

**Governor Joe Manchin's  
Open for Business Report  
September 5, 2006 Edition**



The September 2006 report highlights projects and related announcements that will assist with the creation of as many as 700 new jobs and the preservation of a significant number of existing jobs.

- **Belgian company selects West Virginia for its first U.S. operations**  
Belgium-based Industrial Projects Services USA Corp. selected Charleston as its first U.S. operations location, initially employing 10 engineers and architects and investing \$3 million within three years. IPS USA Corp. provides assessment, consultation, design and project management to the steel and aluminum, chemical, petrochemical, pharmaceutical, automotive, paper and energy industries. The company selected West Virginia because of its central location, potential for collaboration with West Virginia University's engineering school and quick response from the state Development Office.
- **Bayer to invest \$30 million in New Martinsville plant**  
Bayer Material Sciences will invest \$30 million to \$35 million to modernize its New Martinsville polyether production facility in the next several years to improve efficiency. The plant, which makes one of the two liquids used to make polyurethane, a product found in appliances, automotive steering wheels and medical equipment, will continue to operate as contractors complete the major upgrades.
- **State awards \$23.7 million contract extending four-lane highway to Grant County**  
The four-lane Corridor H highway system is officially making its way into mountainous Grant County after the state awarded a \$23.7 million contract extending it from Hardy County. Construction on a 1.75-mile section of the 16-mile Forman to Moorefield part of the corridor begins this month and should be complete by August 2008. The highway will provide quick and easy access to Interstate highways in Virginia that connect to metropolitan Washington. It is part of the Appalachian corridor system made possible through the funding efforts of U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd.
- **Indonesia buys West Virginia products for tsunami warnings**  
Martinsburg's Power Sonix Inc. ([www.powersonix.com](http://www.powersonix.com)) recently shipped six high-powered, speech-projection, acoustic hailing devices to Indonesia for use in making tsunami warnings from helicopters. The systems, ranging from 300 to 5,000 watts, are used in helicopters, vehicles, backpacks and fixed installations for emergency response, military operations, weather alerts, disaster management, crowd control, search-and-rescue operations, and airport bird dispersion. The company also sold seven systems to Taiwan for police boats. The two Asian contracts totaled more than \$135,000.

- MORE -

- **State working to lure more wood products manufacturers**  
Forest products helped build West Virginia's economy and they remain a staple in the state's industry today. The West Virginia Development Office joined the Hardy and Hampshire county development authorities and the state Division of Forestry in late August to market the state's plentiful and renewable forest resources at the 2006 International Woodworking Fair in Atlanta. This major trade show provides an opportunity to showcase West Virginia's abundant wood products to manufacturers and businesses that use them. Similar marketing campaigns have resulted in West Virginia manufacturing facilities from companies such as Bruce Hardwood Floors, Georgia-Pacific, Weyerhaeuser and American Woodmark.
  
- **Braxton Technology Center opens for business**  
Braxton County Development Authority officials joined Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito in dedicating the brand-new 30,000-square-foot Braxton Technology Center and welcoming Triune Software, its first tenant. The \$2.5-million center, which is just off the Flatwoods exit of I-79, was partially funded by a \$1.135 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Triune develops information management applications for clients such as the U.S. Air Force and will employ 10 to 12 people at the Braxton facility.
  
- **Small Business Development Center helps 142 clients in August**  
The West Virginia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offered 867 hours of counseling and training to 142 clients in August, helping to create or retain 90 jobs. To date this fiscal year, the SBDC provided 11,160 hours of counseling to 1,769 clients and created or retained 986 jobs. At 13 events in August, the SBDC trained 139 people; year-to-date, the agency held 261 events and trained 3,299 people. Out of five loans totaling \$875,941 approved in August, three were Small Business Administration loans totaling \$817,451. Out of 148 loans totaling \$25,385,159 approved year-to-date, 72 were SBA loans totaling \$12,659,893. New customer satisfaction was 100 percent in August and for the year.
  
- **Charleston postal facility will expand, hire more than 100**  
The U.S. Postal Service's remote encoding center in Charleston, which now employs 350, is expanding by more than 100 employees in the next six months. Employees at the center, which handles mail from Washington, Baltimore and Richmond, Va., manually process addresses that automated machines can't recognize. In the coming months, they also will handle mail from North Carolina and South Carolina. The Postal Service selected Charleston because it's one of the top-performing remote encoding centers in the United States, with low costs and low staff turnover.
  
