

VIRGINIA

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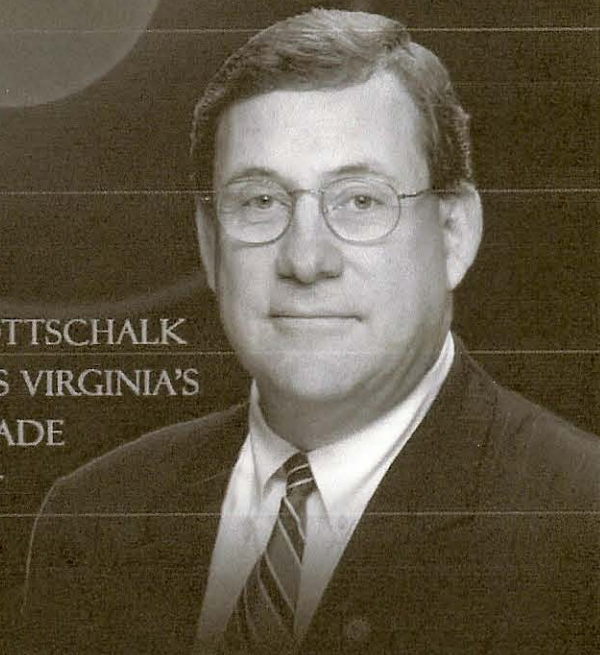
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SPRINTING INTO THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

TO SAY THAT PAT GOTTSCHALK
HAS HIT THE GROUND RUNNING AS VIRGINIA'S
NEW SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND TRADE
WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT

(Story page 14)



Foundation Emphasizes Education in Patrick County



Former Governor
Gerald L. Baliles

Patrick County is no patsy.

Like many counties in Southwest Virginia, the 1990s decline of the textile, tobacco and timber industries hit rural Patrick County hard.

But Patrick is hitting back. With the brain and political power of former Virginia Governor Gerald L. Baliles behind it, the Patrick County Education Foundation was born in 2001. The foundation, a non-profit organization founded as an education-based economic development initiative, is working to raise the education attainment levels of the County's residents from among the lowest in Virginia to one of the top five rural counties by 2011.

"I have traveled across the country and around the world as a lawyer and a member of corporate boards," Baliles said. "I have seen how trade, technology and globalization have changed our lives, our economy and our country. I have concluded, with others, that increasingly, education is the engine that drives the American economy. It is education that is the 'coin of the realm' and will determine the quality of our lives as well as our economy in the future."

The Foundation has hit the ground running. In its first year, the Foundation's Board of Directors—made up of community, business and local government leaders—hired a College Access Program Advisor and Foundation Program Director and launched the first of the Foundation's three initiatives, the College Access Program for high school students. After a year, the first full-time Executive Director, Gerald L. Hughes, Jr., was hired. In 2003, the Foundation's second and third initiatives, the GED Promotion Project and the Workforce Training Program, took flight.

The Foundation continues to progress. Since 2002, the Foundation has awarded 107 Last Dollar Scholarships, funds given to Patrick County High School seniors to assure that qualified students are not denied access to higher education because of cost. The percentage of students receiving the award has risen from 8.7 percent in 2002 to 20.8 percent last year.

The GED Promotion Project has received more than \$187,000 from the Foundation. Thanks to the Project, Patrick County is now ranked second among 45 rural Virginia counties in the number of GEDs awarded per 1,000 residents. When the Foundation began, Patrick County was ranked 43rd. This year, the Foundation plans to launch new work force training programs and significantly increase efforts to recruit even more adults into the County's GED program. ■

Spring VEDP/Ally Meeting Scheduled

Economic developers—it's that time again! Mark your calendars for the spring VEDP/Ally Meeting. This season's gathering will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, June 1 at the Joan Massey Conference Center at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens in Richmond. Keep your eye out for more details.

The mission behind the meeting is to bring state, regional and local economic developers together for an update on the Commonwealth's business recruitment and international trade efforts.

To view presentations from the Nov. 17, 2005, VEDP/Ally Meeting, visit the "Economic Development Resources" section of VEDP's Ally Information Exchange at www.VirginiaAllies.org. ■

CQ HOT DEALS

(Hot Deals continued)

Orange County Wins 200 New Jobs

Diversified
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES
Raising expectations. Getting results.

Diversified Information Technologies, a business process management firm specializing in document/data capture and conversion, plans to invest \$10.16 million to open a customer support facility in Orange County. The project, providing business process solutions and records management services to financial institutions, healthcare providers and other public and private entities, will create 200 new jobs. ■

Chesapeake to Gain 250 New Jobs

American Funds Service Company, one of The Capital Group companies that manages investments of individuals and large institutions through mutual funds, separately managed accounts and pooled investment funds, will invest \$13.7 million to open a customer service center in Chesapeake. The new facility will employ 250 associates. The Capital Group operates two additional Hampton Roads facilities.

The Capital Group, headquartered in Los Angeles, manages, distributes and supports mutual funds, investment funds and other investment products for millions of individuals, and manages assets for corporations, governments, retirement plans and nonprofit organizations around the world. ■