



BALTIMORE COUNTY
MARYLAND

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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Center for Maryland Agriculture - \$10 Million Facility to Serve as Focal Point for Local Agriculture Industry

(Towson, MD) - At a grand opening ceremony for the new Baltimore County Farmers Market at the Maryland State Fair, Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith announced that he has selected Chris McCollum to serve as Executive for the County's new agricultural center slated to open in September.

"Chris will do an excellent job managing this important facility and will provide the vision and leadership that will quickly establish it as a true focal point for local agriculture here and throughout the region," Smith said. "We created this center to help grow Baltimore County's \$300 million agriculture industry by developing important synergies among farm services agencies and the agricultural community."

McCollum grew up on a family farm and has extensive experience in rural economic development, both at the Baltimore County Department of Economic Development and at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. For the past six years, he has focused on agriculture as a large economic engine in Baltimore County, aggressively working to help promote profitability and sustainability of family farms and agriculture businesses. In the past 2 years, McCollum has facilitated some \$1.5 million in economic development loans to a wide variety of agricultural enterprises including cattle, beef, poultry and dairy farms; commercial nurseries and vineyards.

Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture

The Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture is a \$10 million facility designed to preserve and foster growth in the County's important agricultural sector. It will serve as an educational resource center for farmers and the public, offering recreational opportunities and conserving valuable open space. The 149-acre center and park complex will be completed in the next few months and will serve as a centralized facility to bring together a number of agricultural support agencies that enhance the protection of soil and water resources through research-based, modern land management and farming techniques.

The facility was developed by Baltimore County with oversight from the Agriculture Center Steering Committee and input from the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council, trade groups, community organizations, land preservation interests, state representatives, and Center occupants.

