

## Partnerships and Collaboration

*By E. Linwood Wright and Jeremy Stratton, CEcD*

### THE STORY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA'S, ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The city of Danville, Virginia, **experienced the almost total loss** of its economic base of tobacco and textile manufacturing in the first few years of the 21st century.

**A strategy to promote regional** cooperation, aggressive recruitment of both foreign and domestic employers, rapid response to economic development opportunities through infrastructure deployment, and utilization of non-traditional funding sources for incentives became the guiding principle for economic transformation in the region.

**Very strong public/private alliances have been created to  
drive the vision for transformation to reality.**

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# partnerships

## AND COLLABORATION

By E. Linwood Wright and Jeremy Stratton, CEcD

**E**conomic conditions, although still relatively healthy in Danville, Virginia, in the latter years of the 1990's, were beginning to appear extremely fragile. This economy was based in large measure on tobacco and textile manufacturing. The future for both of these industries was bleak.

The closing of a large Tultex manufacturing facility that employed over 6,000 people in nearby Martinsville, Virginia, in 1999 provided impetus for community leaders to get together in Danville and plan key strategies to serve as the blueprint for Danville's economic transformation. Community leaders foresaw that this kind of closure was going to happen shortly to the Danville region's largest employer, Dan River Inc., and we wanted to start being prepared for a seismic shift in the economy.

Concurrent with the Tultex closing was the announcement of funds becoming available to localities through the settlement of a class action suit against cigarette manufacturers that led to the development of the Virginia Tobacco Commission. The Tobacco Commission has a variety of funding programs, but the most important are the grant programs for infrastructure building programs, which have been used for constructing the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, water and sewer lines, and broadband across Highway 58. Additionally, the Tobacco Commission has a deal closing TROF (Tobacco Revitalization Opportunity Fund) cash grant fund, which augments incentive packages and has helped Danville land several key industries over the past six years. The cash grant is given at the front end of the project and is based on job creation and capital investment within a 36-month window.



Downtown Danville, Virginia

This article focuses on Danville, Virginia's, economy, the strategies developed for the community to compete in the global economy, and the successes that Danville has enjoyed in the ensuing eight years. Other communities facing dramatic shifts in their economy can draw from Danville's experiences to help with their current situations.

The Danville region has learned especially that perseverance and working cooperatively as a region toward a shared vision are key in developing a regional economy. In addition, it is of paramount importance to prepare the region's work force through the development of a world class educational infrastructure to attract employers and employees alike. A city and county partnership has been vital in pooling resources and infrastructure to build ready to go business parks with graded sites and shell buildings. The importance of having ready to go "product" (buildings and sites)

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## THE STORY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA'S, ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The city of Danville, Virginia, experienced the almost total loss of its economic base of tobacco and textile manufacturing in the first few years of the 21st century. A strategy to promote regional cooperation, aggressive recruitment of both foreign and domestic employers, rapid response to economic development opportunities through infrastructure deployment, and utilization of non-traditional funding sources for incentives became the guiding principle for economic transformation in the region. Very strong public/private alliances have been created to drive the vision for transformation to reality.

Danville, Virginia, is a medium sized city of approximately 45,000 people situated in the extreme southern part of central Virginia on the North Carolina state line.

It is approximately 45 minutes north of Greensboro and 60 minutes north of Durham and the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina.

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tied to Richmond politically, the city's proximity to Greensboro and Durham has played and will play a larger role in the economic transformation of the region in the future.

to attract capital investment and new jobs to a region cannot be overstated.

## LOCATION AND STATISTICS

Danville, Virginia, is a medium sized city of approximately 45,000 people situated in the extreme southern part of central Virginia on the North Carolina state line. It is approximately 45 minutes north of Greensboro and 60 minutes north of Durham and the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina. Even though Danville is a Virginia community and tied to Richmond politically, the city's proximity to Greensboro and Durham has played and will play a larger role in the economic transformation of the region in the future.

