



WYTHE Economic Development News

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

150 East Monroe Street :: P.O. Box 569

Wytheville, VA 24382 :: Phone (276) 223-3370

Fax (276) 223-3427 :: E-mail JointIDA@wytheville.org

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Note from the Executive Director

As I write this, I am anticipating attending Wytheville Community College's production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and am reminded that, like a theatrical production, economic development requires many active participants for success (which in the case of economic development

surely means avoiding both comedy and tragedy). At the risk of unintentional omissions, I will highlight the cast members needed to improve economic opportunities in Southwest Virginia. Of course, government support at the federal, state, regional, and local level plays a leading role. Private sector supporters representing investors, contractors, utility providers, chambers, civic groups and many others are key players. Finally, a vibrant, attractive community with committed workers and a competitive cost of conducting business is required. It takes all of us.

Alan Hawthorne

Industrial Park. Creating more than 20 new jobs, mostly machinists, will allow the company to expand its local capacity. The company is also moving some of its production capacity from New Jersey to Wytheville. Windward Products manufactures precision components for plastics extruders.

PowerShot - PowerShot Tool, Inc., has recently moved into the 25,000 sq. ft. building formerly occupied by National Seating. PowerShot manufactures and sells forward-action staple guns and glue guns for the residential and commercial markets to all leading distributors, including Lowe's, Home Depot, Sears, Tru-Serve, Ace, and Do-It Best. Seasonal employment peaked at 170 associates and temporary employees prior to Christmas.



Fairview Industrial Park Expansions Announced

Several companies have expanded or located in Fairview Industrial Park during the past quarter. (Visit www.WytheIDA.org for news releases.)

Ryder Systems - Ryder Systems, Inc., is locating a regional maintenance center in Fairview Industrial Park. The facility will initially employ 10 people and be located in a new 6000 sq. ft. facility. Location at the intersection of two interstate highway systems provides a key logistical advantage in efficient customer servicing.



Windward Products - Windward Products, Inc., a subsidiary of Coperion Corporation, is adding 12,000 sq. ft. to more than double its manufacturing space and employees in Fairview

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SCC Considers DENA Generating Facility

Duke Energy Wythe, LLC, has applied to the State Corporation Commission for a certificate to construct a 620 MW electric generating facility in Wythe County. The facility will be a natural gas-fired combined-cycle generator. A local notice was published March 6 describing the application and hearing process. A public hearing has been scheduled for June 25, 2002, in Richmond. A copy of the application and other materials may be reviewed at the Wythe County Public Library. Opportunities to provide local input will be available before June 25.

Revolving Loan Fund Applications Being Accepted

The Joint IDA is accepting applications for its Revolving Loan Fund. If you are a small business needing some assistance bridging the amount available from bank financing and the amount of your needs, a Revolving Loan Fund loan may be what you need. Call the Joint IDA office for information or an application package.

Target Industry Forum November 27, 2001



Thanks to Gary McLaren, Dr. Sygielski, and Delegate Keister for their participation.

Joint IDA/Chamber Conduct Survey

The Joint IDA is teaming up with the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce to conduct a survey of existing area businesses. The surveys are designed to assist the Joint IDA and the Chamber of Commerce in understanding the concerns and needs of area businesses. The surveys were mailed out in February, and results are being tabulated now. If you are an area business and would like to complete a survey but haven't received one, please call the Joint IDA at 223-3370, and we will send you one.

Fairview Park Covenant Committee Formed

A committee, chaired by Longwood Elastomers Plant Manager and Joint IDA board member Joe Freeman, is currently working to efficiently and effectively apply the Fairview Industrial Park Covenants. The committee, consisting of landowners and facility managers in Fairview Park, is providing positive feedback to enhance park appearance and operation.

WCC Offers Free Workplace Safety Walkthrough

The Continuing Education Division of Wytheville Community College is providing free Safety Walkarounds for business/industry within the WCC service region. The inspections are confidential. Larry Smith, Assistant Director, a former OSHA Compliance Officer with over 19 years experience in regulatory compliance, is also an OSHA General Industry Outreach Trainer, authorized to conduct 10- and 30-hour general industry outreach training. For more information contact Larry Smith at 276-783-1777 or wcsmitl@wcc.vccs.edu.

Golf Tournament Set for May 9

Mark your calendars. The Joint IDA's Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament is back. The tournament is set for May 9 at the Wytheville Golf Club. Prizes and gifts of various types will be given away, and a reception is scheduled to be held immediately after the tournament. Past Industry Appreciation Golf Tournaments were very successful, and we hope to continue the tradition. The Golf Tournament Committee, chaired by Joint IDA board member Bob Ayers, is in the process of securing donations, prizes, and sponsorship for the tournament. If your business would like to assist by sponsoring a hole, donating prizes, or contributing in any other way, please call the Joint IDA at 223-3370. Start putting your team together. This should be an exciting event for everyone. Invitations will be mailed soon.

Area Unemployment Rates Remain High

Although the region's unemployment rates are no longer consistently among the top spots in statewide rankings of unemployment, the rates nonetheless remain high. As initial signs of economic recovery begin to emerge, we are reminded that unemployment rates are a lagging indicator. Our hope is that after a few months of improving economic activity the area's unemployment rates will begin to decrease.

Location	Oct-00	Oct-01	Nov-00	Nov-01	Dec-00	Dec-01
Wythe	6.2%	9.8%	5.7%	6.5%	5.7%	6.9%
Bland	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	3.9%	3.5%	3.9%
Smyth	5.4%	8.1%	5.6%	7.6%	5.9%	7.9%
Carroll	6.7%	7.6%	7.2%	7.1%	6.7%	6.8%
Grayson	10.3%	7.1%	9.7%	6.3%	9.2%	6.1%
Pulaski	3.5%	14.8%	4.9%	9.9%	5.2%	6.6%
Galax	4.8%	6.0%	6.2%	5.0%	6.7%	4.6%
Virginia	2.3%	3.5%	2.0%	3.6%	1.9%	3.6%
US	3.6%	5.0%	3.8%	5.3%	3.7%	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 or call 276-223-3370.