



# WYTHE Economic Development News

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

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## Note from the Executive Director

“Transformational”—that’s the word that comes to mind when I think of the new PepsiCo production and distribution project in the center of Progress Park (see adjacent article). The facility will be an anchor for future development in the park. In addition to the potential for direct growth associated with plant expansion and

direct supplier investment, the quality of the facility and company will positively influence the types of projects that will consider making Progress Park their home. It’s rewarding to now be able to share this exciting story after the many months of behind the scenes work. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who worked so diligently on this project. I’m sure they all join me in extending a warm welcome to our newest corporate citizen.

*Alan Hawthorne*

## PepsiCo’s Gatorade Chooses Progress Park

Governor Mark Warner announced on June 23, 2005, that PepsiCo, Inc., will build a facility in Progress Park for the manufacture and distribution of its Gatorade and Propel sports drinks. Headquartered in Purchase, New York, PepsiCo is a Fortune 100 company and the world’s leading producer of sports drinks. The new Progress Park plant will serve PepsiCo’s growing Mid-Atlantic region. Construction will commence immediately on the 134-acre Lot 12 in Progress Park. The 900,000 sq ft facility will eventually employ over 250 people and represent a \$140 million investment in Wythe County. Governor Warner approved a \$750,000 grant from the Governor’s Opportunity Fund and the Virginia Tobacco Commission, through its Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund, committed \$600,000 to be used toward site development. The Virginia Department of Business Assistance will provide workforce training services. Wythe County and the Town of Wytheville are making major infrastructure improvements to extend road, rail, water, and waste water services to the facility. Thanks to VEDP and Virginia’s aCorridor for all their

assistance with the project location. The full press release is available at [www.governor.virginia.gov/Press\\_Policy/Releases/2005/Jun05/0623.htm](http://www.governor.virginia.gov/Press_Policy/Releases/2005/Jun05/0623.htm). There will be a groundbreaking activity this summer.

## WTI Operating in New Progress Park Facility



Wytheville Technologies, Inc. (WTI), became Progress Park’s first tenant when it constructed a

67,000 sq ft facility in 2001. The Japanese-owned WTI, which produces steering components for the automotive industry, quickly became an incubator to two additional companies with Japanese connections, Atsumi Car Equipment (ACE) and Brewer Automotive Components (BAC). All three companies, operating in the original facility, experienced solid growth. In 2003, WTI began construction of a second facility in Progress Park to accommodate growing space demands. The new 160,000 sq ft facility on Lot 11 is occupied by WTI and ACE, while BAC remains the sole occupant of the original building. WTI will operate one of the most advanced plating lines in the world at the new facility. The plant uses state-of-the-art environmental controls and backup systems to remove metals from the waste water before releasing it into the county waste water system. Governor Warner recently visited WTI’s parent company, Somic Ishikawa, while leading a trade delegation in Japan. Peter Argue, Vice President of WTI, served as translator for the governor during this visit.



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

## Website Upgrades

The Joint IDA is co-recipient with Smyth County of a grant from the Virginia's Opportunity Region program. The \$10,000 grant will be split evenly between the Joint IDA and Smyth County and will be used for website upgrades for economic development marketing. Most preliminary site research by prospects and consultants is now done online. The grant will help the Joint IDA ensure that it is responsive to current needs in online marketing. The Joint IDA maintains two websites, [www.WytheIDA.org](http://www.WytheIDA.org) and [www.ProgressPark.com](http://www.ProgressPark.com).

## Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament

Once again, the annual Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament was a huge success as 27 teams turned out to play, and the rain held off until everyone was finished. The tournament was held on May 19 in conjunction with statewide Business Appreciation Week activities. A sincere thank you to all who participated in or made donations to the tournament. The theme for this year's Business Appreciation Week was Planting Opportunity-Harvesting Success. Business Appreciation Week is a small way of saying thank you to those whose efforts and dedication are essential for the economic health of the Commonwealth.



## CHAMPION Program Promotes Healthy Lifestyles

The Commonwealth's Healthy Approach and Mobilization Plan for Inactivity, Obesity, and Nutrition (CHAMPION) Program held its kick-off regional planning meeting in Wytheville on March 9-10. As a result of these planning sessions, communities and regions will develop an action plan to address this serious health issue. A 2002 health department survey revealed that 58.8% of Virginia adults are overweight or obese. In 2003, the total estimated costs related to overweight and obesity in Virginia were approximately \$1.6 billion. Are you being proactive with your workforce to encourage a more healthy lifestyle? Contact the Joint IDA office for additional information on the CHAMPION program.

## Mid-Atlantic Manufacturing and Hydraulics Wins ISO Certification

Mid-Atlantic Manufacturing & Hydraulics, Inc., achieved the ISO 9001:2000 certification last fall. A division of Swanson Industries of Morgantown, West Virginia, Mid-Atlantic has operated a machining facility in the Rural Retreat Industrial Park since 2001. The company has tripled its operations in the last three years. Mid-Atlantic plans to create an apprenticeship program this fall that will create career opportunities at the company. Congratulations to manager Frank McDonald and his team for a job well done.



Mid-Atlantic proudly flies its ISO certification flag.

## Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	Jan-04	Jan-05	Feb-04	Feb-05	March-04	March-05
Wythe	5.7%	5.2%	5.3%	4.2%	5.0%	5.5%
Bland	5.3%	4.1%	5.0%	3.8%	5.0%	4.6%
Smyth	6.7%	5.4%	6.0%	4.6%	5.9%	4.6%
Carroll	5.7%	4.9%	5.4%	5.7%	5.1%	5.5%
Grayson	5.0%	4.7%	4.9%	4.5%	4.8%	4.6%
Pulaski	7.5%	4.3%	7.2%	4.2%	7.0%	5.0%
Galax	5.1%	4.7%	4.7%	4.8%	5.7%	5.4%
Virginia	4.2%	3.7%	3.9%	3.6%	3.9%	3.4%
US	6.3%	5.7%	6.0%	5.8%	6.0%	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](mailto:JointIDA@wytheville.org) or call 276-223-3370.