

Renee Winsky, TEDCO's interim executive director, said a big reason for the growth in interest is people are getting in place early before the BRAC boom kicks into full gear. She said a lot of groups — public and private — worked together to ensure Maryland's BRAC success, and now groups need to work together to ensure its implementation is as smooth as possible.

Brian Simmons, technical director for the U.S. Army Development Test Command at Aberdeen, said working closely with groups such as TEDCO makes the research, development and marketing process more efficient — a “cradle-to-grave, idea-to-application” machine.

“It's the forum that allows us to forget who's in charge,” Simmons said. “It's about the technology ... and what we can do to get it in the hands of soldiers.”

Fritz was quick to note that it is also about the marketing — getting new technology under the nose of the people who know how to sell it.

Simmons said he believes the TEDCO relationship will become even more important as the BRAC gains take effect. With additions such as the resources of the closing Fort Monmouth in New Jersey, Aberdeen will inarguably become the “most diverse” Army technology facility in the world, making it one of the Army's most important bases, too.

“The Army is all about multi-functional, broad-based technology,” Simmons said.

Nancy Trask is well aware of the benefits of working with Aberdeen. Trask is a senior program manager at QuickSilver Analytics Inc., which sells an Aberdeen-developed mobile laboratory for detecting chemical and biological agents. The backpack of sampling equipment was used by United Nations weapons inspectors in the run-up to the United States' invasion of Iraq.

Quicksilver is also working on an Aberdeen-developed sponge for absorbing chemical and biological agents. Unfortunately, the Army product was not a finished product — it leaked. That's where TEDCO came in. QuickSilver received nearly \$50,000 to fix the problem and is currently engaged in final testing.

“They bend over backward to accommodate,” Trask said. In fact, she said a few more business opportunities came her way at the Aberdeen showcase, courtesy of TEDCO.

Mac Mottley, chief executive officer of axonX LLC, said when his company is successful he will also be able to look back and give partial credit to TEDCO.

Currently, axonX is developing a special surveillance system that can recognize fire and send out an alert long before a smoke detector would be of use. Mottley said the technology would be useful for military assets such as weapons stores and biochemical laboratories. It would also be useful in private buildings such as hospitals and art galleries. Basically, the places where you really, really don't want to have a fire.

Mottley said axonX is using the \$50,636 in TEDCO funds to rent testing space and gain needed federal and private approval for the technology. He said working with TEDCO's Aberdeen program means the company can use the advanced testing facilities for far less than it would cost to do it elsewhere, and all right in its backyard.



Maryland was one of the biggest winners in the Department of Defense's effort to trim its budget. The state should gain between 40,000 and 60,000 new jobs, according to documents from the Maryland Military Installation Strategic Planning Council. Aberdeen, above, should see approximately 8,200 new positions.

Photo by Eric Stocklin