Pittsylvania County, which surrounds the city of Danville, is the largest county in land size in Virginia at 982.89 square miles. Pittsylvania County is comprised largely of rural farms, small towns, and the southern edge of Smith Mountain Lake resort and residential development. Virginia is unique among all the states in that independent cities such as Danville and adjoining counties are jurisdictionally totally separated. This local government structure was established by Thomas Jefferson when Virginia was constituted as a state to avoid a second layer of local government.

As defined by the U.S. Census, the Danville Metropolitan Statistical area consists of both the city of Danville and Pittsylvania County. The Danville MSA has approximately 107,000 people, which reflects a 3 percent population decrease from 1997.



A couple of startling statistics to note about the metropolitan area is the high number of residents without a high school diploma (32.2 percent) and the low percentage with a college degree (11.3 percent). Per capita income in the Danville Metropolitan Area is \$25,951, which is well below the Commonwealth of Virginia's average of \$37,503. All of these statistics are telling of a former mill region where one employer (in this case Dan River Inc.) dominated the economy, set the wage standard, and engendered the low valuation for educational attainment and attending school that the region faces to this day.

## HISTORY

Historically, Danville's economy was based on the growth, sale, and processing of flue cured tobacco and textile manufacturing. Dan River Incorporated, a textile manufacturer, was founded in Danville in 1882, and at its peak in the 1960's, employed approximately 12,000 people in its mills located in the city.

The second cornerstone of Danville's economy was tobacco. Just a few miles south of the city, the technique to cure tobacco using indirect heat was invented in the early nineteenth century, and the colorful method of selling cured tobacco leaf by auction had its origins in Danville over a century ago.

These two industrial behemoths combined to build a city of relatively great wealth, and even today, millionaire's row along Main Street is a showplace of Victorian residential architecture where the textile and tobacco barons made their homes. While wealth was not evenly distributed and poverty was a real problem for some people, employment was widely available.

By the end of the twentieth century, tobacco and textile manufacturing were mere shadows of their former stature. The growing and processing of tobacco was

being impacted by lower cost production elsewhere in the world, particularly Brazil and southern Africa, and a domestic market demise resulting from health concerns related to smoking. Textile manufacturing was moving to Asia at an accelerating pace.

The comfortable complacency of the once prosperous city of Danville was being decimated by the impact of both agricultural and industrial globalization. Tobacco and textiles were not just going; they were gone, and they took their jobs with them.

## POLITICAL

Danville and the region surrounding the city had a history of usually strong cooperation between the public and private sectors, but like most localities, there were periods of stormy relationships. Annexation by a city of surrounding county land is usually adversarial and such action is litigated through the state court system.

Danville had annexed approximately 28 square miles from Pittsylvania County in 1988. The litigation involved in this action was lengthy and expensive.

Such annexation fights in Virginia really stem from the issue of who gets the tax base. The scars were deep, and regional cooperation between the city and the county was non-existent. Economic development was damped to a significant extent by the litigation. The hard feelings and distrust that existed among elected officials and local government staff members extended to the private sector with business leaders “taking sides” between the city and the county.

## PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

As stated in the beginning of the article, community leaders witnessed the beginning of economic tsunamis that would eventually engulf Danville’s two primary industries of tobacco and textile. A variety of forces began to surface that would drive the local jurisdictions toward a more cooperative attitude to make economic transformation a plausible target for the region. Our perspective today is still too close to the events that transpired to begin to objectively ascribe credit in any ranked fashion to the various forces that were brought to bear on Danville’s economic vitality. Suffice it to say that these forces combined to create a climate that has produced job growth, a palpable change in self-esteem, and a clear vision showing how the community could deal with both twenty-first century globalization and the level of technology and skill needed in today’s work environment.

### Activity Since 2000

- Six companies headquartered outside the United States have located facilities in the community and one foreign company expanded
- 5,876 new jobs have been announced
- \$901 million in capital investment has been made
- Five private sector and two public sector projects have been sited in joint city/county industrial parks

Within the confines of this article, it is impossible to explore all the pieces of the economic development machine that had to work smoothly to produce the results that were obtained, but the primary components are described below.

