



News Release

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Officials break ground on graded site at Berry Hill Industrial Park

More than eight years of work by local leaders from Danville, Pittsylvania County and the City of Eden, N.C., culminated Thursday in a groundbreaking ceremony for the phase one development at Berry Hill Industrial Park.

The 3,500-acre park is located along Berry Hill Road in Pittsylvania County, a few miles west of the Danville city limits, and it is owned jointly by the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County through the Danville-Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority (RIFA).

“This industrial park is an essential building block in the future of southern Virginia and northern North Carolina,” RIFA board chairman Sherman Saunders said Thursday. “Today, we are here to celebrate a milestone in its development. The journey to this point has had many twists and turns, but our resolve never wavered. Let us celebrate that here today.”

Saunders also stressed that partnerships among local, regional and state offices and agencies are imperative for projects of this magnitude.

“The partnerships formed in the beginning for this park remain in place today,” Saunders said. “We say ‘thank you’ to the state of North Carolina, the Golden Leaf Foundation and the City of Eden for dedicating significant funding toward water and sewer infrastructure that will serve this park. We also say ‘thank you’ to the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission for providing significant funding for site development and infrastructure improvements.”

Saunders and other RIFA leaders were joined at Thursday’s ceremony by Virginia

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Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore and representatives from federal and state offices in Virginia and North Carolina, as well as representatives of two state tobacco commissions and local officials from Danville, Pittsylvania County, Eden and Rockingham County, N.C.

Haymore called the park a testament to what years of hard work and determination can provide. “As the largest industrial park in the Commonwealth and the fifth largest on the East Coast, this site will be an incredible asset for the Danville-Pittsylvania County region and the new Virginia economy as we market the region to companies looking to relocate or expand.”

Del. Danny Marshall, R-VA., added, “It is all about jobs. The vision and long-term planning for Berry Hill are coming together to create major moves in economic development for our region. I chair the Special Projects Committee of the Virginia Tobacco Commission that has helped to provide more than \$29.8 million for the project. This effort is totally focused on bringing good jobs to our area.”

Danville Mayor John Gilstrap pointed out that a graded site would boost marketing efforts for the park. “We believe a graded site will be a game-changer,” Gilstrap said. “When complete, we will be able to show industrial prospects a site that is construction ready.”

Gilstrap continued, saying, “Danville and this region have seen significant change over the years. Textiles and tobacco no longer dominate the economy. However, we have endeavored to adapt – to reimagine success. We are making the transition to an economy with a diversified, forward-looking mix of businesses. Today’s groundbreaking is one more step in our efforts.”

Bob Warren, chairman of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors, said the county is “both honored and humbled” to host the location of industrial park.

“Pittsylvania County’s vision and goal for Berry Hill Industrial Park has always been to collaboratively work together with our neighbors to create an employment and investment center that greatly assists the region in providing revenues needed for resident services while also creating jobs for our current and future workforce,” Warren said. “Pittsylvania County is both honored and humbled to have been entrusted by our regional and State partners to host the location of this site, and values its relationship with the many stakeholders and individuals that have been involved in getting us to this momentous occasion.”

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Danville and Pittsylvania County have been working to develop this park since 2008. Until last year, efforts to secure a permit to grade the first pad were unsuccessful due to federal restrictions on speculative development. Due to those restrictions, RIFA reduced the size and impact of development plans in order to secure a state permit for a graded site.

Last month, RIFA's board of directors awarded the contract for grading a 133-acre site at the park to Haymes Brothers Inc. of Chatham. The site will have four pads, the largest of which is 109 acres. RIFA will pay the \$3.77 million cost for grading with money from the Virginia Tobacco Commission. The contractor will have 360 days to complete the project that will make a level, buildable site for development.

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