Center Establishes Key Business Alliances

The Competitiveness Center’s mission is to create jobs and diversify the local economy. Recently the New River Valley has suffered several disappointing announcements of downsizing and plant closings. The loss of jobs at Renfro, Plymouth, Lynchburg Foundry, and New River Industries challenges all of the organizations of the region to those displaced. The Center was invited to participate as a sponsor of a Job Fair on October 15. The fair was co-sponsored by the New River Valley Partnership for Self Sufficiency, New River Community College, Optimal Rehab Professionals, Virginia Employment Commission, Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, New River Valley Planning District Commission, and the Competitiveness Center.

The sponsors were all pleased with the response to the job fair. There were forty employers set up with information for job seekers. Over 370 people attended, looking for opportunities. Several of those attending expressed interest in beginning their own business and thus became prospects for the Center.

The employers were pleased, giving credit to the sponsors for reaching out to the public and motivating them to attend. The employers offered encouragement for another fair to be held possibly as soon as the Spring of 2004.

The Center and its management appreciate the efforts of those who attended and especially the contribution of the Partnership for Self Sufficiency and their volunteers who did most of the work.

The result of the Center’s participation in the job fair and the hosting of other events has helped to advance the Center’s goal of involvement in community and business development activities. By active participation, the Center gains valuable exposure to potential entrepreneurs that might become tenants while supporting related activities of community partners. One clear example is a commitment to the Virginia Employment Commission to provide meeting facilities for quarterly outreach programs and bi-weekly job seeker training.

The Center looks forward to future programs through sponsorship, presentations and participation. If you have ideas or need further information please contact Wayne Carpenter, Incubator Manager. His contact information is at the end of this newsletter.

Tenant Highlight

LUXINE, INC.

Luxine has been in the Center since May 2000. They began as a research and development company, and after many diligent hours have achieved success with their innovative product. They are currently a production company with a growing assembly operation at the Center.

Luxine, Inc. was founded in 1984 by Nick and Barbara Bassill and was the first company in the United States to introduce induction cooking ranges to the commercial food service market. In 1998 Luxine, Inc. formed a venture with the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), the research consortium for the electric utility industry, to develop a new generation of induction ranges. The company has developed these new ranges, received agency approvals, and is now marketing its products to many original manufacturing accounts on a private label basis.

Luxine, Inc. is located in the New River Valley Competitive Center and has developed an advanced, high speed, high performance, high efficiency induction heating technology used in commercial and residential ranges and other cooking equipment. This revolutionary system, protected by 2 patents and 7 pending patent applications, increases productivity and cuts electric utility costs by up to half. Luxine’s technology, developed through an alliance with EPRI, creates a commercial kitchen that is cooler and safer, making it easier to retain critical labor while cutting electric and other operating costs. For residential users, the new Luxine induction ranges provide fast, easily controllable heat, just like gas but without the open flame and noxious gases, no hot ceramic tops that can cause baked on foods and serious burns, and a high energy efficient cooking range. The features and benefits of the LuxinePower™ induction cooking ranges have just been published on the EPRI international web site. The LuxinePower™ logo is the stamp of approval for high performance and long term
reliability on new innovative products. Luxine is supplying four major commercial equipment manufacturers and distributors 21 product lines for sale in North America. Luxine’s primary commercial customers are Iwatani International Corp. of America, Chefmaster, The Vollrath Company, and The Montague Company. All these companies have introduced Luxine products to the market in the last 6 to 12 months. The technology developed for the commercial market is also used to build residential induction ranges. Luxine is working together with the Viking Range Company, the number one top-end residential range manufacturer with sales to start at the end of 2003 and has been asked to develop a special high-end induction range concept by one of the top three world-wide appliance manufacturers.

As Luxine expands, it is hiring local workers to expand its work force. Over the last twelve months it has added 4 people to its work force. With the expected increased sales and additional working capital, the company expects to add another 3 to 10 people. The Center believes Luxine is making a positive impact on the local community and will continue to create many employment opportunities. Their contact information follows:

CORPORATE:
4980 LATIGO CANYON ROAD  TEL: 310-589-0406
MALIBU, CA 90265  FAX: 310-589-0316
MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING:
6580 VALLEY CENTER DRIVE  TEL: 540-731-0010
RADFORD, VA 24141  FAX: 540-731-6876
LUXINE@AOL.COM

New River Valley Competitiveness Center
General Statement of Tenant
Eligibility Criteria

Incubator staff is frequently asked what kind of business qualifies to become a tenant at the Competitiveness Center. The following is the Center’s general statement of eligibility, but if you have an interest or an idea, please contact Wayne Carpenter (540-633-6730). The Center wants to help you get the best start you can with your business.

