From the Manager’s Desk:

Like many others, at the beginning of a new year, I like to reflect on the past year and judge it compared to other years and the expectations I had a year ago. Overall, I have to declare that 2005 was a good year for the Competitiveness Center. The occupancy rate in the incubator increased from 65% to 75%. More importantly, 25 new jobs were created by our incubator tenants. These jobs were the result of the creation of six new businesses and the expansion of six existing businesses.

The following became tenants last year:

**Eastern Piano Studio, Inc.** - Mike Agee is the owner of this business that offers recreational opportunities for students centered around classical music. He is developing after school programs for middle school and elementary students that include study time for homework and introduction to music and/or musical instruments. He continues to offer piano lessons and other musical programs through local recreation departments.

**Ground Vibration Consultants, Inc.** - This business surveys structures for pre-mining operations for coal mine operators primarily in Southern West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky. Data collected documents structural conditions in the event the owner may file a claim after mine blasting. In addition other consulting services are offered to mining companies. Bobby Payne owns GVC.

**Mobile Medical Diagnostic Services of New River Valley, LLC** - This business has two mobile x-ray units that take x-rays and develop them wherever a patient is located. In addition, the mobile units have the capability to transmit the film digitally to radiologists for remote reading and reporting to the physician who ordered the procedure. They provide this service throughout the New River and Roanoke Valleys.

**Partners for Self-Sufficiency** - This group is a collaborative effort of the five Departments of Social Services in the New River Valley. They provide a service to the local communities by assisting in the development of skills and attitudes for individuals that have been unable to gain employment through regular processes. The program is called “Job Readiness” and is offered in conjunction with New River Community College. The College provides the instructor through their Workforce Development Office.

**Safe Water, Inc.** - This business is owned by two sisters and a brother, Susan, Soheila, and Jay Mirlohi. It provides testing for bacteria in water supplies throughout the New River Valley. The business was started when a previous lab in the Valley was closed after being bought by a Roanoke lab. The lab is certified by the State Health Department and, therefore, can be used to meet local testing requirements for residential and business locations.

**trenia b. and company** - Trenia Bell operated this business from her home for several years, but needed more room because of successful growth planning. Trenia originally joined the Center in a 650 square foot space, but she soon moved to a 2,000 square foot space. Her company makes high-end soft goods such as draperies, slipcovers and bedspreads. Although most of the work is performed for interior designers, Trenia also provides some services directly to customers.

**ServiceMaster Janitorial Service** – Adam Thompson opened this franchise in September 2005 to provide janitorial service to businesses throughout Southwest Virginia. They currently lease storage space and will have an office by the beginning of 2006 and also have first refusal on a 125 square foot space.

The following tenants expanded their presence in the Center:
Austin-Morgan & Associates, Inc. - This trucking company specializes in full load transport throughout the eastern United States. It is owned by Randy Kinder and currently operates three trucks with plans for further expansion. Austin-Morgan joined the Center in December 2004 in a single office and has since hired a dispatcher and added an office.

Debra Chase, AXA Advisors – Debra offers her clients insurance and investment products. In 2005 she moved into her own office space after sharing office space with Barry Duncan, a financial advisor in the incubator.

Lurleen M. Collins Accounting Services - Lurleen specializes in providing bookkeeping and accounting services to small businesses. She has expanded her operations and added one employee. She recently moved from two offices to a four-office suite.

Luxine, Inc. - Luxine continues to increase production and sales. Six new employees were added in the production area and one in management this past year. They also added an office space for their engineer and expanded from one and a half bays to two full bays for production.

Wessex, Inc. - Wessex operated a lab in one-half of a manufacturing bay. During the year they added an office for their technicians and increased to a full bay for lab and production work.

Regional Emergency Medical Services, Inc. (REMSI) - REMSI provides emergency medical services for Pulaski County. They have added a Deputy Director to their staff and now rent one additional office.

We are proud of our tenants because the success that we enjoy is a result of their hard work and continued dedication to excellence. Many other successful businesses reside in the incubator. We are thankful for all our great tenants and look forward to celebrating their continued success in the months to come. For more information on the Competitiveness Center, our tenants, and our programs, please contact me (see below) or visit our website: www.nrvdc.org/nrvcc.html.

In January, we added two new tenants.

Hall and Sons Developers, Inc. - Moved into a small office with expectations of needing more space. The developers are currently removing timber from a lot across from the Center in preparation for the start of construction of a new restaurant. In addition, they have plans for other commercial projects in the future.

The Original Tailgate Party Rug (OTPR) - Entered the Center in the formative stages. They will complete their business organization, then design and develop a product for sports aficionados. They expect to have their product on the market within three months.

We are showing space to a regional organization and have proposals being considered by two other potential tenants. Looking forward, we expect 2006 to be even better than 2005.

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