



*Commonwealth of Virginia*  
*Office of Governor Bob McDonnell*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 8, 2013

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**Governor McDonnell Announces Agriculture and  
Forestry Industries Development Fund Planning  
Grant Recipients**

*~\$249,000 Awarded to Eleven Projects Covering Thirty-one  
Localities to Strengthen Local, Regional Agribusiness Planning  
and Development~*

**Initiative Part of Governor McDonnell's Jobs-Creation and  
Economic Development Agenda During 2012 General Assembly  
Session**

**RICHMOND** - Governor Bob McDonnell announced today the recipients of fiscal year 2013 planning grants from the Governor's Agriculture & Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID). Eleven projects covering more than thirty localities have been awarded a total of \$249,000 to support the growth of agricultural and forestry projects in the Commonwealth. The AFID planning grants program was developed to encourage local governments and regional organizations to analyze and plan strategically about how they can support and integrate agriculture and forestry-based industries into their communities' overall economic development efforts.

A listing and brief summary of the qualifying projects and their locations is included below.

Speaking about the AFID planning grants awards, Governor McDonnell said, “We’ve had great success incorporating two of the Commonwealth’s largest industries, agriculture and forestry, and their significant overall impact on our economy into our economic development agenda. That strategic decision has been justified many times over. Exports have reached new record highs during the last three years and we’ve successfully utilized AFID economic development grants to attract new agribusinesses to Virginia and to help existing operations expand. Creating a program that incentivizes communities to plan for how they can best grow and support agricultural and forestry industries in their business community is a natural continuation of a strategy that is proven to benefit Virginians and create jobs.”

Governor McDonnell continued, “Creating opportunities and the right environment for businesses to succeed is the approach we’ve taken over the course of my administration to keep the economic recovery going in Virginia. During my time as governor, unemployment has dropped from 7.2% to 5.3% because of our commitment to conservative principles and smart, targeted investments that lead to job creation. The AFID is just one more example of our efforts at work. Our General Assembly partners in this initiative, leaders such as Delegates Steve Landes, Kirk Cox, and Ed Scott and Senators Bill Stanley, John Watkins and Emmett Hanger, deserve many thanks for their work to make funds available for important local economic development efforts such as the AFID planning grant program.”

The communities and regions receiving AFID planning grants will match each dollar awarded with a dollar of local funds, including certain types of allowed in-kind contributions. The program also requires the active participation of a board, committee, or working group representing the relevant agriculture and forestry interests in the locality.

“Flexibility was given to applicants to pursue the type of project that made the most sense for their region or locality, whether it was something as broad as creating a strategic plan for agriculture and forestry development, or as specific as construction of a commercial kitchen facility,” said Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Todd Haymore. “It was extremely important that projects demonstrate involvement from the local agriculture and forestry community, giving an indication that it was the producers themselves who helped identify and support economic development opportunities that were of true benefit to their industries. I am hopeful that the successful implementation of these planning grants will lead to future awards of some of our larger AFID facility grants to these same localities that will have benefitted from their dedication to planning for agriculture and forestry.”

AFID planning grant program guidelines were announced on November 27, 2012, with applications for FY 2013 due March 1, 2013. Applicants demonstrating a clear need, a solution to be undertaken, and strong support from local government and the agriculture and forestry community received the highest marks during the review process. The next round of AFID Planning Grants will be fall 2013. Localities interested in applying may visit <http://vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/planning.shtml> for more information.

Agriculture and forestry are Virginia's largest industries, with a combined economic impact of \$79 billion annually: \$55 billion from agriculture and \$24 billion from forestry. The industries also provide approximately 500,000 jobs in the Commonwealth according to the Weldon Cooper for Public Service at the University of Virginia.

**Governor's Agricultural and Forestry Industries' Fiscal Year 2013**  
**Planning Grant Recipients and Projects**

**Project Title: New Markets for Agriculture Producers in Southwest Virginia through Online Marketing and a Local Food Campaign**

**Applicant: Town of Abingdon**

**Award: \$20,000**

**Summary:** Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau and Appalachian Sustainable Development will work together to develop new, year-round markets for locally produced agricultural products by creating and marketing an online order system to facilitate the sales of local foods to restaurants and other institutions. The effort will also further develop *Rooted in Appalachia* website and mobile app to promote local foods and restaurants serving them.

**Project Title: Fields of Gold – The Next Season of Agritourism in the Shenandoah Valley**

**Applicant: Central Shenandoah PDC (CSPDC)**

**Award: \$35,000**

**Summary:** Fields of Gold is a regional agritourism marketing initiative led by the CSPDC in the Shenandoah Valley. They recently completed a year-long planning process, funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and have received significant support and buy-in from their member localities, as well as awards for the effort. This grant is to develop and market a robust website that will include an interactive map of agritourism sites, an events calendar and farm-to-restaurant guide. The marketing and build-out of the website were identified as key deliverables in their strategic marketing plan.

