

BRAC Barometer, May 2010 by Karen L. Holt, BRAC Manager, APG-CSSC Regional BRAC Office

All Aboard for BRAC in the Chesapeake Science & Security Corridor!

It's probably safe to say that everyone has felt the brunt of our downturned economy to some degree. And yet, as I address the readership within the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor, I can think of nowhere else you'd rather be! Here are just a few reasons to consider:

Maryland personal income increased by \$2.7 billion. Personal income of Maryland residents rose from \$272.5 billion in 2008 to \$275.2 billion in 2009. The nearly \$2.7 billion increase was the largest dollar increase in the country. Maryland was one of only six states to witness a personal income gain last year. The State's personal income rose by 1%, the second highest growth rate. This comes during a year when personal income and net earnings declined in most states across the nation by an average of 1.7%

Maryland ranks 6th in online job availability. According to the Monster Employment Index which assesses employer online recruitment activity, Maryland ranked 6th in terms of per capita online job availability in February. Nationally, the index reported the long-term growth rate turned positive for the first time since December 2007. Information Services led all industries with a 13-point gain in February driven by telecommunications and media distribution.

Maryland Public Schools rank #1 in the nation...again. The *2010 Quality Counts* annual report shows Maryland ranking first in the nation for a second year in a row. Maryland consistently placed at the top of its class in the report's six determining categories and scored no lower than a 'B' in any given area. The College Board ranked Maryland #1 nationwide in the percent of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) exams and #1 in percentage of public school students scoring a '3' or higher on at least one AP exam. Maryland is one of six states to earn an 'A' in college preparation, according to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

According to CoStar, **40% of all commercial development in the country is occurring in the Baltimore-Washington region.** The Baltimore Business Journal's "Top 25 Heavy Hitters in Real Estate" were dominated by projects in the Chesapeake Science & Security corridor including the G.A.T.E., Wegman's, Bob's Furniture, and Sun Products in Harford; Hollywood Casino in Cecil; Mercy & Johns Hopkins healthcare facility projects and commercial development in Harbor East in Baltimore City, as well as Lowe's and Miller's Court, a complex for teacher housing in Baltimore County.

My recent voyage to the Southern Caribbean was a fascinating study in economies of scale, observing the impacts of the oil industry and the clout of refineries; the value of tourism in lands primarily dependent on imports; and the delicate balance of global interdependence evident by rising unemployment and increased educational needs that affect world-renown companies and small fishing villages, impacting the price of bananas, a liter of gasoline, and new home construction. For islanders, a docking cruise ship represents a beacon of hope for a day's wages. For us here in the Chesapeake Science & Security Corridor, our beacon is the growth of our defense community which brings technical and professional jobs to the region. It is a history lesson in the making: one of fortitude, perseverance and collaboration. In the words of Henry Ibsen, "a community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm."

Although always good to get away, it's great to be home...and to call the Chesapeake Science & Security "home." BRAC is docking in our community; let's embrace the economic opportunities!

All Aboard!