



# WYTHE Economic Development News

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

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## Note from the Executive Director

April marked a time for reflection and celebration for Wythe County economic development in more ways than one. Recognition for recent community successes by national economic development magazines as highlighted in accompanying articles certainly provides extra incentive to continue efforts to make this a great place for business expansion as well as to live and raise a family. We want to extend our recognition and thanks to

those many partners who helped make possible our selection as a 2002 Top Economic Development Group.

Although it is sad to report on the passing of Robert Eley Johnson, it is also a time to celebrate the important contributions that he made not only to Wythe County but also to Virginia and economic development as a profession. As the founding president of the Virginia Economic Developers Association, he helped establish the foundations for our profession in Virginia. Even after he became frail, he would frequently inquire of me at Rotary regarding the latest outlook for economic development projects in Wythe County. I always receive inquires about Robert Eley at VEDA functions. Although I must now respond that he is no longer with us, his legacy still lives. I can't help but think that he would have been proud of the national recognition we're receiving.

*Alan Hawthorne*

## Site Selection Names Joint IDA as a Top ED Group for 2002

*Site Selection*, a premier economic development trade magazine, has named the Joint Industrial Development Authority as one of the nation's Top Economic Development Groups. The Joint IDA joins local or regional economic development organizations from Broomfield, Colo., Corpus Christi, Tex., Durant, Okla., Shreveport, La., Hagerstown, Md., London, Ont., Ocean-side, Ca., Prince William County, Va., and Raleigh, N.C. as one of the Top 10 Groups for 2002. Virginia was the only state (or province) to have more than one ED organization selected as a Top 10 Group.

The current (May) issue of *Site Selection* introduces the award winners by noting that "Innovation, savvy, and regionalism are the earmarks of the nation's top local economic developers." Conway Data, Inc. (parent company of *Site Selection* magazine), announced the winners by saying that "these 10 agencies, as well as the 10 honorable mentions, have met the challenge of a difficult economy head-on, and promise to be among the leaders coming out of the gate as that economy regains momentum."



To be selected as one of the Top Economic Development Groups, organizations were first ranked according to four objective categories: new jobs, new jobs per 10,000 residents, new investment amount, and new investment per 10,000 residents. Then they were scrutinized for more subjective attributes—among them innovation, leadership, and customer service—for the final selection. The Press Release announcing the 2002 Top Economic Development Groups is at [www.conway.com/cdi/press/pdf/TopGroups02.pdf](http://www.conway.com/cdi/press/pdf/TopGroups02.pdf).

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

## Plants, Sites, & Parks Lists Two Wythe County Projects among Top 25

In its March 2003 issue, *Plants, Sites, & Parks*, a trade magazine targeted toward corporate location strategists, identified two Wythe County economic development projects as being among the top 25 projects in the United States based on job creation. Both Pepsi Bottling Group's new facility under construction in Wytheville and Klöckner Pentaplast of America's expansion of its facility in Rural Retreat made the Top 25 list, according to the publication's Bizsites Monitor, which is a running list of the top job creation projects. The final quarter of 2002 was especially productive for Virginia as six other Virginia projects made the listing. A complete listing of the top 25 projects is available at <http://www.bizsites.com/2003/march/article.asp?id=282>.

## Camrett Logistics Again on Fantastic Fifty List

For the second year in a row, Camrett Logistics of Rural Retreat made the Virginia Chamber of Commerce's Fantastic Fifty List. This annual list ranks the fifty fastest growing privately held companies headquartered in Virginia based on growth rates from 1998 through 2001. For three years in a row, Wythe County has been proud to have one or more companys named to the list. Congratulations to company President Collin Peel and his team for their outstanding work.

**BUSINESS APPRECIATION WEEK**  
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## Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament

The annual Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament is set for May 27 at the Wytheville Golf Club. The Joint IDA joins other Virginians in recognizing and thanking all those companies that

help make this such a great place to live and work. There is still time to register to play in the tournament. If you would like a registration form, or if you are interested in being a hole sponsor or a reception sponsor, please contact the Joint IDA office at 223-3370. Donations appropriate for use as prizes will gladly be accepted. Our thanks to those who have already pledged support for the tournament.

## Wytheville/Wythe Horizons Draft Vision Complete

You may have heard about a visioning program that Wytheville and Wythe County have undertaken known as Wytheville/Wythe Horizons. Assisted by Virginia Tech's Institute for Policy Outreach, citizens of both localities are working together to develop a vision that will guide policy makers in community and economic development decisions. Many local residents, including area high school students, participated in forums designed to solicit broad-based input. Thanks to information obtained at these forums and the subsequent strategy meetings, a draft vision statement has been developed.

The draft vision calls for a need to balance the availability of good jobs and economic vitality with preserving the community's rural characteristic and natural beauty. The draft vision contains five interrelated components that support this balance: a shared community vision; education and life-long learning; information technology; transportation; and marketing. An action agenda will be developed later this summer. To learn more about the program, please visit the project website at [www.cpap.vt.edu/ipo/horizons](http://www.cpap.vt.edu/ipo/horizons).

## Unemployment Rate Better Than Last Year

While the unemployment rate rose in February, Wythe County is in better shape now than it was during February 2002. This is in contrast to the state and the nation, which saw increases in unemployment rates over a year ago.

Location	Dec-01	Dec-02	Jan-02	Jan-03	Feb-02	Feb-03
Wythe	6.9%	5.1%	9.4%	6.2%	10.4%	7.4%
Bland	3.9%	3.9%	7.1%	4.2%	6.6%	5.0%
Smyth	7.9%	9.9%	9.5%	11.5%	8.3%	10.9%
Carroll	6.8%	5.1%	8.1%	6.6%	8.6%	6.4%
Grayson	6.1%	6.7%	8.9%	7.9%	7.8%	8.1%
Pulaski	6.6%	4.3%	7.9%	5.5%	14.3%	8.4%
Galax	4.6%	4.1%	6.9%	5.3%	6.9%	5.9%
Virginia	3.6%	3.6%	4.4%	4.2%	4.2%	4.3%
US	5.4%	5.7%	6.3%	6.5%	6.1%	6.3%

## 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.