

DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
RESOURCES

april/may 2014

Arbor Day 2014 - Longfields Elementary School

Green Scene

newsletter



Rushern L. Baker, III
County Executive

The DER Mission

The Department of Environmental Resources works for a healthy, beautiful and sustainable County through programs that provide clean water, flood control, recycling and waste management, animal management and pet adoption in partnership with residents and other stakeholders.

DIRECTOR'S *Corner*



Dear Friends,

Springtime reminds us of the vitality of nature, as each action begets another in an interdependent "blooming and buzzing symphony" of renewal. As the northern hemisphere tilts toward the sun, we receive more sunlight. More sunlight wakes trees from dormancy. Blooming plants lead to pollen, which leads to fertilization of other plants. Fertilization leads to the generation of seeds and fruits, which feed wildlife. Wildlife transport the seeds to other places and spreads our leafy canopy, and so on and so forth. There are so many chains of interdependence in nature, and this one example is just one of thousands, if not millions.

There is always much to learn from nature, but this lesson of interdependence and renewal is particularly apt. In our work together we must recognize that each of our actions has an impact - positive, negative or someplace in-between - that has an affect far beyond ourselves. This is our primary message in our education and outreach programs - that each of us matters and has power and ability to make a difference...and DER is here to help.

Whether it is a decision to recycle, plant a tree or install a permeable pavement driveway, a key motivation in taking such actions is the knowledge that it matters. In this vein, there are several studies on the psychology of littering and the reasons people litter are varied. One is the existence of "social norms" that if a place is covered in litter it sends the message that it is okay for another to litter (similar to the 'broken windows' theory in public safety). Another comes from a sense of entitlement...that there is someone else out there who will clean up after me. Yet another cause, related to the last, is that some feel it is an act of superiority, an act showing that we are above the rules of others, providing a sense of self-importance.

All of this can be seen as originating from the same source...a feeling of powerlessness. On page three you can read about our recent efforts in the schools; teaching young people that they have 'green power' and that the act of planting a tree (for example) will have a powerful impact felt by many for decades to come. On each page of this newsletter you can see this same effort, finding ways for each of us to exercise our power in a positive way.

We all recently celebrated Earth Day, an important day to honor and bring attention to our power as a people to transform our relationship to our natural environment. We know that everyday must be Earth Day, and we can always learn some new way to participate. On pages 17 and 18 our team has listed out more than 30 things we can do in our everyday life. So, please join me in looking over this list... how can we find new ways to increase our own "green power?"

- Adam
Director



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The DER Newsletter is a monthly publication of the Department of Environmental Resources. We welcome story suggestions, photos and special event articles.

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GREEN POWER AT LONGFIELDS ELEMENTARY!

On Friday, April 25, DER, along with County officials and the Prince George's County Beautification Committee (PGCBC), joined students at Longfields Elementary to plant 17 trees in honor of Arbor Day. An additional 32 trees were planted throughout the day to earn the school a "green school" classification.

Speaking on behalf of Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III, Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Aubrey Thagard, reminded students that they must be active participants in the nurturing of the trees. "These trees will need your care in order to grow healthy and strong," said Thagard. "By planting these trees, you are improving the environment and our quality of life for generations to come."

Department of Environmental Resources Director Adam Ortiz addressed students and emphasized that trees are valuable to our environment and help support our lives. "Trees give us oxygen that helps to make us smarter," he said. "Everyone in this room has the 'green power' to help improve our environment, air quality and to beautify our surroundings."

County Council Chair Mel Franklin (D-District 9) and Councilmember Derrick Leon Davis (D-District) presented a proclamation to school's Principal, Maisha Strong, in honor of the student's environmental stewardship. They also accepted the TREE CITY USA Award from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' (MDNR) Forest Service, which recognizes the County's commitment to community forestry. Prince George's County is the only County in the nation to have received this award for 30 consecutive years.

The County's annual Arbor Day event is sponsored by PGCBC. The committee partners with DER, the Department of Public Works and Transportation, the Office of Central Services, MDNR's Forest Service, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Neighborhood Design Center, the Prince George's County Soil Conservation District and Prince George's County Public Schools to conduct other greening and beautification activities held throughout the County.



