

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-
CONTACT KEN MCFADYEN, REGIONAL DIRECTOR
BLUE RIDGE CROSSROADS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
PLEASE CALL 236-0391 WITH QUESTIONS

**Virginia Tobacco Commission Awards Additional Grant
for Wildwood Commerce Park**

The Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority (BRCEDA) is pleased to announce that the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission on May 21, 2015 awarded a fifth “megasite” grant for the Wildwood Commerce Park in the amount of \$1,746,200. This grant award follows earlier Commission grants totaling \$12.3 million for the purchase and development of Wildwood.

The most recent grant award will be utilized for the engineering and construction of the wastewater collection system expansion to 400,000 gallons per day (GPD) that will serve the park. Currently, the available wastewater capacity is 114,000 GPD and is being expanded to 300,000 GPD with a previous Tobacco Commission grant.

"Wildwood is a prime location and I am confident this will be the scene of tremendous commerce. I hope that day is soon and appreciate the great team work that Carroll, Grayson, and Galax put in to make this possible," said Senator Ralph Smith, who serves on the Tobacco Commission and whose district includes the portion of Carroll County where Wildwood is located.

Carroll County Supervisor David Hutchins, who chairs BRCEDA, responded to the Commission’s most recent grant award by stating that “our localities of Carroll, Grayson and Galax, along with BRCEDA, have worked many years now to create the

positive working relationships with the Tobacco Commission that are bringing resources to our region for economic development and prosperity.”

“The work that Carroll, Galax and Grayson are dedicating through BRCEDA is showing results. The Tobacco Commission’s fifth grant award for the Wildwood Commerce Park will greatly assist the region in creating long-term solutions for job growth and private investment that will bolster the local and regional economy,” stated Senator Bill Carrico.

In making the May 2015 grant award, the Virginia Tobacco Commission awarded a total of \$6.3 million to four megasite projects in Southside and Southwest Virginia. These four projects had requested \$13 million from the Commission. Megasite projects are defined as those that should generate at least 400 jobs and \$250 million in private investment.

“We appreciate the Virginia Tobacco Commission’s grant award to further expand our infrastructure at Wildwood. We have developed a truly “shovel-ready” commerce park since we began the Wildwood project in 2010,” stated Ken McFadyen, Regional Director of the Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority. “Companies that consider industrial sites such as Wildwood will only evaluate those sites that are ready with graded sites, completed environmental studies and sufficient utilities in place,” continued McFadyen.

BRCEDA purchased the first parcel at Wildwood Commerce Park in May 2011 and it now consists of 273 acres, including 100-acre and 25-acre graded sites with retention pond access. Water lines, sewer lines, fiber, natural gas lines and an access road have been constructed and are ready for use by industry at Wildwood. BRCEDA is

receiving inquiries from prospective companies and Wildwood was the Virginia finalist for a \$100 million investment in 2012. That project selected a site in North Carolina that was closer to where its business growth was projected.

“Industrial recruitment is a long-term proposition,” says McFadyen. “We have worked on developing the site over the last several years and now we have a ready commerce park for prospective companies. And, we are operating in a global marketplace. There is lots of competition and we have every reason to believe that we will be successful in recruiting a large operation to Wildwood.”

Wildwood Commerce Park is a collaborative effort involving Carroll County, Grayson County, and the City of Galax, with BRCEDA serving in a management role. The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission has provided vital planning and technical assistance. Draper Aden Associates of Blacksburg has provided principal engineering and related services for Wildwood. The Appalachian Regional Commission, Virginia Department of Transportation, and Appalachian Electric Power have also provided grants and investment for the development of Wildwood of over \$5 million.

BRCEDA was formed to provide the leadership for regional economic development efforts that would benefit the Twin County region. Over the last several years, BRCEDA has established the most successful Small Business Development Center in Virginia, leading to the creation of over 200 new businesses. Before the creation of a stand alone Wired Road Broadband Authority, BRCEDA led the effort to create Virginia’s first community-owned, open access regional broadband network. Most recently, BRCEDA is continuing work with the Town of Fries and Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to implement the Fries Master Plan.

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