

Business Appreciation Week 2010

Final Report

SUMMARY

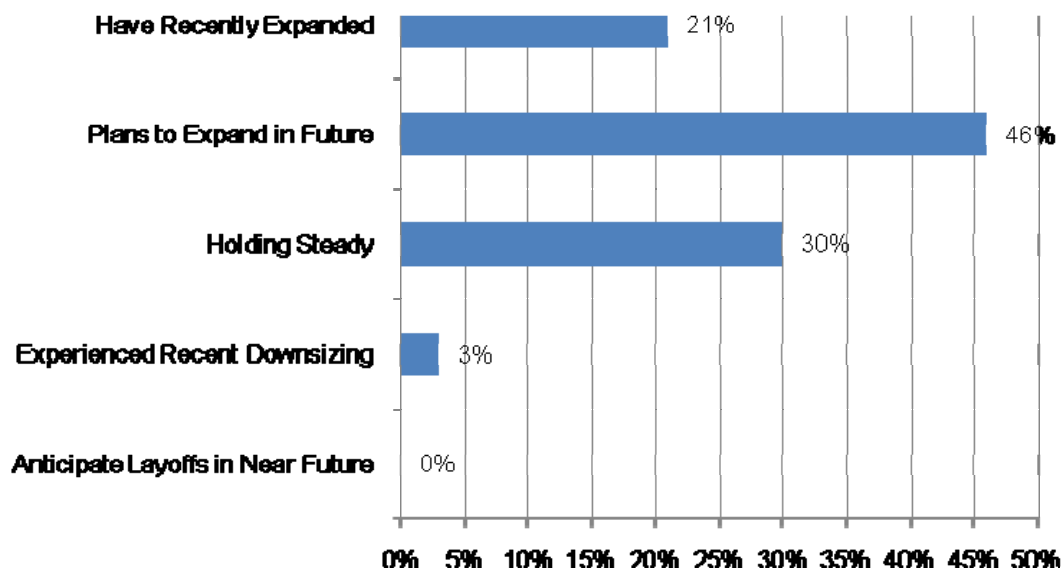
During the 19th annual Business Appreciation Week, 112 visits were scheduled with Howard County companies. Sixty-eight people teamed-up to visit 104 companies throughout the county:

- 57% in Columbia
- 19% in the Route 1 Corridor
- 11% in Western Howard County
- 13% in Ellicott City

The following organizations participated:

- Howard Community College
- Howard County Chamber of Commerce
- Howard County Government
- Howard County Library
- Howard County Tourism
- Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development
- Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation
- Maryland Department of Taxation and Assessment
- Small Business Administration
- Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)

BUSINESS OPERATIONS PLANS



COMPANIES VISITED

| Type of Business | Number of Companies | Percent of Companies |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| Information Technology/ Telecommunications | 36 | 35% |
| Other Professional & Business Services | 21 | 20% |
| Construction/Engineering | 9 | 9% |
| Healthcare Services | 6 | 6% |
| Retail Services | 6 | 6% |
| Communications/Marketing | 5 | 5% |
| Biotech/ Life Sciences | 4 | 4% |
| Distribution/Wholesale | 4 | 4% |
| Manufacturing | 4 | 4% |
| Farming | 3 | 3% |
| Associations/ Non-Profits | 2 | 2% |
| Financial Services/ Real Estate | 2 | 2% |
| | | |
| Total Number of Companies Visited: | 104 | |

COMMENTS/ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

| Concern | Number of Companies Reporting | Percent of Companies Reporting |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| General support for business community | 26 | 30% |
| "We would like to sell products to the Schools, Fire and Police Dept's" | | |
| "Looking for connections of people who would be interested in our facility" | | |
| "More opportunities to do work at the local level" | | |
| "Looking for more ways to get in front of small/ medium sized businesses" | | |
| "Help identifying companies in the county available to our clients" | | |
| "Homeless people on the vacant property next to us needs to dealt with" | | |
| "Affordable space for small businesses in Clarkesville" | | |
| "Centralize buying of local produce and meats" | | |
| "Centralized effort to promote announcements and needs of businesses" | | |
| "Inheritance taxes are way too high for agriculture" | | |
| "Hire local business to do local jobs" | | |
| "Problems with aluminum thefts from our property" | | |
| "State taxes for service oriented business in Maryland are high" | | |
| "Marketing has been a challenge for small businesses" | | |
| "Support in getting business with NSA" | | |
| "We need access to fiber" | | |
| "Help us get in front of larger companies in the county" | | |
| "Finding out about resources available to businesses in the county" | | |
| | | |
| Nothing... Howard County is a great place for business | 23 | 26% |
| "Howard County is a perfect location" | | |
| "Police department has been very responsive" | | |
| "Happy with the services provided" | | |
| "Very happy with the business climate in the county" | | |
| "Howard County is a friendly place to do business" | | |

