

BIZ 'E' ONLINE

The Newsletter of the *Greater Prince George's Business Roundtable, Inc.*, October/November, 2005, VOLUME, NO. 3, ISSUE NO. 4

Roundtable and Air Force Welcome Troops Home in Style: The Maryland Room Opens with Fanfare and Thanks

A Significant Venture Unites Businesses with a Common Goal: Giving American Soldiers a Home Away from Home

On September 8, 2005, a standing-room only crowd got the first look at **The Maryland Room**, a venture brought about to update an out-of-date reception and relaxation area for wounded servicemen and women returning from foreign lands. The new venue, christened "**The Maryland Room**," located at Malcolm Grow hospital at Andrews Air Force Base, offers troops and their families a state-of-the-art place to rest and recuperate, featuring a 60" projection television, internet-ready computer stations and two centers for entertainment with the latest in video gaming. Add in the new kitchen area with the new flooring and ceiling and this haven becomes a site to relax both the mind and body.

The project was the brainchild of former Andrews Air Force Base 89th Airlift Wing Commander, General Scott Gray and 89th Medical Group Commander, General William Germann. They showed the room to *Roundtable* President and CEO, M.H. Jim Estep, and a rebirth began. Mr. Estep enlisted the aid of his wife, Nancy Estep, and the two of them began tapping their considerable list of friends and associates to enlist volunteers to recreate the room.

With the aid of *Roundtable* board members W.F. Chesley and Roger Blunt, they brought Jackie Ferko and Essex Construction VP Jonathan Blunt on board, the dream became reality. Their coordination of workers was combined with donations from most of the Board membership, along with countless others, in bringing this monument to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces and the County's own Andrews Air Force Base.

The event was met with enthusiasm by the county's highest ranking elected officials as County Executive **Jack Johnson**, County Council Chairman **Samuel Dean** and Maryland State Senator **Ulysses Currie** spoke to the audience of dignitaries and the Air Force's Finest.

The media turnout was equally satisfying as local television stations channels 4, 7, 8 and CTV all filed stories as well as the *Gazette* newspaper, *Prince George's County Suite* magazine and *The Capital Flyer*, the base newspaper. *Cont.*



89th Medical Group Commander General William Germann joins President & CEO M.H. Jim Estep, Board Chair Gary Michael, Del. Melony G. Griffith, Base Commander Colonel John I Pray, Jr., County Council Chairman Samuel H. Dean, Del. Anthony G. Brown, State Senator Ulysses Currie and County Executive Jack B. Johnson in the ribbon cutting for the Maryland Room.

Everyone was ecstatic with the turnout, 120 people in a reception area meant to hold 75, and the joy the new room created among the gathered crowd. "Moments like this, watching a group of caring people giving back to the community and our servicemen and women, make projects like this one the ultimate panacea in a world consistently beset with negativity and bad news," said Pres. Jim Estep. Regarding the atmosphere of the room, Board Chair Gary Michael added, "The idea is to create a feeling of warmth, to let the soldiers know that they are really home. This lets them know, you can relax now."



Board Member Roger Blunt and his wife DeRosette watch as donor John White, President of Compass Marketing, offers his appraisal of seating in the new Maryland Room.

Welcome New Board Member

Welcome to New Roundtable Board Member **John M. Bond, Jr.**, Chairman and CEO of the *Columbia Bank*.