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Contact:

Rod Davis

Opportunity Inc.

(757) 314-2370 rdavis@oihr.org

Shawn Avery

Peninsula Council for Workforce Development

(757) 826-3327 savery@pcfwd.org

Levin Sullivan

Crater Regional Workforce Investment Group

(804) 723-7053 lc@learntoearn.org

**\$5 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT FOR WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA**

~ Grant to create pipeline of workers for high-growth, high-wage jobs ~

NORFOLK, VA (June 22, 2007) Governor Timothy M. Kaine announced yesterday, that Virginia has been awarded a three-year, \$5 million grant by the U.S. Department of Labor to help reposition the economy of southeastern Virginia by preparing workers for new, high-wage jobs in the port, transportation, and modeling and simulation industries.

The Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant will help fund the Southeastern Virginia Partnership for Regional Transformation (SEVA-PORT), comprised of 24 cities and counties extending from Hampton Roads to the Petersburg area. SEVA-PORT works to develop worker training opportunities for those people impacted by recent military realignments, as well as job cuts in the automotive industry.

“This WIRED grant demonstrates once again that regional collaboration works,” Governor Kaine said. “The partnership will build on southeastern Virginia’s existing transportation, warehousing, and distribution assets, and add to the growing modeling and simulation sector, in an effort to create a pipeline of skilled workers to fill jobs.”

The partnership, led by Opportunity Inc., the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development, and the Crater Regional Workforce Investment Board, will link public schools, two- and four-year colleges and universities, existing businesses, and the economic development community to prepare BRAC-affected and displaced Ford workers for jobs in ports, transportation, distribution, warehousing, and modeling and simulation.

Participating localities include Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, York, Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Prince George, Surry, and Sussex.

“The WIRED program recognizes that local economies often transcend geographical boundaries," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao. “These grants are catalysts to mobilizing the diverse array of stakeholders in a community to focus on developing the human talent that will be key to any successful regional economic plan.”

Governor Kaine submitted the WIRED grant proposal after convening a meeting of regional leaders from Virginia Beach to Petersburg in December 2006, to encourage collaboration on regional projects.

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