



News Release

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City joins forces on multimodal industrial park

The City of Danville on Thursday joined three other municipalities and a development company in signing a letter of intent to form a regional authority that will develop a multimodal industrial park in Hurt.

Over the next six months, bylaws and ordinances will be developed to formally create the new authority, which will be known as the Staunton River Regional Industrial Facility Authority. The authority will oversee the development of the Southern Virginia Multimodal Park.

Danville Mayor John Gilstrap said City Council is pleased to be part of this regional effort.

“Even though the City is the most geographically distant partner from the authority’s site, the Council understands the importance of regionalism and strongly believes that development of the site and its multimodal infrastructure will both directly and indirectly be an asset to Danville and its businesses,” Gilstrap said. “Through our involvement with the County in the existing Danville-Pittsylvania County Regional Industrial Facility Authority, we know firsthand that the best way of moving the region forward is by uniting and working together on key projects of importance.”

Gilstrap was joined by representatives from Pittsylvania County, the Town of Hurt, the Town of Altavista and Southern Virginia Multimodal Park LLC at a document signing ceremony held at the Willows of Runk and Pratt in Hurt. The document not only brings together the five parties and their collective resources, but also links two of the new state’s economic development program GoVirginia regions while recognizing the importance of the industrial park to the U.S. 29 corridor.

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The Southern Virginia Multimodal Park (SVMP) is the newest of the Samet Corp's endorsed industrial parks. The park is served by industrial capacity water and sewer, and it is being studied and promoted for an intermodal facility due to the park's direct rail and highway access.

Robert W. "Bob" Warren, Chairman of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors, shared his optimism for initiating the creation of the Authority. "Creating a partnership amongst our neighbors to market and develop the regionally important SVMP in Hurt has been long overdue," Warren said. "This partnership and resulting Authority will assist our region, and especially the Town of Hurt, in continuing to move past our recent losses and better position us for future gains."

Town of Hurt Mayor Gary Poindexter was appreciative of the regional partnership and viewed the letter of intent as a symbol of the larger region taking a different approach to economic development.

"For some time now, and especially during the past year, we have had to ask ourselves who we should really be competing with — each other regionally, or the rest of the globe," Poindexter said. "This document is a milestone because it is the first step beyond the conversational in putting together a consortium of people who recognize the SVMP's potential to play a key role in transforming our region's socioeconomic landscape, and who are solidly committed to doing their part in making that happen. When we upshift to thinking on a regional scale, we begin operating on a higher plane where something that's good for one of us is ultimately good for all of us."

Mike Mattox, Town of Altavista mayor, agreed, saying, "Altavista is pleased to be a partner in the development of the Staunton River RIFA. Regionalism is the key in ensuring sustainable futures for our communities. The Southern Virginia intermodal facility will be the standard for regional cooperation in the Commonwealth and demonstrates that economic development can succeed in a partnership. Altavista and Hurt have always shared a regional vision and kinship, and now working with Pittsylvania County and the City of Danville strengthens the efforts to revitalize the site and provide new investment and jobs for Southern Virginia. I am honored to stand with the officials from the region and create a new legacy for our region of Southern Virginia."

Jess Washburn, managing partner of SVMP LLC, stated, "SVMP LLC is pleased to join forces with our local municipal partners. Redevelopment of this critical employment and

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industrial center requires a public-private partnership, to drive success. Our plan is to leverage the vast industrial infrastructure and resources on the site including water, sewer and rail to attract investment, economic development and job growth. This new Authority will make possible the success of the Southern Virginia Multimodal Park. We are thankful for the opportunity to participate in this important partnership and we are excited about the future of SVMP."

The Samet Corp. of Greensboro, N.C., purchased the property that formerly housed the Klopman Mills plant about a year ago. At its peak, Klopman Mills employed about 1,300 people at the plant before closing it in 2007. The company opened in the 1940s as a small manufacturer, but was sold in the 1950s to Burlington Industries. The plant — located at 797 Main St. in Hurt — dyed and sold cloth.

A study to determine whether the site was feasible for Virginia's second inland port began Feb. 15.

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