



BEDFORD BUSINESS FIRST

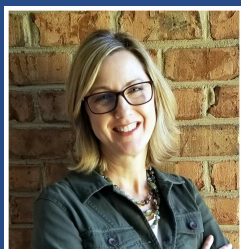
News from Bedford County Office of Economic Development

May 2020

Do you need assistance in determining what programs and loans are available during the COVID-19 crisis for your business? Please visit the [Office of Economic Development's website](#) for available loans and grants. New information is added on a regular basis, so be sure to check back often and reach out to us at 540-587-5670.



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540-587-5670 ext. 1371
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Click this link for more
information and the
County's response to
COVID-19.



Please mark your calendar:

August 12 -
Bedford Business Roundtable at
National D-Day Memorial

December 10 -
Business Roundtable event -
Bedford Welcome Center

Bedford County is poised to return to positive growth with the right blend of efforts

The Bedford County Office of Economic Development has been continuously working on a number of COVID-19 related activities in support of local businesses since the pandemic began in March. Whether assisting businesses with new products aimed at solving pandemic issues or helping those who are working hard to maintain or restart operations, we've reached out to more than 60 companies. We have created a COVID-19 Resources Toolkit on bedfordeconomicdevelopment.com that we consistently update with the latest about loans, grants, and resources intended to help us get through this economic disruption.

The majority of manufacturers in Bedford County are maintaining operations, with some even experiencing growth as a result of increased demand for products they make or services they perform (Nanotouch Solutions, Simplimatic Automation, Automated Industrial Technologies, and Sentry Equipment, for example). However, the retail, restaurant, and hospitality industries have experienced deep cuts, with both reduced employment and halted or slowed sales.

We believe that Bedford County is well positioned to see a trajectory of growth return once COVID-19 cases decrease, but we also realize that it will take a lot of work from businesses, government, residents, churches and organizations. If we all support our local businesses like never before and businesses provide a safe and secure environment, I believe we have a chance to rebuild at a good pace.

Traci Blido
Director of Economic Development
Bedford County, Virginia

Bedford County EDA assists
businesses with PPE needs

The Bedford County Economic Development office and EDA recently worked with the Dept. of Fire and Rescue to meet the need for a dozen manufacturers and public-facing service industries to obtain a supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to do business. If you are having trouble ordering or paying for PPE for your Bedford County business to maintain or reopen operations, please contact the Office of Economic Development, 540-587-5670 or Traci Blido, Economic Development Director, tblido@bedfordcountyva.gov. We may be able to help.



Good steps to Reopen and Recover

As many businesses are just beginning to reopen or planning to transition to the 'new normal', there are a number of factors to consider and decisions make. The Virginia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) recommends using the [Review - Reopen - Recover process](#) no matter what stage you are in to determine your next steps. This [checklist](#) is meant to help guide you through those important questions as you look to re-imagine your business and find success in the post-crisis world. Wherever your business may be currently, the Virginia SBDC suggests starting at the very beginning of the checklist and working your way through. Need expert FREE advice? Contact Stephanie Keener at [our local SBDC](#) for great resources and free business counseling.



Help local store/restaurant owners know what's important to you as they reopen

you as stores and restaurants start to reopen under [Virginia's Phase 1 Reopening Plan](#). Your input will help business owners know the best ways to address safety concerns. Take the survey [here](#) (identifying info is optional).

The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance has put together a [short survey](#) to share what's important to

Virginia's Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims

Seasonally unadjusted weekly initial unemployment insurance claims dropped to their lowest number since March. In figures released last week, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) announced that the effects of the pandemic continue to impact the number of initial and continued claims for unemployment insurance. For the filing week ending May 9, the figure for seasonally unadjusted initial claims in Virginia was 52,139 which is a decrease of 7,492 claimants from the previous week. In Bedford County, initial claims have been decreasing since peak week in early April when we saw 986 claims, to last week when we saw 265 new claims.

[Read the full release here.](#)



Farmers Market Season Has Begun

Most vendors at the [Bedford Farmers Market](#) and [Forest Farmers Market](#) are using pre-order methods so customers can order and pay ahead of time, and simply pick up their products at the market.

Social distancing measures are in place at both markets. [Learn more](#)



[by visiting our website.](#)

Forest Farmers Market Celebrates 10 Years

The Forest Farmers Market is celebrating its 10th season of operation. Even with new safety protocols and limited hours, the market's opening week showed a surprising turnout of customers who came out to shop for local foods, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Even with these strict CDC guidelines, we still saw 234 customers come out our first week to support our local farmers and that made me tear up a little," Dorothy McIntyre, owner and operator of the market, said. [Read more here.](#)



Agritourism Education Series

Virginia agritourism represents a \$2.2 billion economic impact based on a 2016 study conducted by Virginia Tech's professor Vincent Magnini, making a substantial contribution to the economic health and well-being of the Commonwealth.

Join the Virginia Cooperative Extension office for an on-line educational series designed for the Agritourism industry in Virginia. These sessions are open to agritourism producers, industry personnel or anyone wanting to learn more about agritourism. [Learn more here.](#)



News from the BRWA

The Bedford Regional Water Authority (BRWA) is encouraging all businesses that have been closed for an extended period of time to flush water through their pipes prior to reopening.

To ensure that facilities are receiving fresh water, businesses are encouraged to run water through all points of use (faucets, spigots, shower heads, etc.) with both hot and cold water for several minutes prior to using the water. This will allow any stagnant water to be flushed from the pipes and replaced with fresh water drawn from the Authority's distribution lines.

It is also important to clean and disinfect all water fountains, water features, eye wash centers, safety showers, etc. prior to use.

For more information, please visit www.brwa.com or contact Customer Service at 540-586-7679 or customerservice@brwa.com.

Funding available for Existing Worker Training

Virginia Career Works can provide funding assistance for businesses to

upgrade the skills of their current employees — making the business more competitive and profitable.

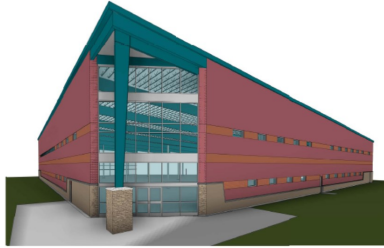
Eligible Industry Sectors:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Emerging Tech and Information Technology
- Healthcare and Life Science
- Food and Beverage Processing
- Industries support above sectors



Funds can be used for the cost of training workers, tuition, instructional cost for courses, certification and licensing exams and fees, and textbooks and manuals. Learn more at www.vcwcentralregion.com

Expanding? We have space for you.



Our premier **New London Business and Technology Center** park in Forest features a 40,000 sf shell building (expandable to 80,000 sf) nearing completion on Lot 7, ready to purchase or lease and build out the inside to your needs. In the park, we also have pad-ready and cleared lots for sale ranging from 4 to 15+ acres for whatever size facility suits your needs.

The **Bedford Center for Business** has land ready for development including a graded lot, and it lies within the Town's Enterprise Zone and Virginia's Opportunity Zone.

In **Montvale Center for Commerce**, we are working with the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance and Board of Supervisors to grade the remaining two lots to prepare for new development.

Call the Office of Economic Development to learn how we can help your business grow in Bedford County. 540-587-5670 BedfordEconomicDevelopment.com

Like what you see?

We post regularly to keep you up to date on projects taking place in the community, continuing education opportunities, and more!



Bedford County Office of Economic Development
Traci Blido, Director
540-587-5670