

- Review and consider adjusting the revenue cap to retain the potential two percent increase; however, change the alternative from the Consumer Price Index to the Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Consumption Expenditures (IPD), whichever is greater (stop use of CPI for benchmarking purposes);
- Develop a small business incubator in downtown Salisbury;
- Develop a comprehensive economic development strategy for both Wicomico County and Salisbury and increase staffing for local economic development office;
- Cooperate with municipalities to minimize tax burdens caused by financing planned and existing capital improvements and operations; and
- Work in partnership with the City of Salisbury to create a downtown environment more amenable to greater visitation, business formation, job creation and tax base production.

The County has recently taken steps designed to eliminate impediments to businesses. For example, the Commercial Inventory Exemption was amended to reduce the tax from 35 percent to 0 percent over a five-year period. The Manufacturer’s Tax Exemption was amended to exempt manufacturing equipment subject to property tax from 100 percent to 0 percent. These incentives will attract new businesses to the area and maintain existing businesses.

Other efforts being implemented across the County, includes the City of Salisbury budgeting for a Downtown Revitalization Specialist for the purpose of creating a focus for Economic Development within downtown Salisbury. Stimulating economic growth in the City of Salisbury will effectively increase the tax base for both the County and City. Continued cooperation and collaboration between the County and its municipalities will assist in economic success for the entire County.

## ECONOMIC PROFILE

### Employment

According to the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR), employment within Wicomico County has increased by 6.7 percent or 2,771 jobs between 2002 and 2012, 41,495 and 44,266, respectively. Of the 44,266 jobs located in Wicomico in 2012, approximately 83 percent are private sector and the remaining 17 percent are public sector jobs (federal, State, and local government). In comparison, public sector employment accounted for 15 percent and private sector consisted of the remaining 85 percent of employment opportunities County-wide in 2002.

According to the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sector of the Service Providing industry constituted the overwhelming majority of employment options in 2012. In contrast, Natural Resources and Mining of the Good-Producing industry provided the fewest employment options in the County, 9,344 and 330 jobs, respectively. See **Table 12-1** shows a detailed breakdown of 2012 County employment by sector and industry.

Overall, the State and the County had a similar distribution of employment by industry in 2012, as well as the proportion of the workforce employed by the private and public sectors. The only exceptions being the State as a whole had more persons employed in the federal government than Wicomico County, roughly 6 percent and less than 1 percent, respectively. Additionally, in the private sector, the State experienced a larger proportion of jobs in the Professional and Business Service Industries than the County, 16.3 percent and 9.8 percent, respectively.

**TABLE 12-1: WICOMICO COUNTY DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT (2012)**

Employment Sector & Industry	Wicomico Annual Average Employee	Wicomico County Percent	Maryland Annual Average Employee	Maryland Percent
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>44,266</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,514,165</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Federal Government	304	0.7%	146,354	5.8%
State Government	2,723	6.2%	100,790	4.0%
Local Government	4,657	10.5%	241,058	9.6%
<i>Total Government Employees</i>	<i>7,684</i>	<i>17.4%</i>	<i>488,202</i>	<i>19.4%</i>
Natural Resources & Mining	330	0.7%	6,926	0.3%
Construction	1,819	4.1%	143,303	5.7%
Manufacturing	3,882	8.8%	109,068	4.3%
Trade/Transportation/Utility	9,344	21.1%	444,972	17.7%
Information	658	1.5%	39,804	1.6%
Financial Activities	1,612	3.6%	137,521	5.5%
Professional & Business Services	4,357	9.8%	409,726	16.3%
Education & Health Services	8,523	19.3%	400,436	15.9%
Leisure & Hospitality	4,441	10.0%	244,213	9.7%
Other Services	1,616	3.7%	89,983	3.6%
Unclassified	N/A	N/A	11	0.1%
<i>Total Employees Private Sector</i>	<i>36,582</i>	<i>82.6%</i>	<i>2,025,963</i>	<i>80.6%</i>

Source: MD Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (2013)

In 2012, the annual average unemployment rate in Wicomico County was 8.6 percent, which was an improvement as compared to the 2011 unemployment rate of 9.3 percent. For comparative purposes, prior to the significant down turn of the economy experienced nation-wide, the County unemployment rate for 2008 was 5.2 percent. The County experienced a slightly higher rate of unemployment than the State, which experienced a 6.8 percent unemployment rate in 2012.

