily have to raise prices. They can just absorb the tariffs and have lower profits and margins.”

If any production does come back to American shores, Kashlak surmised, labor costs, transition costs and a strong dollar would likely price the United States out of new emerging markets, which would be supplied more efficiently by the new owners of the plants we vacated.

USMCA > NAFTA?

On the trade agreement side, the new United States-Mexico-Canada-Agreement (USMCA) that updates the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been met with optimism.

“Manufacturers are extremely encouraged that our call for a trilateral agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico has been answered,” said National Association of Manufacturers President and CEO Jay Timmons in a statement released to the press. “What’s more, as the United States works to put an end to China’s cheating and unfair trade practices, we are better off united with our North American allies.”

“Maintaining dairy market access in Mexico and improving market access into Canada were the IDFA’s top priorities during the talks to modernize the North American Free Trade Agreement,” added International Dairy Foods Association President and CEO Michael Dykes. “This new agreement will preserve our vital partnership with both countries and allow the U.S. dairy industry to seek more export opportunities.”

The tariffs, however, have mainly been met with a healthy dose of cynicism.

“It’s basically saying we want jobs back at home at any cost to get reelected, and it’s both sides of the aisle,” said Kashlak. “Would Bethlehem Steel open again? No, it’s a casino now.”

In fact, he said, the likely advantage for steel production in the United States would probably be limited to companies like Nucor Corp., which produces expensive specialty steel products that fill a niche.

“Tariffs are taxes, so my question is, is it okay to pay a little bit more for a bicycle so steelworkers have jobs in America, or automobile workers have jobs in Michigan?” Kashlak asked. “It might be, but then again we [didn’t want to raise taxes] so everybody could have health care. We have to figure this out, because you’re talking against yourself.”
Ellicott City Flood Mitigation Approved

The Howard County Council approved two of three bills in October dealing with the five-year flood mitigation plan championed by County Executive Allan Kittleman (R) and County Councilman Jon Weinstein (D-Dist. 1).

The council granted approval for the county to borrow up to $15,775,000 and transfer $16.759 million out of funds earmarked for technology infrastructure, site improvements at the East Columbia Library athletic field, and construction of a new fire station on Route 1.

Council Members Calvin Ball (D-Dist. 2) and Jen Terassa (D-Dist. 3) voted against all of the measures.

The failed bill, which required four votes for passage, sought to transfer $1.5 million from an emergency fund, failed.

“[T]here will be an impact to the plan,” Weinstein said. “But the county’s done an excellent job at identifying how to address that shortfall.”

Later in the month, Weinstein submitted legislation that would add public safety as an element for consideration by the county’s Historic Preservation Commission when reviewing applications for a certificate of approval.

“Our intent was seeking to balance the importance of addressing threats to public safety while preserving the Historic Preservation Commission’s process and deliberation,” he said.

Preservation Maryland Executive Director Nicholas Redding, however, warned that the legislation could establish a “dangerous precedent” by eliminating the independent nature of the Commission.

“Everything from floods to fires could be a pretense for demolition or alterations to an historic structure,” he said. “[W]e believe this could upend decades of planning and good investment in Howard County’s historic districts and could be used in years to come as justification to circumvent historic protections and bring about demolition or severe alteration of historic resources.”

School Budget

At the October legislative hearing, the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Board of Education presented the council with its Fiscal Year 2020 Capital Budget, 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), 2020-2025 Long Range Systemic Renovation Projects and 2020-2019 Long Range Master Plan.

According to HCPSS Director of Capital Planning and Construction Scott Washington, the Board’s proposed budget totals $91.986 million. The CIP request is $596 million, while the Long Range System Renovation request totals $132.466 million and the Long Range Master Plan weighs in at $1.1 billion.

Highlights from the CIP include construction of High School #13, scheduled for opening in September 2023; construction of the Talbott Springs Elementary School replacement school scheduled to open in September 2022; and construction of the Hammond High School renovation addition scheduled to open in September 2023.

New legislation discussed in October also included a bill sponsored by Terassa that would require infrastructure and charging stations for electric vehicles in certain new residential structures.

“Residents have reached out to me over the years with the challenges they’ve had with retrofit problems in getting charging stations,” Terassa said.

The bill requires one community accessible station for every 25 residential units where there is no garage and no driveway, and rough-in accommodations for new single-family homes or townhouses with driveways or garages that would allow homeowners to install full electrical outlets at a later date.

Code Rewrite

On Oct. 1, Kittleman announced the official beginning of HoCode Rewrite, an initiative to modernize and unify the county’s development regulations under a single, comprehensive document that will make regulations easier for residents to understand and use.

“I have consistently heard from residents that our development regulations are confusing and subject to interpretation,” Kittleman said. “I have asked the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) to lead this effort to make these regulations less complex, more consistent and to set clear expectations.”

The county hired Clarion Associates LLC, a national land-use consulting firm, to lead the project’s initial public engagement phase, which began in 2016.

Officials will work with Clarion to develop a project timeline, work plan and citizen engagement plan during the fall and anticipate scheduling the first public meetings in early 2019.

On Oct. 10, the county executive also announced the arrival of six new fixed route buses placed into service this month with the Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland (RTA). To date, more than half the fleet serving county riders has been replaced in the last 16 months, with 24 new buses having been added to the RTA fleet since 2017, including three electric buses in July 2017, seven clean diesel buses in December 2017, and eight paratransit buses purchased using state and county funds.

Also in October, Kittleman announced the launch of the Rt. 1 Corridor Master Plan, an effort intended to produce development and design scenarios and identify ways to implement them based on market realities.

The effort began with stakeholder interviews and a business roundtable. Two public workshops are scheduled for Nov. 14 and 15. A corridor analysis and conceptual design scenarios are anticipated to be presented to the public by the consultant team, RKG Associates, in Spring 2019. The initiative is scheduled for completion in Fall 2019.