Eligibility:

The incubator is established to assist companies which have a strong desire and potential to be successful over a long period of time. Their success should contribute to the economy of the region by providing jobs and investing in physical assets.

Eligible businesses include light manufacturers, assemblers, wholesale distributors, service providers, and others. Generally, businesses requiring high traffic volume such as retailers are not eligible. The business should meet one of the following requirements:
1. Be less than three years old.
2. Have a new product or service.
3. Be located in a non-business environment such as a home, or
4. Be expanding from outside the geographic area.

Prospective tenants must present their business plan to the Tenant Selection Committee which approves the tenant’s eligibility. The critical aspects of the presentation include:
- Thoroughness of the plan,
- Dedication of the owner to its success,
- Need for the incubator services.

Preference is given to businesses that have developed innovative products or services that are not generally available in the region.

The Tenant Selection Committee may grant exceptions in special cases based on the best interest of the Competitiveness Center.

***Note: Statistics show over 80% of businesses that start in a business incubator are still active after five years. Only 20% of businesses that start outside a business incubator are active after five years.

New River Valley Development Corporation Marks its Twentieth Year

In 1982 the New River Valley Planning District Commission brought community leaders together for the purpose of forming a non-profit economic development organization for the benefit of the jurisdictions in the New River Valley. Four representatives were appointed by the Counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski; City of Radford; Towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Pulaski. To assure diverse points of view the members from each locality were to represent business, lending institutions, community organizations, and government. Also, there is an at-large position held by an appointee of the Planning District Commission.

After six months of planning and organizing, the group incorporated and received its charter. A nine member Board of Directors was elected with one representative on the Board from each locality and the Commission. In the beginning, the primary function of the Corporation was to process loan applications for the Small Business Administration’s 503 and 504 Loan Programs.

In 1992, the Corporation refocused its activities on plans for a regional center providing support services business. The idea of the Competitiveness Center was born. From there, it took seven years for the Competitiveness Center to open Phase 1. Now, four years later, we have added Phase 2 and the Center offers over 50,000 square feet of space for regional offices and entrepreneurs.

On November 13, the New River Valley Development Corporation held its twentieth annual meeting and celebrated its successful contribution to the economic accomplishments of the New River Valley.

For Competitiveness Center information contact: Wayne L. Carpenter, Incubator Manager 6580 Valley Center Drive, Radford, VA 24141 Phone: (540) 633-6730 Fax: (540) 633-6768 e-mail: wayne@nrvdc.org www.nrvdc.org/nrvcc.html
Keys to Starting a Business

From the Manager’s Desk:

When I am approached by someone with a new business idea that they know will work, the excitement they feel is sometimes overshadowed by one very difficult question: do I really want to be a business owner? Although they are secure in their ability to apply a skill they have learned, or a niche they have found in product development they know they can improve, it is normally not the business that scares them. Their fears usually stem at just getting started.

During my years of experience assisting entrepreneurs, I have come across many helpful tools. Most of these tools deal with the basic steps of business planning and/or how to write a business plan. Some of them even involve a self evaluation to determine if you are indeed ready to become a business owner. One question I feel is particularly important is are they considering starting their own business to get away from the 9-5 job? While most of us would enjoy the luxury of working less hours, some businesses are not able to survive without giving more hours during their early stages of development. Hence, instead of 9-5 you may now be working 9-9.

I do have several favorite tools that I tend to use more often than most. One of these is the Virginia Business Resource Directory published by the Virginia Employment Commission. I began using this document in 1989 when it was first published. I found this publication so helpful I have kept that original document and still find it very useful today. The VEC has updated its version and now distributes the sixth edition (2003). This publication is very easy to read and gives the beginning entrepreneur an outline that can be useful in developing a business plan. It also expands on management, personnel, legal, taxes, insurance, money, marketing and regulations. References are made to other sources for information and a list of contacts is included in this directory to better serve the entrepreneur. This addition is available in print as well as on disk. To obtain a copy you may contact your local VEC office or visit their website at www.VaEmploy.Com.

I have found the VEC alone to be a very valuable resource. Most people only think of them as a place for assistance during unemployment; however, they offer many wonderful services to large and small businesses. In January 2004, the VEC hosted an employer seminar at the Competitiveness Center that provided information on dealing with unemployment insurance claims from the employer prospective. These meetings are held quarterly and if you would like to receive notice of the next meeting you may contact the Radford Office, Business Resource Unit at (540)831-5980.

Another tool I have used extensively is the Small Business Resource Guide from the Internal Revenue Service. This guide provides a tremendous amount of information about federal requirements for business as well as information on start up and business plans. It is available on disk and requires Internet access. To obtain a copy you may visit www.irs.gov/smallbiz. The program is very user friendly and will guide you
through many subjects. Links are also provided to federal sites, such as the Small Business Administration as well as local and state sites that deal with small business development and regulations.