Wicomico County’s labor force accounted for an employment rate of 91 percent of the 53,135 citizens that are 16 years of age or older. Of the 2,575 private establishments employing 36,582 paid employees approximately 50 of them have 100 or more employees. Major employers in the County include: BesTemps, Delmarva Power, Dove Pointe, Genesis, K&L Microwave, Labinal, Peninsula Regional Medical Center, Perdue Farms, Piedmont Airlines, Shore Up, and Walmart/Sam’s Club. The major employers in Wicomico County are listed in **Table 12-2**.

**TABLE 12-2: MAJOR EMPLOYERS - WICOMICO COUNTY (2012)**

Business Name	# of Persons	Business Name	# of Persons
Anchorage Nursing	100-249	Mid Delmarva Family YMCA	100-249
Barrett Business Services	100-249	OfficeMax Inc.	100-249
BesTemps	250-499	Peninsula Regional Medical Center	1,000 and over
Boscov's Department Store	100-249	Pepsi Cola Bottling Company	100-249
Coastal Hospice	100-249	Perdue Agribusiness Inc.	100-249
Coca Cola Enterprises Inc.	100-249	Perdue Farms	1,000 and over
Connectiv Resource Partners	100-249	Perdue Grain and Oil Seed	100-249
Darden Restaurants	100-249	Piedmont Airlines	250-499
Delaware Elevator	100-249	Pohanka of Salisbury	100-249
Delmarva Power & Light	250-499	Quality Staffing Services	100-249
Dove Pointe Residential Services	250-499	Rehabilitation Hospital Corporation	100-249
Draper Holdings Business Trust	100-249	Rommel Holdings Inc.	100-249
Food Lion	100-249	Salisbury Christian School, Inc.	100-249
FPP Business Services	100-249	Sears	100-249
Genesis Eldercare Management Services	250-499	Sherwood of Salisbury	100-249
Giant Food Stores	100-249	Shore Up	250-499
Home Depot	100-249	Standard Register Company	100-249
K&L Microwave	250-499	Target	100-249
KFC-Delmarva Dempseys Inc.	100-249	Tishcon Corporation	100-249
Labinal Salisbury Inc.	500-999	Trigen Labs	100-249
Lorch Microwave	100-249	Trinity Sterile Inc.	100-249
Lowe's	100-249	UPS	100-249
Machining Technologies	100-249	Verizon Maryland	100-249
Macy's	100-249	Wal-Mart/Sam's Club	500-999
McDonald's/Baxter, Thomas W	100-249	Wendy's Old Fashion Hamburgers	100-249

Source: MD Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, September 2012

In addition to the business establishments with paid employees, there were 5,806 non-employer establishments within the County according to the U.S. Census Bureau 2011 Non-employer statistics. As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, a non-employer business is one that has no paid employees, has annual business receipts of \$1,000 or more and is subject to federal income taxes. The U.S. Census confirmed the majority of all business establishments in the United States are non-employers, yet these firms average less than 4 percent of all sales and receipts nationally.

**Commercial and Industrial Sector**

There are a number of existing and potential areas in the County where industrial and commercial land uses are proposed with the goal of maintaining Wicomico County as the hub of commercial and industrial employment on the Lower Eastern Shore. These areas are focused within and around the Cities of Salisbury and Fruitland, as well as the Town of Delmar. County-wide there are six business and industrial parks, which can range in size from one to 350 acres. See **Table 12-3**. These more intensely developed uses are situated in close proximity to U.S. Route 13 & 50, Wicomico River, Salisbury – Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport, or the Norfolk Southern railroad. For the region to remain competitive and economically viable for supporting commercial and industrial land uses, capital planning and programming for infrastructure maintenance and improvements is critical. In addition, the County and Metro Core municipalities will continue to evaluate commercial and industrial land uses to determine

adequate availability of land to meet existing and future demand, as well as identify compatible locations for expansion of aforementioned uses near major transportation hubs.

The Northwood Industrial Park, which is zoned Industrial Park District, is over 350 acres in size and includes over one million square feet of industrial building space. Businesses in this Park include a beverage distributor, microwave technology, manufacturing, research, printing, and others. Surrounding the Industrial Park, in the Light Industrial District, are other manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution businesses.

