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VIRGINIA TOBACCO COMMISSION PROVIDES EMPORIA GRANT TO ASSIST GEORGIA-PACIFIC'S INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE

The City of Emporia announced today that it was successful in obtaining a grant in the amount of \$125,000 from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission to be used for improving Georgia-Pacific's Emporia, Va., plywood mill and training for its workforce. In addition to the grant, Georgia-Pacific plans to make a large investment in its Emporia operation of \$2.75 million over the next three years for new equipment, technology and upgrades to existing equipment. About 400 people are employed at Emporia and more than 700 are employed by Georgia-Pacific in operations at Big Island, Brookneal, Jarratt, Martinsville, Milford and Skippers.

"Georgia-Pacific is a major employer and valued corporate citizen in Emporia and the Commonwealth of Virginia," said Emporia Mayor Sam Adams. "In a competitive business environment, it is crucial to retain our valued employers. We congratulate the company on directing resources toward capital improvements to the Emporia mill and employee training," Mayor Adams added.

Georgia-Pacific has a history of reinvesting up to 90 percent of its earnings in order to compete in the industry long term and add value for its employees, the communities in which they exist and its shareholders. "We appreciate the efforts of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Virginia Tobacco Commission, the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, and City of Emporia on our behalf, and look forward to making our mill an even greater asset for Georgia-Pacific," said Joey Pate, mill manager. The Emporia-Greenville Industrial Development Corporation and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership worked with the City of Emporia to secure the project.

"I am tremendously excited about Georgia-Pacific's commitment to its business and this community," said Emporia City Manager Brian Thrower. "Georgia-Pacific has long been a good neighbor and we are pleased to be able to support them as they continue to support our community," added Thrower.

Tobacco Commissioner Senator Frank Ruff said, "Georgia-Pacific is a very good corporate citizen for the Emporia-Greenville economy, and is a key part of our mission to assist existing industries to bring new technologies and expand the skills of our work force in the tobacco region of Virginia. The Commission is pleased to assist the City of Emporia with this enterprise and we look forward to a continued success of Georgia-Pacific."

Tobacco Commissioner Jack Hite added, "The City of Emporia and Georgia-Pacific are long time partners in improving the economic well being of its workforce. These Tobacco Commission funds will help provide positive economic returns on this important area of our state. Working together we can maintain a viable economic base for our future."

The Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission is a 31-member body created by the 1999 General Assembly to promote economic growth and development in tobacco-dependent communities, using proceeds of the national tobacco settlement. To date, the Commission has awarded 1,125 grants totaling more than \$561 million across the tobacco region of the Commonwealth and has made available nearly \$268 million in indemnification payments to tobacco growers and quota holders. For information on the Commission's history, mission, funding programs and recent grant awards, visit the Tobacco Commission's website at www.tic.virginia.gov or call toll free 877-807-1086.

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