

Economic Development Activity Report 2003 Highlights

Westmoreland County has been carrying out economic development activities for several decades. The Board of Supervisors adopted the current Westmoreland County Economic Development Strategy on December 10, 2001. This plan defined County economic development as the process of providing employment opportunities and economic growth while preserving our heritage and natural beauty. The Strategy sets forth program areas to accomplish the Strategy.

The Board engaged a professional economic development consultant in 2001 to assist the County Administrator with marketing the Westmoreland County Industrial Park and Shell Building.

The Consultant has a direct role to implement three areas of the Economic Development Strategy: Existing Industry Development, Recruitment and Marketing and Product Development. The Consultant has a supporting role in areas of Workforce Development, Tourism Development, Fisheries Development and Agribusiness Development since other agencies and professionals are responsible for the success of those programs.

The Board directed that an annual report of measurable tasks and accomplishments be prepared by the consultant for each economic development program area outlined in the Strategy.

The following highlights and activities are noted for each of these program areas:

1. Existing Industry Development

National research of economic development activities indicates that 3 of 4 jobs created within a community come from within the locality or region. The emphasis of the local existing industry program is to assist local businesses with expansion, financing and other needs. Primary contact is made through an existing industry visitation program.

The following activities assisted existing business in Westmoreland County:

- Received notification from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, that a requested Enterprise Zone boundary amendment to add 231 acres in the Carmel Church area of Westmoreland County had been approved. This action directly aided **Potomac Supply Corporation** in their expansion activities.
- Visited 14 County businesses and set up a file on each company
- Created County Directory of HUBZone businesses (10 currently) and assisted three additional small businesses with applications to enroll in this program with the US Small Business Administration (SBA)

- Met with Small Business Coordinator at **NSWC Dahlgren Division** to enhance contacts and opportunities for Westmoreland County HUBZone businesses
- Established contact and working relationship with Rappahannock Region, Small Business Development Center SBDC in Warsaw to assist local businesses with start up and expansion questions. Four (4) prospects worked cooperatively with SBDC during 2003
- Assisted local businesses with question regarding County land use policies, land development and zoning process
- Assisted County Administrator with damage assessment of local business and industry from Hurricane Isabel as well as providing state and Federal disaster relief information to interested businesses

2. Product Development

The Economic Development Consultant seeks to identify available business properties for sale or lease within the County. This is the local economic development product that is marketed. This information is maintained in files and on a computer database of such properties. Individual printed property cover sheets are developed for marketing purposes. During 2003, these product enhancing actions were taken in Westmoreland County:

- arranged and conducted aerial photography of sites and buildings with local pilot/aircraft
- maintenance of County sites and building database. Added 1 industrial building and 3 office buildings to County database and to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's VASCAN database
- removed two buildings and one site from VASCAN database upon sale or lease
- updated/maintained property sheets on 7 available private buildings and sites in Westmoreland County

3. Recruitment and Marketing

The Westmoreland County Administrator's office is a primary point of contact for inquiries about expanding or locating a business within the County. These inquiries are routed to the Economic Development Consultant for action. Follow up activities include responding to information requests and scheduling presentations regarding the County's shell Building and available sites within the Westmoreland County Industrial Park.

The County has excellent presentation materials and information that can be supplemented with specific data and materials from the Commonwealth of Virginia and other economic development partners (e.g. Small Business Development Center). Once an inquiry decides to make a further contact or visit to Westmoreland County; it is classified as a prospect and followed up until either a location decision is made or the project is cancelled.

All inquiries are handled and treated confidentially by County staff and our economic development partners.

The key location for Westmoreland County during 2003 was **Carry-on Trailer Corporation**. This company was actually a local inquiry that originated in late 2001. A deal was put together between **Carry-On Trailer** and the County and Commonwealth of Virginia during 2002. The company made its locations decision in late 2002 and a public announcement was made by Governor Mark Warner in January 2003.

Carry-On Trailer Corporation is constructing a 125,000 square foot industrial building for the manufacture/assembly of utility and enclosed trailers. The project is valued at \$4 million and will employ 225 people. This project will generate an estimated \$31,105 of annual new taxes to the County when completed.

