



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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CONGRESSMAN BOUCHER ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL FEDERAL FUNDING FOR PATRICK COUNTY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

\$240,000 Federal Appropriation Will Support College Access and Workforce Readiness Training Programs

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Representative Rick Boucher announced today that the U.S. Congress, at his request, has approved a federal appropriation in the amount of \$240,000 to the Patrick County Education Foundation (PCEF) to support the Foundation’s College Access and Workforce Readiness Training programs. **“The federal funding which I am announcing today will support the College Access and Workforce Readiness Training programs of the Patrick County Education Foundation. These two widely successful educational initiatives were developed to expand the educational and professional opportunities available to Patrick County residents, both young and old,”** Boucher said.

The PCEF is an organization devoted to providing educational opportunities for Patrick County residents. PCEF was established to encourage County residents to prepare for 21st Century employment by creating educational opportunities and incentives for lifelong learning. The foundation has set the goal of raising the County’s educational profile from the bottom tenth among Virginia localities to a place among the Commonwealth’s top five rural counties within a ten year period. Attainment of this goal will enable the County to attract new businesses, to help residents earn more competitive wages, and to increase Patrick County’s standard of living.

Former Virginia Governor and PCEF Chairman Gerald L. Baliles said **“ I am delighted with Congress’s recognition of the Patrick County Education Foundation’s work to create an economic development model through increased educational attainment levels. We believe the Patrick County model can be replicated in other rural areas of the country, and we applaud and appreciate Congress Boucher’s work on behalf of the citizen’s of Patrick County.”**

The federal funds which are being announced today will be used to support the College Access and Workforce Readiness Training programs. The College Access

program, which operates in conjunction with the Patrick County Public School system, has been in operation since 2001. The program has assisted students in acquiring over \$2 million in financial aid since 2002.

The College Access program also created the Last-Dollar Awards program to help students and families who exhibit an additional need beyond the assistance offered by normal financial aid grants. Last-Dollar Awards is a four year award commitment which provides financial assistance for up to four years to those students who qualify. The Foundation has awarded over \$258,000 through this program.

The federal appropriation which Boucher has secured will also be used to support the Workforce Readiness Training program which was established by the PCEF using federal funds. The Workforce Readiness Training program utilizes traditional classroom, Internet, and personal computer based instruction, supplied by PCEF and Patrick Henry Community College, to provide unemployed or under-employed residents in the County with job skills training. Over 240 participants have completed the program to date.

PCEF Executive Director Jerry Hughes stated, “The federal funding being announced today, and that which we have previously received, has allowed the Foundation to quickly institute programs. The County’s unanticipated loss of such a large number of jobs created an immediate need for training funds. Without Congressman Boucher’s assistance, we would not have been able to react quickly and effectively in developing and implementing critical programs.”

Congressman Boucher has been instrumental in obtaining previous allocations of federal funding for the PCEF. In 2003, he announced two federal appropriations totaling \$500,000 to expand the College Access program and to establish the Workforce Readiness Training program.

“Improving the educational opportunities for the residents of Southwest Virginia is among my top priorities. I am pleased that the U.S. Congress has honored my request to provide further federal support to the Patrick County Education Foundation,” Boucher concluded.

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