



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Bob McDonnell

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**Governor McDonnell Announces Agriculture and
Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Fund
Planning Grant Recipients**

*~ \$60,500 Awarded to Three Projects Covering Seven Localities
Developing Plans on Agritourism, a Virginia Wine Heritage Center, and
Local Food Systems ~*

Grant Funds Remain Available, Applications Accepted on a Rolling Basis through June 2014

RICHMOND - Governor Bob McDonnell announced today the recipients of the initial round of fiscal year 2014 planning grants from the planning grants program of the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID). The AFID planning grants program was developed to encourage local governments and regional organizations to think strategically about how they can better support and integrate agriculture and forestry-based industries into their community's overall economic development efforts.

"At the state level, we've had great success incorporating the Commonwealth's two largest industries, agriculture and forestry, and their \$70 billion overall impact on our economy into our economic development agenda," said Governor McDonnell. "Creating a program that incentivizes communities to plan for how they can best grow and support these industries in their

business community is a natural continuation of a strategy that is proven to benefit Virginians and create jobs.”

The communities and regions receiving AFID planning grants will match each dollar awarded with a dollar of local funds, including certain types of allowed in-kind contributions. The program also requires the active participation of a board, committee or working group representing the relevant agriculture and forestry interests in the locality.

“Applicants were given flexibility to pursue the type of project that made the most sense for their region or locality, whether it was taking advantage of an existing asset, as Roanoke County is doing with their study of Virginia Tech’s Catawba Sustainability Center or exploring the creation of a new asset, as Albemarle County is doing with their Virginia Wine Heritage Center Study,” said Todd Haymore, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry. “By actively involving the agriculture and forestry community into the planning process we are helping communities grow a long standing component of their economic infrastructure while providing new opportunities to our farm and timber producers.”

The AFID planning grants program guidelines were first announced by Governor McDonnell on November 27, 2012. Fiscal year 2013 awards were announced May 8, 2013 and awarded \$249,000 to eleven projects covering thirty-one localities. With this announcement, the AFID planning grants program has committed \$309,500 to fourteen projects covering thirty-eight localities. Applicants demonstrating a clear need, a solution to be undertaken, and strong support from local government and the agriculture and forestry community received the highest marks during the review process. For the remainder of fiscal year 2014, requests from the AFID planning grants fund, which has \$189,500 in uncommitted funds, will be accepted, reviewed, and awarded on a rolling basis until the fund is exhausted.

Details on the grant awards are below. Localities interested in applying may visit <http://vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/planning.shtml> for more information.

According to a 2013 economic impact study by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, agriculture and forestry are two of Virginia's largest industries, with a combined economic impact of \$70 billion annually. Agriculture generates more than \$52 billion per annum, while forestry induces over \$17 billion. The industries also provide more than 400,000 jobs in the Commonwealth.

Governor's Agricultural and Forestry Industries' Fiscal Year 2014 Planning Grant Recipients and Projects

Project Title: Feasibility Study to Establish Virginia Wine Heritage Center in Albemarle County

Applicant: Albemarle County

Award: \$20,000

Summary: Albemarle County is partnering with the Charlottesville/Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau, Thomas Jefferson Foundation/Monticello, and Piedmont Virginia Community

College, to bring in an expert consultant to examine the feasibility of establishing a Virginia Wine Heritage Center in Albemarle County. The study will look at critical partnerships, facility attributes and location, funding needs, and the appropriate business model.

Project Title: Building Agricultural and Forestry-based Businesses in The Foothills

Applicant: Rappahannock-Rapidan Region-Planning District (RRPDC); includes Culpeper, Orange, Madison, Fauquier, and Rappahannock counties

Award: \$33,000

Summary: The project is an effort to increase support and preservation of the region's agricultural and forestry based industries by implementing specific strategies designed to raise awareness of these industries, increase the purchases of regional ag and forestry products, and sustain the future of agriculture and forestry in region. Deliverables include a regional agro-artisan trail, directory, brand, annual conference, marketing effort, and completion of regional green infrastructure maps and data with agricultural soils and water quality.

Project Title: Linking the Virginia Tech Catawba Sustainability Center to the Local Food System

Applicant: Roanoke County

Award: \$7,500

Summary: The Virginia Tech Catawba Sustainability Center is a 377 acre historic dairy farm located in Roanoke County that was donated by the former Catawba Sanitarium to Virginia Tech. In recent years, Roanoke County has helped fund the activities of the center and searched for ways to help the center contribute to region's economy. Roanoke County and staff at the Sustainability Center, will work with Virginia Tech's Office of Economic Development to explore strategies to increase the connectivity of the Catawba Sustainability Center to the regional food system.

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