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aCORRIDOR News



VOLUME II, ISSUE 2

FALL 2004

Quarterly News & Updates of Mount Rogers Development Partnership, Inc.

Expansions highlight third quarter

Regional companies recently announced expansions that will result in 300 new jobs.

Calling Grayson County and Universal Food and Beverage Co. "a perfect match," Gov. Mark Warner announced Sept. 22 that Universal Food and Beverage Co., Inc., a newly formed company, is acquiring Grayson Springs Water from Independence Water Group, LLC, with plans to expand the bottled water facility, investing \$6.9 million, creating 151 jobs.

Virginia competed with Georgia, Ohio and Wisconsin for the project, but Grayson County's large-capacity, high-quality aquifer was the deciding factor. "We have been fortunate to find Grayson Springs with the added benefit of a high-quality workforce," said Universal President Marc R. Fry.

In mid-September, Bristol Virginia officials announced three industry expansions.

A \$2.7 million expansion at Crowley Foods, a leading East Coast dairy manufacturer, will add 32 jobs at the Bristol plant that employs 64.

In response to increased demand for its touch-free car wash systems, Magic Wand Car Wash Systems will expand its fabrication plant and add 35 jobs. *(continued on page 2)*



Grayson County welcomes Universal Food and Beverage Co. From left, are, Marty Hall, regional representative for U.S. Senator George Allen; Matt Erskine, Virginia Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade; Marc R. Fry, President, Universal Food and Beverage Co.; Duane Martin, CEO, Universal Food; Ralph Tuggle, Chairman, Grayson County Board of Supervisors; Senator William Wampler Jr.; Delegate C.W. "Bill" Carrico; Tom Elliott, Grayson County Economic Development Director; and Andy Hall, Executive Director of Virginia's aCorridor.



Crowley Foods expands. From left, David Dorsey, Division Manager, Crowley Foods; Milt Cutway, Crowley VP Operations; VA Sen. William Wampler Jr.; VA Del. Joseph P. Johnson Jr.; and Bristol Mayor Paul Hurley.



Magic Wand ribbon cutting includes from left, Judy and Bill Daugherty, owners; Bristol Mayor Paul Hurley; VA Del. Joseph P. Johnson Jr.; Alex Anderson, Chairman, Bristol Area Chamber of Commerce.

From My Perspective....



Andy Hall
Executive Director

Fall typically brings more than just beautiful colors to our region. It also brings prospect visits and inquiries, and fortunately, this year is no exception. We have experienced a busy fall thus far and will keep our fingers crossed the trend continues.

Twenty-four companies have visited our region this year compared to a grand total of 20 firms last year. We have also seen an increase in quality inquiries about our region

which is also a good sign. Many of those requests for information about Virginia's aCorridor came to us via the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and we certainly appreciate their efforts in helping us market the region.

As we move into the winter months, many companies initiate the process of developing a budget for the upcoming year. We at the aCorridor hope that you will keep us in mind as you develop your budget for 2005.

We have accomplished much and made strides in marketing the region and making sure companies know what the aCorridor has to offer. We need the support of the private sector to continue our vision to become a strong, proactive regional marketing organization.

Many of the companies in our region might ask, **"Why should we support economic development in our region? Why do we want to compete for labor?"**

And my answer is: if your company strives to have the most skilled labor force, the community amenities you richly deserve, and future jobs for your children, I would ask that you rethink your position.

Competition only makes the existing workforce better.

As the state, region and local economic developers recruit new companies into the region, it fosters competition for the existing workforce. Competition not only increases the skill level of the existing workforce, it also brings an influx of new people to the area. As numbers of people increase in the region, so will the amenities of shopping and nice places to eat. It also brings additional funds for our local governments to spend on schools and infrastructure.

The old adage **"Success Breeds Success"** continues to be true; therefore, I would ask each of you to support your regional economic development organization with your time and monetary support. In the upcoming weeks we will be calling on companies in the region and asking for your support!

Marketing Activity

**aCORRIDOR
REGION HAS HAD
24 PROSPECT
VISITS THIS
YEAR
18
MANUFACTURING,
5 CALL CENTERS,
1 DISTRIBUTION**

"With more and more visitors each month to the aCorridor website, it is really important for statistics and other data to be up to date," says Andy Hall.

"We are striving to update frequently and will be adding some aCorridor 'Success Stories' to the website in the coming months."

Expansions

(continued from page 1)

In the third Bristol announcement, Dominion Carton Corp. broke ground on a new facility in the city-owned Dale Gordon Business Park, becoming the first tenant in the 23-acre park. Dominion, who employs 55, is moving operations from Bristol's Exit 7 area.

Oak Hall Industries, a manufacturer of caps and gowns, is expanding into a former apparel manufacturing facility in Smyth County. The company operates a plant in Wytheville that employs 80, and the expansion facility will initially employ 20 with plans to add 50 jobs in the next 15 months.