“[DPZ] will lead this effort,” said Department Director Val Lazdins. “The initiative will key in on ways to integrate the many parts of a commercial corridor, including transportation, employment and community services.”

The Rt. 1 Corridor Master Plan will constitute an amendment to the county’s General Plan, PlanHoward 2030, and must be considered by the Planning Board and the County Council for review and adoption.

Laurel’s City Administrator Flemion Retires

Martin Flemion, who started working for the city of Laurel’s Public Works Department on Oct. 22, 1976, retired on Sept. 28.

During his tenure with the city, Flemion has been involved in 12 Federal Disaster Declarations, as well as numerous declarations involving snow, flooding, wildfires and a tornado. He holds a license in power engineering from the National Institute of Power Engineers, as well as numerous instructor certifications in disaster preparedness, incident command, weapons of mass destruction and other various disciplines in emergency services.

Kittleman Traded Places With Farmer

Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman traded places with Maria Cunningham, of Mary’s Land Farm, in Ellicott City, as part of the 15th annual Farm-City Celebration. Kittleman helped run the Cunningham family’s farming operation, while “County Executive” Cunningham got an idea of what a typical day is like in Kittleman’s position.

After their switch, they met at the annual job exchange luncheon at Mary’s Land Farm, 4979 Sheppard Lane, to share their experiences. To learn more about the Farm-City Celebration, which brings rural and urban communities together through various events, visit www.visithowardcounty.com/listings/howard-county-farm-city-celebration/89.
A Major Road Opens

The Central Maryland Chamber (CMC) hosted a ribbon cutting on Oct. 10 to officially open Town Center Boulevard in Odenton. Anne Arundel County Executive Steve Schuh, County Councilmember Andrew Pruski, the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation, and The Halle Companies all joined the CMC for this special event. Town Center Boulevard is an important artery, across from Fort Meade, marking a major milestone for infrastructure improvement in the region. The CMC has advocated for and supported the development of Town Center Boulevard for several years because it is essential for handling the growth projected around Fort Meade. Planning for the new road began in 2010 when Anne Arundel County approved a private-public partnership with The Halle Companies. This new roadway also includes a biker/biker trail and sidewalk from Maryland Route 175 through the Maryland Route 32 underpass.

Annual Economic Forecast

The Stock Market lost more than 1,300 points during a two-day span in October. What does that mean for your business? How will the business climate be impacted? The Economic Forecast Luncheon will have the answers for you. Understanding future economic growth and trends is key to your business success. Whether it’s trade wars or tax cuts, you need to understand how to best position your business to take advantage of the environment.

We will have JD Foster, chief economist for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, to discuss national economic indicators, Mike Gill, secretary of the Maryland Department of Commerce, to discuss statewide economic indicators and Colonel Erich Spragg, Fort Meade garrison commander, to discuss growth at Maryland’s largest economic engine. You can get more information about the Nov. 7 luncheon at: www.CentralMarylandChamber.org.

Tipton Airport: A Regional Economic Asset

The Central Maryland Chamber’s Regional Economic Development Committee will host a panel conversation on current and future expansion opportunities at Tipton Airport. Come join us so you can learn how to leverage this important regional asset for your business:

Did you know Tipton is open to anyone? Why is this airport complex important to our economy? How can you better move your people and products around the Mid-Atlantic? What marketing and growth opportunities are you missing?

Join us for a great panel of speakers presenting the history of the airport, the upcoming proposed expansion, and real examples of how businesses are benefiting from Tipton. You can get more information about the Nov. 13 event at: www.CentralMarylandChamber.org

Join the Newest Committee

The Regional Economic Development Committee (rEDC) helps chamber members grow their businesses by leveraging regional assets to create more prosperous opportunities. The rEDC does this in three ways:

Inform — educating members on regional economic trends, programs and resources
Connect — identifying opportunities and fostering relationships across localities
Promote — strengthening existing and new assets vital to regional growth

The rEDC meets every second Tuesday of each month from 9 to 10:30 a.m. in the CMC’s main conference room in Odenton. For more information please contact rEDC Chair Jonathan Williams at jonathan@realprojectives.com.

Raj Kudchadkar is President and CEO of the Central Maryland Chamber.

Legislative Issue for 2019

The Howard County Chamber is the Voice of Business, and in 2019 we will take action on behalf of our members on a range of legislative issues. Our goal, as always, is to advocate for legislation that supports economic development, private investment and job creation.

Labor, Employment, Healthcare

Over the past year, implementing the requirements related to “Paid Leave” have caused numerous administrative hardships for employers. There are also concerns that proposed legislation called “predictive scheduling” will cause labor costs to rise once again, potentially leading to a decrease in jobs. In efforts to keep labor and employment related costs at a manageable level, the Chamber will support legislation in the upcoming session that:

Promotes workplace policies that will enhance, not inhibit, economic growth and job creation;
Is cost effective to administer, and financially feasible for small and growing businesses; and
Educates employers about pertinent state law and employment laws and regulations.

Budget, Finance, Taxation

The Chamber supports ongoing examination of the current tax base, tax rates and compliance requirements to ensure the Maryland business environment is fair and competitive. This includes:

Legislation that removes burdensome and costly regulations;
Legislation that advances tax policy reform thereby enhancing the state’s business climate. Possible reforms include, but are not limited to, legislation concerning single sales factor for all employers, reduction of the corporate income tax, tax relief for pass-through entities, and the defeat of combined reporting.

Education, Workforce Help

A sound and well-funded K-12 education system is paramount to business competitiveness. Institutions of higher learning such as technical colleges, community colleges, and traditional four-year schools must receive adequate budgetary support to prepare our current and future workforce. The Chamber supports legislation that:

Funds the Howard County Public School System in a manner that allows them to adequately improve facilities and serve students of all backgrounds and demographics;
Funds infrastructure at Howard Community College to educate and train students for careers.