SOLAR FLAIR!

The search is underway for companies to partner with Prince George's County in the installation of solar farms at two locations within the County. The farms will convert sunlight to electricity and support the decrease of the County's energy cost while also reducing the County's carbon footprint. The farms will be developed at the Brown Station Road Sanitary Landfill in Upper Marlboro and the Sandy Hill Disposal Project in Bowie. Upon the successful launch of the initial farms, expansion of the project will occur to other facilities within the County.

Recently, the Prince George's County Office of Central Services' (OCS) Contract Administration and Procurement Division hosted a pre-qualification conference for companies interested in working with the County to build the farms. Representatives from 60 companies throughout the United States attended the conference, which included a tour of development sites.

As an initiative of OCS' Sustainable Energy Program and the Department of Environmental Resources' Waste Management Division, these renewable energy upgrades will greatly enhance the County's clean energy portfolio.

For more information, about the farm project and request of qualifications, you may contact Barbara Manley at bgmanley@co.pg.md.us.



GOVERNOR'S ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON URBAN TREES

Governor Martin O'Malley recently held a roundtable discussion on the protection and expansion of the tree canopy in urban areas in Maryland. Experts and State agency representatives, including DER Director Adam Ortiz and Department of Public Works & Transportation Project Manager Wayne Lucas, participated in the roundtable, which examined statewide strategies for enhancing tree coverage including standards and specifications, performance measures, monitoring equipment and protection ordinances. The group also emphasized the importance of addressing disparities in environmental protection and improving partnerships with private landowners for tree planting.



CELEBRATING EARTH DAY 2014

In celebration of Earth Day, volunteers including Congresswoman Donna Edwards (MD-4) and DER Director Adam Ortiz, participated in the Anacostia Watershed Society's 5th annual Earth Day Clean Up & Celebration. Participants gathered at various sites around the Anacostia watershed in Washington D.C., and Montgomery and Prince George's Counties to remove trash and debris from the Anacostia River. During a post-clean up celebration, which was held at RFK stadium in Washington, D.C., the Anacostia Watershed Society recognized outstanding volunteers and leaders in the restoration efforts of the Anacostia River. Volunteers also enjoyed notable speakers, live music, free food and exhibits from local vendors.



From left: Adam Ortiz, Director, DER; Robert Boone, founder, Anacostia Watershed Society; Congresswoman Donna Edwards (MD-4), Jim Foster and Howard Gasaway Sr., DC Seafarers Yacht Club

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ERP IS COMING TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU

Beginning in July 2014, the County will begin to implement the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) program. This is a new web-based system that will replace outdated legacy systems such as Cyborg (for human resource functions), EXPBUD (for budgeting functions) and GEAC/INFOR (for financial and procurement functions). The first wave will consist of web-based modules for finance, budgeting and procurement. The second wave, which goes live in January 2015, will include human resource and payroll modules. Current legacy systems cannot communicate with one another. This will not be the case with ERP.

Reggie Ford of HRO and Cheryl Jones of WMD are the Agency Readiness Leads (ARLs) and will liaison between the ERP implementation and the Agency. They will ensure that the Agency and all end users are kept up to date with training dates and other pertinent information. All users will be fully trained before the "go live" date.

All may access the ERP updates section on the County's intranet page for more information. There you will find PowerPoint presentations as well as the most recent newsletters.

ERP and SAP are used interchangeably. SAP is not an acronym. It stands for the actual software that is utilized to implement ERP. So if you see or hear SAP you will know it references the ERP processes coming our way.

If further discussion is required on ERP, please contact Reggie Ford at x1-5956 or Cheryl Jones at x2-6312.

CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY TO SUITLAND FAMILY

Twenty-two DER volunteers scraped off old paint, repainted exterior surfaces, trimmed tree branches and landscaped, among other improvements at the Suitland home of Clara Champ on Saturday, April 26.

The volunteers were part of an all-day community service program called Christmas in April which helps low-income and disabled residents with a variety of home repairs and maintenance. The program is coordinated and funded by Mary Kucharski of Prince George's County Christmas in April. DER's Team was led by Vanessa Lee of the Administrative Services Division and co-chaired by Henry Ellis and Bruce O'Dell, both of WMD.