Both of these sources focus specifically on the entrepreneur and whether or not they are the type of individual who is capable of being in business for themselves. If you are interested in becoming your own boss, working flexible hours, increasing your income and expressing your independence, you may want to consider starting your own business. Please check out these tools and stop by or call my office with any questions you may have.

**STAFF Weathers the Storm in 2003**

*Staff Contracting joined the Center in 1999 and has grown from using approximately 900 square feet to nearly 3,000 square feet. They specialize in golf course construction, but last year added a commercial/residential division.*

STAFF Contracting, Inc., despite near record amounts of precipitation, had one of the most productive years in the company’s seven-year history in 2003. The grading and excavating contractor of Radford has spent the past two years executing a plan to diversify their scope of work.

The first step in expanding upon their scope of work was to put more emphasis on commercial and residential site work. STAFF (founded in 1996) specializes in constructing and renovating golf courses, but in recent years has been putting additional resources into working in the local community. “We love the golf course work,” said Freddy Spraker Jr., President of STAFF, “but we also have to be able to meet the demands of the local market. Our goal is to grow an excellent reputation with our local clientele while continuing to thrive as a golf course contractor in the South Eastern and Mid-Atlantic United States.”

In 2003, STAFF completed over 27-holes of golf course renovation work. This included an 18-hole overhaul of Fall’s Road Golf Course in Potomac, Maryland, a 9-hole renovation at Massanutten Resort in McGaheysville, Virginia, and construction of the new practice facility at The River Course of Virginia Tech in Radford. Every region in which the company worked received near record amounts of precipitation (Potomac, Maryland had the second wettest year on record). “It seemed like it rained every day this year”, said Spraker, “but we overcame it and all of those jobs turned out awesome.” Along with the golf course work, STAFF completed more than two-dozen residential and commercial projects in Pulaski, Montgomery, Wythe and Floyd Counties.

STAFF looks for even more success in 2004 with two golf course projects and several commercial and residential projects already underway. STAFF specializes in grading, excavating, clearing, underground utilities and grass installation. For further information contact Andy Spraker at (540) 633-6737.
Other Tenant News

Congratulations to two of our tenants who were recently spotlighted in the Current section of the Roanoke Times and World News.

On Sunday January 11, 2004, Luxine Inc. was presented with a picture of Sandi Short, Operations Manager, and one of their two element induction ranges. Luxine was also highlighted in the last newsletter. They have developed an efficient application of induction heating to cooking surfaces that provide safer and more cost efficient cooking. Currently, the units are being made for commercial applications, but this Spring a residential unit should be available. For further information call (540) 731-0010.

The Sunday January 25, 2004 Current section featured an article about Brightside Press owned by Hilda May Woolwine. Brightside Press specializes in short run book publications for local authors. Most orders are from 200 to 500 copies and may be fiction or non-fiction. Brightside also produces classical literature from the public domain, and offers an opportunity for organizations to use books as a fund raiser. For further information call (540) 633-6747.

Where Do You Want to Meet?

The answer to your meeting space needs may be the Competitiveness Center.

The Competitiveness Center can serve your needs regardless of the size of your group. Rooms are available for up to 120 people. There is ample parking at the building and equipment is available for audio/visual needs.

“We are glad to get the word out about our meeting rooms.” said Mr. Carpenter, manager of the Competitiveness Center. “During the past few months we have accommodated several groups of 100 or more who have enjoyed a catered dinner in the New River Room. However, our most popular room is still the Training Room because it is sized for 10 to 40 people and has a lot of flexibility depending on the purpose of the meeting being held.”

Charges for the meeting space is modest, beginning at $25 a day. The charges include the room use and most audio/visual equipment, however there is a charge of $1.00 per hour for use of the LED projector. The rooms may be reserved by calling Wayne Carpenter at (540) 633-6730.

New River Room
Interesting Facts About the Competitiveness Center

- The Center is only fifteen minutes from both exit #118 (Christiansburg) and #98 (Dublin) making it convenient traveling either north or south.

- The Center provides Internet service which is included in the rent payment. There are over 500 connection ports to access the Internet throughout the Center.

- Offices are as small as 100 square feet, and office suites are up to 1,100 square feet. The lease allows tenants to move about the Center into space that suits their needs without renegotiating. This flexible lease saves money.

- There are 128 parking spaces at the Center. They are convenient to six entrances to the building. If there is a large event being held there is overload parking at the rear of the Center that can accommodate 100 vehicles.

- The loading dock that serves the industrial areas has ground level and truck height delivery capability. The dock can handle at least ten eighteen wheelers at one time. Also, the dock is wide enough for pickup and van delivery to the bays through roll-up doors.

- The Center’s high speed copier has a 65 page per minute speed; will sort, duplex, staple, punch, is less than five years old, and has made over 1,075,000 copies.