Energy, Environment, Land Use

Preparing for future population and business growth means protecting our state’s lakes and streams, investing in alternative energy sources, and encouraging eco-friendly and sustainable development. Advancing these principles means supporting legislation that:

Protects statewide access to sustainable, reliable and affordable energy supplies;
Promotes regulatory reform to encourage greater infrastructure investment and the integration of new technologies; and
Secures water supply, enhances access to water, and promotes investment in critical infrastructure.

Transportation

The ability to move goods and products in an efficient and timely manner is critical for industry. The Chamber will support legislation that:

Restores the sharing of state transportation funds to local governments via the Highway User Revenue (HUR);
Institutes a streamlined procurement process;
Calls for the development of a comprehensive transportation plan that prioritizes funding for roads and transportation alternatives such as Bus Rapid Transit;
Improves Maryland’s infrastructure through efficient use of current revenue sources and provides adequate funding for transportation, and encourages private funding for SCMAGLEV and Hyperloop.
Get Ready for a ‘Wow Factor’

For several months now, Columbia Athletic Club has been closed for renovations. That was a major decision. Then again, this was a major project.

Columbia Athletic Club is one of Columbia Association’s (CA) three fitness clubs. It serves a dedicated customer base of members and guests who come there for its strength training and cardio exercise equipment, group fitness classes, personal training, tennis and racquetball courts, a hot water therapy pool, and a sense of community.

However, the Athletic Club is also CA’s oldest fitness club. It opened in 1971 and has expanded and been enhanced in the years since. Over the years, several of our facilities underwent periodic shutdowns – typically brief, around two weeks each – that allowed CA to complete renovations, replace equipment, and work on other projects.

Columbia Athletic Club required extensive reinvestment in order for it to be a state-of-the-art facility that meets trends and needs, providing the experience that our members and guests are seeking with each visit. If we had continued with the practice of shutting down for two weeks per year, or even a month per year, the renovations needed at the Athletic Club would have taken many years to complete and been much more disruptive.

That is why CA chose to close Columbia Athletic Club on April 30. In the months since, we have completely renovated the inside, made a small addition to the building to improve ADA accessibility, and reworked the interior so that we can better serve our members and guests well into the future.

Members and guests who preferred the Athletic Club have been able to use Columbia Gym and Supreme Sports Club in the intervening months. That has understandably been inconvenient for many and led to busier times at those two fitness clubs. In the grand scheme, however, this all will have been worth it. This construction in a way is like the workouts themselves. It is short-term pain that will ultimately provide long-term gains.

The brand new Columbia Athletic Club will reopen soon – we will post the opening date on ColumbiaAssociation.org/acrenovation once it is official.

I am proud to say that there will be a “wow factor” when you walk in. CA also recently completed the third consecutive summer of renovations at Columbia Swim Center. By working in the summertime, when the outdoor pools are open, we were able to minimize the impact on swimmers.

Over the past few years, we have replaced SplashDown; expanded the locker rooms; renovated interior areas; increased the number of changing areas for families with small children; worked on the building’s ADA accessibility; replaced the roof over the Main Pool; and added a new canopy to the front entrance.

CA is reinvesting its financial resources throughout the community. The best customer experience will continue to be our aspiration at CA.

These capital projects and smaller ones are part of an overall strategy to ensure that Columbia remains a community of choice. I invite you to come to Columbia Athletic Club and Columbia Swim Center to see for yourself. And please share your feedback with us.

Milton Matthews is president and CEO of the Columbia Association. His email is milton.matthews@columbiaassociation.org.

Go Big on Small Business Saturday

News flash, the holiday season is not just for retailers!

Nestled between Black Friday and Cyber Monday is that little gem, Small Business Saturday. Consumers want to buy from and support small businesses in their community. This includes service businesses, and others not typically associated with the holiday gold rush.

Started eight years ago, this shrewd, grassroots, marketing campaign was masterminded by American Express. Over the years, the selling event continues to evolve. Amex offers free tools and information, including The Shop Small! Studio, to help your business leverage the movement.

According to the 2017 Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, a study produced by the credit card company and the National Federation of Independent Business, 108 million shoppers spent $12.9 billion last November. In fact, the report claimed nearly 43 percent of U.S. adults patronized a small brick-and-mortar business, online retailer, or neighborhood eatery on Small Business Saturday in 2017.

Part of the beauty of Small Business Saturday is that it follows Black Friday. The point of this promotion isn’t deep discounts. Sure, sales and specials are always great, but this day is about spending money in the local community, so the money stays in the community. If you own or operate a small business, you have the advantage, and flexibility, to create a memorable experience for your customers. Small gestures like free gift wrapping, simple pleasures, like holiday cookies and hot chocolate, will go a long way. Consider donating a percentage of the day’s sales to a local charity that’s aligned with your product or service.

Ready to take the plunge, but still not sure how? Start connecting with your customers and potential customers as soon as you can. Don’t wait for Thanksgiving to roll around. Give yourself four to five weeks to generate some buzz. If you have a physical location, check to see if other businesses in your immediate area are participating and piggy-back on their efforts with cross-promotions or shared fliers.

If you have a customer email list, use it. Small Business Saturday is perfect for social media. Constant Contact, the permission-based email provider, offers a free online Small Business Saturday Toolkit that helps with everything from setting your goal to reaching it.

If you’re a BBB Accredited Business, reach out to yourbbbgreatermd.bbb.org for details on how to get featured in our BBB #ShopSmall, free, social media campaign. We’re highlighting local small businesses and what they’re doing to earn trust this holiday season (and all year long). Not accredited? Check with your local chamber or community business association.

Engaging new and existing customers through Small Business Saturday has been shown to pay dividends that extend beyond November 24. Happy selling!

Jody Thomas is vice president of communications and marketing for the Better Business Bureau of Greater Maryland.
Does Your Computer Have a Panic Button?