Lee thanked the volunteers for their hard work and commitment. "It's about helping those most in need," she says. "Everyone should feel proud of the work they accomplished today."

Each year, DER sponsors a house in the program and depends on employee volunteers to donate their time and raise funds to pay for the repairs needed for each project. This year, Lee was able to secure a donation from Home Depot in Upper Marlboro and materials from the Christmas in April program and Community Forklift. Rodney Curtis and Cedric McCoy of the Prince George's County Public Schools Environmental Office also donated mold abatement services.

Ms. Champ was extremely appreciative of the work that was completed by the volunteers and graciously thanked everyone for their efforts.

DER has been a participant of the program for the past 10 years.

DER employees who volunteered on this year's project include:

- Vanessa Lee – Captain**
- Henry Ellis – Co-Captain**
- Wilfred Aguilar**
- Tumisha Alao**
- Denice Curry**
- Rodney Curtis**
- Walter Hannon**
- Carlton Jones**
- Cheryl Jones**
- Martin W. Lee, Jr.**
- Cedric McCoy**
- Bruce O'Dell**
- Tabatha Patterson**
- Quinton Proctor**
- Harland Smith**
- Carolyn Waldron**
- Wayne Water**
- Debra Weller**
- Deron Williams**
- Shannon Williams**



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PGAMD REMOVES OVER FORTY RABBITS FROM HOME

On Sunday, March 16, the Prince George's County Animal Management Division (PGAMD) responded to a call for animals displaced by a house fire in New Carrollton. When the animal control officer arrived, he found over 40 rabbits of all shapes and sizes, all of whom had been maintained outside. After calling for additional assistance, two animal control officers rounded up all of the rabbits and brought them to the Animal Services Facility. The rabbits garnered quite a bit of attention and all got their fifteen minutes of fame, with several news crews filming them in their new, but temporary, digs. Thanks

to a partnership with Last Chance Animal Rescue, who runs the Spay Spot Spay/Neuter clinic located in the Animal Services Facility, the rabbits are all finding new forever homes. PGAMD waived all adoption fees, and Last Chance Animal Rescue offered discounted spay/neuter fees. All potential adopters were reminded that, like dogs and cats, rabbits can live 10 to 15 years, are companion animals that deserve to live inside the home and require regular veterinary care. PGAMD would like to thank the community for donations of food and supplies to aid in the care of the rabbits during their stay with us.

PGAMD RESCUE COORDINATORS RECEIVE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AWARD

PGAMD is proud to announce that the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments selected our rescue coordinators to receive the Customer Service Award given to an individual or team for assisting the public while consistently demonstrating professionalism. Adina Howard, Jenna Peterson, and Christina Manucy were nominated and recognized for their dedication and commitment in working with local animal rescue groups to find placement for animals at the Animal Services Facility. This can be especially challenging during the warmer months when PGAMD's intake numbers increase, in large part due to the influx of newborn and young kittens. Over the last two years, these hard-working ladies helped place 5,631 animals. An awards ceremony was held to honor regional animal control officers, rescuers, volunteers, and other dedicated animal service and care providers for their outstanding service. The ceremony was hosted by Liz Crenshaw of NBC-4. PGAMD would like to extend our sincere appreciation for their hard work on behalf of the animals in our care. Keep up the great work!



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NONPROFITS AND CHURCHES: SAVE MONEY...AND OUR ENVIRONMENT!

Help improve the water quality in Prince George's County and save money at the same time! Qualified organizations including religious and other non-profit organizations may participate in the Alternative Compliance Program, that provides an opportunity to reduce pollutants into local water ways while lowering their Clean Water Act Fee. By participating in one or more of the following environmentally focused activities, your organization and our environment will benefit.

- Install an environmental system, such as rain barrels, rain gardens or permeable pavement on property owned by the organization, and received up to a 50 percent fee reduction.
- Establish education and outreach programs that raise awareness of water quality issues, develop an environmental "green team or green ministry" of volunteers to assist with the installation of environmental systems, and receive up to a 25 percent fee reduction.