- **State Farm Insurance reaffirms commitment to West Virginia**  
State Farm Insurance acquired new office space in Kanawha County to handle a possible expansion, and reaffirmed its commitment to West Virginia's resurging insurance market. In early August, State Farm announced a 5 percent rate decrease for homeowners' insurance customers in West Virginia, which follows a 10 percent rate reduction in 2005 for the company's car insurance policyholders. Since the approval of sweeping insurance reforms during the 2005 regular legislative session, West Virginians have saved more than \$70 million on consumer insurance.

- **State officials visit intermodal facility**

West Virginia Development Office and Public Port Authority officials in August toured the Port of Virginia in Hampton Roads, one of the fastest-growing container ports on the East Coast, and the Virginia Inland Port intermodal facility in Front Royal. Both West Virginia agencies are exploring the feasibility of a similar facility.

- **Tamarack celebrates 10 years of promoting West Virginia's culture, tourism**

Beckley's popular Tamarack artisan center celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as one of the nation's finest facilities showcasing Appalachian culture, heritage, handcrafts, fine art, cuisine and music. Tamarack draws more than half a million visitors each year and is a major contributor to the success of cottage industries across the state. The facility has generated nearly \$61 million in sales revenue, \$3.2 million in sales tax and benefited more than 2,500 artisans.

- **New lodge opens at Chief Logan State Park**

Visitors to West Virginia's southern coalfields and the Hatfield-McCoy Trails can enjoy a 75-room lodge that recently opened at Chief Logan State Park in Logan County. The lodge is adjacent to the park's conference center and restaurant, which opened four years ago. It features beautifully furnished rooms and suites, plus Internet access, an indoor pool and an exercise room. Each suite includes a balcony or terrace, fireplace, and a microwave and refrigerator. Park officials said its quality and proximity to Charleston and coalfields attractions will make it an appealing venue for groups.

- **Private industry joins state college to train Wheeling students for job market**

Williams Lea, a business process outsourcing company with offices in Wheeling, has partnered with West Virginia Northern Community College to develop academic courses that prepare students for the evolving job market in the Wheeling area. West Virginia Northern now offers the Legal Office certificate program that trains students in the skills required for them to pursue local careers in legal services at Williams Lea's full-service facility in Wheeling. The company and the college have collaborated on courses in word processing, business law, legal transcription and legal document production. In addition to offering courses for legal services careers, West Virginia Northern will create training programs for Williams Lea's new hires while the company will advise on internships and expand its recruitment and partnership efforts with colleges and universities throughout West Virginia.

- **More companies seeking state economic development loans**

More companies are turning to the state Economic Development Authority's low-interest business loans in light of rising interest rates, according to David Warner, the authority's executive director. In August, the EDA approved a \$1.9 million purchase-leaseback deal, approved five loans totaling \$6 million and preliminarily approved nine other loans totaling \$5.5 million. EDA loans generally are provided at 4 percent lower than the prime rate and used to fund business projects that stimulate employee growth and retention.

- **Companies request revisions to existing Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council loans**
  - The Fayette County Urban Renewal Authority requested approval on a revision to a \$599,000 loan approved in June 2004 for the acquisition of a 1,000-acre site and development of 300 of those acres for the Wolf Creek Park mixed-use business park in Fayette County. The project requires additional funding of \$1.6 million, which is being provided through the West Virginia Housing Development Authority. The changes permit the lending agencies to share in revenue and collateral.
  - The Webster County Economic Development Authority has requested a revision to a \$404,725 loan approved in October 2005 to help purchase a 20,600-square-foot building in the Webster County Business Park in Cowen. Information Manufacturing Corp, which leases the first building in the park, has requested leasing 6,000 square feet of space in the facility now under construction. This will allow for additional space and growth of 15 to 20 new jobs, so the Development Authority is requesting an additional \$250,000 to build out the 6,000 square feet.
  
- **Economic Development Authority approves \$11.5 million in loans**
  - **Carr Concrete Corp.** will receive a \$250,000 loan to expand its dock on the Ohio River in Waverly, Wood County. Carr Concrete's 100-acre site has three production facilities totaling more than 65,000 square feet of manufacturing space. The company makes concrete burial vaults, air conditioner pads, curb bumpers, media barriers, bridge beams and culverts. The company will increase employment from 83 to 90 in the next year.
  - **Appalachian Forest Products Inc.** of Buckhannon received final approval for a \$1.575 million loan to build a sawmill comprising four buildings and 27,000 square feet in Buckhannon, Upshur County. The operation will consist of a band mill with two debarkers, two band head rigs, two board edgers, one gang saw and a drop saw trimmer. The company, which is expected to employ 28 people after three years, sells Appalachian hardwood logs and lumber and exports to several countries.
  - **The Berkeley County Development Authority** received final approval for a \$2 million loan to acquire a new conveyor system, racking, and other equipment that will be leased to BlueSky Brands Inc. BlueSky is a direct-to-consumer retailer that markets gift items, apparel and household items via its catalog. BSB will lease more than 400,000 square feet in the Shockey Commercial Center in Martinsburg, Berkeley County, for this project, which is expected to increase employment from 400 to 800 after three years.