"When in trouble, grief or doubt / Run in circles, scream and shout" — old Navy saying.

So, two things happening right now bring that to mind. Hopefully they will have settled down by the time you read this — but of course there will be other insane things to take their place.

First is the "I've been hacked" insanity on Facebook. Declarations of "Don’t accept requests from me" and "don’t share" and "Change your password" and "Delete your eyeballs after reading this." A perfect example of how misinformation spreads like warm poop over your fine china on the internet. At least some people's sense of humor has kicked in. My favorite: "WARNING! All Facebook accounts are being hacked and cloned. To avoid this, you must stand naked on your kitchen table, singing 'I Will Survive' while doing the Macarena. Only then will Mark Zuckerberg travel down your chimney on a golden unicorn and present you with a special blue token to protect your account. Now send this to everyone on your contact list, otherwise goblins will come in your fridge."

Doesn’t say anything about closing the curtains first. Otherwise, that "blue token" may be delivered by someone in a blue uniform. Not recommended.

**Mystery chip**

The second is more disturbing, because it was first reported by Bloomberg News, who has been a trusted source in the past. They claim that Chinese-made motherboards used in many servers have an extra chip added that can spy on network traffic. It resides in the same circuit as the Baseboard Management Controller, a chip that, among other things, can allow a remote administrator to control the server. So, it could modify the server firmware to pass information along.

Super Micro, the motherboard manufacturer, has vehemently denied this, as have Apple, Amazon and other users. Unfortunately, we have all gotten so cynical about denials that are later retracted, that's not enough to feel better.

I have my own reasons for doubting. Story time: some years ago, I was doing IT support for a local accounting firm. Accountants are natural targets for hackers — tax returns with Social Security numbers and lots of financial info on clients. They had appropriate shields in place, including a real firewall. Not that piece of software thrown in as part of Windows, but a real hardware firewall appliance that let you look at all traffic going in and out and, more importantly, trying to get in.

This proved handy one day when all their outgoing emails were suddenly blocked by recipients’ spam filters. There are lists maintained by spam filtering companies that show rogue websites and domains, and they were on them. Hopping on the firewall, I was able to trace one computer as sending out blasts of emails. Walked down the hall, seized said laptop and gave them a spare. Checked it (offline) and yep, it was infected. After it was cleaned up, then came the task of getting them off the naughty list.

So, the point of this? The mystery spy chip does no good unless it can send whatever info it gathers out to someone. You can bet that the target companies have a lot better outgoing screening than one guy with a firewall. Given the alarm raised by Bloomberg, there will be a lot of review of past logs. So far no confirmation of anything untoward. Let's see if anything ever shows up.

**Google+ dies**

Google's version of social networking, Google+, is shutting down. Their explanation is that was too much work for too little enthusiasm but it comes on the heels of a Wall Street Journal report of a bug that allowed developers to see users’ private information. Google had failed to notify anyone, apparently driven by desire to escape regulatory review. Didn’t work. Thank you, WSJ.

Cliff Feldwick is owner of Riverside Computing and does PC troubleshooting, network setups and data retrieval for small businesses, when not laughing at official denials. He may be reached at 410-880-0171 or at cliff@feldwick.com.

**POUNDING THE KEYBOARD**

by Cliff Feldwick

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You Are Invited

**Bernadette's House Hosts Youth Safe Conference**

Bernadette’s House is asking the questions: Are the children in Laurel at risk? Is your child’s school safe? Are you protecting your children from digital dangers?

These questions will be answered at the 3rd Annual Keeping Our Youth Safe Conference on Saturday, Nov. 10, from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Laurel Police Department’s Partnership Activity Center. The keynote speaker will be Del. Joseline Peña-Melnyk. To register or for more information, call 410-707-2420 or visit www.bernadetteshouse.org.

**Veterans Day Parade in Columbia Nov. 11**

The Howard County community is invited to honor those actively serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and the more than 20,000 veterans who call Howard County home at a Veteran’s Day parade and ceremony on Sunday, Nov. 11, in Downtown Columbia. The parade will begin at 9:30 a.m., starting at Merriweather Drive and continuing along Little Patuxent Parkway, heading toward the Downtown Columbia Lakefront. A ceremony will follow at 10:45 a.m. at the Lakefront, featuring comments from Howard County Veterans Foundation President Robert Gillette, Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman, and Columbia Association President/CEO Milton Matthews. There will also be music by a local high school band, performances by the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts’ Young Columbians, and Color Guard provided by Atholton High School’s JROTC.

**Suicide Prevention Symposium Set**

Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center is hosting the 9th Annual Suicide Prevention Symposium on Friday, Nov. 16, from 11 a.m.–4 p.m., at the NonProfit Collaborative, in Columbia. The symposium is designed to raise awareness of suicide as a public health issue and will include prevention techniques and information about the recovery process. A panel of suicide survivors will be featured at the end of the day’s activities.

The primary audience for the symposium is mental health practitioners, police officers and people who have lost someone to suicide. The cost is $30 and includes 3.5 Category 1 CEUs for Social Workers. Registration required; contact amanda@grassrootscrisis.org for more information.

**TBM Online Calendar: Add your events**

The new Business Monthly website now has an expanded online calendar. The calendar includes information about events and activities that you may want to attend. The online calendar also gives visitors the opportunity to add their own events. Recurring events, such as monthly meetings, can be added quickly all at one time.

Micro-Purchase Threshold Goes to $10,000

Recently, the president signed into law the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA/ H.R. 5515), which included several provisions affecting government contractors. This annual NDAA process addresses military funding requirements and commits the Department of Defense (DoD) and other agencies to specific rules, regulations, and laws.

The 2019 NDAA Section 821 increased the threshold for the DoD to meet the civilian agency micro-purchase threshold of $10,000, a seemingly minor change that may impact small business dramatically. A micro-purchase is generally handled quickly, similar to a credit-card purchase, and due to its low value, does not require the government to follow standard competitive procedures. This means any purchase under $10,000 per transaction may now be purchased from any size company. The small-business set-aside requirement affects purchases valued at over $10,000 and under $250,000 per transaction.

