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Governor Releases March "Open for Business" Report

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Gov. Joe Manchin today released the latest in a series of regular "Open for Business" reports, documenting the state's economic progress. The March 2006 report reflects positive progress in the state's economic development efforts during the past month, with projects and related announcements that will assist with the creation of as many as 60 new jobs and the preservation of a significant number of existing jobs.

- **GrafTech International, Ltd. will expand its advanced graphite materials production facility in Harrison County, creating as many as 60 new jobs.** GrafTech is one of the world's leading manufacturers of carbon and graphite products for industrial applications in a diverse array of industries including metal production, electronics, chemicals, aerospace and transportation. For more information on the company, visit www.graftech.com.
- **Le Luong Minh, Vietnamese ambassador to the United Nations, visited West Virginia to explore opportunities for trade and investment.** The ambassador and his staff met with several West Virginia companies interested in exporting to Vietnam and with representatives of Marshall University and West Virginia University to discuss education issues.
- **Gov. Manchin's involvement at the request of federal mediators involved in contract negotiations at PPG's Natrium plant in New Martinsville led to the resolution of a dispute between the company and striking workers.**
- **Representatives from the West Virginia Development Office and the Chemical Alliance Zone participated in INFORMEX, the custom chemical industry's premier marketing event, with nearly 480 custom chemical companies and more than 4,000 specialty and fine chemical professionals in attendance in Orlando. WVDO representatives also participated in the International Poultry Exposition in Atlanta.**
- **Tech-Seal Products, Inc., in Ohio County announced an expansion involving the purchase of a new coater/laminator.** Tech-Seal Products, a 25-year-old corporation that markets custom cap liners and temper-resistant innerseals in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and other countries, consolidated its two manufacturing facilities - the innerseal division in Roselle, Ill., and Wheeling's liner division - at the Wheeling operations in 1999.
- **Shrewsbury Properties, LLC, announced acquisition and improvements of two buildings on a 1.05-acre site between U.S. 60 and the Kanawha River in the Shrewsbury/Chesapeake area of Kanawha County.** The owners of New River Engineering, Inc., and Doss Engineering, Inc., formed a limited partnership (Shrewsbury) to purchase a building that is being leased from KEM Realty for future expansion. NREI was formed in 1998 and is an engineering and consulting firm that primarily serves the coal and construction industries. Doss was formed in January 1999 and provides contract, consulting and engineering services primarily to the coal mining industry.

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- **Mountain State Log Homes, Inc., announced acquisition of a 50,000-square foot shell building on a five-acre site in the Jane Lew Industrial Park in Lewis County.** The project also includes the purchase and installation of a planer and a dust collection system. Mountain State Log Homes, founded in 1978, manufactures log homes, pallets and wooden boxes/shipping containers. The relocation of operations from Ireland, West Virginia, to Jane Lew will enable the company to place its production, currently performed outdoors, under roof.
- **Greenfield Cabinetry, LLC, announced the purchase and installation of equipment at its Randolph County operations.** Greenfield Cabinetry, a manufacturer of semi-custom cabinetry, began operations in 2000 in Elkins as a sister company to Corsi Cabinet Co. of Indianapolis, Ind., which manufactures very high end cabinetry.

Earlier this year:

- **Gov. Joe Manchin joined representatives of The Esseco Group to announce the Italian company will invest as much as \$20 million to establish its first U.S. manufacturing site at the Bayer CropScience Institute Site Manufacturing Industrial Park in Kanawha County, creating as many as 30 new jobs.** The plant, to occupy about nine acres at the Institute site, will produce sodium metabisulfite, sodium sulfite and sodium bisulfite solution, which are used in many industries such as water treatment, food preservatives, gas cleaning in power stations as well as in the manufacture of chemicals, photo processing, surfactants and pharmaceuticals. Esseco Group manufactures sulfur-based chemicals (sulfites in crystal and liquid form) and sulfur for industry and agriculture.
- **West Virginia European Office representatives participated in the annual meeting and exhibition of the Flemish Industry Association in Antwerp, Belgium, to promote West Virginia as an investment location.** Nearly 1,000 executives attended the event hosted by the Flemish Industry Association and the United States Ambassador to Belgium. An emphasis was put on chemicals, plastics, automotive, general manufacturing and the IT industry.
- **A nine-member delegation of business and government leaders from the Shanxi Province, the largest coal-producing province in China, visited Charleston because of West Virginia's importance to the energy industry and future business opportunities.** Delegation members met with West Virginia business people interested in exporting mining machinery to China, developing joint ventures in coal gasification or liquefaction, and other trade and investment opportunities. Of \$3.26 billion in West Virginia exports in 2004, \$128 million went to China, which ranks No. 7 in the list of countries to which West Virginia businesses export. Plastics, mining machinery, organic chemicals and wood were the top exports.