

<http://thedailyrecord.com/maryland-business/2013/09/12/rotunda-project-begins-to-move-dirt-this-month/>



*The Daily Record's business blog*

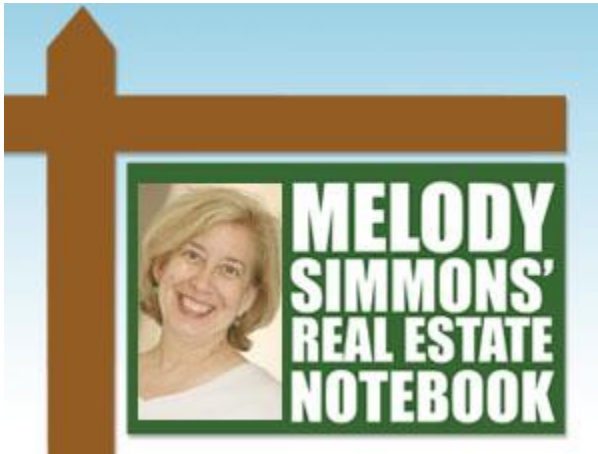
## Maryland business

SEP 12, 2013

### **Rotunda project begins to move dirt this month**

By: [Melody Simmons](#)

The long-awaited groundbreaking for the \$100 million redevelopment of The Rotunda is set for 11 a.m. Wednesday in North Baltimore.



But don't plan on attending.

Even though Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake is expected to be there to help turn the dirt, the event is not open to the public.

The Rotunda project has been through fits and starts over nearly five years, mainly due to the recession and a series of sudden retail implosions at the once-popular shopping center and office complex near stately Roland Park.

Already, there are signs of change. The property is cordoned off by fencing in preparation for demolition and site clearing. That will make way for developer Hekemian & Co. to begin renovations

and additions to total more than 130,000 square feet of retail space, including a new grocery store, MOM's Organic Market, other specialty shops and 379 new apartment units.

The design will flip retail shops at The Rotunda from facing inside to outward opening. Construction is expected to last for at least two years.

After the departure of Giant Food early last year for larger digs nearby, the shopping options at the venue seemed to dry up as redevelopment plans lagged. Only the movie theatre, Rite Aid, an optician and a small number of other stores remained open until recently.

The Rotunda first opened as a retail destination on 40th Street near Hampden in 1971 after Manekin Corp. redesigned and converted the former Maryland Casualty Insurance Co. building.

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Mark Sept. 21 on your calendar. That's when the Howard County Housing office plans to hold its free "Housing Matters" seminar beginning at 9 a.m. in Columbia at the Howard County Public School Conference Center.

The event will allow prospective homeowners and apartment seekers to attend up to a dozen educational sessions on topics that include credit scores and criminal background checks and their impact in loan and leasing approvals, mortgage qualifications, mortgage settlement and insurance.

Seminar attendees include Consumer Credit Counseling Services, Lakeview Title Co., Pillar to Post Home Inspection, Bank of America, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and the Maryland Insurance Administration.

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Mount Clair Junction will welcome a new business this coming week.

A branch of the Capital One Bank will open its doors at 1241 W. Pratt St. on the city's West Side near the intersection with South Carey Street on Tuesday. The branch is one of four the bank is planning to open in the city this year.

Capital One Bank executive Jonathan Witter will join Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake for the festivities set to begin at 9 a.m.

TIDBITS: The latest Buying into Baltimore event sponsored by Live Baltimore will be held Sept. 21, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. Geared toward helping first-time homebuyers find a nest, some participants could be eligible to receive \$4,000 to use toward the

purchase of a home in the city. Cost is \$10 per person if you register before the event at Live Baltimore's website [www.livebaltimore.com](http://www.livebaltimore.com) ... Rockville-based Scheer Partners was recently tapped to locate a 20,000-square-foot headquarters for the National Institutes of Health Federal Credit Union to move into this spring ... Checkers Drive-In Restaurant is expanding in the Baltimore area over the next five years, company officials say. Currently, there are 19 restaurants here and the goal is to open 46 new locations by 2018 with about 1,380 new jobs ... Grid One Solutions Inc. recently leased 8,400 square feet of warehouse space for its company that includes utility metering services at 10711 Red Run Blvd. in Owings Mills. Merritt Properties inked the deal ... St. John Properties Inc. just earned its 20th LEED certification from the United States Green Building Council for work on a four-story, 105,000-square-foot, Class A office building at 8160 Maple Lawn Blvd., within the Maple Lawn Business Community in Howard County ... Blue Ocean Realty has hired MacKenzie Commercial Real Estate Services to lease the company's recent purchase, the 70,000-square-foot Williams Scotsman building, near The Avenue and White Marsh Mall. Blue Ocean also recently announced it would acquire 201 N. Charles St. in Baltimore and 6901 Security Plaza near Interstates 695 and 70 ... Harford County's new Boulevard at Box Hill retail and entertainment development will officially welcome its newest tenants on Saturday with a series of charitable events. Pet Valu, one of the new shops, will hold a unique "Best Dressed Ravens Pet Costume Contest."