

# Harford Firm Promotes Black Capitalism

By EDNA GOLDBERG

Bel Air Bureau of The Sun

Aberdeen, April 3—A recently formed biracial corporation, Black Economic Opportunities, Inc., is working to promote black capitalism and black training in Harford county, where only a handful of businesses are owned by Negroes.

A spin-off from a series of interracial dialogues in Harford, the corporation was organized last November as an investment idea that could "make a dream come true."

Its ultimate goal, according to its middle-class founders, is not profit for the shareholders, but rather a "sound financial basis for the future employment and training" of young black citizens.

"We want to involve blacks who are generally excluded from business," says Capt. W. Donald Bray, the vice president of the Aberdeen-based undertaking.

A 3-year-old patent attorney at Aberdeen Proving Ground who gave the group legal advice, Captain Bray says the organization's plan permits participation by the less affluent of Harford's 9,400 blacks.

Patterned after a plan developed by the Rev. Leon Sullivan, of Philadelphia, shareholders in Black Economic Opportunities make monthly contributions of \$10 a piece for 24 months. And no one is dunned if he is behind in



WILLIAM P. JOHNSON

Sunpapers photo—Weyman Swager

CAPT. W. DONALD BRAY

More black business in Harford county is aim

his payments, says William P. Johnson, the president.

Mr. Johnson, 30, is a mathematician with the ballistics research laboratories at the Army base here.

He believes his group could "easily enroll 200 shareholders within a year." Publicity, he said, had been "low-key" until now and has been directed mainly at black churches, clubs and fraternal organizations.

"We don't want to give the impression we're militant," Mr. Johnson said. "We welcome anyone." He said that no matter what the size of an individual investment, no shareholder could exercise more than one vote.

As soon as enough capital is acquired, the corporation plans to attempt ventures that include low- and moderate-income housing, a community center with catering facilities or service stations, Mr. Johnson said.

Both men consider the organization's major problem the skepticism they encounter when they say that the group is "trying to do something for the small black man."

Captain Bray, who picked tobacco in Connecticut to earn money for college, explained that most Negroes distrust the "old black capitalism" because it helped "only middle-class blacks."