While the individual transaction value is small at under $10,000, over $30 billion of services and products are purchased through this method every year, making it a valuable tool for small businesses, even if many contractors assume only products qualify, as it is easy to understand selling a product priced at $9,999.99 or less is possible; however, both products and services may be purchased by government through the use of micro-purchases. What many government service providers fail to understand is, if it is possible to provide a distinct service for under $10,000, this may be an ideal tactic to open doors to new government customers.

For example, by creating a menu of services that could be provided for under $10,000, such as an assessment, analysis, testing, or research, one may have the ideal no-competition contract, which not only allows for a quick sale and payment, but also provides for a successful past-performance record, assuming of course, that the service or product provided was successful and on time. This positive performance report card can then be the critical stepping stone to more, larger, and profitable contracts.

Other changes in the 2019 NDAA benefit small and large businesses and are summarized here:

Section 851 requires the DoD to develop and implement a new small business strategy “to better leverage small businesses as a means to enhance or support mission execution.” The NDAA states that “…such a strategy should include plans to integrate small businesses into a holistic view of industry; to realign the Department’s small business programs with agency mission under a unified management structure; and to clarify points of entry into the defense market.”

Section 852 restores prompt payment obligations on DoD to small business prime contractors of an accelerated payment date with a goal of 15 days after receipt of a proper invoice for the amount due, unless a specific payment date is otherwise established by contract.

Section 852 also addresses when a prime contractor subcontracts with a small business it will now be required to meet a goal of 15 days payment to the small business subcontractor after receipt of a proper invoice for the amount due if: (i) a specific payment date is not established by contract and (ii) the prime contractor agrees to make payments to the subcontractor in accordance with the accelerated payment date, to the maximum extent practicable, without any further consideration from or fees charged to the subcontractor.

Section 880 imposes government-wide restrictions on the use of “lowest-price technically-acceptable” (LPTA) evaluation factors for complex professional or IT services.

Sections 938 and 941-943 initiate some reporting requirements for security clearances that provides information for Congress to craft new programs to reduce backlogs and wait times associated with government security clearances and make overall improvements to that process.

Gloria Larkin is president and CEO of TargetGov and a national expert in business development in the government markets. Email glorialarkin@targetgov.com.

The following information is regarding awarded contracts can be used to develop prime contractor, subcontractor and teaming partner relationships on these and other opportunities. The website for each awardee is also provided. For more information, contact TargetGov 410-579-1346.


Desbuild Inc., Hyattsville, MD, won a $8,387,000 contract from the Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay for the repair of Building 5044 concrete caisson; work includes limited demolition of existing features, repairs, replacement, refurbishment, and reconstruction activities. http://www.desbuild.com/

Sodexo Management Inc., Gaithersburg, MD, won a $9,071,688 contract from The Marine Corps Installation Command, Arlington, VA, for the Regional Garrison Food Services contract to increase fiscal 2018 meal quantity. https://www.sodexousa.com/home.html

ASRC Communications LTD, Beltsville, MD; Data Computer Corporation of America, Ellicott City, MD; FEDITC LLC, Rockville, MD; Integral Consulting Services Inc., Rockville, MD, along with 16 other companies won a $17,500,000,000 contract from Defense Information Systems Agency, the Department of Defense and other agencies of the Federal Government for providing a full range of information technology services and solutions. http://www.asrcfederal.com/; http://www.dcca.com/; http://www.feditc.com/; https://www.e2integrate.com/

BAE Systems Technology Solutions, Rockville, MD, won a $12,000,000 contract from The Hill Air Force Base, UT, for F-16 commercial fire control computers.https://www.baesystems.com/en/home

Vysnova Partners Inc., Bethesda, MD, won a $38,000,000 contract from The Naval Medical Logistics Command, Fort Detrick, MD, for research support services for the Naval Medical Research Unit-2 located in Singapore. Research study support will be performed throughout Southeast Asia. https://www.vysnova.com/

Chesapeake Technology International Corp., California, MD, won a $30,000,000 contract from the Small Business Innovative Research Phase II for data management architecture synchronization, sustainment and support to U.S. Special Operations Command. http://ctio-inc.com/

The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory LLC, Laurel, MD, won a $23,848,171 contract from the USSOCOM, Tampa, FL, to provide the technical and program support of Tactical Space and small satellite portfolio’s core competencies and mission lifecycle to include support of the mission phases from concept through design, implementation, operations, and transition of space assets. http://www.jhuapl.edu/


GWWO Inc., Baltimore, MD, won a $10,000,000 contract from The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk, VA, for architect-engineering services. https://www.gwwoinc.com/


Property Purchased for School and Park Site

Anne Arundel County has agreed to purchase 71 acres of land on Hospital Drive in Glen Burnie for a future park and potential school site. The proposed agreement comes as the county has begun an initiative to acquire the needed land for schools and parks. This announced purchase is the third major land acquisition announcement since the summer.

The purchase of the Glen Burnie parcel off Hospital Drive, currently owned by the Pumphrey family, was made possible through the county executive’s Land Acquisition Fund, which was initially proposed in this year’s budget.

Schuh Signs Veterans Property Tax Credit

Anne Arundel County Executive Steve Schuh, along with Councilman Pete Smith, have signed bill 76-18 establishing a 15 percent property tax credit for retired veterans in the county. The ordinance allows a retired veteran who owns a home with an assessed value of $500,000 or less to apply for the credit. The credit would be worth 15 percent off the property tax owed on a home.

Residents must apply for the property tax credit by April 1 to be eligible for the 2019 credit. More than 50,000 veterans reside in Anne Arundel County.

