



Commonwealth of Virginia *Office of Governor Bob McDonnell*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 5, 2010

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Governor McDonnell Announces \$5 Million in Grant Awards to Facilitate Job Creation in Rural Virginia

Virginia's First Mega Project Site Planning Grants Aimed at Boosting Regional Economic Development Efforts

RICHMOND - Governor Bob McDonnell today announced Virginia's first Major Employment and Investment (MEI) Project Site Planning Grant Fund program recipients. The Danville-Pittsylvania Regional IDA, Martinsville-Henry County and Wythe County will receive funding to assist with site planning and improvements to help attract "mega projects," or projects that involve more than \$250 million in capital investment and the creation of more than 400 new full-time jobs.

Speaking about the announcement, Governor McDonnell noted, "We are doing everything we can to recruit high quality jobs and investment to the Commonwealth. To be successful, we must build upon our portfolio of properties to provide larger-scale, shovel-ready sites to attract companies that will have a transformational impact on the Commonwealth of Virginia and the future of our economy."

"Our economic development allies across the state have done an excellent job of making sites available for marketing to business prospects," said Jim Cheng, Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade. "The MEI Grant program provides an opportunity for the Commonwealth to lend its support toward enhancing those efforts and continue to expand upon the many reasons why Virginia is the best place to do business."

The Danville-Pittsylvania Regional IDA will receive the \$500,000 maximum amount established for planning grants. The funding will be used for planning activity associated with Berry Hill Mega Park, which is currently under construction on 3,700 acres in southwestern Pittsylvania County. The grant can be used for conducting environmental and geotechnical reviews and for tackling infrastructure challenges to make the site competitive in the marketplace.

Martinsville-Henry County will receive a \$1.5 million site improvement grant. The site improvement grant will be used toward enhancing Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre, a planned 730-acre business park on U.S. 220 South at the Virginia-North Carolina border. The grant can be used for a variety of activities, including but not limited to site grading, utilities and transportation improvements.

Wythe County will receive a \$3 million site improvement grant. The funding will be used to continue development of Progress Park, a 1,210-acre industrial park located at the intersection of Interstates 81 and 77, client-ready. Progress Park is home to PepsiCo's Blue Ridge Gatorade Plant.

Because initial funding for the grant program is being provided by the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission, grant recipients are limited to communities located in the Tobacco Commission's service area. The program is designed to be statewide should additional funding sources be made available in the future.

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