Westwood Commerce Park is located at the intersection of U.S. Route 50 and the U.S. Route 13/50 Salisbury Bypass/Ocean Gateway. This developing business park currently contains three developed sites with over 155,000 square feet of floor area. Additionally, it also includes over 250 acres of land available for new business development. This Commerce Park is expected to serve as the gateway of economic activity in the Salisbury area.

Wicomico County appropriated funding in FY 2014 Capital Improvement Budget to prepare a study identifying the cost and evaluate feasibility to provide water service properties Airport Business Zoning District (A-2). In addition to serving the Airport, consideration of expanding service to the Air Business Center is essential to attract industrial uses to this Center.

**TABLE 12-3: BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL PARKS - WICOMICO COUNTY (2009)**

Business/Industrial Property	Info
Northwood Industrial Park	Located just outside of the City of Salisbury, this industrial park has a total of 350 acres.
Air Business Center	The Air Business Center has direct runway access at the Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport to sites for air related corporate use.
Fruitland Industrial Park	This industrial park has a total of 110 acres with municipal service and rail access.
Westwood Commerce Park	The Westwood Commerce Park is located at the intersection of U.S. Route 50 and the U.S. Route 13/50 Salisbury Bypass/Ocean Gateway. This 260-acre site is served by the City of Salisbury’s water and sewer system. In addition, this commerce park is served by natural gas and high-speed voice and data line.
Airport Incubator	The Airport Incubator provides below market lease rates with flexible terms to technology-oriented firms. The former terminal building at the airport was converted into the Airport Incubator. The building consists of 7,500 sq. feet of space for lease.

Source: MD Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, September 2009

**Construction Sector**

The number of residential and non-residential building permits issued in Wicomico County and the eight municipalities had decreased annually since 2007. In 2007, 513 residential and 174 non-residential building permits had been issued county-wide. The number of permits had decreased to 87 residential and increased to 240 non-residential in 2012, a reduction of 58.3 and increase of 175.9 percent, respectively. See **Table 12-4**. The reduction in building permits between 2007 – 2011 reflected the weakening of the overall economy and underscored the importance of a diversified local economy. The considerable increase in multi-family permits in 2012 is indicative of a recent change in the County development pattern resulting in municipal areas experiencing higher residential growth rates than unincorporated portion of the County.

**TABLE 12-4: BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED –WICOMICO COUNTY**

Permits	Wicomico County 2007	Wicomico County 2008	Wicomico County 2009	Wicomico County 2010	Wicomico County 2011	Wicomico County 2012	Percentage Difference 2007 - 2011
Single-Family Residential	269	208	145	142	107	87	-67.7
Single-Family Residential Percent Change	N/A	-22.7%	-30.3%	-2.1%	-24.6%	-18.7%	N/A
Multi-Family Residential	244	140	55	4	0	240	1.7
Multi-Family Residential Percent Change	N/A	-42.6%	-60.7%	-92.7%	-100.0%	+240.0%	N/A
Non-Residential	174	133	67	64	66	80	54.0
Non-Residential Percent Change	N/A	-23.6%	-49.6%	-4.5%	+3.1%	+21.2%	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>40.8%</b>

Source: Maryland Department of Planning – State Data Center (2012), and Salisbury-Wicomico Economic Development, Inc. (2012)

**Agricultural Sector**

Wicomico County has an active farming community, especially in its eastern and western areas of the County. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, there were 508 active farms in the County with an average size of 183 acres. Statewide, the County ranked first in the estimated market value of all agricultural products sold, with almost \$200 million of products sold in 2007. Poultry accounted for almost 80 percent of this figure, not including crops that may have been grown in support of the poultry industry.

More information about the agriculture and its importance to the local economy is located in **Chapter 6: Agriculture** of this Plan.

**IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

The transportation services offered in Wicomico County provide easy access throughout the County. All modes of transportation are available: highway, rail, water, and air. The major highways that run through the County are U.S. Route 50, which runs east-west, and U.S. Route 13, which runs north-south. The Norfolk-Southern railway runs through Salisbury parallel to U.S. Route 13 Business. In addition, two freight trains service the Northwood and Fruitland Industrial Parks daily. The Port of Salisbury is one of the largest ports in the State of Maryland, second only to Baltimore. Annually, the Port handles over \$200 million in goods including petroleum, grain, and building materials. The County is also home to the Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport, which is the second largest commercial airport in Maryland serving approximately 120,000 to 150,000 passengers annually.