Dominion Carton Corporation breaks ground on a new facility in Bristol's Dale Gordon Business Park. From left, are, Jerry Brown, Bristol VA Economic Development Director; Del. Joe Johnson; Dale W. Gordon, former Director of Economic Development for Bristol, Virginia; Paul Hurley, Mayor, City of Bristol; George Young, President, Dominion Carton Corporation; and K. D. Moore, President, KBM Commercial Properties and Development.

Governor Warner welcomes prospects to region

Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership joined the Southwest Virginia Economic Development Alliance (Virginia's aCorridor and the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority) in hosting a weekend of racing at Bristol Motor Speedway, biking on the Virginia Creeper Trail, historical tours, golfing and a performance at Barter Theatre to introduce these prospects to the region.

The Alliance, made possible through funds from the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization



Commission, developed the relationship-building events to enhance marketing of the Southwest Virginia region. Governor Warner and VEDP hosted a hospitality tent at Bristol Motor Speedway during the Sharpie 500 Nextel Cup Race Aug. 27.

Joining the governor in touting the region's pluses and welcoming the business leaders to the region were Secretary of Commerce and Trade Michael Schewel and Sen. William Wampler Jr.

aCorridor representatives attended the Friday night reception at the Martha Washington Inn during the race weekend events hosted by the Southwest Virginia Economic Development Alliance. Governor Warner chats with Del. Joe Johnson, left; the Governor tells prospects about the region, top right; Sally Morgan, Smyth County's economic developer, chats with visitors, right; and Jonathan Sweet, Bland County Administrator, talks with site consultant Jim Clarke, Senior Vice President of Staubach, right.



Around the aCORRIDOR. . .

Wythe County's Crossroads Regional Industrial Facilities Authority is the recipient of a \$15,000 grant from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to develop a virtual building program. Gov. Mark R. Warner announced in August that it was one of five Virginia communities to receive a grant to develop virtual buildings plans to spark attention from business prospects. VEDP said the purpose of the pilot grant program is to increase the inventory of marketable business properties in Virginia.

A federal grant of \$29,000 has been awarded to the City of Galax to print and distribute 3,000 copies of a travel

guide for the Southwest Virginia Heritage Music Trail, known as "The Crooked Road." Rep. Rick Boucher announced the grant through the Appalachian Regional Commission. **The 150-page travel guidebook will be accompanied by two compact discs featuring narrated information about sites along the trail, plus examples of the distinctive Appalachian music style.** Several venues along the trail are located in the aCorridor, including Blue Ridge Music Center at Fishers Peak, Old Fiddler's Convention in Galax and the Birthplace of Country Music Alliance Museum in Bristol.

An online business directory will be developed at the Crossroads Institute in Galax as a result of a \$14,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant announced in September by Rep. Rick Boucher. The Southwest Virginia Online Business Directory will include a database of about 2,000 businesses and will provide companies interested in settling in the area with a look at available business opportunities.

The Town of Chilhowie has received more than \$100,000 in TEA-21 grants for the H.L. Bonham Regional Tourism Center project. This will aid in the cost of renovating the historic house as a tourism center and linking a walking trail with a community park.



VIRGINIA'S **aCORRIDOR**
 access to markets, technology & transportation

www.aCorridor.com

Mount Rogers Development Partnership, Inc.
 P.O. Box 983
 Marion, VA 24354
 Phone: 276.783.9474 • 888-810-8343
 Fax: 276.783.7999

Virginia's aCorridor

is the region of southwestern Virginia that includes the City of Bristol and the City of Galax and the Counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe,

Two regional incubators getting close to opening

Two aCorridor business incubators have hired directors and are putting the final touches on buildings and programs.

The Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator, located in the 70-acre Stonemill Business Technology Park in Abingdon, is scheduled to be ready for its first tenants this fall. This incubator is being developed as a joint project by the Town of Abingdon, Washington County and the City of Bristol, Virginia.

Jim Doss, who left a 34-year-career in chemical and electrical engineering to head up the incubator, hopes to attract

fledgling businesses that could someday expand into high-tech, high-paying local companies. Among his duties are to fill the 33 office spaces, four office suites and three manufacturing centers in the 40,000-sq.-ft.-building.

The Crossroads Institute in Galax will include a business incubator, classrooms and about 100 computers for public use when it opens in early 2005. Located in a former Lowe's home improvement store, the Institute is a project of Wytheville Community College and other educators in the City of Galax and the counties of Car-

roll, Grayson, Wythe, Bland and Smyth. It is financed through more than \$6 million in grants and loans, most from federal sources.

Dallas Garrett, interim director of the business incubator, has been involved with the development of more than 30 business incubators nationally.

Renovation involves expanding to 80,000 square feet. The incubator will occupy about 30,000 square feet; the community college and public schools will use about 40,000 square feet for classes; remaining space will include a computer lab, kitchen and exhibit hall.