



SENIOR  
LEADERSHIP  
TEAM

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Chief Executive  
Officer

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**Ron Meliker**  
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**Chuck Thompson**  
Chief Information  
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**Jackie Tuma**  
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## May 2019

### ***Office of the President/CEO***

The President/CEO participated in “Business Appreciation Week” sponsored by the Howard County Economic Development Authority. Joined by Tracy Turner, Howard County Economic Development Authority, and Christine Uhlhorn, Fire & Rescue, the President/CEO visited Underwriters Laboratories and Top Virtual Staffing Solutions. The purpose of the visits was to thank business owners for their contribution to the community and to listen to their perspectives on how to strengthen Howard County’s business climate.

County Executive Calvin Ball, Columbia Festival of the Arts, the Inner Arbor Trust, Downtown Columbia Partnership, and others participated in a joint announcement of summer programming on 2 May. Upcoming events include:

- Books in Bloom Festival – 2 June
- Columbia Festival of the Arts *Lakefest* – 14-16 June
- Lakefront Summer Festival – 17 June – September
- Soulful Symphony premier performance – 29 June
- Columbia Orchestra Summer Pops Concert – 30 June

Organizations hosting and promoting 2019 summer activities in Downtown Columbia include Columbia Association, Columbia Festival of the Arts, Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission, Downtown Columbia Partnership, Inner Arbor Trust, Merriweather Post Pavilion, and Visit Howard County.

For a current schedule of activities in Downtown Columbia, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ColumbiaMD/events/>.

Howard Hughes Corporation recently announced its plans for the Downtown Columbia Lakefront district. It is seeking to build a “wellness district” that would focus on bringing in health and fitness-related tenants. Building the wellness district will begin with the construction of a more than 200,000-square-foot office and retail building to be called 1 Sterrett Place. The nine-story, glass tower will be constructed on the site of the 5565 Sterrett Place office building, slated for demolition later this year.

Howard County received a AAA credit rating from the three rating agencies for the 22<sup>nd</sup> year. The agencies noted Howard County’s strong economy and financial flexibility. Among more than 3,000 counties in the nation, Howard is one of only 43 counties to receive a AAA rating from all agencies.

## ***Administrative Services***

### **Highlights**

The IT team and our vendor partners have successfully switched over approximately half of our phones from the old system to the new system. Customers calling those facilities from outside lines will see no difference between the old and new systems. Internally, though, there is a difference in that an internal caller is able to dial internally using the four-digit extensions only to other facilities that are on the same system as the caller. This will be a bit cumbersome for the two weeks or so that we are deploying the new phones to all CA facilities.

Again this month, most of CA is actively working on the Dayforce implementation, the new cloud-based human resources information system from Ceridian. The project remains on time for the "first punch" scheduled for 10 June and the first pay date of 5 July. At this time, the Learning and Organizational Development team is leading training sessions for managers and for employees with the goal of having all managers trained by Tuesday, 4 June. The team is taking the training sessions out into the field, having sessions at the Athletic Club, Columbia Gym, outdoors for pools staff, and other locations, in addition to classroom settings at headquarters. At the same time, there are significant data transfer efforts, testing and more testing and extensive work on security configurations that will use CA's active directory for single sign on for active team members. The IT team is also working with Ceridian's team to configure and test the touch and HTML time clocks.

### **Challenges**

The phone system transition continues to be challenged by Windstream's bankruptcy through the effect that it is having on their staffing. Multiple project contacts on their side have left that organization, creating a challenge for CA in project continuity and completion.

We are at the point in the Dayforce implementation where the team must clear errors, configuration issues, etc. immediately. It is essential that everyone continue to work together and remain focused as we move into the last few weeks of the project.

### **Opportunities**

We are very excited about the use of an automated, integrated application for HR, payroll and related functions. We are also looking forward to the new features, and ultimately reduced costs, of the new cloud-based telephony system.

## ***Sport and Fitness***

### **Highlights**

#### **Aquatics**

Upgrades were made this spring at several of the outdoor pools:

- Dasher Green Pool is on track to have its bath house renovated, concrete deck repaired, shade canopies installed over the wading pool and spa, and a new bean bag toss area created.

- Hawthorn Pool received a new ADA wading pool, shade canopies over the wading pool and spa, and concrete deck replacement. Hawthorn is now the fifth ADA compliant outdoor pool.
- Running Brook Pool had its wading pool replaced with a new Water Journey™ Labyrinth & Race. This is a ground-level design modeled after running streams and sandy shorelines. The unique playscape uses life-like currents and sprays to create highly stimulating play experiences.

