

Federal Funding Announcement  
for the Bland County Commerce Park  
Bland, Virginia  
Thursday, October 9, 2008

I am pleased to return to Bland County today to announce the provision of federal funding for the development of a significant economic development resource for Bland County.

Effective today, the U. S. Department of Commerce, through its Economic Development Administration, is providing a grant in the amount of \$600,000 to Bland County for development of the new Commerce Park, which is located in Bastian along Route 52 near the Wolf Creek Indian Village. It is anticipated that the federal investment in the Bland County Commerce Park will result in the creation of 135 jobs and a future private investment of \$15 million.

My highest priority for Southwest Virginia is the expansion of our economy and the creation of new job opportunities for our region's residents. Essential to the realization of that goal is the development of the resources necessary to accommodate industrial and commercial growth and to attract to our region employers in search of new plant locations.

Bland County Commerce Park will consist of 22 acres that will be available in four to seven acre tracts. It will accommodate mixed-use development of manufacturing, distribution and research and development businesses.

The federal grant which I am announcing today will be used to develop the site for the Park and to provide water and wastewater resources to the site. Water and wastewater facilities currently run adjacent to the Park. As a result of the federal funding, 10 inch water and 12 inch wastewater main lines will be installed throughout the Park. In addition, the grant funds will be used to grade the site for future development.

The total project cost for the development of the Bland County Commerce Park is \$1,972,000. Matching funds are being provided by several sources. The Virginia Tobacco Commission is providing \$200,000; the Virginia Department of Transportation is providing \$375,000 through its Industrial Access Road funds; Bland County is providing \$747,000, and Mount Rogers Planning District Commission is providing \$50,000. These matching funds will be used to complement the federal funding, and the

Industrial Access Road funds from VDOT will be used to construct turn lanes on Route 52 for easy access into the Park.

Right-of-way along the southern side of the Park is being set aside for the construction of an access trail that will link a trailhead at Wolf Creek Indian Village to the Round Mountain Trail Network. This will provide an aesthetically pleasing element to the Park and provide job-site recreational opportunities for the employees of the businesses which locate in the Park.

Although the Park is not yet constructed, businesses are already expressing interest in locating facilities in it. Construction on the new Park is anticipated to commence in the spring of 2009.

Given the excellent quality of life, strong work ethic and low costs for doing business which are found in Bland County, I have no doubt that the Bland County Commerce Park will become one of Southwest Virginia' premier industrial parks, that it will soon become the home of a variety of companies, and a number of new jobs for Bland County residents will be created.

I want to commend Bland County's farsighted leadership for the commitment it has made to the development of the Bland County Commerce Park. I particularly want to commend Jason Ramsey, Chairman, and the other members of the Board of Supervisors for their hard work and dedication to the advancement of Bland County's economy. The Board and County Administrator Jonathan Sweet and his staff are also to be congratulated for the strong support which the County has provided for this project of large importance to Bland County's economic future.

I would like to recognize Kelly O'Brien, Director of Public Affairs at the Economic Development Administration, who is here today. The Economic Development Administration worked closely with my office to ensure that the funding application received proper consideration, and I thank Kelly for EDA's support of this project.

And I want to commend my Deputy Chief of Staff Laura Lee for her persistence and persuasiveness in urging that the federal funding be provided to Bland County.

It is always a tremendous pleasure working with Bland County's local government officials in planning projects and obtaining funding for them, and today I want to offer my congratulations to all of those individuals for the success of their efforts.