Kittleman Announces Public Transportation Gains

Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman has announced a milestone in his initiative to improve public transportation for residents: Six new fixed-route buses were placed into service in October with the Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland (RTA), more than half the fleet serving county riders has been replaced in the last 16 months.

The RTA provides public transportation across Central Maryland, including Howard County, Anne Arundel County, Northern Prince George’s County and the City of Laurel. In 2018, the RTA delivered more than 1.1 million trips across the three counties. An estimated 60 percent of RTA riders use the service to travel to and from work.

Since July 2017, 24 new buses have been added to the RTA fleet. In addition to the buses entering service this month, the county added three electric buses in July 2017, seven clean diesel buses in December 2017 and eight paratransit buses which were purchased using state and county funds.

Under the new fare policy, implemented in July, seniors age 60 and older and persons with disabilities now ride fixed-route buses for free. Already, more than 500 people have been certified to ride for free, doubling the number of senior and disabled riders since the policy took effect. The policy also made fares more consistent across the region.

Sidewalk along Route 424

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) will soon begin a project to install nearly two-miles of new sidewalk along the south side of Route 424 (Davisonville Road) between Duke of Kent Drive and Route 450 (Defense Highway). The $2.7 million project will be complete spring 2019.

In addition to the new sidewalk, MDOT SHA will also add ADA-compliant sidewalk ramps along the north side of Route 424 between Underwood Road and Route 450 (Defense Highway). The new sidewalk will enhance safety, as there are numerous entities along the route, including schools, daycare centers, residences and businesses, among others.

Schuh Proposes Ethics Reforms

Anne Arundel County Executive Steve Schuh has announced a series of proposed ethics reforms for Anne Arundel County. The ethics reform proposal includes:

- Requiring mandatory ethics training for all county employees and elected officials, every five years.
- Implementing stricter gift restriction on meals and beverages.
- Increasing the penalties on lobbyists who violate the ethics code.
- Mandating all county board and commission members be covered by and subject to the public ethics law.

The reforms would be implemented by the Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission. The commission administers the public ethics law, provides ethics training to county employees, provides advice to county employees, maintains financial disclosure records, maintains lobbying records, and investigates and holds hearings on alleged violations of the ethics law.

Paid Sick Leave Tax Credit?

Small businesses in Maryland that provide paid sick and safe leave to their employees will soon be able to apply for a refundable tax credit administered by the Maryland Department of Commerce. The Small Business Relief Tax Credit offers businesses that meet certain criteria a state income tax credit of up to $500 per employee, and $7,000 per small business (of 14 or fewer employees) for each year in which they qualify.

The tax credit program was proposed and enact by Gov. Larry Hogan to help businesses comply with the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act, which was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in early 2018 and requires businesses with 14 or fewer employees to provide unpaid sick and safe leave. Commerce will begin accepting applications for the credit for tax year 2018 on Jan. 3, 2019.

Arundel Breaks Ground in Brooklyn Park

Anne Arundel County has broken ground on the $1.7 million Brooklyn Park Senior Center revitalization. The project was made possible through the JumpStart Anne Arundel capital project financing program. Enacted in 2015, the capital plan embraces a 30-year bond financing option.

The center was founded in the basement of the Brooklyn Park Library. In 2000, in partnership with the Brooklyn Park Middle School (on the opposite side of the campus from the Chesapeake Arts Center) the doors opened at the current location.

HoCode Rewrite Launched

Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman has announced the beginning of HoCode Rewrite, an initiative to modernize and unify the county’s development regulations under a single, comprehensive document that will make the regulations easier for residents to understand and use. The process will result in a new Unified Development Code that will eliminate loopholes and inconsistencies, and tighten ambiguous language in existing regulations that often lead to subjective interpretations of the law.

The process began in 2016, during which nearly 500 residents and stakeholders participated in more than 40 public meetings to discuss what should be improved in the existing regulations. This outreach and an online survey resulted in more than 700 comments that informed an assessment and roadmap for the remainder of the project.

The roadmap proposes to establish a new Neighborhood Protection Standards section and overhaul zoning districts that are seldom used or contain vague criteria, such as the Community Enhancement Floating zone.

The effort is being led by Clarion Associates, a Denver-based national land-use consulting firm.

Schuh Hosts ‘Zero-Waste’ Fundraiser

Anne Arundel County Executive Steve Schuh’s 13th Annual End-of-Summer Party at Kurtz’s Beach, Pasadena, was a zero-waste event. The campaign believes this to be the first-ever zero-waste political fundraising event in Anne Arundel County. More than 1,000 attendees composted and recycled everything from utensils to crab shells, and generated more than 2,300 pounds of compost. None of the waste from the event was taken to a landfill.

“The experience was an education for all of us on the little things we can do to reduce waste in our everyday routines,” said Schuh. “Every pound of trash that we compost or recycle is one less pound of trash that ends up at the landfill in Millersville. Currently, our landfill is scheduled to be full by 2041, and it is critical that citizens, businesses and county government work together and commit to reducing our waste.”
LG-TEK Awarded Cryptologic Contract

Elkridge-based LG-TEK has won a contract to deliver Training and Test Proctoring services and support for six locations across the country in support of the National Cryptologic School (NCS). This contract is a multi-year effort providing a full array of training support across multiple locations throughout the United States.

NCS is a cryptologic training operation within the National Security Agency (NSA). It is responsible for designing, developing and delivering curriculum in cryptology, information assurance, language and leadership.

BIZ ROUNDUP

Regent Healthcare Acquires Loving Touch

Odenton-based Regent Healthcare, which bills itself as the largest, non-franchised Home Care Agency in central Maryland, has completed the acquisition of Loving Touch Home Care, of Chestertown, on Maryland’s upper Eastern Shore. Under the agreement, Loving Touch will be absorbed by Regent, which will employ all former Loving Touch employees, including office staff and caregivers, and assume care for nearly all former Loving Touch clients.