### Columbia Gym

Renovation of the exterior of the building, including power washing and painting, was completed. All of the outside windows were removed to reinforce them and prevent water damage to our interior walls. The pool area had a complete cleanup and a new whirlpool shell was installed.

### Tennis

Columbia Association and the Wilde Lake Tennis Club are proud hosts of the three-step process of crowning the Maryland High School Tennis Champions for 2019. The series began on 7 May when we hosted the Howard County Tennis Championships. The winners will then participate in the Maryland Regional High School Tennis Championships on 15-18 May. The third leg of the crown will conclude 23-25 May with the State Boys and Girls Championships.

Over 1,000 youth tennis players from Maryland will meet at Wilde Lake Tennis Club during this three-week elimination tournament.

Hobbit's Glen Tennis Club is now open for the 2019 clay court season. Two of the six courts will be rebuilt during this summer; the club will be operating on four newly resurfaced courts during that time.

### Athletic Club

The ceiling project in Studio 2 is complete and all classes returned to their normal schedule and location as of Monday, 13 May. The project included the installation of a new drop ceiling, a thick layer of insulation and new light fixtures, to mitigate the sound coming from the studio above. A new stereo system was also installed, as the previous one had reached the end of its useful life.

The re-connection of the MYE App Audio system is nearing completion and will be functional by 17 May.

### Challenges

Challenges include continuing to find quality part-time team members with declining response to ads given the current jobless rate, and keeping the member experience at a high level while we begin our second major renovation in as many years.

### Opportunities

The temperate spring, together with the new bridge and pricing at Fairway Hills, has presented us with a great opportunity to grow golf participation after a year of decline due in large part to weather.

## ***Open Space and Facility Services***

### **Community Improvement and Capital Projects**

#### Highlights

- Fairway Hills Hole 18 bridge and boardwalk are complete and open.
- The Dorsey Hall Basketball Court playing surface was replaced and the basketball courts are open and available for play.
- Two pedestrian pathway bridges were installed off of Red Keel and boardwalk work is currently underway at Four Foot Trail.
- Exterior improvements at the Columbia Gym are nearing completion and the Supreme Sports Club phase 1A will begin this month. The Supreme Sports Club Phase 1A construction will focus on the upper level locker rooms and some repairs and finish upgrades to the pool area.

#### Challenges

The much higher than average rainfall totals continue to negatively impact outdoor construction related activities and completion schedules.

#### Opportunities

Continuing to assess the fiberglass bridge and decking for roll-out across the full Columbia portfolio.

## **Energy Management**

#### Highlights

- The 40kW solar photovoltaic (PV) system at the Columbia Athletic Club was energized and is providing power to the facility; it is expected to generate approximately 5% of annual use.
- Planning for solar PV systems at the Long Reach Tennis Club, Kahler Hall, and Slayton House was initiated, with installation expected later this summer.
- A high efficiency ENERGY STAR HVAC unit was installed at the Longfellow Neighborhood Center.
- CA staff participated in Howard County GreenFest on 13 April to promote energy efficiency and CA's energy programs offered to the community.

#### Opportunities

Howard County recently announced aggressive energy and climate goals that may offer potential collaboration on sustainability projects. CA is considering a promotional partnership with BGE to increase participation in their Quick Home Energy Checkup program for residents.

## **Open Space Operations**

#### Highlights

Aquatic weed management at Lake Elkhorn, Wilde Lake and Lake Kittamaqundi has begun. In between mowing cycles, staff is increasing tot lot maintenance including redistributing and adding mulch. Pre-event tasks at Symphony Woods such as aerification, fertilization and tree pruning have been completed in preparation for Wine in the Woods.

### Challenges

Adequate rainfall and warm temperatures has resulted in excessive growth in between mowing cycles. Crews are mowing select areas weekly instead of biweekly to help alleviate clippings.

### Opportunities

The current procedure is to mow most turf areas biweekly throughout every Village the same week. We are beginning to shift to mowing some Villages on opposite weeks to balance the workload and to minimize weather impacts.

## **Watershed Management and Open Space Enhancements**

### Highlights

CA staff, in cooperation with the Wilde Lake Community Association and Howard County Watershed Stewards, held a tree give away and plant swap at the Wilde Lake Barn on 28 April. Following the plant swap, volunteers joined CA staff, the Wilde Lake Community Association, and Howard County Watershed Stewards planting replacement trees below the Wilde Lake dam. Later in the afternoon, CA staff, in collaboration with the Community Ecology Institute, constructed a pollinator garden in River Hill.