| Concern | Number of Companies Reporting | Percent of Companies Reporting |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| "Great experience moving our business to Howard County" | | |
| "We love the location - that is why we decided to stay in the county" | | |
| "The BBI has been great" | | |
| "Howard County is doing great, especially Parks & Recreation" | | |
| "Police have always been very responsive" | | |
| "Really enjoy doing business in Howard County" | | |
| "Howard County has done a great job " | | |
| "Howard Tech Council does a great job providing networking" | | |
| "Enjoy doing business in Howard County - good central location" | | |
| | | |
| Responsiveness of county government | 19 | 22% |
| "Clean up prostitution along Route 1" | | |
| "Health Department Inspections during off business hours" | | |
| "Help with the roadmap for regulatory approval" | | |
| "Better snow removal on Whiskey Bottom Road" | | |
| "Need better signage - people can't find us" | | |
| "Keeping an agriculture representative in County Government" | | |
| "Specific zoning for Nurseries and Landscaping on small properties" | | |
| "A better job with consistency in answers and interpretations" | | |
| "Frustrated over the inspection process" | | |
| "More freedoms for agriculture land in preservation" | | |
| "We can be \$50,000 into a project design before you have an answer" | | |
| "Permitting is cumbersome - not unusual" | | |
| "County needs to help address parking needs in Downtown Ellicott City" | | |
| "Tax assessment on our building is entirely too high" | | |
| "County departments need to work together more efficiently" | | |
| "Loosen sign regulations" | | |
| "We need better signage, but regulations will not allow it" | | |
| "Route 29 and Route 32 are in bad shape. Both need to be resurfaced" | | |
| "Health Dept. - ease regulations or be aware of what MDHMD is doing" | | |
| | | |
| More pro-active economic development efforts | 12 | 14% |
| "More aggressive marketing effort to BRAC" | | |
| "Promoting support of other local businesses" | | |
| "Help with letter of support from Governor O'Malley" | | |
| "Job credits and continued economic development efforts" | | |
| "Incentives programs for smaller firms" | | |
| "Spur environments that cater to IT similar to Tyson's networking venues" | | |
| "Encourage university systems to foster emerging companies" | | |
| "Expand educational opportunities on how to break into government work" | | |
| "Discounted commercial rental rate set-asides from small emerging firms" | | |
| "Buy locally - promote Howard County business opportunities" | | |
| "Resource center to address housing, education, transportation etc." | | |
| | | |
| Transportation | 10 | 11% |
| "Traffic in Gateway - a new access point needs to be created" | | |
| "Need better public transportation as the county grows" | | |
| "A traffic light is needed at Stanford Boulevard and McGaw Road" | | |
| "Traffic in Gateway Business Park is bad" | | |

| Concern | Number of Companies Reporting | Percent of Companies Reporting |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| "Transportations connections with the DC Metro" | | |
| "Concerned about traffic along Route 108" | | |
| "Route 1 needs median strip - it is very dangerous" | | |
| "Public transportation is severely lagging" | | |
| "More efficient public transportation system is needed" | | |
| "Alleviate traffic leaving Columbia Gateway in the evening" | | |
| | | |
| Workforce | 9 | 10% |
| "Training tax credits towards education of personnel" | | |
| "Having trouble finding skilled talent with mobility knowledge" | | |
| "More access to Spanish speaking workforce" | | |
| "Even with more qualified help, good employees are difficult to find" | | |
| "Coordinate employment of people while awaiting NSA clearances" | | |
| "Need to find employees with DOD work experience" | | |
| "Difficult to find cleared technology professionals" | | |
| | | |
| Quality of Life | 5 | 6% |
| "Affordable housing - still too expensive" | | |
| "Bring a Whole Foods to the area" | | |
| "Eliminate prostitution on Route 1 - bad image for those trying to cleanup" | | |
| "Congestion in around Columbia, especially around Dobbin Road area" | | |
| | | |

ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

| Comment | Number of Companies Reporting | Percent of Companies Reporting |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Impacted by the Downturn | 45 | 52% |
| "Down about 10%, which is up from 25% in January" | | |
| "Business comes from public funds and decreased tremendously" | | |
| "Yes, but seeing good quality applicants for positions we have open" | | |
| "Yes, the cost for a personal fitness trainer can be pricey" | | |
| "2007 was great, but we had a decline in business in 2008 and 2009" | | |
| "Yes, but we have adapted - 2009 sales increase 32% over 2008" | | |
| "Impacted, but we are still growing" | | |
| "More people are considering our plans verses the major carriers" | | |
| "Assisted living occupancy is down" | | |
| "Down about 5% from where we wanted to be" | | |
| "Some slow down, but recent activities are up and business is doing well" | | |
| "Discretionary repairs are down somewhat" | | |
| "Some clients extending the periods between visits" | | |
| "Had to shut down one division of the company last year" | | |
| "IT project based work dried up last year" | | |
| "Business was down, but we benefited from families taking staycations" | | |
| "15% or \$3-Million cutback" | | |
| "Will not be able fill a position we are losing in June" | | |
| "The slowdown has provided us the best labor pool we have had in years" | | |
| "Slowed down a little bit, but things are going back to normal" | | |

| Comment | Number of Companies Reporting | Percent of Companies Reporting |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| "Recession is brutal - off 60% from 2006. Down from 40 to 16 core emp." | | |
| "Dairy industry continues to struggle with low prices" | | |
| "Not optimistic about recovery, so we are diversifying farm" | | |
| "Credit market freeze slowed national growth" | | |
| "Yes - we are running 9-10 months behind where we should be right now" | | |
| "Receivables are slower" | | |
| "Sales dropped 80%" | | |
| "Yes, but we have recovered" | | |
| | | |
| Minimal Impact | 42 | 48% |
| "Business has been hot. Hope to handle activity when recession ends" | | |
| "The economy has not really helped or hurt our business" | | |
| "Everyone has to eat" | | |
| "No - we have had steady growth" | | |
| "Membership has not been effected by the economy" | | |
| "Business has doubled since the downturn" | | |
| "No - most business is international" | | |
| "No dramatic negative impact our business" | | |
| "In 2008, business grew 20% and it was all BRAC related" | | |
| "Sales have grown in the last couple months" | | |
| "We have doubled our operation over the last two years" | | |
| "Growth off slightly, but not a major impact" | | |
| "Currently 130 youth football teams - 14 just three years ago" | | |
| "Have had 100% growth in high value shipping during the recession" | | |
| "Business has slowed down, but it is picking back up again" | | |
| "We are running lean, but business is ok" | | |
| "Customer base is stable - most somehow are affiliated with government" | | |
| "The impact has been very mild for us" | | |
| "Have always managed business conservatively with stable clients" | | |
| "Has not affected the beef business so far" | | |
| "Delinquencies are up a bit, but not drastically" | | |
| "Customer base is expanding right now" | | |
| | | |

FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED*

Forty-eight companies will require some form of follow-up, 55% of all firms that have been reported.

| Department/Issue | Number of Follow-up Requests | Percent of Follow-up Requests |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Economic Development Authority | 33 | 38% |
| Development Process (DPZ, DILP, DPW) | 12 | 14% |
| Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development | 10 | 11% |
| Howard County Office of Workforce Development | 8 | 9% |
| Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation | 8 | 9% |
| Howard County BRAC Office | 8 | 9% |
| Howard County Police Department | 6 | 7% |

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| Howard Community College | 3 | 3% |
| Howard County Tourism | 3 | 3% |
| Howard County Health Department | 2 | 2% |
| Howard County Human Resources | 2 | 2% |
| Howard County Office of Environmental Sustainability | 1 | 1% |
| Howard County Chamber of Commerce | 1 | 1% |
| Howard County Department of Citizen Services | 1 | 1% |
| Howard County Fire Department | 1 | 1% |
| Howard County Public School System | 1 | 1% |
| Howard County Leadership | 1 | 1% |
| SBA | 1 | 1% |
| Howard County Purchasing | 1 | 1% |
| Howard County Department of Parks and Recreation | 1 | 1% |

*** 87 reports (84%) tabulated**