

# THE COMMERCE CONNECTION

Brought to you by Venture Access, Harford County's dedicated entrepreneurial entity supporting entrepreneurs in their quest to successfully formulate, launch and grow profitable companies.

POWERED BY THE  
**HARFORD CHAMBER** COUNTY OF COMMERCE  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Welcome to the November issue of the **The Commerce Connection**, brought to you by Venture Access! This month we explore the Armory Marketplace, a business incubator in the heart of Harford, and meet the current business owners!

# DISCOVER ARMORY MARKETPLACE

Written by Natalie Pixley

Discover Armory Marketplace, the retail-focused business incubator facility, just steps off Main Street in the heart of downtown Bel Air. The once vacant garages located behind the Armory offer an innovative service provided by the Town of Bel Air to encourage retail development, nurture entrepreneurs, increase pedestrian traffic, and create new jobs in the community.

Armory Marketplace has been serving Bel Air for six years. The highly selective program offers new and emerging businesses, who have never had a brick-and-mortar location before, an opportunity for a flexible, below market-rate lease for up to three years giving them enough time to establish their business, understand demand level and strengthen their financial standing. In addition, the program offers business coaching, marketing and technical assistance and an opportunity to build strong community partnerships. Bel Air's Economic Development Department works alongside the businesses to nurture them during the critical start up period. The additional support creates a strong foundation that helps the business graduate from Armory Marketplace and be successful in their permanent location. One of the goals of the program is to ensure that Bel Air is consistently infused with new life through the businesses that make it so unique.



Current Armory Marketplace tenants include Creative Chaos Designs, Kindred Spirits Vintage and Old Line Mercantile.

Additionally, recognizing that the arts serve as an economic driver, the Town of Bel Air worked with Harford Artists' Association to relocate their gallery which is now a permanent tenant and serves as an anchor for the north end of the Arts & Entertainment District.

Harford Artists Gallery also serves as the Town's Visitors Center and is a great first stop to see what is happening in town.

Armory Marketplace is a community asset that enhances the vibrancy of downtown Bel Air. The rehabilitation of the garages allowed the Town of Bel Air to maintain the historical integrity of the Armory while offering an innovative resource for entrepreneurs in the community.



**Follow Armory Marketplace  
on social media!**



# DISCOVER ARMORY MARKETPLACE Written by Natalie Pixley

Creative Chaos Designs, owned by Ellen Kunzelman, is a unique shop that offers vintage and antique hand painted furniture and coordinating accessories. Creative Chaos Designs offers customization of pieces allowing the customer to select their own knobs, handles, wallpaper, contact paper and color and they can also bring new life to customers' pieces that are in need of rejuvenation.



Kindred Spirits Vintage had several years of a strong on-line presence under their belt before opening at Armory Marketplace. Carrying items from the 1890's - 1980's, owner Jenna Curro has a particular focus on psychedelic fashion of the 1960's and 1970's. The Kindred Spirits team travels the east coast sourcing top-tier vintage goods to bring to Bel Air. Jenna's vision is to carry a wide selection of vintage garments for the consciously cool.

Old Line Mercantile, owned by Charmayne Sturla, is a family operated home décor shop that carries a wide variety of primarily hand made products including door rounds, address signs, holiday items, sports themed décor and plenty of Maryland themed home accessories. The store's inventory changes with the seasons and you can even custom order exactly what you need.



**Follow Armory Marketplace  
on social media!**



## STARTING A BUSINESS ON A BUDGET

Starting a business can be overwhelming, but the most significant barrier to starting a business is the cost. In this webinar hosted by SCORE, USA TODAY senior small business columnist and author of The Small Business Bible, Steve Strauss, teach you how to save money on the most common startup expenses.

[Register Here!](#)



## SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH FUND

Check out this grant opportunity from HelloAlice! Small businesses can apply for a \$25,000 grant to accelerate their growth and achieve their goals in 2023. Find a list of requirements and submit your application [here](#).



## FREE BUSINESS RESOURCES

Check out these free business resources! There are several business research platforms and organizations ready to help you start and grow your small business! Find the full list [here](#).





**Join the Venture Access community!** Our brand new community membership portal is now open! Chat with other community members, ask questions of our resource partners, register for events, and more! Whether you have been a member for some time or are brand-new, please click below to create your account.

[Join Our Community](#)

---

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



---

### FOLLOW ALONG WITH VENTURE ACCESS



info@ventureaccess.org