- Work with lawn management companies certified in the proper use and application of fertilizers for optimal water quality protection, and receive up to a 25 percent fee reduction.

The Clean Water Act Fee supports the State of Maryland's efforts to reduce the amount of pollutants reaching neighboring water ways. When it rains, pollutants including trash, oil, sediment and chemicals are collected in stormwater runoff from areas such as rooftops, roads, parking lots, and driveways. The water, in addition to the pollutants, is carried into local streams through storm water drains.

Organizations interested in applying or learning more about the program can contact the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources, Stormwater Management Division at (301) 883-5833.

ANACOSTIA FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT REHABILITATION PROJECT

Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources (DER) and Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) were recently recognized by the American Council of Engineering Companies Maryland (ACEC MD) for their role in the Anacostia Flood Risk Management Rehabilitation (FRMR) Project designed by McCormick Taylor. Award recipients were honored at the ACEC MD Awards Banquet and General Membership Meeting. The ACEC MD is a nonprofit association representing over 85 multi-sized consulting engineering and related service firms located throughout the State serving the public, as well as private sectors.

Prince George's County, the Flood Risk Management System (FRMS) sponsor, responsible for maintenance and operations of the Anacostia FRMS, selected McCormick Taylor to oversee the rehabilitation of the Anacostia FRMS which included four levee and flood control pumping stations that needed reaccreditation. McCormick Taylor designed and managed the rehabilitation effort to correct all deficiencies identified by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and mandated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The Anacostia FRMR Project provides flood risk reduction from high water events to seven communities in the County and a multitude of property owners. The project included:

- Reconstruction of 4.8 miles of earthen levee
- Rehabilitation to 4 major pumping stations
- Design of maintenance access vaults
- Formulation of repairs to levee penetrations, gates, and flapper valves
- Improvement of slope repairs using mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) methods
- Development of operation and maintenance manuals for each levee system/pumping station
- Implementation of a comprehensive maintenance and testing program

"We are honored to have participated in this project and receive recognition for our role in the Anacostia FRMR Project. We congratulate McCormick Taylor on their 2014 Honor Award from the ACEC MD. By working together, the County now has a sustainable and reliable flood protection system in place that will provide flooding protection to property owners during major storm events," commented Adam Ortiz, Director, DER.



SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES

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COPE TRAVELS THE COUNTY

DER's Community Outreach Promoting Empowerment Section (COPE) has been busy bringing information and encouraging environmental stewardship around the County. COPE has been to Temple Hills, University Park, District Heights, Fort Washington, Upper Marlboro, West Laurel, Beltsville, Greenbelt, Riverdale Park, Oxon Hill and Baden. Planned events are also scheduled for Hyattsville, Cheverly and Forestville.

Of course all that travel doesn't matter if it helps citizens become engaged. It seems to be working, because each time COPE talks to a group or participates in an event they receive invitations to speak to other groups and organizations.

As one civic association president put it, "I want to thank you and your staff for the time, patience and enlightenment shown at our Civic Association meeting. I am proud to say that many are very receptive to doing what they can for the environment. Many members responded "great meeting" or "I learned something new tonight."

So what is COPE's message? Telling citizens about the Rain Check Rebate and Tree ReLEAF Programs and introducing COPE's focus areas: Trash Reduction, Water Quality, Environmental Justice, Energy, Air & Climate, Trees and Leading the Way to Sustainability. We are also participating in events such as: Stormwater Solutions: Rain Barrels and More! Behnke Nursery's Spring Open House and Community Forklift's Annual Garden Party.



TREE ReLEAF GRANT PROGRAM

The Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources is pleased to announce the relaunch of its Tree ReLeaf Grant Program – a sustainability initiative that fosters the enhancement of natural environments in Prince George's County through tree planting grants. Civic, neighborhood, community and homeowner associations, schools and local municipalities located in Prince George's County are eligible to apply for grants for tree planting projects conducted in the County. Available on a first-come, first-serve basis, grants must be used for costs associated with the planting of trees and shrubs in public or private common areas.

