

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
NOV. 1, 2005**

**CONTACT: Lara Ramsburg, (304) 558-2000**

## **Governor Introduces West Virginia "Open for Business" Reports**

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** - Gov. Joe Manchin today introduced the first in a series of regular "Open for Business" reports, documenting the state's economic progress. This initial report reflects on positive progress in the state's economic development efforts during the past two months, with project announcements that will result in the creation of as many as 1,000 new jobs, the preservation of nearly 2,000 existing jobs, and the investment of more than \$115 million in West Virginia.

"As part of the Oct. 14 State Capitol event celebrating the introduction of our new state quarter and the completion of the dome restoration project, we proudly unfurled a banner that declared West Virginia officially 'Open for Business,'" the governor said. "As West Virginia continues to spread the word about the important and positive changes taking place here, more companies are discovering that 'Open for Business' is more than just a slogan. I look forward to sharing even more exciting economic news in the coming months as we work together to make West Virginia the best that it can be."

- Gov. Joe Manchin announced the West Virginia Coal Conversion Initiative, which outlines the state's commitment to using the latest technology to harness West Virginia's coal resources to address the vulnerability of America's refining capacity and the nation's dependency upon foreign sources of oil.
- BPB America, Inc., a manufacturer and marketer of wall and ceiling products, will construct a \$100 million wallboard plant next to AEP's Mitchell electric plant in a project that will result in as many as 200 jobs. AEP will supply the plant with gypsum, which is a byproduct of the scrubber process used to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions in power plants.
- International Coal Group will relocate its corporate headquarters to Putnam County, creating as many as 100 permanent jobs by June 2006.
- Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe announced a partnership with British firm Williams Lea, which specializes in providing document, litigation and technology solutions to law firms, but also does such work as design and graphics for banks. Orrick's Global Operations Center in Wheeling will continue to provide technology, finance, human resources, Web engineering, benefits, payroll and marketing services while Williams Lea will coordinate all of Orrick's word processing needs, transcription production services and document services work. The company will hire 30 employees to start. Orrick also will continue to develop a U.S.-based outsourcing business for other law firms.

**\*\*MORE\*\***

**West Virginia "Open For Business" Report**  
**Nov. 1, 2005**  
**Page Two**

- Gov. Joe Manchin joined Ohio County business leaders and officials to announce financing has been secured to complete a major renovation of the historic Stone and Thomas Building in downtown Wheeling, the first project in the state to be partially funded with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) obligation bond financing by a local government. The Regional Economic Development Partnership (REDP), the Ohio Valley's primary economic development agency, will redevelop the 180,000-square-foot building into back office and shared services space for businesses. It is projected that the project – the Stone Center @ Market Plaza – has the potential to create more than 500 technology and/or finance jobs. The \$6.4 million project will be funded with \$3.4 million of proceeds from Series 2005 A TIF bonds and a \$3 million loan from the West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council.
- The Harbour Report once again recognized Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia as the most productive engine plant in North America for the calendar year of 2004, a title the plant has held for the past three years. This is only the second time The Harbour Report -- the auto industry authority on manufacturing efficiency first published in 1989 -- has had an engine plant with an Hours Per Engine measure below 2. Both times it was Toyota West Virginia.
- West Virginia is ranked the 10-lowest in the nation in the cost of doing business, according to the 2005 Milken Institute Cost of Doing Business Index, with costs 13 percent below the national average. Hawaii, New York and Massachusetts are the most expensive states in which to do business, ranking first, second and third most expensive. Hawaii, which was also No. 1 on last year's index, has business costs that are 43 percent higher than the national average. Second-place New York's costs are 30 percent higher and third-place Massachusetts has costs that are 25 percent greater than the U.S. overall. The Index measures wage costs, taxes, electricity costs and real estate costs for industrial and office space. Each state is measured on the five individual categories and those weighted scores are compiled to make the overall index.
- Gov. Joe Manchin encouraged union and company leaders to work together to resolve a contract dispute at Pechiney Rolled Products in Ravenswood. After speaking with Michel Jacques, the senior vice president of Pechiney's owner, Alcan, Manchin reported that significant investments to improve the plant's viability would result from the union's approval of the contract. Members of the United Seelworkers of America Local 5668 avoided a pending strike after voting to approve a new five-year contract.
- Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. and SNA Carbon LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Severstal North America, Inc., of Dearborn, Mich., announced the formation and funding of a new joint venture, Mountain State Carbon, LLC, that now owns Wheeling-Pittsburgh's coke plant in Follansbee.

