

2008 was a good year for Farmville Economic Development

2008 turned out to be a pretty good year for economic development activities in the Town of Farmville. In spite of a lagging national economy, interest in the community has remained strong and specific efforts have been undertaken to bring in grant money, assistance for existing building and expansion, new business recruitment and general marketing of sites and buildings.

The move of the Farmville Economic Development Council administratively to the Town led to a specific focus on economic development activities integrated with knowledge of planning and utilities in order to promote the community and attract desired businesses. This list is not exhaustive but rather an overview of activities. More will certainly occur during 2009 as projects are in the pipeline and many are close to fruition.

Farmville is a good place for business and industry and there is opportunity. A focused, targeted marketing of the Town has attracted and will continue to attract interest.

During 2008, the following activities and results have been achieved:

--Continued communications with more than 150 large national distribution and supply firms continued after a 2007 brochure was sent to a target group of more than 1500. Information is provided on DVDs existing buildings and land in our community. An additional set of information has been provided to more than 200 companies with information on our commercial park, future industrial park, and corporate park as well as individual sites in Farmville, and to 54 existing businesses and industries in surrounding counties about retention and expansions.

--A statewide marketing and advertising effort to promote the available space in the Small Business Incubator through universities, community colleges, incubator associations, small business and entrepreneur groups, MBA and engineering programs resulted in numerous proposals and the result is a business incubator that is nearly at capacity.

--Meetings, tours and contact with 84 retailers for opportunities in Farmville; continued, focused follow-up with fifteen retailers to provide data, follow-up, extended invitations to visit. To date, 11 have visited Farmville in person.

--The Town secured the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) extension for Farmville through Pitt County Planning Board, Pitt County Commissioners for the Industrial Park.

--The Town secured the former American Elements tax-free from Pitt County Commissioners for economic development, and there are on-going conversations with investors group with ideas for site.

- A new commercial/industrial business, Better Built Cabinets, relocated to Farmville.
- Multiple meetings with an investor who has purchased the Cottontops Bldg and plans a renovation of the building.
- Multiple meetings with shopping center brokers and redevelopers.
- Meetings with 14 potential downtown businesses and nine building owners in downtown.
- Meeting with site reps re C&A building and work on packages to attract a new industry to the building and sale of the building as well as the shell building at the Corporate Park.
- Cooperative advertising ad for Farmville Businesses in 8-page spread for Impressions Magazine, ½ page print advertisement for Business NC for February 2009 editorial feature, and Global Expansion Magazine print and on-line advertisements.
- Three new food establishments opened – Bojangles, Subway, La Flama
- A new store will be opening downtown in the Spring.
- A Fall 2008 Economic Development Annual Meeting event with 65 attendees representing state, local and regional ed organizations, elected officials, businesses (new, existing and potential).
- Regular meetings and communication with six commercial brokers to provide building and land information for additional marketing.
- A successful \$125,000 Community Development Block Grant for Duck Rabbit Craft Brewery.
- Submission of multiple grant fund applications for the town and meetings with venture funds/investors for assistances for businesses.