ATTENTION EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS!

The Virginia Employment Commission’s next EAC Workshop will be at the Competitiveness Center on Wednesday, March 24, 2004
The Presentation will be “Training from the Employers Perspective”

Please note this date on your calendar and watch for your notice from the VEC or contact their Business Resource Unit at (540) 831-5980

For Competitiveness Center information contact:
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6580 Valley Center Drive, Radford, VA 24141
Phone: (540) 633-6730
Fax: (540) 633-6768
wayne@nrvdc.org
www.nrvdc.org/nrvcc.html
From the Manager’s Desk:

In our last issue, we offered keys to starting a business and included some of the tools that I have used to assist new businesses for many years. In that article we highlighted the Virginia Employment Commission as a valuable resource to both large and small businesses. The following thoughts build on the idea that none of us operate alone and by building relationships and networking, a synergy is realized and indeed we can have an even greater impact on building a better place to live.

There are three examples of how we network with other organizations. The first organization is the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Radford University’s Business Technology Park. The professionals at the Center provide one-on-one counseling, business education opportunities and resources to help small business owners or managers improve their business. The SBDC helps individuals expand their business, solve problems, develop new ideas, or meet the requirements for going into business. The assistance provided includes business planning, management skills development, business information, marketing, and financial analysis. This is all provided at no cost. For more information visit www.radford.edu/~bac. To contact the SBDC call (540) 831-6056 or email David Shanks at dshanks@radford.edu.

The second group that has been very active in promoting the New River Valley is not very well known in its new form, but the faces and names are well known in the area. The organization is the Partners for Self Sufficiency (PSS) and is a united effort of the five departments of Social Services in the Valley. The group’s purpose is to improve quality of life for our communities. They have been a great supporter of the Competitiveness Center and presented a very successful job fair last Fall at the Center. On April 14, they are joining New River Community College (NRCC) to present a second Job Fair. The event will be in Edwards Hall at NRCC. We will have a booth there along with many other business and service providers. Please plan to attend; you will not be disappointed. To learn more about PSS or the Job Fair call 231-3842 or email Raquel Becerra at rbecerra@vt.edu.

The third organization we want to highlight is again the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC). In our last issue we talked about one of the tools we use for business plans. The VEC provides many services, but in this article we want to speak specifically to the tremendous amount of data that can be accessed through them. For a small business, such as those in the Competitiveness Center, the information on labor markets provides valuable statistics for making decisions about salary ranges and job skills among other information. For information about the VEC visit their web site www.VaEmploy.com.

There are many organizations we work with to provide our tenants and prospective tenants the best possible chance to succeed in their business. We appreciate the support we get and hope that the benefit is mutual. Our goal is to advance our Mission: “Create jobs and diversify our local economy”. 
This month we highlight two people. Both work for the AXA Network and they share an office, but they are independent of each other from the services they provide. Barry Duncan and Debra Chase are our newest tenants and have a beautiful corner office in our new addition.

Debra Chase is a Registered Representative with AXA Advisors, member of NASD, and is an agent of AXA Network. She offers variable and traditional life insurance and annuity products of The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U.S. and over 100 unaffiliated companies.

She began her career working in Human Resources in 1974, which has included positions as Benefits Representative in industry, Benefits Coordinator in a higher educational setting and Retirement Representative for an insurance broker. She believes that benefits play a tremendous role in the compensation of employees and education of the employee in understanding how their compensation package works is vital to job satisfaction. Her position now as a Registered Representative provides her with opportunities to assist individuals and businesses in reaching their peak financial success through various investment and insurance programs.

Debra earned a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1984 and received a Masters of Administration from Lynchburg College in 1990. She is a native of Richmond and currently lives in Radford, Virginia with her husband, Bruce, and two children, Abbey (16) and Joe (23), two horses and two dogs. Debra can be reached at 540-633-6772.

Barry Duncan is a financial advisor located in suite 326 of the Competitiveness Center. He lives in Christiansburg with his wife Janie, their Jack Russell “Terrorist”, Edie, and Siamese kitty, Aggie. Prior to becoming a successful financial advisor, Barry was a fiber optics engineer for Poly Scientific and was most recently the lead engineer responsible for Solectron’s optics manufacturing capability startup.

Being an avid snowboarder and mountain biker, he spends the winter boarding Aspen and summers riding the Blue Ridge Mountains. Barry has assembled a bike team that will ride in the Southern Culture MS150 bike tour on June 12 and 13. The 150 mile ride will begin in Charlottesville and travel to Longwood University in Farmville, VA for an overnight stay, finally returning to Charlottesville. As he has battled the devastating effects of MS for over 10 years, he volunteers one day per week at the Roanoke office of the Blue Ridge National Multiple Sclerosis Society and at local MS events. If you would like to sponsor Barry and his team in their efforts, please feel free to stop by and make a donation. Barry may be reached at (540) 633-6771.
Financial Priorities: Working With a Financial Professional
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Establishing and pursuing a long-term investment program requires time, skill, discipline, and confidence — a combination that many individuals may lack. In fact, Standard & Poor’s research shows that most retirement plan participants are “reluctant” to take on the responsibility of planning and implementing their own investment programs. If you find yourself in this situation, it may make sense to consider working with a financial professional.

