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EDA Partners with Shenandoah University And the NSVRC to Issue “Regional Jobs Assessment Report : 2012”

May 4, 2012, Front Royal, Virginia: The Front Royal-Warren County Economic Development Authority (EDA) announced today the finalization and issuance of the “Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Jobs Assessment Report 2012.” The report cites workforce and jobs data for each of the five counties that make up the Northern Shenandoah Valley region: Warren, Shenandoah, Page, Frederick and Clarke.

The purpose of the report is to better understand the workforce, employment and jobs availability at a regional level. “Over the past year or so, the EDA has worked

on researching state and federal grants opportunities,” said Jennifer McDonald, Executive Director of the EDA. “In that process, we learned that both the state and federal government incentives and resources are focused on regional jobs innovation, with the operative word being ‘regional.’ In addition, with our work on ‘Entrepreneurial Community’ initiatives, we have explored creating a small business incubator in Warren County, but were not able to generate substantial interest from the local community.

“To better understand community jobs needs, growth and declining occupational sets, we decided to conduct a study. We partnered with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC) and Shenandoah University (SU) to create report criteria and to recruit research assistance.

“We enlisted the support of Martha Shickle, Executive Director of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and Miles Davis, Director of the Institute for Entrepreneurism at Shenandoah University. We interviewed student interns from SU and selected Robert Annan to conduct the research and collect the data.

“We funded the research position through the Virginia Innovation Grant awarded to the EDA in March 2011. Data was collected, the report went through several draft iterations, the Review Committee assessed and made recommendations, and the final report is now available to all regional leadership.”

“We are very happy to have participated with the EDA in this project,” said Dr. Miles Davis of Shenandoah University. “This is precisely the kind of regional, community partnership we enjoy. It provided a scholastic project for one of our students and it provided valuable data gathering resources for a regional endeavor.”

The EDA and NSVRC hope to utilize the report in a number of ways: first to determine the viability of establishing a community or regional small business development incubator, or of establishing smaller “satellite” incubators throughout the region; and, second to understand emerging markets and how supportive entrepreneurship might evolve. It is also hoped that this report will bring the regional leadership together in dialogue on ways to initiate jobs innovation in a shared setting.

“The Commission will introduce the report at the upcoming Spring Dinner on May 17, 2012, where workforce will be the focus of presentation and discussion,” said Martha Shickle, Executive Director of the NSVRC.

“This is a very relevant report, with a lot of important data for each of our communities as well as comparatives on unemployment rates, largest employers, growth occupations and wage and salary figures. We are pleased to have partnered on this project.”

“The EDA continues to work on defining and creating an ‘Entrepreneurial Community,’ said McDonald. “This report gives us an important starting point of understanding for entrepreneurial development and jobs innovation. We are also working on assisting the public school system in its development of entrepreneurial studies at the high school level.

“These are important initiatives that we hope will provide valuable information for existing and emerging entrepreneurs.”

For more information on the “Regional Jobs Assessment Report” and on “Entrepreneurial Community,” projects, contact Marla Jones at EDA, 540.635.2182 or

jones@wceda.com. The "Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Jobs Assessment Report : 2012," can be found on EDA's web site: www.wceda.com.

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