



# WYTHE Economic Development News

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

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## Note from the Executive Director

Many construction projects are experiencing the impact of higher materials costs, fewer competing contractors responding to bids, pressures from higher fuel costs, and, at least in some localities, shortages in construction materials such as

concrete. These are certainly signs of a strong and growing economy.

The one area where pressures are not intense is the workforce. Job growth has lagged compared to recent economic recoveries. The primary factor playing out here is the near record gains in productivity in recent years. If companies are not continually improving their operations and competitiveness, then they are likely to be falling behind their competition. Although affecting job growth in the short term, strong productivity gains are good not only for businesses but also for workers and the economy in general as they allow for a higher standard of living and more competitive positions in the global economy.

*Alan Hawthorne*

## PBG Dedicates Facility

Pepsi Bottling Group executives dedicated the new 334,000 square foot New River Valley manufacturing and distribution facility on June 4, with company employees and invited guests, including state and local officials, on hand for the celebration. As the company's first major new production facility in a decade, the Wytheville plant will serve as the prototype for other new regional production facilities. The plant produces Pepsi's carbonated soft drink brands as well as the increasingly popular *Aquafina*® bottled water.

Employing approximately 200 people and operating 24 hours a day, the manufacturing operations emphasize advanced features and maximum productivity. Four high-speed production lines have the ability to produce 12-oz cans, plastic (PET) bottles, and bag-in-box for distribution to food service outlets. Facility products are distributed throughout the mid-

Atlantic region, with Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania as principal destinations. For more details see [http://pbg.com/pr/03\\_01\\_040604.asp](http://pbg.com/pr/03_01_040604.asp).



**VEDP's Mark Kilduff presents a Virginia flag to President and CEO John Cahill.**

## Commonwealth Mfg. and Development Purchases Building

Commonwealth Manufacturing and Development recently purchased the Ivanhoe Shell Building from the Joint IDA. Commonwealth Manufacturing has leased the shell building for more than six years and now plans to expand the size of the building by about fifty percent. A Rural Business Enterprise Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture funded construction of the building in 1990.

Founded in 1997 by Dan and Peggy Good, Commonwealth Manufacturing and Development is a rubber components manufacturer that serves mostly the transportation industry and, increasingly, the defense industry. The company is currently hiring new employees through the Virginia Employment Commission. The Virginia Department of Business Assistance is helping with recruitment and training needs. You may read the complete press release at [www.wytheida.org/pressrelease.htm](http://www.wytheida.org/pressrelease.htm).

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*[www.WytheIDA.org](http://www.WytheIDA.org)*

## WIB Sets Goals

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board (WIB) has been busy lately. It held a strategic planning retreat on June 9. Attended by about forty people, the retreat led to the establishment of strategic goals that can be found at [www.nrmrwib.org./data/chart\\_list.php?information\\_category\\_id=11](http://www.nrmrwib.org./data/chart_list.php?information_category_id=11). The organization is currently developing an action plan and a business plan for achieving these goals.

A key service of the WIB is the One-Stop centers hosted at the Virginia Employment Commission offices. These centers offer assistance with education, employment, and training issues all under one roof. WIB's centers in Bristol, Galax, Marion, Radford, and Wytheville were recently chartered using Malcolm Baldrige continuous improvement criteria.

Individuals serving on the local WIB from Wythe County include Dave Elmore, Rohm & Hass; C. L. Faulkner, BB&T; Alan Hawthorne, Joint IDA; Tom Hough, Magnetic Technologies; Jennifer Jones, Chamber of Commerce; Bill Snyder, WCC President-emeritus.

## Chamber After-Hours

A good crowd attended our Chamber After-Hours networking event on June 10. Co-hosts for the evening were Squire's Tavern and Peed and Bortz LLC. Our thanks go to all who attended or donated items for the event. We are also grateful to the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce for coordinating this event. Although the weather was not as cooperative as we would have liked, everyone had a good time.



The crowd anticipates the awarding of door prizes at our Chamber After-Hours.

## Tobacco Commission Funding Secured for Progress Park Utilities

The Crossroads Regional Industrial Facility Authority (CRIFA) recently received notification that its application for funding from the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission has been approved. The Tobacco Commission approved a \$350,000 grant to CRIFA to assist in development of water and sewer infrastructure in the rail-served southern portion of Progress Park. Costs for the Phase II southern Progress Park development project total approximately \$5.8 M and include road and rail corridor grading, Lot 18 and inland port grading, and industrial access road in addition to water and sewer infrastructure. The availability of large rail-served sites is an important addition to the state and region's inventory of available sites.

## Export Walkabout Planned

Wytheville will host one of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) annual "walkabout" visits by the organization's international trade managers on October 4. VEDP's international trade division maintains six overseas offices (China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Brazil, and Germany). Each year, the managers of the overseas offices return to Virginia to meet with companies one-on-one during the walkabout. To schedule a time to meet with these managers, please contact Diane Thomas of VEDP's regional office in Abingdon at (276) 623-1536 or the Joint IDA office. The VEDP International Trade Division also organizes overseas marketing missions for Virginia companies. Visit the VEDP International Trade Division website at [www.ExportVirginia.org](http://www.ExportVirginia.org) for more information. Be sure to sign up for their online newsletter, *Beyond Virginia*, which contains valuable links about international trade issues and upcoming overseas marketing missions. Let us know if you wish to learn more about Virginia's export assistance resources.

## Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	Apr-03	Apr-04	May-03	May-04	Jun-03	Jun-04
Wythe	5.4%	4.3%	4.9%	5.0%	5.1%	5.1%
Bland	3.7%	2.9%	3.4%	3.8%	4.1%	4.6%
Smyth	9.2%	5.1%	9.2%	5.7%	9.8%	6.3%
Carroll	7.5%	4.7%	5.8%	4.6%	6.4%	5.4%
Grayson	8.3%	3.7%	7.0%	4.0%	6.8%	5.2%
Pulaski	6.6%	6.7%	5.1%	7.4%	5.6%	7.5%
Galax	11.1%	4.7%	6.2%	4.9%	6.7%	5.2%
Virginia	3.8%	3.1%	3.9%	3.5%	4.2%	3.8%
US	5.8%	5.4%	5.8%	5.3%	6.5%	5.8%

### 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](mailto:JointIDA@wytheville.org) or call 276-223-3370.