1. It was essential to have private sector leadership commitment to create a vision for success and to provide the necessary political cover for the public sector to pursue that vision. In Danville’s case, the private sector was a group of eight business leaders called the Future of the Piedmont Foundation (FOTP), established in 2000, who were tenacious in maintaining focus on the concept of building a new, technology based economy.

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Membership of the Foundation was self-appointed, and persons asked to serve were chosen by the three persons who initiated the activity. The FOTP was incorporated as a Virginia, not for profit corporation, and it was granted 501(C)(3) status by the Internal Revenue Service. The publisher of the local newspaper, the CEO of the leading radio station, the largest contractor in the area, a highly successful local entrepreneur, the CEO of the leading regional bank, the president of the leading local architecture and engineering firm, the CEO of the regional hospital, and a corporate executive and former mayor were the founding members of the Future of the Piedmont Foundation.

The FOTP’s first consideration was the requirement that the city and county stop fighting and begin cooperating to build a world class community that would be attractive to potential employers. These leaders realized that Danville must change or perish, and they acted on that realization.

2. The cost of developing a carefully constructed, well reasoned strategic plan for the community had to be borne by some entity. Danville had recently established a Community Foundation, and that funding source provided the seed money to the Future of the Piedmont Foundation for the creation of a strategic plan that would become a navigation aid to move the community along its pathway to a reinvigorated economy.

The Community Foundation is a traditional community foundation that was formed to provide an opportunity for a variety of entities to pool their funds

in an organizational structure that was created through Internal Revenue Service action to provide tax incentives and to benefit the community in a variety of ways. At the time of the founding of the FOTP, the Community Foundation awarded \$50,000 to the FOTP to develop a strategic plan for development in the region.

Additionally, the public provided valuable input on its vision for a prosperous Danville economy. This input gave elected officials comfort that the public wanted to try new ideas, and they need not worry about trying to sell some unorthodox ideas to their constituents to remain in office.

3. At the outset, the FOTP convened a task force of 28 persons, 14 from the city and 14 from the county, to work in conjunction with Dr. David Dodson of MDC, Inc. as the facilitator to craft a plan to present to both the city and the county that would document a strategy for economy recovery. All eight members of the founding FOTP board served as advisors to the task force.

The process of developing this plan took approximately eight weeks, once the facilitator was selected and hired. The process included a traditional SWOT analysis as well as formal sessions to develop a community vision for the plan.

4. The strategic plan that was formally adopted by the Future of the Piedmont Foundation included four major initial goals. They were:

#### Goal One

The first goal was to establish regional cooperation to offset the natural litigious nature between an independent city and its surrounding county. We have made tremendous strides in this area with the merger of the separate Danville City and Pittsylvania County Chambers of Commerce. This effort was led primarily by the publisher of the newspaper who served on the Board of the FOTP.

