



Bedford Business First

A bi-monthly update from the Bedford County Office of Economic Development - May/June 2012

Signs of growth

It has been a busy Spring so far for the Office of Economic Development. We have applied for and won three grants on behalf of two different companies, we hosted a Bedford One Program Appreciation event, and increased awareness about our programs throughout the state. We're encouraged with the signs of slight economic growth.

The unemployment rate has decreased in our county from 5.9% to 5.2% which is slightly better than that of the state.

We are continuing to reach out to meet with our local companies in an effort to build relationships and partner with them for future growth. Please give us a call if you would like to schedule a tour/visit with us. 540-587-5670.

*- Traci Blido
Director, Economic Development*

Quick Links:

[Our webpage](#)

[Our business incentives](#)

VIRGINIA BUSINESS APPRECIATION WEEK



THE YEAR OF THE ENTREPRENEUR JUNE 4-8, 2012

Governor Bob McDonnell has declared June 4-8, 2012 as Business Appreciation Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia and 2012 as the Year of the Entrepreneur.

We, along with the Bedford County Board of Supervisors and Bedford County Economic Development Authority, believe our existing businesses are a top priority for our county. We want you to be successful so you will continue creating quality jobs and moving forward with innovation and entrepreneurship in our community.

Thank you for all you do to make our county the best place to live and work!

Mail America to expand, create 75 jobs



Mail America Communications, Inc. announced this week it will invest more than \$5 million to expand its current operations in Forest, Virginia and add 75 net new jobs over the next three years to meet customer demands in the direct mail advertising industry.

Del. Kathy Byron tours the expansion site for Mail America with Managing Director David Collins (left) and EDA members Matthew Braud and Jim Lusk.

Bedford County's Office of Economic Development worked with the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission (TICRC), the Bedford County Economic Development Authority, and The Virginia Jobs Investment Program to provide grants and assistance toward the expansion totaling more than \$210,000.

Read the full story [here](#).

Forestry Equipment of Virginia to expand, create 35 jobs

Forestry Equipment of Virginia (FEVA)

announced recently that it will expand its custom truck assembly business constructing a 42,000 square foot weld shop facility at its 23-acre site in Forest and hiring at least 35 new employees over the next three years.

Bedford County's Office of Economic Development worked with the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission (TICRC), the Economic Development Authority and the Virginia Jobs Investment program to provide \$130,000 in grants and assistance to support the expansion.

Read the full story [here](#).



FEVA currently produces more than 400 aerial lift trucks annually for the forestry and vegetation management industry.

Next Bedford Business Roundtable to be held June 14



Our Bedford area businesses are invited to attend our next **Business Roundtable meeting to be held June 14 at 8 a.m. at the Bedford Welcome Center**. These meetings are designed to keep the lines of communication open between local government leaders, area businesses and support organizations.

Light breakfast will be served. For more details or to register, please contact Diana Cocke at dcocke@bedfordcountyva.gov or call 540-587-5670.



Virginia Food System Council announces \$10/week challenge to eat local and buy local in Virginia

Did you know that if each household in the Bedford area spent at least \$10 a week on local food, more than \$16.8 million would be generated annually?

The Virginia Food System Council, along with other food and agriculture organizations, recently rolled out a challenge to all Virginia households to spend at least \$10 per week on locally-grown foods and beverages. The impact of this statewide over a year would generate \$1.65 billion back into our local economy across Virginia. In the Bedford Area that would equate to more than \$16.8 million directly within Bedford City and County. Read the full Virginia Farm to Table Plan [here](#) to learn more.

Meanwhile, for an easy way to spend a portion of your groceries on local foods, please visit one of our county's farmers markets.

- **The Bedford Farmers Market**, located at Center and Washington Streets, is open on Tuesdays and Fridays, 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. and on 2nd Friday events Downtown (evening.)
- **The Forest Farmers Market**, located at the Forest Public Library is open on Saturdays from 8 a.m. - Noon.

- **The Moneta Farmers Market**, located at Moneta Farm Supply is open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Also search by zip code for your nearest farm to consumer site here: <http://www.localharvest.org/>.

Bedford One Program wraps up another year of tours



Liberty High School students Darius McCoy and Sarah Claytor tell about their experiences with internships at local companies while Josslyn Gregory, Career Coach, listens in support.

Bedford County is a prime example of what can be done when the public school system, businesses, and economic developers work together and become ideal partners. The One Program provides students the opportunity to learn about employment opportunities that they did not know existed.

On May 4, 2012 the One Program Steering

Committee honored more than 30 area businesses for participating in this valuable program for students. More than 800 students have visited nearly 35 businesses since the onset of the program in 2008. A highlight of the May 4 event was when several students spoke, including Jefferson Forest graduate Reid Robertson who shared his experience of touring Griffin Pipe as a senior and being so impressed that he applied for a job and is successfully employed there today.

The One Program Steering Committee is looking for companies to participate in Fall 2012. If you are willing to host a group of Bedford County students on an educational tour at your company this Fall/Winter, please contact Existing Business Coordinator [Diana Cocke](mailto:diana.cocke@bedfordcountync.gov) at 540-587-5670.



A group of local artists, business owners, agri-artisans and civic leaders have been meeting in recent months to develop a plan to start an "Artisan Trail" in Bedford County through the Artisans Center of Virginia (a non-profit organization). The Trail would include a wide range of venues - everything from galleries and individual studios - to local farms, wineries, breweries, inns, B&B's and "locally grown" restaurants.

During April and May, Trail organizers coordinated a small tour of just a few of the many potential sites along the trail and organized a public meeting to attract interested participants to

the program. (See recent *News and Advance* article [here](#)).

To stay current on the progress of the Trail's development, visit their Facebook page [here](#), or to volunteer, become a Trail sponsor, or request more information, send an email to artisantrailbedford@gmail.com. Information can also be downloaded from the County's website [here](#) or visit the Artisans Center of Virginia [here](#).

Intern completes assignment

Our office was fortunate to have Brian LeVeque serve as our intern this semester, designing graphs, developing a video and learning about all facets of economic development.



High School Intern Brian LeVeque reviews an industrial park layout.

Brian, who is a junior at Jefferson Forest High School, says he plans to major in business thanks to his experiences.

"The balance of working with both private business and local government is something that would very much interest me as a job possibility one day," he recently wrote.

Hosting a high school intern a few hours a week has been a rewarding experience for us. Thank you Brian!

Bedford County Office of Economic Development

Traci Blido, Director
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