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## Touting Md.'s community development 'success' stories

By: [Adam Bednar](#) Daily Record Business Writer October 19, 2015

A week of events highlighting community development work accomplished with funds from various state programs kicked off in Baltimore's Station North Arts & Entertainment District on Monday.

The Maryland Community Development Week will make stops throughout the state for the next several days showing off projects, which range from affordable housing in St. Mary's County to a work experience center in Cumberland, completed with money from these programs.

"We consider community development to be anything that improves communities," said Odette Ramos, executive director of the Community Development Network of Maryland, which organized the week.

Following the kickoff event, there was a tour of 13 projects in Station North and Remington showing various redevelopment projects that used state funds. Those projects included The Centre Theatre, Motor House and Greenmount De/Construction Jobs Center.

Ramos, in her remarks at the week's kickoff event at the Parkway Theatre, said she is hopeful the Community Legacy Fund program will receive an increase in funding. The Department of Housing and Community Development receives \$20 million in requests each year, while the fund has been budgeted \$6 million annually. Ramos said her organization would like to see either the legislature or the governor increase funding to \$10 million in the next budget. In Baltimore alone the legacy program has invested \$42 million in 50 projects during the last four years, according to the network.

Other programs the week-long tour will highlight include Rental Housing Works; Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund; Neighborhood Business Works; Maryland Housing Counselors Fund; and the Baltimore Regional Neighborhoods Initiative.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt said the administration of Gov. Larry Hogan plans to invest more capital in infrastructure and blight elimination. He said the administration wants to use the capital market for low-cost financing to supplement capital funding for community development projects. Holt also said an administration goal is to expand the Neighborhood Business Works program that provides gap funding for small businesses from \$5 million to \$50 million.

"We need to raise more money for investment in you and your communities," Holt said.

The next event on the tour is scheduled for Tuesday in Lexington Park at the mixed-income affordable housing development Spring Valley Apartments that were built using state Rental Housing Works funds. On Thursday, the tour will head to Cumberland to show off the Work Experience Center that was built using state funds and private investment.

The tour will make subsequent stops in Cambridge and in Prince George's County and will conclude on Oct. 28 with a workshop with state lawmakers, including Del. Steve Lafferty, at the Sparrows Point Country Club in Dundalk.