Trees and shrubs provide a host of benefits to you and your community. They improve air and water quality, help prevent soil erosion and clean waterways. Trees also give shelter to wildlife, muffle noise and provide privacy. Best of all, trees increase property value, add beauty to our communities and are a priceless heritage for future generations. Together we can plant the seeds of a greener future, encourage stewardship of our living resources and stimulate excitement and enthusiasm for the planting and caring of trees.

To celebrate the relaunch of the newly revitalized Tree ReLeaf Grant Program, a kick-off event will be held at the City of College Park on May 29, 2014. During the event, 35 new trees and shrubs will be planted, supporting the growth and expansion of the tree canopy in Prince

George's County. The Sustainable Initiatives Division (SID) will also host informative workshops throughout the County to discuss the benefits of trees, share best planting and maintenance practices and provide an overview of other tree enrichment programs available through DER.

For more information on the Tree ReLeaf Grant Program, grant eligibility and the application process, you may contact Moji Banjoko at mbanjoko@co.pg.md.us.



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WEIGHING IN AT THE SCALE HOUSE

Have you ever thought about how the thousands upon thousands of tons of combined households and communities discards are accurately tracked and categorized once delivered to the County's landfill? Well, the answer to this question is the finely honed operations of the Scale House at the Brown Station Road Sanitary Landfill (BSRSL).

Scale House operations are the main intake hub for all customers bringing their waste materials to the BSRSL. In these current times of heightened environmental awareness and sensitivity, Scale House staff play a pivotal role at the threshold point of waste acceptance at the BSRSL.

All the many waste hauling vehicles heading directly to the BSRSL, with their staggering sums of tonnage, must use the main entrance at White House Road, and undergo the thorough watch of the Scale House operations staff. Weigh masters must carefully generate a delivery ticket for each customer. Also, a daily transaction report is generated, which captures the type of waste material and origin, vehicle and payment process. Waste material categories include residential and municipal solid waste, tires, metals, appliances, electronics, household hazardous waste and yard debris. Scale House staff directly assist with determining what are acceptable/non-acceptable landfill waste, and provide this information to customers when needed.

In the daily interests of safeguarding the public's well-being with regard to appropriate use of its landfill, Scale House staff have a tremendous responsibility in painstakingly recording, categorizing and fully accounting for all waste accepted at the BSRSL. In recognition of this voluminous and vitally important work provided, a very favorable "tip of the scale" is justly due to the County's Scale House staff and operations.



MULCH MADNESS SCORES BIG POINTS

More than 900 cars drove their way to the Mulch Madness Source Reduction Event to pick up wood chips from recycled Christmas trees. The event was hosted by DER's Waste Management Division's Recycling Section and Maryland Environmental Services.

DER employee Denice Curry, the program organizer, noted that the event was a success and that citizens were able to take advantage of a good, free sustainable resource. In addition to free mulch, participants also received a free paper yard waste bag to support the County's new residential curbside yard waste collection policy banning plastic bags for yard waste collection and they also received a pack of flowers seeds to help beautify their landscape.

The event was advertised as a source reduction event, which means stopping waste before it is created. Mulch is a good environmental

resource to use in that it retards evaporation and therefore minimizes the need for water. This means less watering and less stress on plants when there is not enough rain. Another related benefit is the moderating of soil temperature. The soil stays cool, shaded under the mulch material from the sun's rays. Mulch also suppresses weeds. Weed seeds in the soil will either not germinate or die after germination from lack of sunlight. This can drastically reduce the need for tedious weeding.

The County has been hosting this event for 14 years and is planning to hold the event again next year. "This annual event is another example of how the County is doing more by throwing away less," said Curry.



CELEBRATE EARTH DAY EVERY DAY IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Help make a difference not just on Earth Day, but every day with these few easy tips:

Earth Day was April 22, and if you didn't have a chance to celebrate, DER would like to remind you that there are a host of ways to honor this 'green day' in Prince George's County everyday! When it comes to taking care of our Earth, we are all in this together and the everyday actions of each one of us matter.

