



WYTHE Economic Development News

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

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Note from the Executive Director

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the creation of the Joint Industrial Development Authority. In 1989, Wythe County and the Towns of Wytheville and Rural Retreat agreed to form a combined economic development organization to more efficiently use resources to improve the quality of life for their citizens through economic growth. The focus was, and continues to be, creation of quality

employment opportunities, encouragement of capital investment to broaden the tax base, and support for existing and expanding local businesses. The wisdom of this partnership approach continues to bear fruit as Wythe County is among the leaders in the Commonwealth in job creation, new investment, and announced projects on a per capita basis in the “basic” employment sector. As these core sectors create purchasing power, other sectors of the local economy are stimulated to grow. Wythe County is recognized for its balance of other quality of life issues with the need for employment and investment opportunities, and the Joint IDA continues to be engaged in this balancing effort. We hope you can participate in some of our planned anniversary year activities as highlighted later in the newsletter.

Alan Hawthorne

New Joint IDA Offices

As briefly mentioned in our last newsletter, the Joint IDA relocated its offices to 190 South First Street in Downtown Wytheville. Our new home is located at the corner of Spring and First Streets in what was formerly the dental office of Dr. Robert Moore, across the street from Sprint and Salon Bella, formerly El Matador.

The Joint IDA wishes to thank those who have contributed to our move. Wytheville Office Supply generously donated moving services for our office equipment. Wal-Mart donated several much-needed appliances as well as the television monitor used for the video conferencing equipment highlighted in the next article.

Please stop by to visit our new offices.



Wayne Roop and crew from Wytheville Office Supply provided moving services.

Video Conferencing Service Available

As part of our move to new offices, the Joint IDA purchased internet-based video conferencing equipment. The primary objective for this equipment is to help our small and medium industries stay competitive by facilitating communications with other company facilities and reducing travel costs.

Using funds donated by supporting companies, the Joint IDA purchased a PolyCom ViewStation H.323 System that transmits over the internet (as opposed to the more expensive ISDN line that some systems use). Positive feedback from beta test users communicating with corporate contacts in other states has been encouraging.

Equipment use is open to industries in Wythe County and to organizations that support economic development. Possible uses of the equipment include meeting with vendors and clients, communicating with other company facilities, and workforce training. The equipment is housed in the Joint IDA’s new conference room. To reserve use time, contact the Joint IDA.

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www.WytheIDA.org

WMC Scholarships Available

Wythe Manufacturing Council scholarships are available to Wythe County students studying manufacturing-related fields at Wytheville Community College. The scholarships provide “gap” funding for the difference in the amount of other financial aid for which students qualify and the cost of up to one academic year of study at WCC.

Applications and additional information can be obtained from the WCC Educational Foundation by contacting Rhonda Catron at 223-4772. If you know a high school student or WCC student who might qualify, please let them know about this scholarship opportunity.

Industry Appreciation Activities Include Golf and 15th Anniversary Celebrations

Governor Warner has declared the week of May 16-22 to be Business Appreciation Week. In recognition of Business Appreciation Week, the Joint IDA will host its annual Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament and Reception on May 13 at the Wytheville Golf Club. Registration materials will be available soon, but mark your calendar now. If you would like to serve on the tournament planning committee or commit to be a sponsor, contact the Joint IDA office.

In addition to the Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament, the Joint IDA will celebrate its 15th anniversary by hosting an economic development symposium at Wytheville Community College. The symposium will begin at 9:30 a.m. on May 13. The golf tournament will commence at 1 p.m.

The Joint IDA also plans to host a Chamber of Commerce After-Hours event in June. Watch for details in our next newsletter.

BUSINESS APPRECIATION WEEK
Together We Make A Difference



Joint IDA Board of Directors Updates

Dr. William Snyder, President Emeritus of Wytheville Community College, has been appointed by the Town of Wytheville to serve a four-year term on the Joint IDA board. Dr. Snyder succeeds Tom Green, who completed an eight-year tenure on the board and served for many years as Vice-Chairman. We thank Mr. Green for his many years of dedicated service. Wythe County has reappointed Danny Gordon to another four-year term. We thank Mr. Gordon and the other board members for their continuing service. Current Joint IDA officers are Steve Irvin, Chairman; Joe Freeman, Vice-Chairman; and George Johnstone, Treasurer. Other Board members are Gerald Brewer and Robert Ayers. For profiles of the Joint IDA board members, visit www.WytheIDA.org/boardmem.htm.

eVA Helps Streamline Government Purchasing

If you are not currently using the Virginia Department of General Services automated and streamlined purchasing program, perhaps you should be. Known as eVA, this business-to-government program is web-based and provides a single source for procurement information. Registered eVA users can conduct business with state agencies, local governments, colleges and universities. Even if you are not registered, you may still benefit from visiting the eVA website to see what type of goods and services are being sought. You can also obtain information on awarded contracts. Users of eVA can post a catalog listing of products and services, check solicitations and award notices, receive e-mail notices of business opportunities, and electronically submit bids. As a web-based network, eVA is a 24/7 tool that cuts the administrative costs of doing business with the government. In general, eVA is used for purchases up to \$30,000 where competitive bidding is required. Some Wytheville companies have found eVA to be a real boost to their business—have you? Visit www.eVA.state.va.us for information or to register.

Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	Oct-02	Oct-03	Nov-02	Nov-03	Dec-02	Dec-03
Wythe	5.7%	4.0%	5.2%	4.1%	5.1%	4.4%
Bland	3.6%	2.9%	4.2%	2.7%	3.9%	2.7%
Smyth	10.1%	7.1%	10.0%	6.9%	9.9%	6.7%
Carroll	12.1%	5.2%	7.6%	4.8%	5.1%	5.2%
Grayson	4.2%	4.8%	10.0%	4.3%	6.7%	4.2%
Pulaski	9.9%	6.0%	4.9%	6.4%	4.3%	6.5%
Galax	14.3%	4.8%	8.7%	4.4%	4.1%	4.5%
Virginia	3.8%	3.4%	3.6%	3.3%	3.6%	3.3%
US	5.4%	5.6%	5.7%	5.6%	5.7%	5.4%

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.