

**Campbell County
Economic Development Commission**

October 15, 2009

The regular meeting of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission was held on Thursday, October 15, 2009 in the Campbell County Haberer Building Board Level Multi-use Room, Rustburg, Virginia.

Members Present:

Lester Wooldridge, Chairman
William Anderson
Gary Cantwell
Richard Carroll
G. Michael Damron
D. Vance Driskill
Herbert Guthrie
William Overacre
William R. Reeves, Jr.
Kyle Rosser
Scott Tweedy

Also Present:

J. Michael Davidson, Director, Economic Development
R. David Laurrell, County Administrator
Brandon S. Turner, Program Manager
Catherine Moore, Administrative Assistant

Member Absent:

William Calohan, Vice-Chairman

// Chairman Wooldridge called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon.

The July 16, 2009 minutes were presented for approval. Hearing no changes or corrections, upon a motion by Mr. Overacre, seconded by Mr. Anderson, and duly adopted by unanimous vote of the members present, the July 16, 2009 Economic Development Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Matters from Economic Development Department:

// Project Updates

Included in the meeting package was a summary of the project updates. Mr. Davidson highlighted several projects.

- Seneca Commerce Park – Sewer

Staff learned this week that the Tobacco Commission has approved \$582,000 in grant funds to run about 7,500 linear feet of sewer lines in the Seneca Commerce Park. The project would include the installation of forced main sewer lines. Next year another grant application would be made to build a

pump station, and the year after that a third request for grant funds would be made to install gravity sewer lines. If successful, a public sewer system would be located in the Seneca Commerce Park within three years.

- Enterprise Zone

Staff attended an Enterprise Zone workshop on how to apply for enterprise zones. It was clear early on that Campbell County would have little success applying for an enterprise zone designation. It would take close to 80 hours of staff time to complete the application with assistance by Region 2000. The enterprise zone program had changed a great deal. There were little benefits to be gained from the State. At the same time the Department of Housing and Community Development requires the locality to guarantee a number of incentives. Half of the 300 points needed to have a successful application come from the locality's distress factor indicator. Campbell County's is only 57 which led staff to conclude it would not be worth the effort to apply. In addition, all four of the localities with expiring enterprise zones were planning to reapply. One project staff was going to do over the next year was look at the localities with enterprise zones, study the incentives offered and identify what obstacles a business was trying to overcome with those incentives.

- Unemployment

The August unemployment rate for Campbell County was down to 6.7% from 7.7% in May. The Virginia Employment Commission tracking shows 2,124 unemployed persons in Campbell County in July 2009 and 1,910 in August 2009. The August 2009 state unemployment rate was 6.5%; the federal rate was 9.8%; and the Lynchburg MSA rate was 7.1%.

- Areva

As everyone was probably aware, Areva has announced they plan to close the commercial fuel manufacturing division at Mt. Athos which would reduce about half of its employment in Campbell County. They would be consolidating with a facility in Richland, Washington. A valiant effort was made in state and local incentives, but what impacted the project was the reduction in the number of nuclear power plants proposed to be built. In their cost analysis of consolidation over a ten-year period there would be a \$40 million net savings to operate the facility in Washington. It was anticipated that facility would not be vacant too long. Areva has already indicated an interest in producing equipment to generate wind and solar energy.

// Economic Development website

Mr. Davidson reviewed the new Economic Development website designed by Mark Sisson and hosted by an outside vendor. This saved considerable dollars by the County not having to host two sites. The website not only offered detailed information for prospective businesses, but also capitalized on tourism in the County. Historic attractions, a Campbell County winery, lodging and restaurants were some of the information included. Another great asset was the information provided to those wanting to start a business in Campbell County and information on airports.

// Virginia Tourism Assessment

Campbell County would be participating with the Towns and the Virginia Tourism Corporation to perform a tourism assessment. The first day would be a brainstorming type session with the Virginia Tourism staff, and the second day would be a presentation by them on their interpretation of all the facts and data gathered on the first day. The two days set aside were January

20th & 27th. Mr. Davidson invited at least two Commission members to participate in those sessions. Anyone interested, please let Mike know.

// 2010 Meeting Schedule

The meeting schedule for 2010 was presented with three meetings scheduled in 2010 on January 21, May 20 and September 16. Because more meetings would be required in 2011 to update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, fewer meetings were proposed for 2010.

Matters from the County Administrator:

// Relocation of Economic Development Office

With the opening of the Citizen Services Building in November, the County Office Building would be mothballed for the time being. The Economic Development Office would be relocated to the second floor of the Haberer Building in January 2010.

// Budget Projections

In light of more State budget reductions, the County's revenues would continue to shrink. The County was expecting a \$5 million reduction in revenues next year, and it could be four to six years before revenues return to current levels. There was a step down strategy in place that the County would implement from savings over the last four years to offset part of those reductions. It was anticipated the reductions would impact the Schools and service delivery.

// Liberty University Development Plans at Airport East

Liberty University would be making a presentation at the October 19th Board of Supervisors meeting to unveil plans for development of the property on the east side of U. S. Route 29 across from the airport. The Board previously authorized the issuance of a special use permit for a retail shopping complex known as Crossroads Colonnade, but has revised its vision of developing that area in light of Liberty's significant growth and market changes in retail development. Liberty would like to build a School of Aeronautics and a School of Engineering and Computational Sciences and a Business Park.

// Energy Star Campaign

Catherine Moore spoke to the Energy Star Campaign the County was participating through the National Association of Counties. It was a contest with other localities to collect pledges to change at least one bulb in your home to an energy efficient bulb. She asked the Commission members if they would participate.

// Adjournment

Following a general discussion of the aforementioned matters and with no other items presented for consideration, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.