

# Wythe Economy: A Mid-Decade Review

## Executive Summary

The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County conducted a mid-decade review of the local economy, especially focusing on employment and wage evaluations. Comparisons are made with the region, state, and nation regarding sector distributions of employment, wages, and growth in employment and wages over the past five years.

Wythe County has experienced strong employment growth, outpacing both the state and nation in new job creation, from 2000 to 2005. This employment growth was led by manufacturing, in contrast to most areas of the country, and by trade, with both the retail and wholesale sectors expanding. New facility locations by both PepsiCo's Gatorade and Amcor PET Packaging indicate continued strong manufacturing growth in the near term.

In contrast to Wythe County's strong employment growth during the past five years, its wage growth, only 54% that of Virginia, has significantly lagged the region, state, and nation. With an average wage in 2005 of 61.3% of the national average, Wythe County's average pay poses both an opportunity and a challenge as the second half of the decade evolves.

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