### Challenges

Obtaining grant funding to support the Rain Garden Cost Share Program is a challenge.

### Opportunities

Current opportunities include engaging residents in conversations about various watershed and lake management activities and having the opportunity to explain the reasons and logic behind some of CA's actions.

## **Community Services**

### Highlights

Columbia Art Center, in collaboration with the Howard County Public School System and Howard County Library System, hosted the 2019 "Choose Civility" Poster and Video Contest. More than 100 youth participated with art reflecting this year's theme: "*We Are All Welcome!*" More than 135 people attended the reception on 10 April.

Columbia Community Exchange (CCE) timebank, in collaboration with Transition Howard County, Howard County Community Sustainability Office and Howard Community College (HCC) presented interactive do-it-yourself workshops at GreenFest in April 2019. Workshops featured presenters from CCE, CA, Elkridge Library DIY Education Center, and HCC's Engineering Department. Over sixty people attended the workshops. Two project tables featured live demonstrations by two groups: Sew Who Cares (plastic bag sleeping mats) and Less Plastics Please (tee shirt bags).

Over 300 people attended the preview screening for "Columbia's Promise" documentary at Smith Theatre, 24 April before the public air date. The documentary was commissioned as part of Columbia's 50th Birthday, in collaboration with community leaders and resources for the Columbia Archives. Ken Day, an award winning producer, was the executive director of the piece. Currently, the link to view is <https://video.mpt.tv/video/columbias-promise-mifik/>



## **Opportunities**

Renee Kalu, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator, attended [Encore Howard County's](#) Launch Celebration at Belmont Manor, Elkridge, MD on Thursday, 25 April. She networked with attendees and distributed Volunteer Center resources. A photo of Renee was posted on their website (<https://www.encorehoco.org/>)

Pam Simonson, Volunteer Center Manager, has been invited to sit on A-OK's Advisory Board. The initial meeting was held on Monday, 28 April at the Hawthorne Center. A-OK recruits, screens, trains and oversees volunteers who mentor and tutor students in many Howard County elementary and middle schools.

Patricia Dugan, Columbia Community Exchange and Older Adults Programs, attended Miller's Grant's resident health fair on 16 April. Ms. Dugan shared information about CA's transportation offerings for older adults via the Senior Events Shuttle and CCE.

Columbia Art Center hosted the 2019 Congressional Youth Art Competition for the 3rd District of Maryland on Saturday, 11 May 2019. More than 35 high school artworks were on display representing Baltimore City and four counties - Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Howard. Congressman John P. Sarbanes presented the juror awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. The winning selection will be exhibited in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC. This exhibit marks the sixth time Columbia Art Center has had the honor to host the Congressional Youth Art Competition.

## ***Communications and Marketing***

### **Highlights**

Communications and Marketing (C&M) continued to communicate and update the community about CA's five-year strategic planning process. The team posted revised goals, some with objectives, following the 25 April meeting and invited community review and feedback.

Enhanced landing pages for fitness and golf memberships launched at the end of April in an effort to improve lead form submissions. All advertising and marketing efforts direct people to these new pages. An enhanced landing page for Haven on the Lake memberships went live on 10 May.

To increase traffic at Columbia Gym and Haven on the Lake, a series of targeted emails and direct mail pieces were planned and executed beginning the week of 6 May. Additional direct mail pieces are planned for Columbia Gym and Haven on the Lake for late May/early June. One in particular includes a focus on new area residents. Messaging will include an invitation to "Try us free for a day."

Our lead growth for memberships is strong, compared to year-over-year data. Digital leads grew 345% in April 2019 compared to a year ago. Organic traffic, display ads and Facebook are generating most of the leads for CA fitness and Haven, while organic and Google Ads are driving the golf lead submissions.

On a separate note, we have planned audio improvements for the Boardroom at CA Headquarters. New microphones have been ordered that have longer goosenecks, which

should improve the audio pickup of participants in the room. The installation of these new microphones is scheduled for June.

### Opportunities

An update on the redevelopment of the CA website: New navigation has been finalized, and implementation work has begun. A wireframe for the homepage has been approved, and homepage designs are currently being reviewed. The expected timeframe for the new site to go live is late summer 2019.

### ***CA in the News***

Recent coverage in the media included a feature story on the “Columbia’s Promise” documentary in the Baltimore Sun and Howard County Times, and additional coverage on the documentary by Business Monthly and Maryland Reporter.

### ***Thought of the Month***

“Always measure an obstacle next to the size of the dream you are pursuing.  
It is all in how you look at it.”

John C. Maxwell