

Regional Resources Reports Washington Metro



Regional Resources Teams, comprised of the 10 State Agencies of the [Governor's Commerce Subcabinet](#) as well as the Governor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, were formed in 2019 to improve communication and collaboration between state agencies representatives in their respective regions across the state. The teams meet regularly to provide project updates and identify opportunities to assist businesses and local jurisdictions with economic development efforts. This report exemplifies how the Regional Resources Team is collaborating to support Maryland's Washington Metro region.

Choice Companies, home of Choice Floors and Choice Stairways, has provided flooring and stairways in the Mid Atlantic area for over 40 years. The company relocated its headquarter operations from Southern Maryland to an existing 100k SF building at 8800 Lottsford Road in Prince George's County. This move was a result of the company's significant growth in the past decade. Choice Companies is set to hire 35 full-time employees because of their expansion in the area.

The company opened its doors as a retail flooring store located in Prince George's County, Maryland in 1976 with just two employees on the payroll. Founders Glenn Walker and Kenneth Cleaver have spent decades developing the business and diversifying the product offerings.

According to the company, the new location in Prince George's County serves them better logistically, with nearby access to their large customer base of mainly builders and construction companies. Both Choice Floors and Choice Stairways would be housed at the new site, resulting in increased operating efficiencies by utilizing common resources, including: human resources, accounting, customer service, shipping, and warehousing.

The company's use of the new building changes it from, S-1 (buildings occupied for storage use) to F-1 (factory use) and would consist of a showroom and office areas.

Over the past few decades, the concept behind what constitutes economic development was traditionally viewed in terms of job creation. The approach now to economic development requires more collaboration and coordination with outside parties and agencies. The collaboration story for Choice Companies is one of interagency and regional partnerships, diligence, a commitment to excellence, and exemplary customer service, even amid a pandemic.

Maryland State agency collaborations in this project include: Maryland Department of Commerce, Maryland Department of Housing and Neighborhood, Maryland Department of Labor. The Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MD MEP) and Prince George's County were instrumental partners in the project as well.

Choice Companies' expansion story begins in April 2019e when the company reached out to Commerce regarding their plans to grow in Prince George's County. It was at this time that Commerce facilitated the connection to its State and Regional partners for the company's planned expansion in Maryland.

To assist with costs related to the development project, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development has approved a \$2.7 million loan through Neighborhood Business Works, formerly the Neighborhood Business Development program, with a first lien on business assets of Choice Companies, Inc., and the first lien on undeveloped land located at Jibsail Dr., Prince Frederick, MD. Maryland Department of Commerce has received the company's completed applications for two of its tax incentive programs, namely, Job Creation and More Job for Maryland Manufacturing tax credits. Additionally, Commerce facilitated access to business resources, support and technical assistance throughout the project. . Prince George's County has provided ongoing business support and technical assistance to help Choice Companies navigate through the county's permitting and inspections process. Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation also testified favorably to the County's Council meeting to approve a resolution for the use of Maryland DHCD Neighborhood Business Works Loan to support the company's development project in Prince George's County.

The expansion of Choice Companies is a growth opportunity that will not only benefit the company, but also the state of Maryland and Prince George's County through job creation and regional capital investment possibilities.

There were several key aspects to the company becoming operational at their new location, including the conformance to applicable county and state codes necessary to ensure the new building met zoning, property maintenance, and life safety requirements. All these requirements were met with support from the state and county.

The grand opening was held on October 22-24, 2021.