Appropriate Training Counts
Investment professionals are trained to estimate your financial needs, help minimize the impact of taxes, and pursue portfolio diversification. Moreover, financial professional or financial advisor can help reduce the emotions involved in decision making and keep your long-term strategy on track.

Whether you are an experienced investor or just starting out, financial professional can help support your financial goals and bring clarity to issues you may not have thought about, such as:

Income and savings — This may be a particularly important topic if you anticipate changing jobs, starting a business, or staying home to care for children.
Retirement — A financial professional can help you calculate your goals and evaluate your investment risk tolerance.
College — A financial professional can help you take advantage of new rules governing educational funding.
Estate planning — The Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 has made a variety of changes, and its long-term impact remains unclear.
Contingency fund — Thinking about the possibility of a job loss or illness is not pleasant; however, a financial professional can help you work toward building a three- to six-month surplus for unexpected events.

Preparing for a First Meeting
To help you create a financial plan, your financial professional will need to assess your personal situation, including tolerance for risk, current portfolio allocation, and time horizon, among other matters.

At your first meeting, you may want to bring documents such as wills, insurance policies, and pension, investment, and savings account statements. There is no single right way to establish long-term financial goals and objectives. Some financial professionals use a series of worksheets to help identify a client’s current financial circumstance and to help you design a personal plan of action.

Because a financial plan is a long-term, working document, it makes sense to meet with your financial professional at least once a year to make adjustments for any changes in lifestyle and market conditions.

Initiating Contact
Building a relationship of trust takes time. The sooner you contact a financial professional, the sooner you may be able to take charge of your finances, simplify your financial life, and devote your energy to other important matters.

Barry Duncan and Debra Chase offers securities through AXA Advisors, LLC (member NASD, SIPC) 10 South Jefferson Street, Suite 850, Roanoke, VA 24011 and offers annuity and insurance products through an insurance brokerage affiliate, AXA Network, LLC and its subsidiaries. GE 28350 (Revised 03/04) (Exp 03/06)
The cover article emphasized the value of networking. On Thursday, March 25 and Friday, March 26, the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce held a business expo at the closed Heilig-Meyers store in Fairlawn. This was their first attempt at such an event, and by all accounts was a great success. There were eighty exhibitors including the Competitiveness Center. The Expo is a good example of networking. Thursday night there was a VIP reception that was attended by several hundred people. Friday was open to the public from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The crowd on Friday was steady and quite a few people stopped at the Center’s booth to learn about the Center and what it offered. Six of those who stopped by were genuinely interested in starting a business and locating in the Center. However, the exposure to the people who have heard of the Center but were not familiar with the program will no doubt lead to more interest from entrepreneurs looking for a place to begin their business.

Attention!!

Mark your calendar for the Second NRV Job Fair Expo to be held Wednesday, April 14th from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Edwards Hall Room 117 at New River Community College.

For further information contact Raquel Becerra at rbecerra@vt.edu

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www.nrvdc.org/nrvcc.html
Competition Center Gets International Press

From the Manager’s Desk:

This year we have offered articles in the Manager’s Section of the Competitive Edge that deal with an important aspect of getting a new business started. In the last issue, we talked about the importance of networking and gave three examples of the network the Center uses to assist businesses in their development. This month we turn our focus inward to give our readers a chance to see how we use important contacts to help our operation and perhaps how our operations may benefit other incubators.

The Competitiveness Center has been a member of the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) since it organized seven years ago. The NBIA is an international organization of business incubators and those who support business incubation. The primary benefit to the Competitiveness Center has been the information resource that the association has offered. This information has come in printed material such as books on identifying viable entrepreneurial companies to management techniques for incubator managers. Also, networking with other business incubators that have common challenges is an important advantage. In recent months we have joined the NBIA Rural Incubator Forum. The organization of this forum was lead by Betty Mitchell at the Highland Center in Monterey, Virginia and has members from over ten states.

The NBIA publishes a newsletter bi-monthly that is available to its members. Last November a survey was sent out by NBIA seeking information from members regarding how the slow economy was affecting their operations. We responded to the survey with the elements of our marketing plan that we had just revamped to create an awareness for our new expansion. As a result of the response to the survey, the Competitiveness Center was chosen to be featured in the April edition of the NBIA Review. The Managing Editor conducted a phone interview and included comments from the interview along with a selection of key elements in the marketing plan in the article.