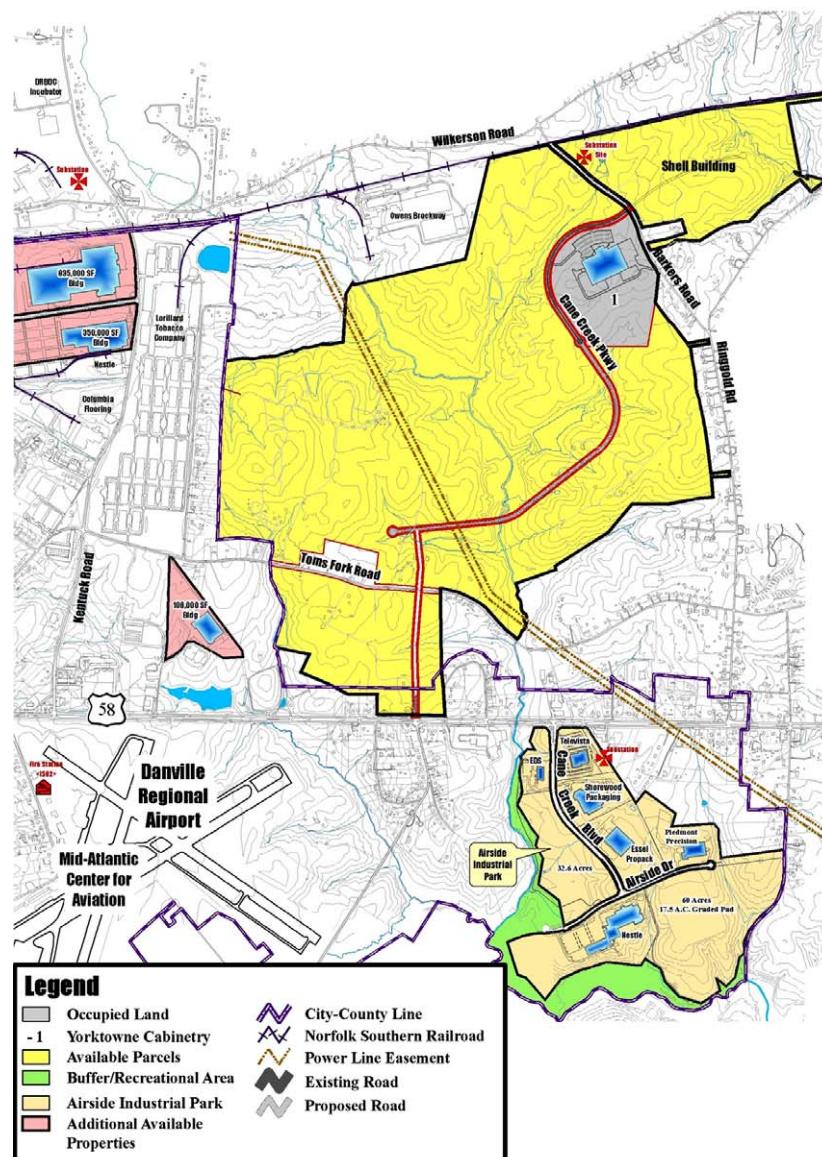
Danville and Pittsylvania County have also collaborated on the planning and development of three business parks – Cyber Park, Cane Creek Business Centre, and a 4,000-acre mega park currently under development. A Regional Industrial Facility Authority Board, which is comprised of three City Council members and three county supervisors, was established as the landowner of the three business parks and meets monthly to conduct business pertaining to the sale and extension of infrastructure to the properties.

This regional cooperation is now being hailed as a model for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and it has been cited extensively by Virginia Governor Kaine for its success. This effort was spearheaded by members of the FOTP board making presentations to both the City Council and the Board of Supervisors of Pittsylvania County. The FOTP board members and the city manager became convinced that local governments should pursue jointly owned industrial parks, and the manager made an essential contribution to this phase of the process.

#### Goal Two

The second goal was to ensure that all residents and businesses in the region would have access to world class broadband infrastructure. In the late 1990's, Southside Virginia lacked any broadband infrastructure access, which was becoming a serious problem for existing business needs as well as a detriment to recruiting new businesses. Investor owned utilities were not willing to invest in the Southside's broadband infrastructure since the area did not boast a dense enough population base for the utilities to realize a return on their investment.

Regional leaders worked together with Virginia's Tobacco Commission to develop a plan to fund the extension of broadband infrastructure along the Highway 58 Corridor. The Tobacco Commission has dedicated over \$100 million to the deployment of the



## CANE CREEK CENTRE



Map of Cane Creek Centre.

network. The plan was realized and the floodgates opened for southern Virginia communities, including Danville, to have broadband access.

The city of Danville took the plan a step further by creating a new division called nDanville in its Utility Department specifically for broadband. The Utility Department expanded the broadband infrastructure to businesses, schools, and industrial parks by tying into the Highway 58 backbone.

A state-of-the-art broadband network is now in place in Danville with very high capacity, redundancy, and speeds comparable to or faster than any metropolitan area of the country. Particularly attractive to businesses is the relatively low cost of access to the broadband network. This activity in Danville and across southern Virginia preceded by several years the current emphasis on rural broadband development in the federal stimulus effort.

### **Goal Three**

With access to over 50 Meg of bandwidth, the third goal of the plan was to create the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), a world class facility with state-of-the-art communications infrastructure that businesses and the community can use for educational purposes, research collaboration, and meeting space. Located in Cyber Park, jointly owned by the city and the county, IALR has been a highly visible symbol of city/county cooperation. The Institute has become the model for other technology led initiatives, such as the Gateway Technology Center in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, where communities want to transform their economies.

