



WYTHE Economic Development News

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

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Note from the Executive Director

Many pieces of a complex puzzle must come together to make a community an attractive place in which to live, work, and play. Businesses assessing places to locate or expand operations consider how effective and efficient state and local governments are at providing needed community services. They want to be a part of communities that place the same value on productive operations

as they do. One of the critical community services provided today is the training and retraining of the workforce. Communities that do a good job of effectively and efficiently preparing the workforce for employment opportunities certainly have an advantage in economic development.

A new step in this direction for Wytheville and Wythe County is the anticipated development of a OneStop Center that will house many key agencies that deliver workforce development services, including those provided by the Virginia Employment Commission, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, and a host of other partners that assist workers and employers in matching employment opportunities with workforce skills and attributes. Further leveraging the effectiveness and efficiency of our full-service OneStop Center is the expected co-location of Wythe County's Department of Social Services and Health Department in the facility.

Planned as one of about six such OneStop Centers across the Commonwealth to open within the next year, the Wytheville OneStop Center will be one more piece of a mosaic of community attributes attractive to existing and potential employers and to citizens alike.

A lan Hawthorne

Joint IDA Chairman to Retire from Board

Joint IDA board member and current Chairman Joe Freeman will be leaving the board at the end of his term in December. Joe will be completing his second four-year term on the board and has served as the Joint IDA board

chairman for the past four years. The community, and especially the Joint IDA staff, will miss the leadership and dedication to economic development that Joe has provided to Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat during his tenure. However, with his long history of support and involvement in the community, we know that he will continue to make a difference in the community with his leadership. Thanks, Joe, for a job well done.



Thanks, Joe

Wythe Manufacturing Council Launches Environment, Safety, and Health Group

Earlier this year, the Wythe Manufacturing Council and its steering committee acted to pursue creation of a group oriented toward environment, safety, and health (ES&H) coordinators. This subgroup will allow more detailed focus on specific topical issues and needs for Wythe manufacturers. The Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC) provides assistance in developing meeting programs. The goal of the group is to share experiences and information resources among the ES&H group members and to emphasize the importance of environment, safety, and health in the local manufacturing community. For more information, please contact Patrick Burton at (276) 223-3370.



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Economic Developers Elected to VEDA Posts

Two economic development officials from Wythe County and the surrounding region have been elected to positions in the Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA). Alan Hawthorne, Executive Director of the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County, was elected treasurer of the organization, and Tom Elliott, Executive Director of Virginia's aCorridor, was elected to the VEDA Board of Directors. VEDA supplies input that helps maintain Virginia's leadership position in economic development, encourages continued education of members, promotes standards of professionalism and ethics, and facilitates the exchange of information.

Industry Recognition Award Presented

The Joint IDA presented its Special Recognition Award to Gatorade Blue Ridge at the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce annual dinner on November 17. The award recognizes Gatorade's contributions to the local community. The company supports a wide range of community organizations and activities. Gatorade began operation of its Blue Ridge facility in the fall of 2006 and currently employees approximately 300. The decision of PepsiCo (Gatorade's parent company) to invest in Progress Park was a major factor in elevating its stature as a premier industrial park.

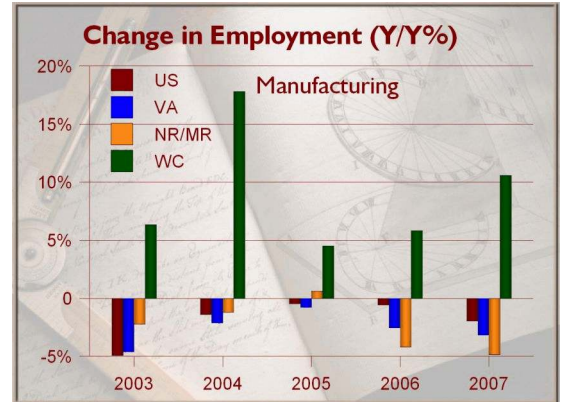
Industry tenure awards will be presented at a luncheon event in January 2009.



Gatorade Blue Ridge receives the Joint IDA's Special Recognition Award for 2008.

Counter to State and National Trends, Wythe County Shows Growth in Manufacturing

In contrast to decreasing employment in the manufacturing sector for the U.S., Virginia, and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area, manufacturing employment in Wythe County has shown strong growth during the past five years. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, which reports employment by place of employment instead of place of residence, show that manufacturing employment in Wythe County has grown at an annual rate of five percent or more in each of the past five years. Much of the growth in manufacturing employment has been associated with location of manufacturers in Progress Park.



Wythe County has experienced strong employment growth in manufacturing over the past five years.

Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	July-07	July-08	Aug-07	Aug-08	Sept-07	Sept-08
Wythe	5.0%	7.0%	4.5%	7.0%	4.3%	6.4%
Bland	4.1%	6.0%	4.0%	5.9%	4.2%	5.5%
Smyth	5.4%	6.4%	4.9%	6.8%	4.9%	6.1%
Carroll	5.2%	7.9%	5.6%	8.0%	5.9%	8.0%
Grayson	4.1%	7.0%	5.4%	7.6%	5.4%	7.0%
Pulaski	5.6%	8.4%	6.3%	9.2%	5.0%	8.1%
Galax	4.6%	6.2%	5.9%	6.6%	6.5%	5.7%
Region*	5.1%	7.3%	5.3%	7.6%	5.1%	7.0%
Virginia	3.1%	4.5%	3.2%	4.6%	3.0%	4.2%
US	4.9%	6.0%	4.6%	6.1%	4.5%	6.0%

*Overall regional rate includes Wythe County and the contiguous counties of Bland, Smyth, Carroll, Grayson, and Pulaski, and the City of Galax.

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.