

TABLE 12-4: BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED –WICOMICO COUNTY

Permits	Wicomico County 2007	Wicomico County 2008	Wicomico County 2009	Wicomico County 2010	Wicomico County 2011	Wicomico County 2012	Percentage Difference 2007 - 2011
Single-Family Residential	269	208	145	142	107	87	-67.7
Single-Family Residential Percent Change	N/A	-22.7%	-30.3%	-2.1%	-24.6%	-18.7%	N/A
Multi-Family Residential	244	140	55	4	0	240	1.7
Multi-Family Residential Percent Change	N/A	-42.6%	-60.7%	-92.7%	-100.0%	+240.0%	N/A
Non-Residential	174	133	67	64	66	80	54.0
Non-Residential Percent Change	N/A	-23.6%	-49.6%	-4.5%	+3.1%	+21.2%	N/A
TOTAL	687	481	267	210	173	407	40.8%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning – State Data Center (2012), and Salisbury-Wicomico Economic Development, Inc. (2012)

Agricultural Sector

Wicomico County has an active farming community, especially in its eastern and western areas of the County. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, there were 508 active farms in the County with an average size of 183 acres. Statewide, the County ranked first in the estimated market value of all agricultural products sold, with almost \$200 million of products sold in 2007. Poultry accounted for almost 80 percent of this figure, not including crops that may have been grown in support of the poultry industry.

More information about the agriculture and its importance to the local economy is located in **Chapter 6: Agriculture** of this Plan.

IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The transportation services offered in Wicomico County provide easy access throughout the County. All modes of transportation are available: highway, rail, water, and air. The major highways that run through the County are U.S. Route 50, which runs east-west, and U.S. Route 13, which runs north-south. The Norfolk-Southern railway runs through Salisbury parallel to U.S. Route 13 Business. In addition, two freight trains service the Northwood and Fruitland Industrial Parks daily. The Port of Salisbury is one of the largest ports in the State of Maryland, second only to Baltimore. Annually, the Port handles over \$200 million in goods including petroleum, grain, and building materials. The County is also home to the Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport, which is the second largest commercial airport in Maryland serving approximately 120,000 to 150,000 passengers annually.

This versatile transportation system allows both the residents of the County and tourists to move freely around the area. It allows businesses to maintain their operations and ensure delivery of needed products and services. Therefore, maintaining the various modes of transportation within the County is vital to the sustainability of the economic activity.

EXISTING PROGRAMS & INCENTIVES

Salisbury-Wicomico Economic Development, Inc. (SWED)

Founded in 1968, Salisbury-Wicomico Economic Development, Inc. (SWED) is the primary agency charged with the promotion of economic development activities within Wicomico County. SWED is a private membership organization, which receives support from local governments. The mission of SWED is “to enhance the socio-economic environment of Salisbury, Wicomico County and region through the preservation and creation of productive employment opportunities.”

In their 2012 Annual Report SWED had described its activities as threefold:

- **Business Retention/Expansion:** Most businesses derive seventy to eighty percent of revenue from existing customers. As a correlation, most new jobs in any community originate from resident businesses. A strong business base also helps to attract new firms to a growing area.
- **Business Attraction:** New and diverse businesses mitigate adverse effects of economic downturns, reduce reliance on a few firms, increase the taxable base, and add jobs. Ancillary or indirect benefits are as great, if not greater, than direct benefits.
- **Strengthen SWED:** Since its establishment in 1968, SWED has received financial and professional support from public and private sectors. Both sectors demonstrate an interest in economic development and both sectors possess unique resources. A combined public-private effort maximizes resources, leverages capital, and broadens expertise.

To learn more about the activities and services provided by SWED, visit their website at www.swed.org or contact them (410) 749-1251.

Enterprise Zone

Businesses locating within an Enterprise Zone may be eligible for real property and state income tax credits. Upon application and approval, the zone offers a ten year credit against local real property taxes on a portion of real property improvements. The credit is 80 percent the first five years, and decreases 10 percent annually to 30 percent in the tenth and final year. This Zone also offers a one-time \$1,000 credit per new worker on State income taxes.

The Count has partnered with Cities of Fruitland and Salisbury to establish two certified Enterprise Zones (Salisbury – Wicomico County and Fruitland – Wicomico County Enterprise Zones). Both certified Enterprise Zones contain a portion of the unincorporated area of Wicomico County. The City of Salisbury and Wicomico County, which was certified in 2012 by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, expanded the 3,845 acres previously designated as the Salisbury-Wicomico County Enterprise Zone by 435 acres. In 1995, the 133 acre City of Fruitland – Wicomico County Enterprise Zone was certified. See **Map 12-1**.

The criteria for classification as an Enterprise Zone concentrates on areas with declining population, higher than average poverty rates, unemployment rates above national average, and percentage of families with a median family incomes of less than 80 percent of the surrounding area of county. The Enterprise Zone provides an incentive for businesses to locate in these areas and hire new employees.