**Project Title: Fauquier County Impact of Agriculture Study**

**Applicant: Fauquier County**

**Award: \$6,000**

**Summary:** Funds will be used to conduct a study of the needs of the farming community in Fauquier and to off-set the costs of having UVA's Weldon Cooper Center conduct an "Impact of Agriculture" study to document the overall economic contribution of agriculture to Fauquier. As part of the study, a working group of county farmers, representing all segments of the local farming community, will work with the County's Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Fauquier County Farm Bureau to conduct, review and analyze results of a farmer survey. Studies will help the County determine what changes to the zoning ordinance might be necessary to assist the agricultural community.

**Project Title: Planning for Agritourism and Agribusiness Benefits in Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties**

**Applicant:** Giles County – lead applicant, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties  
**Award:** \$35,000  
**Summary:** Project will develop a strategic plan for agricultural economic development in the tri-county region. It will include interviews/surveys of agritourism operations and agribusinesses, an inventory of these businesses, policy recommendations, and an economic impact study.

**Project Title: Meat Processing Facility for Southside Virginia**

**Applicant:** Halifax County  
**Award:** \$12,500  
**Summary:** Grant funds will help pay for a professional, third-party feasibility study of a USDA inspected meat processing facility in Halifax county to serve Southside Virginia.

**Project Title: The Highland Center Local Food Incubator**

**Applicant:** Highland County  
**Award:** \$20,000  
**Summary:** Grant funds will help pay for the renovation and upgrading of a commercial kitchen at the Highland Center in Monterrey. Specifically, they will be used to create a temperature-controlled meat processing area in the kitchen that will allow for the production of value-added meat products under USDA inspection. This project is the culmination of years of effort to grow Highland County's economy by building on its agricultural assets, primarily livestock. It will complement the County's recently completed USDA inspected slaughter facility, by giving producers the opportunity to add further value to their meat.

**Project Title: James City County Rural Economic Development Strategic Plan**

**Applicant:** James City County  
**Award:** \$20,000  
**Summary:** The county boasts many agricultural and forestry assets, and has undertaken a number of individual efforts to promote them, but never has the County taken a comprehensive look at how to protect, support and leverage these assets. The need is particularly important for the County, with development pressures coming from its east (Williamsburg/Hampton Roads) and west (exurban Richmond). This effort is just the type of project the AFID Planning Grants program was designed to engender. It is being led by their Rural Economic Development Committee, which includes key local government personnel, local business leaders and agricultural producers). This project could be used as a model for other jurisdictions under development pressure.

**Project Title: Feasibility Study for Barging Logs across the Chesapeake Bay**

**Applicant:** Northern Neck Planning District  
**Award:** \$35,000

**Summary:** Funds are part of a proposed \$100,000 feasibility study to determine the economic efficiency of utilizing barge transport to bring logs timbered on the Eastern Shore for milling in Kinsale. Study will be conducted in two phases with Phase I determining the basic economic feasibility of the project, especially as compared to extending their current wood basket by truck. Phase II will develop a detailed proposal for moving forward with the project. The study seeks to address the timber availability problem faced by sawmills on the Northern Neck and lack of a robust transportation infrastructure to otherwise transport timber into the area.

**Project Title:** Southside Food Enterprise Center for Production, Marketing, and Education of Value-Added Food Processing Serving Virginia Farm-Based Producers

**Applicant:** Prince Edward County

**Award:** \$20,000

**Summary:** Since 2009, Prince Edward County has been working to provide local food processing options for area producers, primarily through its existing community cannery facility. They have completed a feasibility study on developing a new shared-use kitchen and food-business incubator. AFID Planning Grant funds will be used to develop an operational plan for this facility. A separate application to the Tobacco Commission for funding for facility construction is pending.

**Project Title:** Vision for Agriculture and Forestry in Region 2000, 2013-14 Strategic Plan

**Applicant:** Virginia's Region 2000 Local Government Council; includes Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell Counties and Lynchburg City

**Award:** \$35,000

**Summary:** Funds will be used to bring in a consultant to work with the organization and local partners to develop a regional strategic plan for the agriculture and forestry components of the region's economy. The study will include an inventory of regional agriculture and silviculture assets, SWOT analysis and will seek to develop a plan endorsed by member jurisdictions.

**Project Title:** Staunton Feasibility Study of a Commercial and Shared-Use Kitchen

**Applicant:** City of Staunton

**Award:** \$10,500

**Summary:** Funds will be used to help analyze the feasibility of a certified, commercial, shared-use kitchen and to research and create a replicable business model. The development of a commercial kitchen was a recommendation from a recent Community Foods Planning Project. The Project's key partners, the City of Staunton and the Staunton Creative Community Fund, have successfully undertaken other local food development projects and are developing a suite of services to assist area food entrepreneurs from start-up through launch. This study will be useful to other communities considering a commercial kitchen as well.

## About the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund

The creation of the AFID was part of Governor McDonnell's jobs-creation and economic development agenda during the 2012 session of the General Assembly. Funded at \$1 million in each year of the biennium, the AFID is broken into two categories with \$750,000 going to large grants to assist local efforts in expanding current or attracting new agriculture and forestry processing facilities using Virginia-grown products (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/afid.shtml>) and \$250,000 dedicated to small grants to assist localities in improving local economic development efforts relating to agribusiness (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/planning.shtml>).

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