



WYTHE Economic Development News

**JOINT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
OF WYTHE COUNTY, WYTHEVILLE, AND RURAL RETREAT**

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Note from the Executive Director

Manufacturing finds itself in the relatively rare (at least in recent years) position of being a leading engine of the economy. Since bottoming last year, the Institute of Supply Management's PMI readings have consistently improved. The index has been above 50 (indicating expansion) since August, with it's reading of 58.4 in January being the highest reading in

six years. The new orders sub-component is especially strong, which bodes well for continuing improvement in the manufacturing sector. Not surprisingly, the employment sub-component, which tends to lag economic activity, remains somewhat weaker, but it too is strengthening, providing encouragement that increases in manufacturing employment are not far away.

If you are a local manufacturer that sees improved employment on the horizon, please contact the Joint IDA office to see if you might qualify for assistance with recruitment and training. A variety of programs have strengthened resolve to support employment growth.

A lan Hawthorne



Dr. White addresses awards luncheon

American Tire Distributors, Chandler Concrete, Johnson Screens, MTC Transformers, Coperion Corporation, Umberger Contractors, Farmers Milling & Supply, Boart Longyear, and Rural Retreat Mills, Inc. To view the full event press release, see www.wytheida.org/pressreleases.aspx.

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WCC President Speaks at Recognition Lunch

Wytheville Community College President Charlie White was the keynote speaker at the Joint IDA Tenure Awards Luncheon on January 28, 2010, at the Wytheville Meeting Center. Dr. White, who is also the current President of the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce, shared his insights on the importance of industry and business to the health of the community, as well as on the expanding role of Community Colleges in workforce development in Virginia.

The Joint IDA extends it thanks to Wytheville Office Supply for sponsoring the luncheon.

The following companies were recognized for their contributions to the community over extended periods of time: Gatorade Blue Ridge, Southwest Specialty Heat Treat, Camrett Logistics,

Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament

May 12 at Wytheville Golf Club

After having a combined golf event sponsored by both the Joint IDA and the Chamber of Commerce last year, the Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament will return in 2010 to its status as a unique separate event sponsored solely by the Joint IDA as an industry appreciation. The event will be held on the afternoon of May 12, during Virginia's Business Appreciation Week. Sponsorships are available through the Joint IDA. Local business and industry leaders are urged to participate. Additional details and registration forms will be available soon. For further information, please contact the Joint IDA office at 276-223-3370.

Entrepreneur Express Coming to Wytheville

Business owners and potential entrepreneurs from Wythe and Bland Counties and the surrounding area are invited to attend *Entrepreneur Express: Moving Your Business Forward*, a workshop designed to provide information on available business resources and deliver practical, hands-on training covering key elements of business practice. The event is sponsored by the Joint Industrial Development Authority, Bland County Economic Development Authority, Southwest Regional Enterprise Center, Wytheville Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce. The workshop will be held on Thursday, April 29, from 9 a.m. until noon at the Wytheville Meeting Center. Admission is free and lunch will be provided; however, advance registration is required. For more information and to register, visit www.vastartup.org or call 276-223-3365.

Social Media Workshop

The Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce has scheduled a *Social Media Workshop* on the afternoon of April 29th. The *Social Media Workshop* will be held from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Wytheville Community College in Galax Hall, Room 203. This workshop will show small business owners and entrepreneurs how social media tools can be used for promoting business and will demonstrate how to harness the power of these tools. The *Social Media Workshop* is free for Chamber members, while non-members must pay a \$25 fee on the day of the workshop. Seating is limited. All attendees must register in advance at www.vastartup.org or by calling 276-223-3365.

Presentations Available

If your civic or other community group would like to have a presentation on Progress Park or on Wythe County economic development in general, please contact the Joint IDA office to schedule a presentation for your organization.

Virginia Tech Lumenhaus Has Wythe Connection

Lumenhaus, Virginia Tech's 650 square-foot solar-powered house that maximizes use of the sun's energy and light, competed in the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon competition in Washington, D.C., in the fall of 2009, earning recognition in the architecture category. The Lumenhaus project is lead by architecture and engineering students with assistance from faculty advisors. Lumenhaus optimizes the use of technology to make the house more energy efficient and improve its performance/operation.

One of these advanced components, Venturi Vent Technology (V2T), is incorporated in the roof of the Lumenhaus. The V2T concept was initially developed by Acrylife, Inc., a Wytheville roofing manufacturer. Acrylife then partnered with Virginia Tech faculty in architecture and engineering to improve the design. The V2T system helps to hold membrane roofing more securely in place in high-wind conditions. Acrylife's Chuck Johnson points out, "The V2T system uses physics instead of metal fasteners or adhesives. The harder the wind blows, the better it works." Acrylife, using a grant from Virginia Tech's Center for High Performance Manufacturing, is conducting further testing of the V2T system in conjunction with a commercialization plan.

Acrylife also assisted the Lumenhaus team with a flexible membrane roof that would adhere to a curved surface and, at the same time, offer a way to seal around the support posts for the solar panels. This unique design allowed the team to maximize the placement of solar panels on the roof of the Lumenhaus.

The Lumenhaus' travels did not end last fall. In late January, the Lumenhaus was transported to New York City, where it was on display in Times Square for a week. It was featured on a segment of Good Morning America on January 28th. In June of this year, the Virginia Tech Lumenhaus and its team will travel again, this time to Madrid, Spain, to compete in the prestigious European Solar Decathlon.

Dr. Andrew McCoy, Assistant Professor of Building Construction and a primary faculty advisor on the Lumenhaus team, notes, "Lumenhaus has helped bring additional visibility to the V2T system. No matter where the Virginia Tech Lumenhaus travels, it carries a connection to Wythe County."

Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	Oct-08	Oct-09	Nov-08	Nov-09	Dec-08	Dec-09
Wythe	6.1%	10.0%	6.8%	9.9%	7.3%	10.3%
Bland	5.0%	7.2%	5.4%	6.5%	6.3%	7.2%
Smyth	6.1%	10.5%	6.5%	10.7%	7.4%	10.9%
Carroll	7.1%	10.8%	8.4%	11.1%	9.7%	12.3%
Grayson	6.9%	10.9%	7.1%	10.7%	9.2%	11.6%
Pulaski	7.1%	9.7%	7.4%	9.5%	7.6%	9.6%
Galax	6.5%	10.0%	7.4%	10.1%	11.0%	10.3%
Region*	6.5%	10.1%	7.2%	10.1%	8.1%	10.6%
Virginia	4.2%	6.4%	4.6%	6.4%	5.1%	6.7%
US	6.1%	9.5%	6.5%	9.4%	7.1%	9.7%

* Overall rate for the region including the Counties of Wythe, Bland, Smyth, Carroll, Grayson, and Pulaski, and the City of Galax.

Wythe Economic Development News is published quarterly by the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County to inform interested parties of industrial development activities in the county and its incorporated towns. If you are not on the distribution list and would like to be added, please let us know at JointIDA@wytheville.org or call 276-223-3370.