

Organization: Harford County Office of Community & Economic Development

Community Size: Large (More than 200,000)

Name of Marketing Initiative: Using Next-Generation Technology to Tell the Story of Economic Development in Harford County

Strategic Approach: The Harford County Office of Community & Economic Development (OCED) implemented multiple new technologies to tell the story of business in Harford County and to attract new companies.

OCED's "Here We Grow" virtual reality tree was developed to symbolize the county's growth and stability and to showcase different "branches" of resources OCED provides. Any image of the tree can be used in conjunction with AppAR8, a mobile application that showcases 3D, interactive renderings of 2D images. The app was created by Balti Virtual, a Maryland company specializing in augmented reality. Users snap a picture of the tree and the app's rendering displays an interactive map of Harford County and a virtual "digital tool kit" of OCED's incentives. Use of the AppAR8 app provides a new, innovative approach with 3D interactive renderings to explore county resources. This cutting-edge technology draws users to explore all aspects of the individualized rendering of the OCED tree.

Harford County also created multiple video series highlighting business resources that are currently being used as promotional materials for unique audiences. One video called "Greatness Awaits" highlights the county's strategic location, qualified workforce, and development opportunities. Another video called "Come Find Your Future in Harford County" is a comical take on the storytelling of the county's location, quality of life, and wide array of business resources. The videos can be found on OCED's homepage – www.harfordcountymd.gov/oed. Harford County created a series about the recently completed Aberdeen Proving Ground Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). The four videos – "What is a Joint Land Use Study?," "Living in a Defense Community," "Working with an Eagle Population," and "Aberdeen Proving Ground's Legacy of Innovation" – were developed to increase awareness about Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) and to promote the Chesapeake Science & Security Corridor as a great American defense community. The videos are housed on the new JLUS website, which was also created as a result of the JLUS project and can be found at <https://apg-chesapeakejlus.com>. The multiple video series use high-definition imagery, drone footage, and animated illustrations to offer refreshing content geared at retaining, growing, and attracting business in Harford County. Lastly, Harford County highlighted its rich agricultural history and growing agribusiness sector through an app called "Farm Finder" and a video titled "The Barn Quilt Trail of Harford County," detailing the county's agriculture and historic Barn Quilt Trail. The agricultural video, which can be found on YouTube, and app are targeted at Harford County's robust agricultural sector. The app uses GIS technology to map out county farms and can help residents find locally-grown products. The Farm Finder app's use of ArcGIS technology uses vector symbols to differentiate different types of farms to allow for easy-to-use navigation.

Target Audience: The "Here We Grow" tree was first used on the cover of OCED's annual Growth Report, being initially distributed to a wide audience through a regional newspaper, The Daily Record. Additional copies of the report are handed out at every event attended by OCED. The tree itself is printed on the back of all OCED business cards, and is a predominant feature on other print materials, including coasters. The coasters were the first piece of collateral handed out to demonstrate how to use the AppAR8 app. The app is a fun, tech-savvy way to teach users about county resources.

The video series are used as promotional materials for unique audiences. The Harford County videos are displayed on OCED's homepage and Facebook page, are featured each month in OCED's email newsletter, distributed to 7,000+ people, and are housed on YouTube with both videos nearing 1,000 views. The JLUS videos, housed on YouTube and displayed on the new JLUS website, have been highlighted at defense events and covered in APG News. (The new JLUS website was also created as a result of the project and can be found at <https://apg-chesapeakejlus.com>).

The agricultural video and app are targeted at Harford County's agricultural sector. The app was promoted in Homegrown Harford, a publication produced for the county's annual Farm Fair that focused on local agriculture. 10,000 copies of the publication were printed and distributed. Users can utilize the app as a way to find local farms and purchase locally-produced goods.

Innovation & Originality: The Harford County Office of Community & Economic Development's modern approach to marketing incorporates innovative technology to deliver its message. This method appeals to more-skilled audiences and allows users to get information in new, creative ways. The applications and videos provide visual and interactive means of disseminating information and the use of technology symbolizes and parallels the modernization of the business world.

Cost Effectiveness: In the JLUS video series, all costs went to production – all interviewing featured in the videos and all script writing was done voluntarily. There were also no additional costs to create the Farm Finder app as it was an in-house, collaborative effort between the Harford County Office of Community & Economic Development, the Harford County Agricultural Center, and the Harford County Department of Planning & Zoning.

Source of Public Funds: The Joint Land Use Study video series was funded by the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment. Harford County funded all other projects.

Source of Private Funds: n/a

Private Sector Investments: Total cost - \$64,452

Project Cost /ROI: Total cost - \$64,452

Project Cost / Method for Measuring Results: Methods for measuring project results include capturing digital and social metrics and through the number of impressions from all web – including YouTube, Facebook, and the respective websites that house the videos – and print media channels. The videos and applications are also being distributed through Harford County's partner organizations and are being used in all business attraction activities.

Achivement of Stated Objectives: The videos and applications have been well-received and have been disseminated through various channels to both wide and niche audiences. The use of new technologies successfully demonstrates Harford County's dedication to innovation and attracting a highly-skilled workforce and a diverse business community.

Method for Measuring Results: The methods include measuring unique views of the videos on YouTube, accounting for the distribution of all printed materials, documenting hits to each web page where the videos are housed, tallying the number of recipients for OCED's monthly newsletter, tracking social

media metrics through Facebook insights, and registering attendees at different events and functions where the videos have been shown.

Graphic Appeal: Harford County's use of technology to convey its marketing message is interactive and visually compelling. Use of the Appar8 app uses a new, innovative approach to 3D interactive renderings to explore county resources. This cutting-edge technology is used rarely enough that users are drawn to explore all aspects of the individualized rendering of the OCED tree. The multiple video series use high-definition imagery, drone footage, and animated illustrations to refresh content that can feel stale on static platforms. The Farm Finder app's use of ArcGIS technology uses vector symbols to differentiate different types of farms to allow for easy-to-use navigation.

Additional Docs:

<https://www.medamd.com/index.php?gf-download=2019%2F12%2FAppAR8-Tree.pdf&form-id=27&field-id=40&hash=254ab866146d0b79c0f332036f5c44eb8876e091f330ec7769e1374bb249a96c>

<https://www.medamd.com/index.php?gf-download=2019%2F12%2FMEDA-Awards-Marketing-2019.docx&form-id=27&field-id=40&hash=da7bc948a1206f1875a3a53aead6ba838921e532c9c326b680f33569385d4ef2>

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bkxgbdpvhbe4/AADf3nFBaur0das8C_cWFCQWa?dl=0