The ability to exchange information with other professionals is important in keeping up with best practices in incubation management and tenant selection. We have been pleased with the access to information through the NBIA with their publications, forums, and direct contacts. We also hope that in some way we have been able to give back a little with the information about our marketing program in their last newsletter.
Tenant Highlight

This month we highlight Woodworks Restoration & Remodeling, Inc. They joined the Center two years ago occupying an office and half of a small bay, and are now occupying the entire bay and still have their office. They are general contractors specializing in Restoration and Renovation, Wood Restoration, Historic Preservation, Structural Repairs, and Commercial and Residential remodeling. They can be reached at (540) 731-0021.

Woodworks Restoration and Remodeling, Inc. is a Class A General Contractor specializing in the restoration of historic residential, commercial, and government buildings throughout the New River Valley of Southwestern Virginia. Their professional management and dedication to local historic architecture will make them a valuable resource for your project. Woodworks is dedicated to providing premium workmanship and materials that will exceed the expectations of their most discriminating customers in both residential and commercial applications.

The business started in the New River Valley as Woodworks & Repair, run by Edward Dixon in 1986. Ed ran the small company with one or two employees doing home repair. In the fall of 1999, a decision was made to grow Woodworks Restoration & Remodeling into a larger company to keep up with the growing client base. The company was incorporated and received its current name in January 2000. Their key staff includes Ed Dixon as Project Consultant, sales, estimating, design, and has 20+ years of construction experience, being self employed since 1983. To support their production staff of four carpenters, currently in the field, they have one Production Manager, Nathan Chamberlin, and two helpers. They have been using design interns from RU for the past two years with good success training them on their 3 D design software “Chief Architect”. They use Lurleen Collins (also a tenant in the building) for their accounting needs and make use of the Competitiveness Center’s conference rooms for client design presentations.

Above is The Coffee Mill located in Radford, Virginia’s Downtown Historic District. This was an Interior & Exterior Restoration in which Woodworks converted offices to three apartments and outfitted the ground floor for a modern coffee shop. Also above, the “Harvey House” in Radford, Virginia, was a project which included exterior restoration, the addition of one bath & period style reworking of the 2nd floor bath in this 19th century historic landmark home.
Woodworks has had the privilege to work on many of the finest homes in the area, including six Historic Landmark homes (two of which were on the 2004 Blacksburg Calendar) and the restoration of five old downtown commercial/residential buildings in the historic district with one more just started.

Woodworks team of building professionals is committed to delivering incomparable service with dexterity, agility and reliability. Professional management, personal attention to customer satisfaction, and pride in detailed craftsmanship are their primary objectives on every project.

**They provide all of the following services:**

- ✔ Full Service Remodeling
- ✔ Professional Design Build Services, Engineering
- ✔ Room Additions, Kitchens & Baths
- ✔ Door & Window Repairs & Replacement,
- ✔ Historic Restoration, Tax Credit Projects
- ✔ Structural & Design Correction for Preservation
- ✔ Carpentry, Custom Cabinetry and Woodworking
- ✔ Project Management
- ✔ Wood, Tile, etc. Floor Installation/ Refinishing
- ✔ Decks, Porches & Sunrooms
- ✔ Slate, Metal, & Shingle Roofing
- ✔ Painting and Re-Finishing

Woodworks strives to keep up with the latest products, tools and application techniques through trade journals and professional shows. They just attended a trade show in Charlotte, NC, with their carpenters for “Lead Carpenter” Training. In addition, Nathan and Ed took a course in job site and company management. Ed said, “The exposure to new vendors and the latest in building products is a great value in itself.” Management also continues to refine their company’s procedures to guarantee a great product each and every time. Written policies have been beneficial in lowering the amount of time needed to train new employees.

Please contact them regarding any construction project that requires attention or detail or experience preserving historic structures, or general remodeling. Woodworks can be reached at (540) 731-0021.
Tenant Update

Brightside Press
Brightside Press’ latest book, *The Ultimate Guide to Country Ham*, by food scientists Norman G. Marriott, Ph.D., and Herbert W. Ockermann, Ph.D., received a "celebrity" endorsement from NBC Today Show weatherman, Willard Scott, who is a country ham fancier. The book was edited by Deborah Lowery, a former food editor for *Southern Living* magazine. It contains some wonderful recipes and menus from around the south. (paperback; 160 pages; $16.00.) *For further information contact May Person at (540) 633-6747.*

REMSI
Congratulations to John Casey, Executive Director of REMSI. John has been accepted by the Edward Via School of Medicine in Blacksburg and will be vacating the Director’s position in August. He plans to stay involved with REMSI because of his passion for the organization. Currently, REMSI’s Board of Directors is searching for the next Director and hopes to have someone chosen by July.