IALR is now a fully constituted entity of the Commonwealth of Virginia and its operating funds are appropriated through the state budget with a significant amount of research dollars provided by the Virginia Tobacco Commission. Danville and Pittsylvania County worked together with Future of the Piedmont to site the IALR on a prominent hill in Cyber Park overlooking the Highway 29 by-pass.

The \$20 million facility was funded with \$15 million in bonds amortized equally by Pittsylvania County and the city of Danville, using funds provided by The Tobacco Indemnification Settlement fund. The local private sector provided the balance of funds, \$5 million, for furnishings and IT hardware.

Through educational collaborations with Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, Old Dominion University, and Averett University, the Institute can offer distance learning courses, programs, and degrees for local students without their having to leave Danville. This availability enables adult students to obtain bachelor and advanced degrees while working full time and keep the recently graduated bright high school students in the area while they are earning their degrees.

IALR has now been the site for study and research for students who have been awarded both Masters and PhD degrees from Virginia Tech University. Graduate students working at IALR have expressed their pleasure at the kinds of research they can do in this facility, and their presence has brought a dimension of youthful energy to the community that is having a positive impact on the entire region.

Research is conducted in four different disciplines at the Institute – plant biology, plastics/polymers, motorsports, and robotics. Each research initiative was chosen to complement specific assets available in Danville.



*The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR).*

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Danville's previous history of tobacco lent itself perfectly to alternative crops and plant biology. Goodyear, Essel Propack, and Intertape provide a strong backbone of plastic and polymer companies in the area.

Danville's proximity to the Virginia International Raceway and the NASCAR track in Martinsville made it a natural for motorsports research. Unmanned vehicle research provided an opportunity to integrate fully the mechanical engineering expertise of the IALR faculty with available space for test tracks used for both vehicle evaluation and development.

Faculty and students from Virginia Tech work and teach full time at the Institute while pursuing their individual areas of research and advanced degrees.

Most recently, IALR has been awarded a grant of \$8 million to construct a research facility for sustainable energy. Research in this facility will be focused on developing fuels from bio-based materials, and as with all the research done at IALR, it will be systems oriented.

The mission of IALR is to provide opportunities for economic development through the application of innovative technologies. Rather than working on basic knowledge research, IALR is intended to bring practical knowledge to bear on opportunities for regional economic transformation.

#### **Goal Four**

The fourth goal of the plan was to upgrade the computer literacy of the regional population by instilling the necessary skills in public and private school teachers to take full advantage of computers in the classroom. The region's schools were behind the bell curve in using technology as a teaching tool, and students were not adequately learning how to use computers.



Swedwood is located in Danville's Cane Creek Centre.

A formal program was initiated to train public and private school teachers to utilize computers in the classroom. Over 100 teachers in the region have been trained at Virginia Tech in methods to incorporate computers into classroom instruction and each teacher has been given a free personal computer. The Future of the Piedmont Foundation has borne much of the cost of this effort through private and anonymous donations.

At the same time that the FOTP was developing and implementing its strategic plan for economic revitalization, the city of Danville and its Office of Economic Development were busy developing four key strategies to bring new jobs and investment to the area. Since 2000, the city of Danville has announced 5,876 new jobs and over \$900 million in private capital investment. Over 3,000 of these jobs are currently filled, and these jobs cover an extremely wide range of skill levels and corresponding wages and salaries, from a low of \$10 per

hour to a high of well in excess of \$100,000 per year. The four strategies are as follows:

#### **1. Development of Product to Market**

The city of Danville has a history of constructing shell buildings and purchasing property to develop into business parks. Danville's shell buildings have been an excellent "mouse trap" for generating prospect traffic from state and national consultants and real estate firms. The typical shell building was constructed with 100,000 square feet and 30-foot ceiling clearance heights. Market studies have indicated that these characteristics were the most popular for companies that look at smaller sized city markets.

