



The September 2009 Open for Business report highlights projects and related announcements that will assist with the creation of new jobs and the preservation of a significant number of existing jobs.

### **Standard and Poor's upgrades West Virginia's credit rating**

Standard and Poor's Rating Service raised West Virginia's credit rating on general obligation debt from "AA-" to "AA." The credit rating increase means government agencies such as local school boards will be able to finance projects at lower interest rates. The rating agency said the upgrade was merited due to West Virginia's economy remaining relatively stable during economic downturns and the state's fiscal policies. This marks the first time in 10 years that Standard and Poor's Rating Service has raised the state's credit rating.

### **Fitch rates West Virginia Outlook as "Positive"**

Fitch Ratings gave West Virginia's revenue bonds an A+ and upgraded the state's Rating Outlook from "Stable" to "Positive." The revised rating reflects West Virginia's strong financial management. Fitch cited in particular the state's disciplined efforts to address financial challenges such as the workers' compensation systems.

### **GST to fill 30 new high-tech positions**

Global Science & Technology Inc. (GST) kicks off a major recruitment effort to fill 30 new high-tech positions, most of which will be in West Virginia. The company has an immediate need for IT professionals, including systems engineers, application engineers, test engineers and application programmers. GST—West Virginia Division operates in Fairmont, Marion County.

The recruitment drive supports the new GST joint venture partnership known as Diversified Global Partners JV, LLC. GST was awarded new tasks to continue developing and maintaining the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Comprehensive Large Array-data Stewardship System. The contract has a maximum ordering value of \$200 million over the potential nine-year period of performance. For more information, call (304) 368-1862 ext. 14 or e-mail [John.Dahlia@gstvw.com](mailto:John.Dahlia@gstvw.com).

### **Hydrogen energy conference kicks off with opening of Yeager fuel facility**

The Mountain States Hydrogen Business Council kicked-off its Hydrogen Implementation Conference with the inauguration of a hydrogen fuel facility located at Yeager Airport in Charleston, Kanawha County. The \$2 million production and storage facility will produce fuel for hydrogen-powered vehicles for Yeager Airport and the 130<sup>th</sup> Air Wing of the West Virginia National Guard. The conference continued with seminars in hydrogen energy, technology and economic development.

### **Simonton Windows calls 263 laid-off W.Va. employees back to work**

Simonton Windows called 263 laid-off workers back to its Parkersburg-based manufacturing plant and hired an additional 25 seasonal employees. The window and patio door manufacturer cited increased summer sales due to the federal tax credit incentive. The company also recalled 139 workers in Illinois.

### **Eight West Virginia firms listed in Inc. 5000 Fastest Growing**

The 2009 Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing companies includes eight West Virginia businesses. The businesses and their rankings are HMS Technologies, Martinsburg, Berkeley County, No. 45; Reliable Environmental Transport, Bridgeport, Harrison County, No. 393; McKinley Carter Wealth Services, Wheeling, Ohio County, No. 1465; beBetter Networks, Charleston, Kanawha County, No. 1486; Centra Bank, Morgantown, Monongalia County, No. 2287; KeyLogic Systems, Morgantown, Monongalia County, No. 3379; Advanced Technical Solutions, Scott Depot, Putnam County, No. 3512; and L.J. Hughes & Sons, Summersville, Nicholas County, No. 4319.

### **Marshall University recruits gene researcher**

Marshall University Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (MIIR) has recruited gene regulations expert Dr. Joan Wilson. Wilson was a research fellow at the Harvard Institute of Proteomics, senior applications scientist and product manager for Panomics (now Affymetrix), and most recently, researcher at System Biosciences. Marshall University established MIIR to develop a focused program of pioneering research that will lead to the creation of high-tech businesses based on the patentable discoveries. Wilson is the second scientist to join the institute created through the West Virginia Research Trust Fund, popularly known as the "Bucks for Brains" research trust fund.

### **West Virginia University receives \$1 million gas field desalination project**

West Virginia University's Water Research Institute received \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Energy/National Energy Technology Laboratory to study Marcellus Shale natural gas field waste water treatment. The project will research ways to cleanse salty water that is produced when gas fields are developed in the formation. The 32-month project will evaluate new and existing salt removal methods.

**WVSBDC and VA agencies help wood specialty business open in Putnam County**

The new wood products business Miller's General Store has opened its doors in Winfield, W.Va. The new company provides portable band saw services and produces furniture. The band saw is transported to the customer's site to cut hard or soft wood to the customer's specifications. Miller's also produces primitive pioneer-style wood furniture such as beds, bookcases and tables. Guests can visit Miller's workshop to observe how the furniture is made. Miller's General Store got its start with support from the West Virginia Small Business Development Center (WVSBDC) and Veterans Administration (VA). The WVSBDC services included business counseling, business plan development guidance and financial planning advice. The VA assisted with business education.

**Marion County's Fairmont wins three grants for historic downtown improvements**

Main Street Fairmont was recently awarded grants totaling more than \$46,000 to preserve three historic buildings in downtown Fairmont. The preservation grants help protect the historic integrity and economic health of the downtown district.

**West Virginia's stimulus Web site ranked among nation's best**

West Virginia's stimulus tracking Web site is among the best in the nation, according to national nonprofit research group Good Jobs First. The state's site was ranked fourth. The research group calculated the rankings by scoring states in 10 categories. West Virginia's site received perfect scores in several areas, such as centralization of information, data on jobs created by stimulus projects and how federal dollars are divided by category.

**Commerce receives Best of Class Award for Economic Development Marketing**

The West Virginia Department of Commerce received a Best of Class Award at the Southern Economic Development Council's (SEDC) Annual Conference held in August in Point Clear, Ala. SEDC recognized Commerce for its development of a branding and identity system governing the consistent, professional design of materials for its nine agencies promoting West Virginia's workforce, industries, tourism and natural resources. Commerce earned the award in a field of more than 100 entries, from a 17-state region.

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