

CBI NEWS



AFG Glass Opens State-of-the-Art Coating Plant in Washington County

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Late 2003, AFG Glass began construction of its third state-of-the-art coating manufacturing facility. A strong workforce and cost-effective services led the site selection to Abingdon and Washington County, Virginia.

AFG went to work early to develop a recruiting program to support its goal of an employee-empowered, team-based work environment. The ability to partner with Virginia Highlands Community College and the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center to accomplish interviewing, assessments and training goals has prepared AFG and its employees for manufacturing operations that began mid May.

AFG corporate headquarters is located in Kingsport, Tennessee along with a pattern glass facility and a large float glass facility near by in Hawkins County. When combined with multiple float, pattern, coating and commercial fabrication plants throughout the United States and Mexico, there are more than 7,000 AFG employees in North America, including about 2,000 in this region. AFG is the second largest glass maker in North America, which is part of Asahi Glass, the largest glass manufacturer in the world.

Low-E coated glass is the fastest growing part of the AFG business because of its energy efficient properties. In fact, many states are enacting legislation that requires all new commercial and residential construction use Low-E products. The glass produced here in Abingdon will support primarily the residential market.



"We are very excited about our new home," said Theresa Carter, Human Resources Manager for AFG. "Our location in the Oak Park Industrial Center off I-81 exit 13 is ideal for attracting employees from both Bristol City, Washington County, Virginia and even Smyth County, Virginia. We're looking forward to a long and lasting relationship with this area."



200 New Jobs for Saltville

Things to Ponder

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Would you hire these folks to work for you?

Looks can be deceiving. Back in 1978 these folks couldn't find jobs so they created their own jobs at a little company called Microsoft.

Santa Clause is coming to town a few weeks early for the Town of Saltville, and he is bringing 200 new jobs with him. The first new business to move to town in six years will begin operations in early 2005.

Global Contact Services, a telemarketing company based in Salisbury, N.C., plans to invest \$1 million to open a call center in the building formerly owned by Piggly Wiggly. Global Contact Services, established in 2000, provides telemarketing for Fortune 100 companies. It has three other centers – two in West Virginia and one in Pulaski. The company joins nearly a dozen other firms that have opened telemarketing centers in the region in the past few years. The centers provide jobs to about 2,000 people.

Global ultimately choose Saltville because of its work force, said Bob Lynch, the company's expansion manager. "The area looked like the quality of labor was outstanding," he said. "We interviewed 40 prospective employees and were impressed with what we saw." Global plans to begin its hiring process as soon as early February. The company wants workers with strong communication skills. Computer skills are not mandatory but helpful. Global will pay a starting wage of \$8 an hour, and the company has a benefits package. Some management positions will be available as well.

CBI Receives Grant Designed to Improve Employee Soft Skills

In August Virginia Highland Community College and Wytheville Community College applied for a grant from the Virginia Community College System to institute a workforce development program to address the needs of the Smyth County Workforce Demand Profile. Both schools, who share the Smyth County service area decided to collaborate on the grant proposal. The report stated that 380 jobs existed in Smyth County but the workforce did not possess the skills to fill them. The lack of a strong work ethic was a particular concern to the employer.

Starting in January 2005, the grant will allow the two colleges to conduct NO COST training courses at the WCC-operated Smyth County Education Center in Atkins. The classes will address improving worker's "soft skills." Soft skills are the "skills that allow an employee to be a better employee." These include communication, locating information, computer basics and business math. The program will also provide the opportunity for attendees to test for the new Virginia Career Readiness Certificate.

The development program will offer the employed, underemployed and the unemployed an opportunity to improve their chances of gaining better employment, and give employers a better pool of applicants from which to choose. An emphasis will be placed on the manufacturing sector as a high-demand occupation, particularly in Smyth County.

While the program will be held and focused on the needs of Smyth County, folks in Wythe and Washington Counties and the City of Bristol, Virginia will also have the opportunity to take advantage of this no cost training when openings occur.

Watch your mail box for more information on how your organization can benefit from these training opportunities. Or, contact Melinda Leland at (276) 739-2548.

Small Business Incubator Ready for Tenants

The Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator, located in the 70-acre Stonemill Business Technology Park, will be ready for its first tenants by year end. Officials hope to attract and help fledgling businesses that could someday expand into high-tech, and high-paying, local companies.