- **S.J. Morse Co. of Capon Bridge** received final approval on a \$299,475 loan to purchase new equipment and expand its existing facility in Hampshire County. S.J. Morse is a manufacturer of architectural wood veneer-faced panels. The new project includes financing a 4,800-square foot building and the purchase and installation of specialized machinery, which are expected to increase employment at the company from 17 to 24 after three years.
- **Summit Point Automotive Research Center (SPARC)** in Jefferson County received final approval for a \$2.126 million loan to develop a 277-acre training center next to its existing raceway facility. SPARC operates weekend racing events and conducts specialty driver training, accident avoidance training and anti-terrorist procedures on weekdays. The company intends to create a training and research campus that will house security firms from the Washington area that wish to relocate their training operations at Summit Point, which is a short drive from the capital. SPARC's individual employment is expected to increase from 33 to 55 after three years.
- **Coastal Lumber Company** received preliminary approval for a \$1.9 million sale/leaseback of an existing Coastal Lumber facility in Hazelton, Preston County. The company will modernize, refurbish and expand the facility and will purchase and install manufacturing equipment, and employ 16 people.
- **Ohio Valley Industrial and Business Development Corp.** received preliminary approval for an \$800,000 loan to renovate and build out the first floor of the Stone Center at Market Plaza in Wheeling. OVIBDC acquired the former Stone and Thomas building in 2004 and is redeveloping it into back office and shared services space. Officials estimate the first tenant will create 60 to 70 new jobs.
- **Tabor Machine Co.** in Bluefield received preliminary approval for an \$800,000 loan to buy property and a 76,000-square-foot building in Princeton, Mercer County, to relocate and expand its operations. Tabor is a custom manufacturer of vibrating screen systems that are used in the coal mining industry to remove water or separate larger materials from those of desired size. The company anticipates an increase of 20 jobs to a total of 71 within three years.
- **Beaver Coal Co. Ltd.** of Beckley received preliminary approval of a \$300,000 loan to build four luxury vacation cabins near the Beaver exit of I-64 in Raleigh County. Beaver Coal owns Woodland Amenities, which was created in 2005 to provide luxury cabin rentals to southern West Virginia tourists. The project comprises two one-bedroom cabins, one three-bedroom cabin and one four-bedroom cabin/conference center and will create four new jobs.
- **Bluefield Gear & Machine LLC** received preliminary approval for a \$560,000 loan to purchase and install equipment for an expansion at its Bluefield, Mercer County, facility. The company, which makes gears used in mining equipment, will use the loan to buy five overhead cranes, a C&C turning center and heat treating equipment. The expansion is expected to increase employment from 10 to 25 after three years.

**-MORE-**

- **Industrial Plating & Machine Inc.** of Princeton, Mercer County, received preliminary approval for a \$180,000 loan to purchase and install equipment in the former EIMCO building in Bluefield. The new project consists of one 20-ton and two 10-ton overhead cranes and welding equipment and it is expected to increase the company's employment from 15 to 40 after three years.
- **Harbor Steel of West Virginia Inc.** received preliminary approval for a \$328,500 loan to purchase and install equipment as part of an expansion at a shell building in Prichard, Wayne County. The project consists of a new high-definition plasma cutting machine, shear and other equipment. Harbor Steel will cut, shear and shape carbon and stainless steel products at the facility, which is expected to increase employment from 10 to 40 after three years.
- **The Duane Zobrist Group LLC (Greenbrier Valley Limousine & Executive Services)** of White Sulphur Springs, Greenbrier County, received a \$300,000 loan to purchase an office building and garage on Main Street in White Sulphur Springs. DZG will restore the historic character of the building facade, which originally was a gas station and garage, and remodel the interior as an office. The company provides transportation by sedan, van, limousine and executive coach between the Greenbrier Resort, the airport and other destinations, as well as provides non-emergency medical transportation for the public.
- **Victory of West Virginia Inc.** of Fairmont received preliminary approval for two loans totaling \$2 million for the purchase of all the fixed assets of Industrial Resources Inc. and West Virginia Electric Corp. in Fairmont, Marion County. This project will transfer ownership of Victory of West Virginia from its founder to the company's current president and will preserve 278 jobs in Fairmont. Victory designs, manufactures and sells mineral processing and handling systems and electronic control systems to coal, stone and other industries.

###