

Encouraging Business

Calvert County, Maryland

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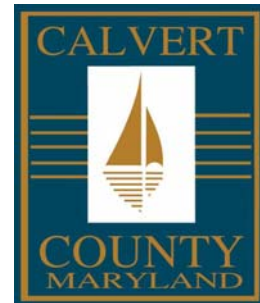
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Welcome

This is the first in a series of electronic news bulletins to be sent on a periodic basis to businesses in Calvert County. As the Department of Economic Development learns of information that might be useful to the business community, we will use this bulletin as a vehicle to forward information to you. We hope that you find these bulletins useful. Please e-mail us at info@ecalvert.com to let us know what is on your mind and how we might assist you and your business enterprise.



• House Keys for Employees



As part of the State of Maryland's More House 4 Less program, Calvert County was the first County in the State to join the House Keys for Employees initiative. House Keys for Employees provides additional opportunity for affordable home ownership for the County's working population. It is

an employer partnership initiative that matches funds for closing costs and down payments for eligible employees to purchase a home. Eligible employees are those who have not owned a principal residence in the last three years, and meet specific eligibility requirements. Local match for private sector and public sector employees could total up to \$5,000, equivalent to the State benefit/contribution.

The County government is also a participating employer in the program and provides matching funds for eligible County government and public school system employees. [Click here](#) to view the entire press release. For complete information, take our [online tutorial](#).

• Getting Away When You Can't Get Away



If you're like most small business owners, the idea of vacation seems absolutely impossible for the foreseeable future. However, you may still be able to take a sorely needed break from your small business. Brief escapes from "business-as-usual" require as little as two hours of your time and can help you maintain the work/life balance that eludes many small business owners.

With a little creativity, almost anyone can find time to take short breaks. For instance, adding an hour to your typical workday may enable you to leave at 1 p.m. on Fridays. Or you might consider planning a short trip over a holiday weekend, when business contacts are likely to be away. If spending three days

away is impossible, consider returning to your job on the third day of the long weekend. Your clients and vendors will still be out of their offices, which will provide for a quiet and productive workday. After you find time in your schedule for a short

break, use the tips below to maximize its value:

Learn something new

Enrolling in continuing education courses can be a low cost and effective way to break the monotony of work. Giving your mind something new to learn will occupy it fully, leaving it little energy to wander back to the office. When selecting a class, look for one that will introduce you to a new skill. Focus on those that require participation, like cooking, repair work, or sailing. Avoid classes aimed at honing a business skill or seminars requiring only passive listening.

[The College of Southern Maryland](#) offers a variety of continuing education (credit-free) courses for those who wish to pursue personal enrichment or recreational activities. The Calvert County Parks and Recreation Division also provides opportunities for healthful, enjoyable, lifetime leisure activities to the entire community through a comprehensive program of recreational activities and classes offered in the community centers, the public schools and the County parks. For a complete listing of classes and activities visit the [Calvert County Parks and Recreation Division](#) Web site.

Visit a museum or attend a cultural event

Get out of the office for an afternoon and attend a community event that will motivate you to think in new ways. If you're a graphic artist, go to a poetry reading. If you're a business consultant, visit a local art gallery. By varying the content of your activity, you tap into cognitive skills that lie dormant in your everyday routine. This is the equivalent of taking your mental muscles to the gym. Like any good workout, stretching these muscles will leave them refreshed. As an added benefit, you may find the creativity of others inspiring new solutions to old problems.

If you're looking for new and exciting things to do in Calvert County be sure to visit the Calvert County Department of Economic Development Web site to view the online [2006 Calendar of Events](#).

Get back to nature

Exchanging the four walls of your office for a forest, pond, or field can do wonders for your spirits. A change of scenery forces your mind and body to absorb a new set of stimuli. This automatically refreshes your senses. Your mind frees itself from the pressure of work as it processes new sights, sounds, fragrances, and feelings.

Become a tourist in your hometown

No need to pay for expensive flights to get away. You can be a tourist in your own county. Find out which exhibits are currently showing at one of the local museums. Invite a friend or loved one for an afternoon tour--then visit one of Calvert County's historic landmarks, treat yourself to a manicure, or head to the putting green. When you're through, check into one of the county's wonderful local bed and breakfast establishments or local hotels to enjoy a peaceful night away from ringing phones and household chores. A little advance planning can reduce the cost of your excursion. Before you leave, take time to contact one of the local information centers:

Fairview Information Center
8120 Southern Md Blvd.
Route 4
Owings, MD 20736
410- 257-5381 or 410-257-0801

Solomons Information Center
Routes 2/4 (across from the Calvert Marine Museum)
Solomons, MD 20688
410-326-6027

Or you can contact the [Department of Economic Development Tourism Office](#) for current visitor information.

• Tourism and Hospitality Industry - We Need Your Feedback



Advertising is expensive and one way smart businesses can reduce their marketing costs is to seek cooperative (co-op) advertising opportunities. By definition, co-op is a system by which advertising costs are divided between two or more parties. Co-ops are good ways to stretch an advertising budget and reach more customers.

The Department of Economic Development organizes many co-op campaigns throughout the year with a goal of helping to make our tourism businesses accessible to customers and as successful as possible. This year, we are updating our program - a must for your advertising toolbox!

We are currently surveying our partners to determine the best advertising vehicles for their businesses. If you are in the tourism or hospitality industries, please visit www.ecalvert.com and select the Tourism Co-op Survey. Your code is TCOP. Your information will remain anonymous and will further assist us in tailoring our year-long tourism co-op program.

The DED continues to provide a number of services and resources to support the growth and development of County businesses. Free business services include online commercial real estate listings, confidential in-house counseling, online employment classifieds, marketing assistance, an ombudsman program and training and educational seminars. The County offers an Incentive Loan Fund and Economic Development Loan Fund for well-qualified businesses and produces a number of publications including quarterly business newsletters, an annual Calendar of Events and Visitors Guide and the annual State of the Economy. Additionally, the County's business retention program was enhanced in 2005 with the addition of a dedicated staff person to counsel and serve as an intermediary to local business owners in helping them to grow and succeed.

For information on the Calvert County, Maryland Department of Economic Development and services available to assist County businesses, call 410.535.4583, 800.331.9771 or 301.855.1880; send an e-mail to info@ecalvert.com or visit our Web site www.ecalvert.com

Calvert County Department of Economic Development

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