Upcoming Events

Business Planning Seminar, Jacksonville Center, Floyd
The Jacksonville Center, a small business incubator, is sponsoring a seminar presented by Wayne Carpenter, Manager of the NRV Competitiveness Center, on **June 16th**. More information will be available by June 4. This seminar is an excellent example of how the business incubators in the New River Valley network and support each other.

Virginia Employment Commission, EAC Lunchtime Seminar
The Virginia Employment Commission has conducted their Employer Advisory Committee (EAC) Seminar at the Competitiveness Center and will return on **June 30** for the next series. The seminar offers timely subjects and includes a lunch if you wish to purchase one. Please contact the Center or the VEC for detailed information.

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Competitiveness Center Offers Flexibility

From the Manager’s Desk:

There are times that I find it difficult to believe that the Competitiveness Center is over five years old. We opened Phase 2 a year ago and now have plenty of space to offer new and/or growing businesses. One of the Center’s most beneficial characteristics is having various size spaces to offer prospective tenants.

An example of how the Center provides flexibility in space can be seen in the growth of one of our current tenants. Luxine, Inc. joined the Center a few years ago occupying a small industrial bay of approximately 600 sq. ft.; before long they needed additional space and their lease was modified to include a second 600 sq. ft. bay. As Luxine continued to grow and transform from a research and development company to a production company, their need for even more space was apparent and they moved from the two small bays to a 2,000 sq. ft. manufacturing bay. In the past year, they have realized more growth and now occupy the large bay, 1,000 sq. ft. of a second large bay, and two offices that are approximately 200 sq. ft. each. In just over three years, Luxine has grown within the Center from a single 600 sq. ft. space to over 3,400 sq. ft. in four spaces.

Another example of flexibility for tenants of the Competitiveness Center is the Lease. Our standard lease term requires only a one year commitment from the tenant. The lease can be renewed twice in one year increments or may be terminated at the end of any lease year. We can modify the lease to add, delete or change space within the building as shown above, and even with the changes does not require any extension of the term of the lease. Our focus is to provide an environment that fosters growth in small businesses and advances our mission to create jobs and diversify the local economy.

On the last page of this newsletter you will find a schematic floor plan of the Competitiveness Center. You will see that there are various sizes and configurations of the office and manufacturing spaces. I invite you to contact me or just stop in for a quick tour of the Center. Remember, we are about more than just space. When you join the Center you are given access to many amenities that you have to pay for elsewhere if they are available at all. We are small business friendly.
Tenant Highlight

This month we highlight the Competitiveness Center’s newest tenant, Ralph Cummings, Jr., a representative of Prime Lending. Ralph provides mortgage loans with a focus on ability and accessibility. Ralph can be reached at 540-633-6773.

Prime lending brings prime mortgage money to the NRV! 

In July 2004, Prime Lending joined the NRVCC. Senior Mortgage Consultant, Ralph Cummings, Jr., JD, says that one of his foremost goals is to provide real estate financing not just to those with perfect credit, but also to those NRV residents who have had challenges to overcome in regard to their financial situation. “Many local banks and lenders just don’t have the tools, experience or resources to get the tough deals approved. That’s where I come in,” says Ralph. Ralph brings to the company both a background in law and financial planning. After practicing law in both real estate and general civil and criminal matters, Ralph obtained his stockbroker’s license and worked for American Express as a financial advisor. He has been involved in the real estate finance industry in different aspects since 1998. Hence, his role is one of a “Consultant” as opposed to a “Sales Representative”.

In addition to specializing in “bruised-credit” loans, Ralph also offers several loan products uniquely suited for residents requiring loan amounts in excess of $250,000. “There are several new mortgage products that seem to be almost custom-made for the homeowner who will stay in their home for only a few years. With loan amounts exceeding $250,000, these new products can save this type of homeowner thousands of dollars!” Prime Lending also offers loans for the self-employed, who traditionally have had problems in obtaining mortgages due to the difficulty in documenting sufficient income.

Prime Lending, A Plains Capital Company, is headquartered in Dallas, Texas and has around 40 branches across the country. In 2003, Prime Lending originated over $1.5 Billion in mortgage loans.

In addition to a wide range of residential and commercial products and expertise, Ralph seeks to make the whole loan process more streamlined and less tedious. Ralph states that, “The real key though, to my business is my burning desire to be available to clients and business associates when they need an answer!” He can usually pre-qualify a client over the phone in 10 minutes or a client may choose to apply online at www.OnlineMoneyLenders.com. Ralph is also typically available after business hours and on weekends. He can be reached at 540-633-6773 or 540-230-1308. His email address is: Rcummings@PrimeLending.com.
Tenant Update

Brightside Press - Hilda Person, owner of Brightside Press, reports that business has reached a brisk pace. In the past month, the local publisher of short run book orders has completed or is in the process of completing seven jobs that total over 1,600 volumes. In addition, Brightside continues to publish and distribute three volumes on Appalachian regional economics for the Radford University Sociology Department.