The Consultant has tracked all inquiries to the County. Not all the County's 2003 prospect inquiries are as large as Carry-On Trailer. Prospect inquiries for Westmoreland County during 2003 are as follows:

<u>Origin</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Expansion</u>	<u>New Project</u>	<u>Total</u>
Westmoreland County	2	3		5
Northern Neck		1		1
Fredericksburg Region	2	2	6	10
Elsewhere in VA	1		6	7
Maryland/Wash D.C.	2		4	6
Eastern U.S.			3	3
Southern U.S.			1	1
Midwest			2	2
Far West			1	1
Canada			3	3
Not specified (UNK)			1	1
Totals	7	6	27	40

Product interest of prospect inquiry:

Shell Building	12
Westmoreland County Industrial Park	3
Vacant industrial buildings	7
Vacant office/commercial buildings	5
Retail sites	2
Private land for development	8
Financing assistance	2
Information inquiry	1

Total 40

Type of prospect:

Manufacturing	15
Retail	3
Technology	1
Agribusiness	1
Defense	4
Fulfillment	1
Distribution	2
Tourism	1
Marina	2
Wood processing	2
Medical	1
Services	4
Private school	1
Not specified (UNK)	<u>2</u>

40

Primary type of assistance or incentive sought:

Commonwealth of VA	2
Small business financing	2
Help w/rezoning or permits	2
Enterprise Zone	7
HUBZone	10
Not specified	<u>15</u>

Total 40

Status of Prospect inquiries as of December 31, 2003

Locations	4*
Active	5
Inactive	8
DEAD-	<u>23</u>

Total 40

Source of Inquiries:

Northern Neck-Chesapeake Bay Region Partnership	1
Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)	3

Local referrals	
From local realtors	1
From advertising	1
From Westmoreland County website	1
Westmoreland County economic development	<u>33</u>
Total	40

*The four companies that located within Westmoreland County came from within the Fredericksburg Region. They are:

ERI
Eastside Glass
Imagine One Technology & Management
Pro Auto LLC

Two of these companies occupied vacant industrial buildings and two occupied vacant office or commercial space.

Jobs Created:

The following jobs were created/retained during 2003:

Carry-On Trailer Inc	225
ERI	5
Eastside Glass	6
Pro Auto LLC	5
Imagine One Technology	<u>45</u>
	286

Other marketing activities performed during 2003 include:

- Participated in two Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) trade shows; Biotechnology **BIO 2003** in Washington D.C. (June 2003) and **Worldwide Food Expo 2003** in Chicago, Illinois (October 2003)
- Completing an update and revision of the economic development portion of the County's website www.westmoreland-county.org and adding a new website to promote the HUBZone www.westmoreland-hubzone.com
- Placing classified ads in the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star and Washington Business Journal to market the shell building and available land parcels in the Westmoreland County Industrial Park.
- Worked with Dominion Virginia Power to obtain donated copies of Westmoreland Shell Building video formatted on a computer disc (CD for use in CD-ROM) that is presented to inquiries interested in this building
- Preparing a Powerpoint presentation about Westmoreland County to use with prospects and to inform our partners about economic development activities and advantages of locating within the County.

- Sending an estimated 50 marketing letters concerning the HUBZone, land in the Westmoreland County Industrial Park and/or the availability of the shell building
- Participating in quarterly meetings sponsored by the Potomac Gateway Alliance (PGA) for contractors doing business at **NSWC Dahlgren Division**.
- Participated in the 12th Annual Small Business Fair at **NSWC Dahlgren Division** in a booth with **Imagine One Technology & Management**
- Participated in Job Fair at **NSWC Dahlgren Division**
- Participated in Virginia Department of Business Assistance quarterly economic development seminars for training, market information and networking opportunities
- Using **Dun & Bradstreet s Marketplace iMarket** software to generate mailing lists for marketing letters and to verify information provided from prospect inquiries

In these next areas of the Westmoreland County Economic Development Strategy the Consultant exercises a support role to assist in the application and implementation of these programs within the County.