“Our goal here is to be a factory and our product is small business,” said Jim Doss, the incubator’s new executive director. Doss left a 34-year career in chemical and electrical engineering to head up the incubator. Among his duties: fill the 33 office spaces, four office spaces, four office suites and three manufacturing centers in the building. After that he must ensure that each of those businesses get the direction and help needed to become successful.

Doss knows that once Abingdon joins the approximately 550 business incubators operating nationwide the real work begins. He hopes to attract entrepreneurs with ideas for medical devices, precision machines, pharmaceuticals and companies involved in clinical service trials.

The incubator will rent office space for \$1 to \$10 per square foot. But it’s more than cheap office space. The incubator will offer onsite clerical and technical support, professional advice, a shared communications center and other services.

Statistics show that more than 80 percent of businesses that start with incubator support succeed beyond their third year. For those that start without the support, the statistics are reversed.

The Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator will be the 27th in Virginia. It has been funded by the Town of Abingdon, Washington County and Bristol, Virginia, and assortment of federal and state grants totaling \$3.9 million.



Artist's rendering of completed park.



Artist's rendering of Small Business Incubator.



Incubator under construction this summer.

New Virginia Career Readiness Certificate Now Available at VHCC

On October 19 Governor, Mark Warner recognized the first round of recipients of the new Virginia Career Readiness Certificate, acknowledging businesses that have worked to certify their employees, and more than 5,200 recipients of the certificate. Five applicants from Scholle Corporation in Chilhowie, Virginia were among the first 5,200 to receive this recognition.

The Career Readiness Certificate was created to assist employers by certifying that a recipient possesses competency skills in Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information that are required by more than 85% of all jobs in the nation.

Your employees can now earn a Career Readiness Certificate through Virginia Highlands Community College. CBI will offer four sections of a one credit testing review course and the CRC test beginning in January 2005. See our website for more details.

New Classes Announced for Spring Semester 2005

The Productive Manager Class Series

The Productive Manager is designed to give new or up-and-coming managers the edge they need to be a successful frontline manager. This class series combines personal development topics such as identifying and understanding personality types and adult learning styles, goal setting, praising and reprimanding, with fundamental business concepts, industrial safety, CPR certification, problem solving skills and train-the trainer. Classes begin February 1, 2005 and continue through May 2, 2005. Classes are held in the evening. Cost for each individual class will vary depending on the length of the class. Cost for the entire 10 class series is \$680.

SIGN YOUR SUPERVISORS AND TEAM LEADERS UP TODAY

Certified Mechanical Engineer Exam Preparation

This course is intended as a review for those individuals planning to take the ASQ Certified Mechanical Inspector Exam. This course is based on materials from the Quality Council in Indiana. The course will review the CQE Body of

Knowledge which includes:

- 1) Technical Mathematics
- 2) Metrology
- 3) Inspections and Test
- 4) Quality and Assurance

Please Note: Participation in this review course does not guarantee a passing score on the examination. Cost for taking the exam is not included in the review course price.

Cost: \$525 + cost
of book
Class Meets Every
Wednesday
12/15—2/23
6:00—9:00 p.m.
Meets in LRC 728

Certified Quality Engineer Exam Preparation

This course is intended as a review course for those individuals planning to take the ASQ Certified Quality Engineer Exam. This course is based on materials from the Quality Council in Indiana. The course will review the CMI Body of Knowledge which includes:

1. Management and Leadership in Quality Engineering
2. Quality Systems Development, Implementation and Verification
3. Planning, Controlling, and Assuring Product and Process Quality
4. Reliability and Risk Management
5. Problem Solving and Quality Improvement
6. Quantitative Methodology

Please Note: Participation in this review course does not guarantee a passing score on the examination. Cost for taking the exam is not included in the review course price.

Cost: \$525 + cost
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Class Meets
Every Wednesday
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6:00—9:00 p.m.

OSHA
Certification
Courses will be
offered Spring
Semester 2004.

Contact CBI at
VHCC for more
information or to
register
today.

276-739-2430

Parting Thoughts . . .

Business is not just doing deals; business is having great products, doing great engineering, and providing tremendous service to customers. Finally, business is a cobweb of human relationships. — H. Ross Perot