

# Governor Northam Announces \$1 Million Investment in Pittsylvania County

Eastern Panel Manufacturing to expand manufacturing operation creating 15 new jobs

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**RICHMOND** – Governor Ralph Northam today announced that Eastern Panel Manufacturing, Inc. (EPM), a custom plywood manufacturer, will invest \$1 million to expand its manufacturing operation in Pittsylvania County. EPM will move to a 55,000-square-foot facility in the Chatham Industrial Park to accommodate future growth. This project will create 15 new jobs.

“The manufacturing industry is booming across the Commonwealth and in Southern Virginia, and it is exciting to see this growth positively impacting businesses of all sizes,” **said Governor Northam**. “Manufacturers like Eastern Panel that continue to invest in Virginia demonstrate the advantages of our favorable operating costs, strategic location, a superior transportation network, and strong talent pool. We congratulate EPM on its success in Pittsylvania County and are proud to have the company on the Commonwealth’s corporate roster as we continue to diversify Virginia’s economy.”

Eastern Panel Manufacturing, Inc. is a custom plywood manufacturer with more than 100 years of experience. The company laminates and machines decorative wood veneers and high-pressure laminates to a wide variety of core materials. EPM specializes in supplying office, residential, and contract furniture manufacturers with quality cut-to-size or sheet stock plywood to clients’ specifications. The company also services the architectural millwork industry, along with many cabinetmaking clients.

“Eastern Panel is an important employer and corporate partner in Pittsylvania County, and this new investment and expansion are testaments to the company’s commitment to the region and the Commonwealth,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Esther Lee**. “Virginia’s skilled manufacturing workforce has grown to nearly a quarter of a million employees, and this quality talent ensures that advanced manufacturing companies continue to thrive and contribute to the growth of this important sector.”

“Eastern Panel Manufacturing Inc. has enjoyed the advantage of operating in Chatham for well over 20 years,” **said Keith Van Asch, President, Eastern Panel Manufacturing**. “During those years, Chatham has proven to be an excellent place to conduct business and offers us all the support we need to operate efficiently. The combination of our experienced

local workforce, along with being centrally located to our customer base and vendors, produce a natural fit to remain in Pittsylvania County. As our company's offerings continue to transform and broaden, the acquisition of this facility provides us with greater flexibility to expand on future opportunities."

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership worked with Pittsylvania County to secure the project for Virginia. The Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission approved \$30,000 in Tobacco Region Opportunity Funds. Eastern Panel Manufacturing will be eligible to receive Sales and Use Tax exemptions on manufacturing equipment, and funding and services to support the company's employee training activities will also be provided through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program.

"Pittsylvania County has been very fortunate to have Eastern Panel Manufacturing as an integral member of our thriving business community, and we are so pleased that they have chosen to expand their operations here," **said Robert "Bob" Warren III, Chairman, Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors.** "We are thankful for their continued commitment to the county and to the economic growth of our region, and we are proud to have them in our growing business family. The Board offers our warm congratulations to Eastern Panel on the acquisition of their new building in the Chatham Industrial Park, and we wish them great success as they move into this new and exciting phase of the company's future. We very much look forward to continuing our partnership with them as they grow and prosper here in Pittsylvania County."

"It's indeed a pleasure at any time to hear of increased economic opportunity here in our small community," **said Roy P. Byrd, Mayor, Town of Chatham.** "More jobs and private investment are always welcome, especially when associated with one of our existing businesses expanding into a vacant facility in our industrial park. We have many folks in our area who have the skillsets that match the workforce needs of Eastern Panel Manufacturing. On behalf of the Town Council, I thank both Eastern Panel Manufacturing for believing in our community, the County Board of Supervisors, and their economic development staff for facilitating this exciting expansion that will directly benefit the Town of Chatham and its residents and businesses."

"It is great to see a successful business expanding and adding jobs in our region," **said Tobacco Commission member, Senator Bill Stanley.** "Companies like Eastern Panel show that our manufacturing workforce is second to none, and I am pleased that the Tobacco Commission chose to support this project."

"It is great news to learn of another expansion by one of our existing businesses that will stay here in Southside," **said Delegate Les Adams.** "I happily offer Keith and his team congratulations on their success and growth."

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