



WYTHE Economic Development News

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

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Note from the Executive Director

Are we in a recession yet? If not, we're probably talking ourselves into one. One of the major components of a downturn is the psychological aspect whereby both businesses and consumers tighten spending to address the slower pace of the economy. This, of course, contributes to a slower economy. The generally acknowledged trigger for the recent downturn is the

subprime mortgage crisis. Structured investment vehicles, and other innovative products, distributed the risks of these loans around the world, resulting in global shocks as the crisis evolved. Some brighter news that will tend to counter the downward pressures include aggressive interest rate action by the Federal Reserve, anticipated rapid (by congressional standards) rebates and credits to individuals and businesses, and a weaker dollar, resulting in more competitive US exports to an ever-growing middle class in many world countries. Fortunately, we had no local housing bubble to burst, and many of our companies are engaged in exporting. With sound fundamentals in place, many may view this as a good opportunity to prudently prepare for the next up cycle.

Alan Hawthorne

VMA President Speaks at Recognition Lunch

Virginia Manufacturers Association President and CEO Brett Vassey was the keynote speaker at the Joint IDA Tenure Awards Luncheon on January 24 at the Wytheville Meeting Center. Mr. Vassey shared insights regarding VMA's priorities with the Virginia General Assembly this session as well as key efforts to assure a suitable



Alan Hawthorne welcomes VMA President Brett Vassey as speaker for the Joint IDA Tenure Awards event. (Photo: Jean Farley, Wytheville Enterprise.)

workforce pool to fill the projected needs of manufacturers in the coming years. The Joint IDA extends its thanks to Wytheville Office Supply for sponsoring the luncheon.

See WytheIDA.org/pressreleases.aspx for a complete listing of companies receiving tenure awards.

Mark your calendar for Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament May 15 at Wytheville Golf Club

The format is captain's choice with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. A reception will follow the tournament. The fee is \$40 per player/\$160 per team. Local industries are urged to invite corporate leaders to play. Hole sponsorships are available for \$50 per hole and reception sponsorships are available for \$100. Registration forms will be available shortly. This year's committee is Dave Elmore (chair), Linda DiYorio, William Snyder, and Tom Jones. If you would like to be a hole sponsor or a reception sponsor or if you have door prizes to donate, please contact Mike Webb or Danielle Skeens at 223-3370 or JointIDA@wytheville.org.

In this issue . . .

Note from the Executive Director	1
VMA President Speaks at Recognition Lunch	1
Strong CRC Presence	1
New Board Members	2
Congratulations to VEDA on 25 Years	2
Entrepreneur Express Coming to Wytheville	2
Tax Exempt IRBs Help Finance Expansions	2
Regional Unemployment Rates	2

www.WytheIDA.org

Strong CRC Presence

The Wytheville area continues to have a strong representation of [Career Readiness Certificate](#) holders. Over 8.5% of all CRC holders in Virginia live within 50 miles of Wytheville. Of these, 81% hold Gold or Silver CRCs versus 70% for Virginia as a whole.

New Board Members

Dana “Dickie” Pack is Wythe County’s new appointee to the Joint IDA board of directors. Mr. Pack, who is retired from Sprint, replaces Danny Gordon, who served as a board member for 12 years.

Foy Patton joins the Joint IDA board as Rural Retreat’s representative, replacing Dale Yontz. Mr. Yontz was determined to have been ineligible to serve based on the original jurisdictional ordinances establishing the Joint IDA, which prohibited elected officials from serving on the board. Mr. Patton is owner and president of Harpo’s Hardware & Building Supply in Rural Retreat.



Welcome Mr. Pack (l) and Mr. Patton (r).

Also, Wytheville reappointed Dr. Bill Snyder for a second four-year term.

The Joint IDA appreciates Mr. Gordon’s and Mr. Yontz’s services and wishes them the best.

Congratulations to VEDA on 25 Years

The Joint IDA extends its congratulations to the Virginia Economic Developers Association on its 25th anniversary. In recognition of its founding president, Robert Eley Johnson, his widow, Jane Johnson, was honored at the Joint IDA Christmas open house. Mrs. Johnson expressed her appreciation of the recognition.



Alan Hawthorne presents Mrs. Johnson with a 25th anniversary memento recognizing Robert Eley Johnson’s VEDA contributions.

Entrepreneur Express Coming to Wytheville

Business owners and potential entrepreneurs from Wythe and Bland County 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, and the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce and will be held on April 10 from 9 a.m. until noon at the Wytheville Meeting Center. Admission is free and lunch will be provided; however, registration is required. For more information and to register, visit www.WytheIDA.org.

Tax Exempt IRBs Help Finance Expansions

One of the tools that the Joint IDA has available to help small manufacturing companies (or 501(c)(3) nonprofits) grow and expand is its ability to issue private activity bonds, often referred to as Industrial Revenue Bonds (RBs) or Industrial Development Bonds (IDBs). These bonds are generally exempt from federal income tax for the bond holders, resulting in lower financing costs for the borrower. Up to \$10 M in borrowing can be obtained via this tool. Recently Congress loosened one of the constraints on eligibility (requirement of no more than \$20 M of investment in the issuing jurisdiction within the three preceding or three succeeding years of issuance). Discuss your plans with your financial institution or team (or consult bond counsel) to see if you qualify and if a private activity bond can save you financing costs. If you have questions, contact the Joint IDA for more information at (276) 223-3370 or JointIDA@wytheville.org.

Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	Oct-06	Oct-07	Nov-06	Nov-07	Dec-06	Dec-07
Wythe	3.3%	3.8%	3.5%	3.9%	3.4%	4.2%
Bland	3.2%	3.2%	3.6%	3.1%	3.1%	3.5%
Smyth	4.5%	4.8%	5.4%	4.9%	5.0%	5.2%
Carroll	4.1%	5.3%	4.4%	4.7%	6.1%	5.1%
Grayson	5.0%	3.5%	5.2%	3.5%	5.2%	4.3%
Pulaski	3.1%	3.8%	3.1%	3.9%	3.0%	4.3%
Galax	5.6%	5.8%	6.0%	4.6%	6.1%	4.5%
Virginia	2.7%	2.9%	2.8%	3.0%	2.7%	3.3%
US	4.1%	4.4%	4.3%	4.5%	4.3%	4.8%

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 or call 276-223-3370.