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Founded in 2008 and accredited by The Joint Commission, Regent Healthcare provides all levels of in-home companion, personal and skilled nursing care throughout central Maryland, Southern Maryland and Maryland’s Eastern Shore. With this acquisition, Regent will establish a local presence in Chestertown by taking over the office space previously leased by Loving Touch, which has served that area since 2013.

Aldridge Acquires Chesapeake Electrical

Evergreen Advisors Capital, a middle-market investment bank based in Columbia, has announced that Chesapeake Electrical Systems has been acquired by Illinois-based Aldridge Electric. Evergreen acted as the exclusive financial adviser to Chesapeake. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Chesapeake, of Laurel, provides a range of electrical contracting services to various clients in the commercial and industrial sectors.

“This is great news for our customers and our employees as Aldridge sees tremendous potential in having Chesapeake as their platform for growth in the Washington/Baltimore region,” said Joey Tominovich, president and CEO of Chesapeake.

Furthermore, Aldridge shares our vision in taking care of their employees and providing opportunities for them to advance and grow professionally,” he said.

BWI Marshall Ranked Among the Best

BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport was ranked the 10th best U.S. airport, according to the Condé Nast Traveler 2018 Readers’ Choice Awards. The magazine announced the results of its comprehensive annual survey, which examined domestic and global destinations, airlines, hotels and other travel options.

According to Condé Nast Traveler, more than 429,000 reader surveys were submitted for the awards. The survey highlighted BWI Marshall’s efficiency, transit access and amenities, noting that foodies, “like the multitude of places to sample Maryland’s famous crabs.” BWI Marshall was the only airport in the region to make the list; there are more than 500 commercial service airports in the U.S., according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Arundel Breaks Ground on Brooklyn Senior Center

Anne Arundel County has broken ground on the $1.7 million Brooklyn Park Senior Center revitalization. The project was made possible through the JumpStart Anne Arundel capital project financing program. Enacted in 2015, the capital plan embraces a 30-year bond financing option.

The center was founded in the basement of the Brooklyn Park Library. In 2000, in partnership with the Brooklyn Park Middle School (on the opposite side of the campus from the Chesapeake Arts Center) the doors opened at the current location.

Apax Partners Acquires Authority Brands

Funds advised by Apax Partners have announced the acquisition of Authority Brands, a Columbia-based North American franchisee of home services, from PNC Riverarch Capital. The financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Columbia, Authority Brands is the parent company of two home services franchisors: The Cleaning Authority, which provides residential cleaning services to more than 100,000 customers across the U.S.; and Homewatch CareGivers, which delivers at-home services including elderly, disabled and after-surgery care, as well as help for those living with dementia. Authority Brands operates over 300 franchises in the U.S., Canada and Latin America, supporting them to grow through the provision of marketing, technology and operational support.

The acquisition by the Apax Funds will help the company accelerate its growth, both organically and through strategic acquisitions, as it looks to expand internationally and offer additional services. It also presents digitization opportunities as Apax intends to leverage its significant experience in this area to help Authority Brands provide enhanced software, digital marketing and systems to support its franchise partners.

“We have been attracted to the home services market for some time, due to its size, fragmentation and attractive growth rate. We have been impressed by Authority Brands’ established franchise network, experienced management, and strong track record of growth,” said Ashish Karandikar, partner at Apax Partners.
HHC Offers Free Trees

The Howard Hughes Corp. (HHC) is providing 300 trees to residents of Howard County through the Community Canopy Project, an Arbor Day Foundation program that aims to expand the tree canopies of cities and towns across the United States.

Residents of Howard County can reserve up to two trees and are expected to plant and care for them in the location provided via the foundation’s online tool. The types of trees offered include Bald Cypress, Eastern Redbud, Northern Red Oak, Red Maple and Shadblow Serviceberry. The two-to-four-foot-tall trees will be delivered directly to customers at an ideal time for planting. Residents can reserve their free trees at www.arborday.org/howardhughes.

Waterloo – Blue Ribbon School

Waterloo Elementary School was named a 2018 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. The school is one of only five Maryland elementary schools to receive the nation’s Blue Ribbon award this year.

Sixty percent of Waterloo students met or exceeded expectations in math and English language arts on the 2017 PARCC assessments. Student teams from Waterloo earned high honors in the Rube Goldberg and Safe Racer Engineering Challenges. Many students participate in Honors and GT Band and Strings groups and extracurricular activities including Girls on the Run and Let Me Run race preparation programs.

The announcement brings the total number of national Blue Ribbon Schools in the Howard County Public School System to 11. Other schools recognized in prior years include Centennial Lane, Clarksville and Manor Woods elementary schools, Burleigh Manor, Clarksville, Ellicott Mills, Folly Quarter, Hammond and Lime Kiln middle schools, and River Hill High School.

Columbia Rotary Club Donates to Frisky’s

The Rotary Club of Columbia recently donated $1,500 to Frisky’s Wildlife & Primate Sanctuary to repair corral fencing. The corral contains rescued hoof stock, such as goats, horses and fawns.

Frisky’s, which is run by Founder Colleen Layton, accepts and rehabilitates orphaned and injured wild animals with the intent of releasing them back into the wild, and also is home to several primates and other previously homeless animals. The nonprofit receives no government financing. The Rotary Club of Columbia has donated more than $2 million to community nonprofits, organizations and scholarships, in addition to contributing to multiple charitable causes internationally.

Rights of Foreign-Born Students Affirmed

A new policy sets clear expectations for the rights, protections and supports of all Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) students and their families. Policy 1070, Protections and Supports for Foreign-Born Students and Families, was adopted by the Board of Education during its Oct. 2 meeting and will go into effect on July 1, 2019.

The policy affirms that HCPSS welcomes and supports all students and families, regardless of their place of birth, immigration status or perceived immigration status. The school system is committed to providing a safe, engaging, and supportive school climate that fosters all students’ academic achievement and social-emotional development.