4. Workforce Development

Having buildings and available sites is not enough to have a successful local economic development program. There has to be an available local and regional workforce that is either trained or trainable. Westmoreland County has experienced annual unemployment figures higher (4.9%) than the State average (4.1%) and comparable to the seasonal fluctuations of the Northern Neck Region in 2002.

Local actions taken by the Consultant to insure workforce preparedness include:

- Maintaining contacts with local employers regarding workforce characteristics, trends and training needs as well as applicable State programs that would be of assistance to them
- Inquiring and noting traits about employees during existing industry visits
- Developing a reliable list of local business CEO s as references for those inquiries interested in qualities of the local workforce
- Maintaining current County data base of employment information and statistics that can be used to respond to questions from prospects interested in the local/regional workforce
- Maintaining contacts with workforce training providers at Rappahannock Community College, the Bay Area Consortium Workforce Investment Board and Virginia Employment Commission

5. Agribusiness Development

The importance of agriculture cannot be underestimated in Westmoreland County. The 1997 Census of Agriculture indicated that the County ranked in the top 10 Counties for

barley for grain production, corn for grain production and soybeans. Activities taken during the year to promote agribusiness development included:

- County support for a bio-diesel feasibility study for the Northern Neck that could lead to the location of an ethanol facility in the region
- Consultant participation in **BIO 2003** trade show in Washington D.C. with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Virginia Economic Development Partnership (see Recruitment and Marketing)
- Consultant participation with the **VA Tech Extension** agent in economic development forums and activities that support agribusiness development such as planning for an upcoming Agricultural Economic Development Conference scheduled for February 2004
- Consultant using the Virginia Department of Agriculture s staff resources to prepare responses to agribusiness prospect inquiries

6. Fisheries Development

Westmoreland County has a rich historic background that focused on fisheries in the Potomac River, Rappahannock River and Chesapeake Bay. Fish and shellfish were a constant staple in the life of the community and the development of the first industries in the County.

However, harvests of oysters, crabs and fish have been reduced in recent years. These low numbers have had a corresponding effect on local jobs and businesses. Hurricane Isabel also contributed to make 2003 a difficult year for local watermen. Damage to local piers and docks reduced local sport fishing and its impacts on the local economy.

Local efforts to assist Fisheries Development include:

- The consultant responding to inquiries from local businesses involved in Fisheries Development to assist them with referrals to either the Rappahannock Region Small Business Development Center or appropriate Federal or Virginia funding programs
- The County implementing the planting of seed oysters in Currioman Bay by the Marine Resources Commission (MRC) funded by a \$30,000 of Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for the Westmoreland Oyster Heritage Program
- The County working with **Bevans Oyster Company** and others to plant seed oysters in several banks in the Lower Machodoc Creek
- The County working with MRC and others for seeding oyster banks on the Nomini Creek, Yeocomico River and Potomac River

7. Tourism Development

Local attractions and properties and the Northern Neck Tourism Council have promoted tourism development in Westmoreland County. A strategic plan was prepared by the Westmoreland County Tourism Council in 2002, presented to the Board of Supervisors

and included as a reference within the adopted Westmoreland County Economic Development Strategy.

The following tourism activities were noted during the year

- Consultant promoting County tourism development by assisting those prospects seeking to locate a tourism related project within the County
- Westmoreland County s sponsorship of a 350th Anniversary with special event celebrations throughout 2003
- County supporting the work of the Northern Neck Tourism Council to work with local tourism attractions and businesses to market the County and region
- County supporting regional tourism efforts by assisting in funding the Potomac Gateway Welcome Center on Route 301 in King George County
- Consultant working with **VA Tech** to perform a hotel/motel feasibility study in 2004 to examine tourism infrastructure development in Westmoreland County

8. Looking ahead to 2004

Carry-On Trailer Inc. will finish their building and begin manufacturing and assembling utility trailers in early 2004. This activity has already caused more interest in the shell building and remaining parcels in the Westmoreland County Industrial Park.

There are 13 prospect inquiries carried forward into 2004. It is anticipated that several of these will make announcements and result in new local employment opportunities.

Marketing efforts will be augmented and supported by the improved websites, new marketing CD and proactive efforts to promote the County with Virginia Economic Development Partnership staff and within the Fredericksburg region.

The 2004 Year looks to be as promising as 2003.