



PHOTO BY RICH DENNISON

Tom Loveland and John Eckenrode

MARYLAND COMPUTER SERVICES ASSOCIATION

When the Maryland legislature passed a “tech tax” on computer services in its special session last year, Tom Loveland and John Eckenrode didn’t take it sitting down. They co-founded the Maryland Computer Services Association (MCSA) and launched an intensive drive by the state’s informa-

tion technology industry that led to the General Assembly’s repeal of the tax this year.

“Our industry succeeded in preventing the flight of technology workers from Maryland and the loss of jobs and employers,” says Loveland, chairman and CEO of Mind Over Machines.

Eckenrode is president of CPSI-MD. The two were aided in their legislative fight by the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, the Tech Council of Maryland and many other organizations and individuals.

“They reached into hundreds of small (and some large) computer service firms in Maryland to get people engaged in the legislative process unlike anyone in the tech community has done before,” says Kathleen T. Snyder,

chamber president and CEO.

Loveland and Eckenrode are examples of “the difference business people can make in public policy when they get engaged,” she says. Neither had lobbied in Annapolis before. “They didn’t know the ‘players’ or even where the House/Senate offices were,” Snyder says. “But they devoted much of four months of their lives to repealing this tax.”

The 6 percent tech tax was slated to raise \$1 billion over five years. “That’s \$1 billion taken away from innovation — the life source of new jobs and new companies” including Maryland’s “precious economic jewels like financial services, biotechnology and the defense industry,” says Loveland. “Our ‘innovation’ saved much IT innovation for all of Maryland.”

— *By Alan Dessoff*



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