Columbia Swim Center Indoor Pool Reopens

Columbia Swim Center has reopened with a new look that is the result of three consecutive summers of renovations to one of the community’s first recreational facilities. The three-phase project took place during summertime — when Columbia Association’s (CA) 23 outdoor pools were open — to minimize the impact on swimmers.

Construction began in summer 2016, replacing SplashDown with newer, faster water slides and revamping the flume tower stairwell. Work continued in summer 2017, when crews expanded the locker rooms; renovated the lobby and hallways; added private showers; increased the number of changing areas for families with small children; upgraded flooring; and completed some work on the building’s roof and ADA accessibility.

The most recent phase began after the traditional Memorial Day Weekend opening of CA’s outdoor pools. Highlights of the project included replacing the roof over Columbia Swim Center’s Main Pool and adding a new canopy to the front entrance. For more information, visit ColumbiaAssociation.org/pools.

HCPSS Earn Energy Star

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has certified 44 Howard County public schools with its Energy Star award for 2018. Buildings certified with the Energy Star are verified to perform in the top 25% of buildings nationwide, based on demonstrated energy performance.

On average, Energy Star certified buildings and plants use 35% less energy, cause 35% fewer greenhouse gas emissions and are less expensive to operate than comparable buildings, without sacrifices in performance or comfort. LEED standards guide all new school construction within the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), and the majority of HCPSS schools have been certified as Green Schools.

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BIZ GIVING

Columbia Rotary Club
Donates to Frisky’s

HCPSS Earn Energy Star

Columbia Swim Center Indoor Pool Reopens
ALL AROUND Town

HCLS Elkridge Branch Unveils Mosaic
A sea-themed mosaic was unveiled at the Howard County Library System (HCLS) Elkridge Branch on Oct. 20. Young library visitors joined the celebration with Jon Weinstein, county council member, and Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman, on the left; and on the right, Toyna Kenyon, CEO HCLS; and Phillip Lord, branch manager.

Howard Chamber Holds Signature Event and Award Celebration
Howard County Chamber celebrated its Awards for Chamber Excellence (ACE) winners at its annual Signature Event held on Oct. 3 at Turf Valley Resort. Shown is Chamber President Leonardo McClarty, left, with award winners Greg Fitchitt, regional president, Howard Hughes Corp.; Pam Long, Pam Long Photography; Creig Northrop, founder Northrop Realty; Dick Story; Lance Cook, owner Tino’s Italian Bistro; Gail Sanders, manager of business development and Al Smith, senior vice president, member services, Tower Federal Credit Union.
Right: Comedian Greg Schwen was the featured guest. Photos by Seth Hoffman

CAC Celebrates 23rd Holland Dinner:
The Community Action Council of Howard County (CAC) celebrated the 23rd Annual Holland Awards Dinner at Turf Valley Resort on Oct. 18. From left, Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford and CAC President Bita Dayhoff, present the Holland Humanitarian Award to Vivian Bailey. On the right is CAC Board Chair Patrick Curtis.

AAEDC Holds Cybertour of Fort Meade
The Anne Arundel Economic Development Corp. (AAEDC) recently hosted more than a dozen journalists for a media tour of Fort Meade. Reporters were able to learn more about how the 119 on-base tenants are protecting the U.S. from global cyberthreats.

HCGH Presents State of Health Care
Howard County General Hospital (HCGH) held its first annual State of Health Care on Oct. 5 providing insight into the future of health care in the county and worldwide. Receiving the first Promise of Health in Howard County award was Sheri Lewis, center, program area manager for the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. Presenting the award were Steve Snellgrove, left, president of HCGH and Paul Skalny, right, chair of the board.

Do You Remember ‘Emperor Rodgers’?
Do you remember one-time disc jockey Paul Rodgers, left, from WCAO and WCBM’s golden days of Top 40 radio? Now known by his given name of Paul Rothfuss, he’s written a book, “Alias Emperor Rodgers,” and discussed his career at the National Electronics Museum, in Linthicum. He’s pictured with his son, Paul, center; and Mark Smith of The Business Monthly.

Redskins Legend Theismann Visits Live! Casino
Washington Redskins legend (and former local restaurateur) Joe Theismann recently made a guest appearance at Live! Hotel in mid-October. He’s pictured with owner David Cordish.
Schuh Brings the Scissors to Town Center Boulevard
Anne Arundel County Executive Steve Schuh was surrounded by Odenton’s movers and shakers when he cut the ribbon to officially open Town Center Boulevard on Oct. 10.

HCEDA Celebrates Silver Anniversary
The Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA) recently celebrated its 25th anniversary at its annual meeting, which was held at Two Merriweather in Downtown Columbia. Among those on hand were the three CEOs who have served the organization since 1993: from left, Dick Story and Laura Neuman stopped for a snap with the current leader, Larry Twele.

Kennedy Takes First in Cyclocross Race
Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission Executive Director Ian Kennedy, center, took first place in the Mens Masters 40+ Category 3, 4 and 5 Hyattsville CX cyclocross race on Sept. 30. Kennedy also claimed first place in his category at the Falkorburg Cross Superseries Race in Howard County on Oct. 14 and second place at the UCI sanctioned Charm City Cross event in Baltimore on Oct. 6.

Manufacturing Day Celebration
From left, Northrop Grumman Corp. Project Manager Bianca Lankford assists Jon Stairs (North County High School in Anne Arundel County), Joseph Tyler (Mergenthaler Vocational Technical High School, Baltimore) and Jonathan Castillo (North County High School) in constructing a Rube Goldberg device during a Manufacturing Day Celebration held at the defense contractor’s BWI Campus in October.

 UMBC’s Odom Addresses the Partnership
UMBC men’s basketball Head Coach Ryan Odom, right, was the guest speaker at the BWI Business Partnership’s October breakfast. He was joined on stage by the partnership Executive Director Ed Rothstein during the event, which was held at the BWI Airport Marriott.
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