

# BUSINESS NEWS

## Let's Get Started!

It's a new year – and a new chance to get organized, take the entrepreneurial leap or grow your existing business. Resolve that 2019 will be your year of business success by signing up for one of the following courses offered by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) or Maryland Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC):



**Jan. 24, 10 a.m.-noon**

**Webinar:** How to Conduct a SWOT Assessment to Determine Government Contracting Readiness

**Jan. 30, 6-8 p.m., La Plata**

**Start Right for Success**

**Feb. 5, 6-9 p.m., Leonardtown**

**Branding, Building Your Brand**

**Feb. 7, 10 a.m.-noon**

**Webinar:** How to Read and Understand a Government Solicitation

**Feb. 8, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., La Plata**

**QuickBooks Advanced & Practical Applications – Beyond Basics**

**Feb. 19, 10 a.m.-noon**

**Webinar:** Government Proposal 101

**Feb. 21, Noon**

**Webinar:** Find and Keep New Customers



## Successfully Navigate State Contracts

**Jan. 31, 7-8:30 p.m.**

**Calvert Library, 850 Costley Way,  
Prince Frederick (Rooms 1 & 2)**

Are you interested in learning how to obtain contracts with the state? eMaryland Marketplace (eMM) representatives will present tips and tools for understanding commodity/service codes, searching for bid opportunities, updating company profiles, eMM resources and how to bid on Calvert County government opportunities. **Sign up today.**

## Calvert County's Unemployment Hits 2018 Low

Calvert County's unemployment rate reached a low in November 2018 of 3.1 percent. The U.S. unemployment rate held steady at 3.7 percent in November for the third consecutive month and the Maryland rate was 3.5 percent.

"We currently have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Maryland and the highest number of employed individuals in the past decade," said Kelly Robertson-Slagle, director of the Department of Economic Development. "Over the past four years, our monthly unemployment rate has dipped to 3.1 percent or lower only two times."



In addition to various statistics measuring employment numbers, the Department of Economic Development tracks other economic indicators to pulse the health and vibrancy of the local economy such as commercial vacancy rates, business starts, tourism counts, tax revenues, commercial permit applications and commercial square footage. "Overall, our indicators are very positive, demonstrating economic success, positive growth and a strong economy," said Robertson-Slagle.

Ruthy Davis, director of Regional Workforce and Business Development at [Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland](#), agrees Southern Maryland is showing signs of a very strong economy and good job growth. "It's somewhat of a double-edged sword," she said. "While low unemployment rates are an excellent indicator of a stable, fully employed community, it can also prove difficult when businesses want to expand or hire new staff to meet demands. We are working very closely with our economic development partners and business clients to help fill vacancies in a shallow employment pool. Our training and apprentice programs are also excellent tools that can ensure businesses are able to find the workers they need to succeed."



## Drug-Free Workplace Training

The Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse received a small grant to host a drug-free workplace training event for Calvert County businesses. The event is still being planned but your response to a [six-question survey](#) will help determine the format and topics to be covered.



TEDCO's annual Entrepreneur Expo brings together all of Maryland's entrepreneurial resources into one place at one time. [Save the date.](#)

## Gov. Hogan Expands Opportunity Zone Initiatives



This month a series of new initiatives – valued at \$56.5 million – were proposed by Gov. Larry Hogan to further expand Maryland’s Opportunity Zone program. The initiatives are intended to attract new businesses and continue the investment in Maryland’s workforce.

The administration introduced the More Opportunities for Marylanders Act of 2019 to extend a 10-year credit for each new job created by a company that locates or expands in a Maryland Opportunity Zone. These companies will also be eligible for an additional \$6 million in tax credits, have 100 percent of their state property taxes exempted and have all business recording, filing or special fees waived.

[Visit online](#) for information on Maryland Opportunity Zones. More information on Calvert County’s three Opportunity Zones and the other incentives we offer businesses is [available here](#).

## The Maryland Healthy Working Families Act (Sick and Safe Leave)

For information about the history of the act and available resources, use the links below.

- [Maryland Healthy Working Families Act](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Model Policies](#)
- [Employee Notice Poster](#)



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



**Kathy MacAdams** is Calvert County’s Business Retention Specialist. She has been a business and management consultant in Southern Maryland for more than eight years, first as a consultant with the Small Business Development Center and now as a member of the county’s Economic Development team.

### ***What do you like most about your job?***

Every day is different and because of that I am constantly learning new things and meeting new people. I love knowing what’s happening in my community and that I can make a difference by helping to create a better place to live with purpose.

### ***How do you serve the community?***

I work with the existing business community to start, grow, manage and fix their businesses. After working as a business consultant, I learned the best way to provide business assistance is to get out from behind my desk and physically visit businesses. Business visits are vital not only for the owner/manager but I also benefit from the discussion by listening to their challenges, triumphs and concerns. By listening to the personal perspectives of our business owners I also learn a lot, firsthand, about the economic climate of our community.

### ***What do you think is the biggest challenge facing businesses today?***

Being a business owner comes with a plethora of challenges and it is often difficult to pinpoint one challenge over another. In my opinion, the hardest obstacle in the current market is finding good employees. The job market is already very near what economists deem full employment. That is, most of the 3.1 percent of the people that are currently unemployed are simply between jobs or not seeking employment. Unfortunately, I think private sector businesses will continue to see challenges due to retirement of the large baby boomer generation. This is constantly on our radar as we track labor

market statistics, work with resource partners to host job fairs and brainstorm unique, long-term solutions like on-the-job training opportunities tailored to meet industry needs.

## Our Tourism Team

We recently filled two vacant tourism positions with **Hilary Dailey** as Tourism Program Specialist (pictured, left) and **Sandy Staples** as Tourism Program Assistant. Both have strong organizational, marketing and analytical skills and are working hard to elevate and promote Calvert County's tourism industry for the coming year.

Please share your questions or ideas with them – or request a 2019 Visitors Guide – by emailing [Hilary](#) or [Sandy](#).



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