**\*\*MORE\*\***

**West Virginia "Open For Business" Report**  
**Nov. 1, 2005**  
**Page Three**

- The West Virginia Economic Development Authority preliminarily approved a \$7.5 million loan to the Wood County Development Authority for an expansion at Coldwater Creek's distribution center. The expansion, which will result in as many as 92 permanent jobs and 103 seasonal jobs after three years, involves a 352,825-square-foot addition to the company's distribution center in the Parkersburg Business Park, Mineral Wells, for a total of 962,825 square feet on a 60-acre tract.
- Huntington Area Development Council (HADCO) and Flex Partners, LP, broke ground on a new flex space facility in Commerce Park in Huntington. The new facility, Business Center at Commerce Park, will represent a private investment of more than \$1.9 million. It will encompass 32,000 total square feet. Each bay size is 100 ft. x 30 ft. The facility may be divided into units as small as 3,000 square feet and will be suitable for office, warehousing and light manufacturing.
- The Wayne County Commission and the Huntington Area Development Council (HADCO) broke ground on a new 40,000-square-foot shell building in Prichard Industrial Park. This shell building - the fourth constructed by HADCO - will cost approximately \$682,000. HADCO has constructed three other shell buildings in Cabell and Wayne counties. The first (55,000 square feet) was built in late 1997 at Prichard Industrial Park and sold to Okuno International, a Japanese manufacturer of hydraulic cylinders for customers such as Toyota. The second (50,000 square feet) was also constructed at Prichard Industrial Park and sold in late 2002 to Sogefi, an Italian manufacturer operating in Prichard as Allevard Springs. Allevard expanded the size of the facility to 215,000 square feet to manufacture automotive springs and stabilizer bars for companies such as Ford Motor Co. The third shell building (42,500 square feet) was built at Huntington Industrial Center and sold in late 2004 to Capresa, a Spanish company operating in Huntington as Caprewest, which produces cold-drawn steel bars and is a supplier for Allevard Springs in Prichard. All four shell buildings were financed by the West Virginia Economic Development Authority.
- Thirteen West Virginia companies exhibited in the China Coal & Mining Expo 2005 in Beijing, China's 11th international technology exchange and equipment exhibition on coal and mining. The state's exports to China, West Virginia's seventh largest export market, increased 74 percent from 2003 to 2004.
- The West Virginia Development Office conducted a marketing trip to Italy to meet with European companies that have invested in West Virginia and with new prospects. Several European companies with existing West Virginia facilities are considering expansion projects. The new prospects considering the state as an investment location include companies in the following sectors: automotive, chemical, electronic, aerospace, high-end ceramics and others.

**\*\*MORE\*\***

**West Virginia "Open For Business" Report**  
**Nov. 1, 2005**  
**Page Four**

- Four West Virginia companies participated in a state-sponsored trade mission to Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte and Sao Paulo Brazil in September. One-on-one appointments, customized to each company's business objectives, allowed pre-screened and focused meetings between Brazilian and West Virginia companies. This trade event marks the fifth delegation to Brazil in 10 years. Brazil is West Virginia's sixth-largest export destination, receiving more than \$131,000,000 worth of the state's products in 2004. This is an 86 percent increase over 2003, and accounts for gains across many product categories and industry sectors.
- West Virginia Development Office representatives participated in printing and biometrics trade shows to promote new investment in West Virginia. Approximately 62,000 people -- including a large international contingent -- attended Print 05 Converting in Chicago with 954 exhibitors on display filling nearly 750,000 square feet of booth space. As many as 1,000 participants and 75 exhibitors took part in the Biometric Consortium Conference in Arlington, Va.
- Gov. Joe Manchin has emphasized the strong economic potential for developing additional trade and investment opportunities with West Virginia's largest trading partner, Canada. In response, the WVDO participated in the Woodworking Machinery & Supply Expo in Toronto, the state's most recent effort at strengthening ties with Canada.
- Gov. Joe Manchin announced the designation of White Sulphur Springs, Ronceverte and Charleston's West Washington Street as the newest neighborhood Main Street West Virginia programs, bringing the total number of programs to 15. Other participating communities include Charleston's East End, Fairmont, Harpers Ferry, Kingwood, Mannington, Martinsburg, Morgantown, New Martinsville, Philippi, Point Pleasant, Ripley and St. Albans.
- The Neighborhood Investment Program announced 128 FY2006 participants/projects that will receive \$2 million in vouchers to distribute to contributing business and individuals, allowing them to receive up to 50 percent of the contributed amount in credits to reduce Corporate Net Income Tax, Business Franchise Tax and Personal Income Tax. The West Virginia Legislature established the Neighborhood Investment Program (NIP) in 1996 to increase charitable giving to local nonprofit organizations.
- Sino Swearingen received certification from the Federal Aviation Administration for its SJ30-2 plane, which enables commercial production of a jet partially built in Martinsburg. After the plane's shell is built in West Virginia, it will be shipped to San Antonio for full assembly.

**\*\*MORE\*\***

- Gov. Joe Manchin commended West Virginia's companies that export their products across the globe, presenting 29 with the Governor's Commendation for International Market Entry and two with the Governor's Award for Excellence in Exporting. "The companies and individuals we honor today prove that West Virginia can compete in the global marketplace," Manchin said. "To build on West Virginia's success in global markets, it is essential that we continue to market the state and that our companies continue to market their products." The Governor's Commendation for International Market Entry is based on the tradition of displaying the first dollar a business earns. During the ceremony, each company received a plaque with currency attached from the country whose market it has entered. The Governor's Excellence in Exporting awards, established in 1983 and presented by the governor and the West Virginia Export Council, honor companies and business professionals for their leadership and success in the state's exporting efforts.
- A Polymer Industry Mission during "Plastics Appreciation Month" in September honored the important role polymer companies play in the state's economy. The mission introduced national and international polymer industry executives to business partnerships and investment opportunities in the state. The event was a joint effort organized by Sen. Jay Rockefeller's office, the Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation, inc., the Polymer Alliance Zone, Gov. Joe Manchin's office and the West Virginia Development Office including its overseas offices in Japan and Germany.
- The West Virginia Small Business Development Center offered 770 hours of counseling to 127 clients in August, creating or retaining 96 jobs. To date this year, the SBDC provided 8,363 hours of counseling to 1,845 clients and created or retained 830 jobs. At 22 events in August, the SBDC trained 216 people; year-to-date, the agency held 368 events and trained 4,262 people. The SBDC provided counseling to 65 startup businesses in August, which accounted for 50 percent of its total clientele. In 2005, the agency counseled 969 startups, accounting for 52 percent of total clients. Sixty-two existing businesses received counseling in August; 875 existing businesses were counseled year-to-date. Out of five loans totaling \$882,200 approved in August, two were Small Business Administration loans totaling \$804,000. Out of 98 loans totaling \$10,268,306 approved year-to-date, 35 were SBA loans totaling \$6,264,752. New customer satisfaction was 100 percent in August and for the year.