



WYTHE Economic Development News

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

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Fall 2003



Note from the Executive Director

Fall has always been my favorite season of the year. The beautiful vistas of Southwest Virginia are one of the quality of life factors that drew me back to my home community. However, in recent years there has been another reason to enjoy the fall season. By coincidence, fall has become the time of the year when our larger economic development projects have come to fruition with public announce-

ments. This issue of our newsletter highlights expansions by Wytheville Technologies and Musser Lumber. Local company expansions remain a principal means for employment and investment growth. To acknowledge our local industrial base, the Joint IDA conducted its annual Awards Night, as a part of the Chamber of Commerce's Annual Banquet meeting, recognizing several of our local businesses for tenure in the community and presenting special awards to Klöcker Pentaplast and to our newest industrial citizen—Pepsi Bottling Group. We were also pleased to recognize Chairman Irvin's receipt of the VEDA Volunteer of the Year Award. Yes, fall is a good season of the year.

Alan Hawthorne

Wythe Tech to Expand

Progress Park will be home to the second Wytheville Technologies, Inc., facility in Wythe County. Wytheville Technologies plans to create 102 new jobs and to make a \$31 million investment in its new 150,000 sq ft facility to be located on Lot 11 in Progress Park. Wytheville Technologies is a joint venture between four Japanese companies, led by Somic Ishikawa, and was the first company to locate to Progress Park. A manufacturer of automotive steering components, Wytheville Technologies currently employs 62 people in Wythe County.

The project was managed through Crossroads Regional Industrial Facility Authority. Crossroads RIFA allows for multijurisdictional cooperation and revenue sharing of regional economic development projects. Member jurisdictions of Crossroads RIFA are Wythe County, Bland County, and the Town of Wytheville.



Sen. Pucket presents WTI TROF grant.

The project was announced on October 28 at Somic Ishikawa's headquarters in Japan on behalf of Governor Mark Warner by Secretary of Commerce and Trade Michael J. Schewel. Virginia successfully competed with Tennessee and North Carolina for the project and received both Governor's Opportunity Fund and Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund grants. In addition to Crossroads RIFA, the Joint IDA, Virginia's @Corridor, Virginia Department of Business Assistance, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development assisted Wytheville Technologies. (See www.yesvirginia.org/news/news.aspx?newsid=579).

We've moved—our offices are now at 190 S. First Street (two blocks south of our former location). More next issue.

Musser Lumber Plans Facility Expansion

Rural Retreat will be home to 45 new jobs as Musser Lumber announced plans to expand its Rural Retreat facility through a \$3 million capital

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investment. The company is constructing a gas-fired wood kiln, additional storage and production facilities, and a retail operation as part of the expansion.

Headquartered in Rural Retreat, Musser Lumber purchases rough lumber and resells it after processing as kiln dried or green lumber. The Town of Rural Retreat and Wythe County are collaborating to extend water and sewer infrastructure to serve the site. A Community Development Block Grant will assist with infrastructure improvement costs, and the Virginia Department of Workforce Services will assist with workforce training services. (See press release at www.yesvirginia.org/news/news.aspx?newsid=583.)

Awards Night Banquet

The annual Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet was held November 10 at the Wohlfahrt Haus Dinner Theater. Congratulations to the following winners of the Joint IDA's Industry Awards:

5 Year Tenure Award
Fuel Systems LLC
PowerShot Tool Company

10 Year Tenure Award
A&I Mechanical
Horizon Healthcare
Klöckner Pentaplast

15 Year Tenure Award
Creative Glass and Mirror

20 Year Tenure Award
P&T Products

30 Year Tenure Award
Longwood Elastomers

40 Year Tenure Award
Crisp Manufacturing

Newest Industry Award
Pepsi Bottling Group

Special Recognition Award
Klöckner Pentaplast



Annual Joint IDA industry awards presented at Chamber of Commerce Dinner.

Chairman Irvin Earns VEDA Volunteer Award

The Virginia Economic Developers Association recognized Joint IDA Chairman Steve Irvin as the recipient of its 2003 Volunteer of the Year award. The award recognizes contributions made to economic development by individuals who are not full-time paid economic development professionals. Mr. Irvin was one of six candidates nominated for the statewide award. VEDA cited Mr. Irvin's role in the planning and acquisition of Progress Park as one of the reasons he was selected for the award. Mr. Irvin accepted the award at the 2003 annual conference held in Roanoke on September 26. This marks the second consecutive year that someone from Southwest Virginia has received the Volunteer of the Year award. Congressman Rick Boucher was granted the award in 2002. Mr. Irvin has served on the Joint IDA board as a representative of the Town of Wytheville since 1996 and has served as the chairman since 1997. Mr. Irvin is employed as a vice president with Bankers Insurance in Wytheville and serves on the board of directors of First National Bank. Mr. Irvin was Virginia's nomination for the 17-state Southern Economic Development Council's Volunteer of the Year award.

Wythe County Recognized as a Top Small Market

Wythe County's economic development efforts have received plenty of positive press lately. Most recently, Wythe County received recognition as one of the top small markets in the south in the Summer 2003 issue of *Southern Business and Development*. Specifically, Wythe County received a third place ranking in the small market category earning it an honorable mention in the magazine's annual assessment of "Top Deals & Hot Markets." The same issue of *SB&D* also identified top sites in the south for automotive manufacturing facilities, and Progress Park was one of three sites in Virginia to be included in that list.

Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	July-02	July-03	Aug-02	Aug-03	Sept-02	Sept-03
Wythe	7.3%	7.9%	6.0%	4.3%	5.6%	4.3%
Bland	5.5%	5.2%	3.9%	3.2%	3.7%	3.0%
Smyth	10.6%	8.6%	10.0%	7.7%	10.5%	8.2%
Carroll	11.0%	12.6%	11.3%	6.2%	5.7%	5.5%
Grayson	12.4%	13.2%	14.3%	4.7%	7.7%	4.9%
Pulaski	5.6%	12.8%	5.0%	5.2%	4.7%	4.7%
Galax	16.0%	21.7%	17.8%	5.7%	4.6%	5.6%
Virginia	4.1%	4.1%	4.2%	3.8%	4.1%	3.8%
US	6.0%	6.3%	5.7%	6.0%	5.4%	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 or call 276-223-3370.