

THE COMMERCE CONNECTION

Brought to you by Venture Access, Harford County's dedicated entrepreneurial entity supporting entrepreneurs in their quest to successfully formulate, launch and grow profitable companies.

POWERED BY THE
HARFORD CHAMBER COUNTY OF COMMERCE
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



ENTREPRENEURS SHOWCASE

A Sign of Thing To Come:
FASTSIGNS Whitemarsh/Joppa
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Welcome to the August issue of the **The Commerce Connection**, brought to you by Venture Access! This issue features some familiar faces- can you believe it's been two years since FastSigns-White Marsh/Joppa joined our Harford County business community?! Find out what they've been up to in this month's Entrepreneurs Showcase!

A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME Written by Heather Murphy

When it comes to exploring the backgrounds and "how they came to be" stories from entrepreneurs, a common theme tends to emerge- making the jump. There is not always a perfect time or a specific reason. Sometimes the stars align and the chances are taken to pursue something special.

About 7 years ago, owner Bobby Jordan approached his wife, Angi, about branching out on his own after 20 years experience in the sign industry. At the time, Angi was in banking, but was intrigued by the opportunity. Instead of jumping alongside headfirst, Angi went to work at a T-shirt printing company to learn the business. Like any true dedicated entrepreneur, Angi spent 5 years learning, managing, and operating in the industry.

By the end of 2019, the paperwork was filed and in 2020 the FASTSIGNS franchise was chosen. Franchises are a great option for individuals looking to start a business because they can offer lower investment costs, established brand recognition, marketing support, and more. Angi and Bobby chose FASTSIGNS because they thought they offered the best resources, including professional development classes and opportunities for not just franchise owners, but even employees!

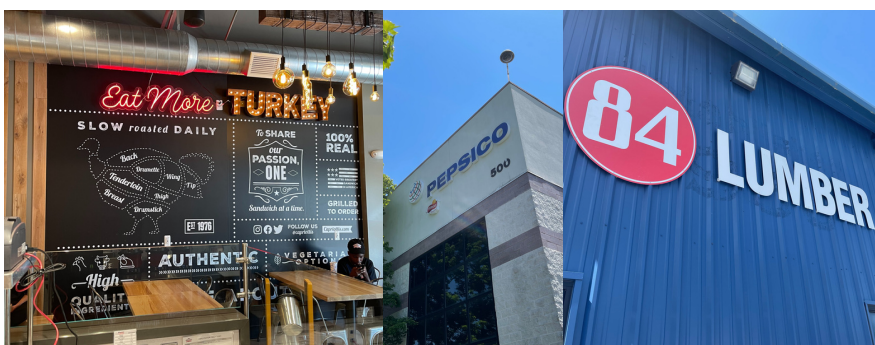
In March 2020, they were ready to open and then we all know what happened next. Thankfully, due to the nature of the business in providing critical items such as masks, shields, and signage, they were considered "essential". In the beginning, circumstances had created a need, but by August Angi and Bobby realized they needed to get out in

the community. With only a trickle of customers and the inability to qualify for any pandemic relief because they had shown "growth" as a brand new business, they knew they needed to increase their client base. They turned to key business organizations like the Harford County Chamber of Commerce and the Route40 Business Association to make connections.

Angi and Bobby's commitment to volunteering and giving back to their community has cemented the relationships they now have around Harford County, which has catapulted their growth. Today they are a mighty team of 4 and have recently expanded to the previously empty retail space next-door.

Their client "bread and butter" tends to be manufacturing, distribution, and construction companies, donning large clients like Amazon. But surprisingly enough they can produce anything from car wraps, happy birthday banners, and vendor fair tents to ADA braille signage, flags, and big checks. No matter your need, it never hurts to ask and see what's possible!

Moving full steam ahead, Bobby and Angi look to future goals of hiring 1-2 additional employees and purchasing new equipment to expand product lines and take on larger projects. Make sure to follow their Facebook to see projects they complete!



ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR MINORITY SMALL BUSINESSES

Join SBA and Public Private Strategies Institute for a [webinar](#) to learn about access to capital for minority small businesses. Speakers include:

- Mark Madrid, Associate Administrator, Office of Entrepreneurial Development, U.S. SBA
- Lenwood V Long Sr., President/CEO, African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs
- Ed Cooper, Vice President, SMB Initiatives and Customer Insights, CyberSource and Authorize.Net

Building a Better AMERICA
A SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE COMMUNITY
★★★★★

Join Us
Wednesday, August 31
2 pm ET (11am PT)

Upcoming Webinar:
Access to Capital for Minority Small Businesses

Featured Speakers:

Mark Madrid
Associate Administrator, Office of Entrepreneurial Development, SBA

Lenwood V Long Sr.
President, African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs

Ed Cooper
Vice President, SMB Initiatives and Customer Insights, CyberSource and Authorize.Net

Additional speakers to be announced.

WORKFORCE TECHNICAL TRAINING GRANT WEBINAR

The Workforce Technical Training Grant [webinar](#) discusses:

- The new online application portal
- The conditions of program eligibility
- Permitted uses for funding
- And more!

Registration is required, email Lisa Krysiak at lmkrysiak@harfordcountymd.gov.

A HARFORD COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRAINING WORKSHOP

ROUND 1: FY23 DUE: OCT 21, 2022

WORKFORCE TECHNICAL TRAINING GRANT WEBINAR
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 9-10 a.m.

UPCOMING WEBINAR EVENTS

Stay tuned to the [SBDC Online Training calendar](#) to ensure you are up-to-date with the latest educational opportunities!

- [Webinar: Risk Management- Planning for a Successful 2023](#) **9/14** from 1-2:30pm. Register by 9/13
- [Webinar: Sales Funnels 101- How to Build a 24/7 Lead Generation Machine](#) **9/14** from 1-2:30pm. Register by 9/14
- [Webinar: Google Analytics: Five Reports that Impact Your Marketing Data](#) **9/20** from 1-2pm. Register by 9/19



QUICKBOOKS 101

Join the Harford County Economic Development office at The GroundFloor in Havre de Grace for a QuickBooks introductory seminar led by an industry professional. Doors will be open at 5:30 p.m. for attendees looking to network in person. To attend virtually, email Lisa at

lmkrysiak@harfordcountymd.gov AFTER registering.



COALITION TO BACK BLACK BUSINESSES GRANT



The Coalition to Back Black Businesses (CBBB) is now accepting applications for its 2022-2023 grant program.

- \$5,000 grants to 272 Black-owned small businesses will help meet critical needs and invest in long-term growth.
- The CBBB also provides resources, such as one-on-one mentorship and training for small businesses.

HUBZONE CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND PROGRAM UPDATES

Becoming a certified diverse supplier can open your business to receive government and corporate contracts as a part of government efforts to ensure businesses like yours can play a more significant role in our economy. This webinar covers The Historically Underutilized Business Zones Certification. The HUBZone certificate is designed to help small businesses in urban and rural communities connect with federal contract dollars. Topics include:

- How the HUBZone certification program has changed
- What the program requirements are, and if your business meets them
- How to apply and what the application process looks like

To register click [here](#).





Exciting things are happening behind the scenes at Venture Access, Inc., and we are in the midst of transitioning to a new membership platform. We can't wait to offer our members a modern opportunity to connect with others in the entrepreneurial community here in Harford and our vast network of resource partners. We kindly ask that you stay tuned as we reach out to our community to get everyone set up with access!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



ALREADY A PART OF THE VENTURE ACCESS INC COMMUNITY? KEEP YOUR BUSINESS INFORMATION UP TO DATE BY FILLING OUT [THIS FORM](#).

FOLLOW ALONG WITH VENTURE ACCESS



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