You can fill your recycling in your County-issued 65-gallon toter with recyclables or make a visit to the landfill convenience centers to drop off your household hazardous waste like oil-based paint, fluorescent light bulbs or fertilizer. You can even drop off your used electronic equipment like those speakers you had from the 70s that are still sitting in the basement. If you want to help beautify your community, plant a tree or start a neighborhood cleanup.

There are many environmentally friendly options you can take to honor planet Earth that will help make a difference in your home or community. If you're still searching for something to do, check out the tips on the next page that will help improve the world around us.

EARTH DAY, EVERYDAY ACTIONS

- Plant an herb garden.
- Switch all your light bulbs to compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) .
- Create a homemade compost bin.
- Switch one appliance to an energy efficient model (look for the "energy star" label).
- Order some reusable bags or make your own.
- Buy a reusable water bottle and stop buying single use plastic disposable bottles.
- Wash laundry in cold water instead of hot.
- Turn off lights when you leave the room.
- Don't turn on lights at all for as long as you can, or better yet, open your curtains and enjoy the natural light.
- Drive the speed limit and combine all your errands for the week in one trip.
- Walk or ride a bike to your errands that are two miles or closer.
- Support your local economy and shop at your farmer's market.
- Turn off your computer completely at night.
- Sign up for green power with your utility company.
- Pay your bills online.
- Put a stop to unsolicited mail — sign up to opt out of pre-screened credit card offers and while you're at it, sign up for the "do not call" list.
- Reuse scrap paper. Print on two sides, or let your kids color on the back side of used paper.
- Call your utility for an quick energy audit of your home.
- Subscribe to good eco-friendly blogs for sustainable living tips.
- Before buying anything new, first check your local newspaper classified section, Craigslist or make a visit to Community Forklift.
- Support local restaurants that use food derived less than 100 miles away, and learn more about the benefits of eating locally.
- Fix leaky faucets.
- Make your own household cleaners.
- Line dry your laundry.
- Talk to your kids about the impact your household trash has on our landfills.
- Lower the temperature on your hot water heater.
- Unplug unused chargers and appliances.
- Repurpose something.
- Collect rainwater in a rain barrel and use it to water your houseplants and garden.
- Use cloth diapers or try a combination with disposables.
- Make rags out of old towels and T-shirts for use around the house.
- Use cloths instead of paper to clean your kitchen. Be frugal, and make these rags out of old towels and t-shirts.
- Bring your own washable plate to activities or events where food is served.
- Repurpose glass jars as leftover containers and bulk storage, especially in the kitchen.
- Donate to and shop at thrift stores. By doing so, you'll be recycling perfectly usable items, supporting your local economy and saving money.

DER LAUNCHES DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

A diverse body of talent with fresh ideas, perspectives and views is one of the essential ingredients to an organization's success. Bringing persons of different gender, cultures and backgrounds creates a workplace that can stimulate creativity, spur insight and increase efficiency. The concept of diversity refers to acceptance, respect and understanding that each individual is unique and has individual differences. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

The benefits of having a diverse workforce are many. A diverse workforce makes an organization more interesting and increases the likelihood of attracting different types of people that wouldn't normally apply for positions in an organization. Diversity also increases creativity and can help employees learn new ideas, perspectives and connect intellectually and personally to different people. Research has demonstrated that adding one employee from a different background can sometimes get people out of their comfort zones and think differently about a situation.

In recognizing and appreciating the contributions that persons from diverse backgrounds bring to the workplace, the Department implemented a diversity initiative, the goal of which is to attract and retain

employees from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures. A diversity team, comprised of a small number of DER employees was created to facilitate the development and implementation of the initiative. The team has multicultural representation and has members from the County's Human Relations Commission and Casa de Maryland. The team has been charged with responsibility for developing and implementing strategies to increase Departmental representation of a broad spectrum of employees from different ethnic groups and cultures.

Some of the strategies the team has implemented since the summer of last year include attending job fairs and community festivals; partnering with recruiters from the Office of Human Resources Management and from local staffing agencies; posting DER employment opportunities on various internet employment websites and the Department's Facebook page; outreach with career placement offices at local colleges and targeted media outlets. The Department's plan is to create a workforce that is representative and of the cultural diversity that exists within the County.