Danville has built a total of six shell buildings, one at 40,000 square feet, one at 70,000 square feet, and four at 100,000 square feet. All four of the 100,000- square-foot buildings are occupied.

Danville also collaborated with Pittsylvania County to build Cyber Park, Cane Creek Centre, and the new 4,000-acre mega park still under development. Cyber Park with its access to IALR is marketed to high tech manufacturing and office functions. Cane Creek Centre is a 900-acre park located in the county that is being marketed to larger manufacturers, such as Ikea's Swedwood, one of the park's tenants. Water, sewer, natural gas, electricity, roads, walking trails, and broadband are provided throughout both parks. The land has been purchased for the mega park, and the city and county are currently in the midst of having the park certified, using engineering and geotech studies.

In 2006, Swedwood announced the location of its first North American manufacturing facility in Danville's Cane Creek Centre. This plant will produce Expedit

**The main factor in choosing Danville over the competitive site in North Carolina was the fact that all the environmental, geo-technical, and wetland studies at the site in Cane Creek Centre had already been completed.**

bookshelves, Lack coffee and side tables, and Besta Modular entertainment centers for Ikea stores in the U.S. This \$280 million project will create 740 jobs over a seven-year period. The company proposes building up to four 1,000,000-square-foot highly automated facilities during the ensuing seven-year period.

The main factor in choosing Danville over the competitive site in North Carolina was the fact that all the environmental, geo-technical, and wetland studies at the site in Cane Creek Centre had already been completed. Swedwood officials were in a hurry to get started on the first building and needed to move dirt quickly. Local assurances that the site was ready to go paved the way for Swedwood to choose Danville.

## 2. Recruiting Foreign Companies – Reverse Globalization

Danville's mid-Atlantic location, excellent transportation infrastructure, and low cost manufacturing environment provided good incentives to start attracting investment. Although Danville is not served by an interstate highway, it does have both north/south and east/west highways that are dual lane, controlled access, and relatively lightly travelled that connect with major interstate highways that run both north and south and east and west. Local traffic congestion is essentially non-existent. Rail service through the city is provided by Norfolk and Southern Railway and freight handling service is very good. These factors, along with the fall in the U.S. dollar versus foreign currencies, have made Danville a strong candidate for new companies to locate in the region.

Since 2000, Danville has realized foreign investment from seven companies headquartered in seven different countries, six being new locations and one being an expansion. Personal relationships developed through the Swedwood project led to the February 2008 announcement of the Polish company, Com.40 (now known as EBI), locating in a 900,000-square-foot former tobacco facility and creating 813 jobs over seven years. EBI will produce mattresses and sofas for Ikea stores in the U.S. Table 1 provides a list of foreign companies that have invested in Danville since 2000.



*Essel Propack has announced three different expansions in the past four years.*



*EBI in the former Universal Leaf Tobacco facility.*

## 3. Work Extensively with Existing Industries

Danville understands that not only is it important to woo and court a company to locate in the area, but it is just as important to ensure that they are successful and thriving for many years once they are up and running in the community. Equal importance is placed on helping companies expand.

Essel Propack has announced three different expansions in the past four years. Nestle's and Shorewood Packaging have had multiple expansions as well. In each case, the city of Danville has facilitated the means for the company to choose the community for its expansion.

**TABLE 1**

Company	Product	Country
Telvista (new)	In-bound customer contact center	Mexico
Essel Propack (new)	Laminated and plastic tubes	India
Arista Tubes (new)	Extruded and plastic tubes	United Kingdom
Swedwood (new)	Bookshelves, coffee tables, and entertainment centers	Sweden
Nestles (expansion)	Toll House Cookies and pasta sauce	Switzerland
Com.40 (new)	Mattresses and sofas	Poland
Canadian Bank Notes (new)	Highly secure licenses and documents	Canada

**Since 2000, Danville has realized foreign investment from seven companies headquartered in seven different countries, six being new locations and one being an expansion.**

In June 2008, Governor Kaine and the city of Danville announced that an agreement had been reached among Virginia, Danville, and the region's largest employer, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, on a \$200 million modernization and reinvestment in key machinery and equipment and facility to expand production capabilities. The announcement corroborates the partnership among Goodyear, Danville, and the Commonwealth of Virginia to retain the company in the area with its approximately 2,000 employees. The Danville Goodyear plant manufactures medium radial truck tires (tires for 18-wheelers) and aircraft tires.

