

Counties search for winning formula to draw business

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[Kate Ryan](#), wtop.com

WASHINGTON - Fairfax County has a winning formula of low taxes and excellent schools that "provide a great workforce for the companies that are locating here," says Jim Corcoran, president and CEO of the county's Chamber of Commerce.

Montgomery County has great schools too, but officials there have expressed concern that the county may be losing out to Fairfax County because of its lower tax rate.

However, John Jabara says he chose Bethesda for his business, [Savenia Labs](#) because of [BethesdaGreen](#), a unique public-private business incubator that focuses on environmentally friendly businesses.

"That was a perfect fit for what we were trying to do," Jabara says.

Jabara's Savenia Labs performs energy ratings of small appliances -- the ones that are not rated by the [Energy Star](#) program.

Jabara says BethesdaGreen isn't your standard business incubator program. "A lot of incubators that you hear about in the country are just renting you an office."

He says the program does more with business to business introductions and community networking.

Montgomery County's Steve Silverman, director of the county's Department of Economic Development, says he is putting added emphasis on retaining businesses already in the county, while the search to attract new businesses continues.

Next month, Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett will join Governor Martin O'Malley on a trade trip to India.

Corcoran says they really do help bring business to localities, but they are not a quick fix to an ailing economic climate.

"When you're doing business internationally, it takes time. It takes years to cultivate relationships ... those are major investments," he says.

Fairfax County has offices in London, Israel and in India.

"The Fairfax County name is recognized around the globe because of those economic development efforts," Corcoran says.

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