REMSI - In our last edition, we congratulated John Casey for his acceptance to Medical School. This edition we congratulate Joe Trigg on his appointment as Director of REMSI. Joe has been a resident of the Center for over a year with the Western Virginia Emergency Medical Services (WVEMS) Council as Area Director.

Joe’s move to the REMSI position left his WVEMS position available, and Debbie Akers, who has been the Training Co-ordinator for REMSI, has been selected to fill that Area Director position for WVEMS. Congratulations to Debbie for her forward career move. We are glad that she and Joe are both going to continue to be at the Center.

Woodworks Restoration and Remodeling, Inc. - In the June-July edition of the Competitive Edge, Woodworks was the highlighted tenant. We are pleased that they have experienced continued success in gaining jobs. In the last two months, they have added four workers in the field which doubles their field employment. This increase is due to the addition of four new jobs and some of which are significant according to Ed Dixon, owner of Woodworks.

Staff Contracting, Inc. - Staff Contracting specializes in building and remodeling golf courses. They were recently awarded a contract to build a First Tee project in Roanoke. First Tee is a PGA sponsored program to provide access to golf for all youth, especially those who might not otherwise be able to participate. The project started in June and should be completed in 60 to 90 days (weather permitting).

Upcoming Events

The New River Valley Partners for Self Sufficiency is hosting the second annual fall Job Fair at the Competitiveness Center on Wednesday, September 22. Planning is reaching the final stages and more information will be published soon. Please be on the lookout for details and make plans to attend.
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Competitiveness Center: Making a Difference in Everyday Life

From the Manager’s Desk:

The New River Valley Development Corporation which is a 501(c)3 economic development organization, owns and operates the New River Valley Competitiveness Center. It was developed by eight localities and has an appointed Board of Directors. It was during an orientation tour of the Center to a new Board Member that I began to evaluate the exciting things that are happening here at the Center.

Our tenants provide many diverse products and services. One tenant is manufacturing an induction cooking surface, another is producing a heat emmissive coating, and yet another is developing applications for nano-technology. While it is difficult to try and explain what each of these applications and processes are, all of these tenants are making strides towards making life better and/or safer by using innovative technology. Some of our tenants have created their business around a specialization. These include building golf courses, publishing books and restoring historic buildings. There is also an accounting firm, financial advisors, and a mortgage broker located in the Center.

On October 1, the Competitiveness Center will welcome a new tenant that will set up a water testing lab. This business will fill a void left when a prior testing lab moved its facility to Roanoke. This is yet another way our tenants are making a difference in everyday life.

On October 12 through October 14, the Center will also be host to Virginia Commonwealth University as they offer a course on dealing with emergency preparedness including bio-terrorism. A representative of the University visited the Center recently and was impressed with the facility’s spacious meeting rooms and ample outdoor space, which is needed for this type of course that includes disaster drills. This is just another example of the specialities that the Center offers visiting guests.

It was after completing the tour that I found a new appreciation for the entrepreneurs who have incorporated the Center as part of their businesses’ success. The new board member was certainly impressed with the facility and all it has to offer. The Center is truly an exciting place to be a part of and I am proud of all of its accomplishments.
Tenant Update

Woodworks Restoration and Remodeling, Inc.

Recently three hurricanes have devastated Florida. In the aftermath, many volunteers offered assistance to the people who were directly affected. Ed Dixon of Woodworks Restoration and Remodeling, Inc., a tenant of the Competitiveness Center for two years, took action. He spent a week with equipment and manpower to help with repairs to homes so that families could return to them. No doubt his time and efforts were greatly appreciated. The Center is proud of Ed and his concern for those directly affected by these natural disasters.

Barry Duncan - Aspen Investment Advisers, Inc.

Barry Duncan moved to the Competitiveness Center just less than a year ago as a financial advisor in the AXA Network. He recently made a major decision to leave AXA and continue his business as his own investment firm. He has chosen the name Aspen Investment Advisers, Inc. no doubt because of his love for the outdoors and especially snow boarding. Barry is not one to avoid a challenge, this summer he bicycled over 150 miles to raise funds and awareness of MS.

New River Valley Job Fair

Congratulations to the sponsors of the Job Fair held at the Competitiveness Center on September 22. This is the third job fair sponsored by a consortium led by the Partners for Self-Sufficiency and the second fall event held at the Center. There were 50 vendors displaying their materials and looking for employees. Over 300 job seekers attended making this a very successful event. Plans are already underway for the next Job Fair to be held in the Spring of 2005. Watch for details!

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