Economic Development, Danville Community College, and Chamber officials have worked together extensively on workforce issues to ensure that there is a continual pool and pipeline of qualified workers available for existing companies. Danville Community College has created a world class manufacturing technician training program, whereby participants take ten weeks of classes and have hands-on experience so that the student becomes certified, documenting that he/she can operate factory equipment. Participants are screened and drug tested throughout the program.

Local industries have warmly embraced the program and given their stamp of approval that the class graduates are ready to begin work immediately in a manufacturing setting. Industry representatives visit the classes to check on the students and see their quality of work. All the graduates of the first class were hired immediate-

ly upon completion of the course, and the placement rate for graduates has continued to be higher than 80 percent.

#### 4. Danville as a Regional Retail Hub

Danville serves as the region's center for commerce and economic activity over a 30-mile radius, which includes parts of Pittsylvania, Franklin, Henry, and Halifax Counties in Virginia, and Caswell County in North Carolina. During the past four years, the city of Danville has embarked on an ambitious regional hub strategy to take advantage of the community's status as a commerce center and to bolster sales tax revenue.



*Equal importance is placed on helping companies like Nestle's to expand.*

These efforts culminated with the announcement in 2006 of Coleman Marketplace, a \$60 million, 550,000-square-foot, power shopping center with major tenants including Target, Dick's Sporting Goods, Ross Dress for Less, Old Navy, Petco and Home Depot. Other retailers are expected to join the Marketplace in the near future. Since 2004, general sales tax revenues in Danville have increased 19.3 percent despite the population base remaining stagnant.

#### SUMMARY

Danville and its neighboring county have enjoyed significant transformation of an economy that was devastated by globalization. Communities with similar industrial, manufacturing backgrounds and population bases can benefit from Danville's experiences. Some lessons learned can probably be transported to such communities.

Public/private sector cooperation is an essential ingredient for success. A coordinated effort between the business community and local government not only results in a climate that is business friendly, it provides unique opportunities for joint efforts in financing and general services to both new and existing employers.

Grant funding is necessary, and sources such as the Virginia Tobacco Commission have been the most flexible and useful. The Virginia Tobacco Commission was formed using funds from the settlement of the national litigation dealing with cigarette manufacturers and state



*Tenants at Coleman Marketplace.*

attorneys general. The Commonwealth of Virginia dedicated a large portion of the money it received from the settlement toward economic development in the regions of the state that historically had major growth and processing of tobacco.

Between 2001 and 2008, our region has been awarded approximately \$56 million for economic development activities. Much of that money has been invested in infrastructure.

Political support from local, state, and federal delegations is required, and developing trust and open lines of communication with all elected representatives demands total commitment. Everyone must tell the same story and be firmly committed to that story.

Economic developers must maintain a high level of integrity when dealing with both the private and public sectors. They are brokers between the public and private sectors, and success is judged by their credibility. All obligations to companies that locate in the region must be met. While confidentiality must be maintained, it has to be balanced with transparency when working with public officials to help them become comfortable with economic development projects.

Avoid the risk of trying to do too many things at the same time. The importance of maintaining focus on the stated goals cannot be overemphasized.

Build a team that encompasses visionary and implementation excellence, political aptitude, and sharp analytical skills. All of these attributes working together are necessary to yield success.

The community must invest in fully developed business parks by extending infrastructure, including roads, water, sewer, natural gas, electricity, and broadband access. Additionally, the environmental, geo-technical, and wetland studies should be completed. Greenfield sites should be ready for construction, making graded pads a basic necessity. Speculative buildings decrease the construction timeline by at least three months.

Take advantage of both related business entities and vendor relationships of employers who have located in the community. Such relationships can prove to be very valuable in recruitment efforts.

Get key players to accept that the old model of a non-diversified economy no longer works and that a new, highly diversified, entrepreneurially driven model must be created to realize the transformative vision. 

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