

## **Economic Development Advisory Board**

### **Kent County, Maryland**

**July 2, 2014**

Board Members Present: Ron Athey, Tom Beckett, and Dan MacLeod

Board Members Absent: Zoe Schneider, Robert Ampula, James Rich, John Carroll, and Robert Jacob

Also in attendance: Commissioner Short; James Massey, Council Manager, David Black, GIS Coordinator, Sean Brimm, Member of Broadband Task Force, Cecil County; Bill Barnes, Executive Director, Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council, (ESMC); Ed Vitalos, Broadband Implementation Coordinator, Salisbury University ESRGC; Scott Boone, Director, Amy Plummer, Project Manager, Information Technology; Dick Barker, Associate Broker, The Hogans Agency, Inc.; and Dave Robinson, Network Maryland.

At 4:05 p.m. there was no quorum, and the meeting convened.

Mr. Barnes introduced himself to the Board and the audience and shared that the ESMC is a new organization. They were organized in October 2013, and they are growing. They are focused on growing jobs on the Shore. The trend in manufacturing is going from low skilled to middle skilled labor. We hear of many companies shutting down, however manufacturing has grown by 55%. ESMC connects manufacturers with other companies on the Shore. Membership costs are based on the number of employees.

Mr. Boone shared that the County website would be under County control as of September 1, 2014. The new webmaster just began his employment with the County. He is currently researching where we are going to move to, and we will maintain what we currently have and behind the scenes he will be developing a brand new site. The anticipated launch of the new website is expected early 2015. There will be new fiber link connecting the municipalities. Mr. Beckett shared that the Economic Development website contains a wealth of knowledge that he had never seen before, it is hidden in layers. Mr. Beckett suggested a “come here and bring your business” on the home page and encompass tourism, recreation, cultural, etc.; all the things that make Kent County a great place to live. Commissioner Short shared his vision to see the Economic Development Advisory Board as a Public Relations tool to market Kent County. Mr. Boone also shared that we must keep in mind the way in which people access the Economic Development website. Mr. MacLeod suggested a captive portal when people connect to government wi-fi to draw them to the website. Mr. Athey suggested benchmarking from other County websites.

Mr. Boone shared he had just completed a Certified Fiber to the Home Professional course and learned about Human Relations and how it relates to this project. He suggested that we look closely at the available funding sources as they tend to have strict limitations. Mr. Boone stated the project will use a phased in approach and each phase will be evaluated to improve on each phase going forward. Currently 30% of the population has no service. The task force is in the process of identifying (W)ISPs who may be interested in providing service in Kent County. Estimate a three to five year plan for the entire county with a hybrid network of wireless and ground based services.

Cecil County shared that they are working on a similar project and offered to share the findings

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with Kent County going forward.

Mr. Vitalos stated that there has been a big uptake in counties facing similar issues with broadband service to citizens and businesses.

Ms. Williams on behalf of Ernie Crofoot, County Administrator and County Attorney, shared a new website [www.business.usa.gov](http://www.business.usa.gov) , which is an offspring of The US Small Business Administration (SBA) Website.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m., and the board agreed to meet again on Wednesday, August 5, 2014, at 4:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams  
Deputy Clerk