



WYTHE Economic Development News

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

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Note from the Executive Director

Economic development, like many undertakings in life, is a team activity. A community will certainly benefit if it has physical advantages (infrastructure, product, etc.) or even good economic development leadership. However, unless a large (*quite large*) number of partners, both private and public; local, regional, state, and even federal government entities; and all

components of an effective workforce development system (K-12, community college, area four-year colleges, WIBs, private providers, etc.) work together to make the community an attractive business location in which to expand and attract growth opportunities, the community will not reach its full economic potential. Wythe County and its towns have been blessed to have many different players working to make a more competitive climate for economic development.

One significant partner, which had strategically reduced its economic development involvement in the last decade, is American Electric Power. AEP is now back in the economic development game in an aggressive manner, and at a level of commitment that can make a real difference. Several items in this newsletter highlight projects where AEP is making a real difference in our economic development efforts. Welcome back as a starting player on the team.

Alan Hawthorne

Company, a noted consulting firm in the data center field, and its partners. The study evaluated in detail key site parameters of importance to data center siting and operation. Wythe County's Progress Park was identified as one of two such sites in Virginia to receive this qualified site designation.

Along with their initial investment in the qualification study, AEP and Appalachian Power have committed to assist Wythe County and Virginia's aCorridor, the regional marketing group under which Progress Park falls, in marketing the site as a possible data center location. These marketing efforts will include attendance at industry specific national events as well as a significant online presence.



Progress Park is one of two Virginia data center sites recognized under new qualification program.

Wythe Location Certified as Qualified Data Center Site

On April 25, 2013, Appalachian Power Company announced a new initiative to assist localities in attracting large capital investment and high-tech jobs to the area. The program is part of an American Electric Power (parent company of APCo) effort to identify sites within its service area that are qualified to meet the requirements for such facilities. The qualification process included a rigorous, independent on-site review by Biggins Lacy Shapiro &

“Appalachian Power’s data center qualification program targets an industry that can bring significant investment and high-paying employment opportunities,” said Appalachian Power’s Vice President for External Affairs, Mark Dempsey. “Under this program, we’re pleased to have the opportunity to help facilitate economic growth in our communities.”

Information about AEP’s data center qualification program and the complete study for Progress Park can be found online at: www.aepdatacenters.com.

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Gatorade Wins Environmental Award

The PepsiCo Blue Ridge Gatorade Plant in Wytheville was acknowledged at the Environment Virginia Symposium on April 10 in Lexington as a Gold Medal winner of the 2013 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards. The awards recognize significant contributions of environmental and conservation leaders in the state.

Gatorade was recognized for its Comprehensive Sustainability Program, beginning with the plant's construction as one of the most energy and environmentally friendly plants of its size, and continuing with its ongoing efforts to reduce its environmental footprint.

These efforts include: solar panels that power external lighting; hybrid vehicles for company use; steam recovery; use of grey water in toilets and irrigation; heat recovery from bottler coolers to pre-heat water; donation of waste sugar to local bee farmers; and a recycling program with a 96.7% recycling rate.

Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament and Reception Held

The 2013 Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament was held at the Wytheville Golf Club on May 16. In one of our larger tourna-

ments, players enjoyed an afternoon of fun and networking. At the reception, the participants partook of good food and fellowship following a day of golf. Thanks to all of the players, sponsors, donors, and volunteers (and the weatherman) who helped make it a fun day for everyone. See you next year.



Chair McDaniel plays last tournament as BOS member. He is retiring after 16 years on BOS.

Progress Park Lot 30 Construction Underway

Construction is underway on Lot 30 in the southern portion of Progress Park. This site is the formerly proposed Inland Port area of the park. The project uses excess fill material from the nearby Lot 24 project to create a building pad suitable for a 400,000 square foot building.



Construction underway on Lot 30

Weather permitting, the project is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2013. This development project is being funding in part by a \$150,000 grant from the Virginia Tobacco Commission.

AEP Holds Regional Economic Development Meeting in Wytheville

AEP held a regional meeting for economic developers and local officials at the Wytheville Meeting Center on May 14, 2013. Representatives from AEP shared details of the company's return to an active economic development program after about a decade's absence from the field. Company representatives committed to assisting local economic development efforts in the region and discussed various new AEP programs, such as the Data Center Site Qualification Program.

The meeting also included a presentation by Jay Garner of Garner Economics, LLC. Mr. Garner is a site selection consultant and member of the board of directors of the Site Selection Guild. After the meeting, Mr. Garner toured the aCorridor region, including a well-received visit to Progress Park.

Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	Jan-12	Jan-13	Feb-12	Feb-13	Mar-12	Mar-13
Wythe	7.8%	9.6%	7.2%	8.5%	6.7%	6.3%
Bland	6.1%	6.8%	6.2%	6.4%	5.8%	5.1%
Smyth	9.9%	9.3%	9.6%	9.7%	9.0%	9.2%
Carroll	9.2%	10.3%	9.1%	9.2%	8.3%	7.5%
Grayson	11.3%	12.8%	11.6%	11.7%	9.6%	10.0%
Pulaski	7.0%	12.9%	6.6%	10.1%	6.4%	6.2%
Galax	10.4%	10.1%	9.5%	8.8%	8.3%	7.7%
Region*	8.6%	10.6%	8.3%	9.5%	7.6%	7.4%
Virginia	6.4%	6.2%	6.3%	5.7%	6.0%	5.2%
US	8.8%	8.5%	8.7%	8.1%	8.4%	7.6%

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

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.

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.