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Bedford Business First

News from Bedford County Office of Economic Development - September 2018

Bedford County by the numbers

Population: 77,974

Labor Force	38,978
Employed	37,799
Unemployment rate	3.0%
Advertised jobs	636

Source: VEC,
July 2018 report

About our office

The Office of Economic Development is responsible for planning, developing, and directing business and economic development programs and services in Bedford County, Virginia.



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Director

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Bison Printing Expanding Operations

Congratulations to [Bison Printing, Inc.](#) which announced this past month that it will invest more than \$650,000 to expand its facility and add new equipment, along with 10 full-time jobs.

Bison, which employs more than 50, will break ground in October on a 10,000 square-foot addition at its 42,000 square-foot facility located on On Time Road in Bedford.

[Read more >>](#)



Al Beisser of Bison Printing

Bedford County taking steps to expand Broadband



Bedford County expanding Broadband services in the County.

Bedford County is taking the next steps necessary to expand broadband internet access to nearly all County residents. The county is underway in reviewing proposals for a Public Private Partnership with an Internet Service Provider to build out wireless broadband with the goal of reaching 95-percent of the county. [Read more >>](#)

Bedford County teen named Virginia FFA President

Ethan Jackson graduated from Staunton River High School in 2018, but he is already on track for a big future in agriculture.



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Ethan Jackson is the first Virginia FFA President from Bedford County!

Ethan was recently named as the President of the Virginia FFA. [Read more](#) about Ethan and his reaction to his nomination.

Business Retention and Expansion company visits are underway.

During the month of August we kicked off a Business Retention & Expansion program with a list of companies identified by the state and region. These visits are open to all Bedford County manufacturing and professional services businesses with a goal to connect them with key resources at the local, regional and state level to talk about their growth and the challenges they may be facing, and assist them with workforce development. The meetings usually include a representative from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, along with local economic development staff.

LiteSheet Solutions



Roger Whyte, CEO of Litesheet shows the technology behind his products to Senator Newman, and Rob McClintock of the VEDP.

For our visit with [LiteSheet](#), we were honored to have Virginia Senator Steve Newman join us for the tour and learn more about the company which makes AC direct LED lighting. Senator Newman assisted the company with a Virginia connection to a key client. LiteSheet currently employs 30 people with more than 20 of them based at the Forest headquarters.

Simplimatic Automation

Forest-based [Simplimatic Automation](#) is located in our premier business park, the New London

Business & Technology Center. Simplimatic, which employs more than 100 people, designs and produces robotics and material handling systems for a variety of industries, including medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and electronics.



Tom DiNardo (right) shows the robotic capabilities to Rob McClintock of the VEDP and Jamie Glass of the LRBA.



Dora Gaither, HR; and General Manager, Greg Dooley, stand in front of one of their newest presses.

Smyth Companies

Based in Bedford, Smyth is another growing company in Bedford County.

Smyth employs more than 100 people and operates two shifts at its Bedford facility. The company recently invested \$6.5 Million in a new KBA Litho Press and a new Comco roll-fed press.

CommScope

Our visit with CommScope gave us the opportunity to meet the new General Manager, Jennifer Davis, (second from left). She is the first female GM at the Forest location which manufactures printed circuit boards and supports new product introductions for its Connectivity Solutions and Mobility Solutions divisions. CommScope's Bedford County location employs more than 150 people and currently has seven open positions.



The 75,000 square feet facility sits on 23 acres in Forest Corporate Park and also serves as the repair center for all of North America.

Sentry

Equipment & Erectors, Inc.

Sentry Equipment is another Bedford County company with a long history in the region. The



company began in the 1980's and has grown into a multi-million dollar operation employing 225 people in its 245,000 square feet facility on 460W in Forest. They make conveyor equipment for companies such as Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, and Snapple to name a few.

Sentry currently has openings for Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. They also have a great apprenticeship program for students in the electrical field. Here, Greg Goff, VP of Sales and Les Womack, tell Jamie Glass about the skills they are looking for.

We'd love to visit with you, and learn more about your business and how we can help you grow.

Contact the Office of Economic Development to schedule your visit today! 540-587-5670 or email us [here](#).

Expanding? We've got pad-ready sites!

Our premier New London Business and Technology Center park has freshly graded and cleared several lots ranging in size from 4 acres to 15+ acres. Additional larger lots are also available. Call the Office of Economic Development to learn how we can help your business grow.
540-587-5670



One of the recently graded lots is Lot 4, located at the end of the cul-de-sac on East London Drive. It is 24+ acres with 10 acres graded.

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