

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Teresa Hamilton Hall  
Corporate Communications  
(540) 985-2497  
[tahall@aep.com](mailto:tahall@aep.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**APPALACHIAN POWER AWARDS \$155,000 TO FUND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

ROANOKE, Va., November 23, 2016 – Projects in several Virginia and West Virginia counties and cities have been selected to share \$155,000 in economic development grants from Appalachian Power. The awards announced this week are part of Appalachian Power’s efforts to promote economic growth in the company’s service territory.

Thirteen localities and nonprofits will receive grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 through the company’s Economic Development Growth Enhancement (EDGE) program administered by John Smolak, economic and business development director. The funds will be used for site development or to support marketing and promotion, or new business development and retention.

“Appalachian Power received outstanding applications from local, regional and state organizations throughout Virginia and West Virginia,” Smolak said. “These groups work hard to promote economic growth and business retention in thoughtful and innovative ways and we want to help them succeed.”

The Mingo County Redevelopment Authority in West Virginia will receive a \$20,000 grant to support its Refresh Appalachia program that provides educational and training opportunities for the unemployed including former coal miners. Executive Director Leasha Johnson said the funds will allow her group to move forward with construction of a critical multi-purpose building for agricultural product processing at the Mingo County Wood Products Industrial Park. “This award represents an investment in our workforce development and growth of a sustainable agriculture industry in southern West Virginia,” Johnson said.

Below is a complete list of the 2016 EDGE program recipients in Virginia and West Virginia.

**Virginia**

- **\$20,000** to the Western Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority for site planning and environmental assessments on a new 130 acre industrial park in Roanoke County currently referred to as the Woodhaven site;

## **Appalachian Power**

### **Page 2 of 3**

- **\$10,000** to assist the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance with a comprehensive workforce analysis for the Lynchburg Regional MSA;
- **\$10,000** to help the Virginia aCorridor Regional Authority enhance its branding and marketing of commercial and industrial properties;
- **\$15,000** for the New River Valley Economic Development Alliance to develop a balanced marketing strategy for its 15 local partners;
- **\$10,000** to support the Roanoke County Economic Development Department's efforts to develop a virtual study and grading package for a 57 acre site located in the County's Center for Research and Technology;
- **\$5,000** to Nelson County's Economic Development Department to fund a county-wide economic development marketing plan that focuses on the Route 29 Corridor; and
- **\$5,000** to the City of Lynchburg Economic Development Department to aid in development of a pilot TechHire program that will target and develop the unemployed and underemployed for job opportunities in health care, technology and advanced manufacturing.

### **West Virginia**

- **\$20,000** to the Mason County Development Authority to redevelop its master plan for a 200 acre county-owned industrial park;
- **\$20,000** to the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority to support the Refresh Appalachia economic development initiative with construction of a new multi-purpose facility for agricultural product processing at the Mingo County Wood Products Industrial Park;
- **\$20,000** to the Wayne County Development Authority's new subsidiary, the Western Gate Land Development Corporation, for development of a master plan for a 50 acre tract near the Heartland Intermodal Gateway Facility;
- **\$10,000** to Advantage Valley, Inc. to develop a new prospect lead generation and marketing program to capitalize on social media;
- **\$5,000** to the Huntington Area Development Council to re-assess its current strategic plan for regional economic development; and
- **\$5,000** for the RED Partnership to develop a database of potential new sites for development in Marshall County.

Megan Lucas, CEO of the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, commended Appalachian Power for its history of economic development support. "Strong partnerships are critical for regional economic

## **Appalachian Power**

### **Page 3 of 3**

development to be successful and we are fortunate to have Appalachian Power as a valued partner in that effort,” Lucas said. “This grant will help our organization focus on workforce needs.”

Beth Doughty, executive director, Western Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority, applauded the company for its willingness to development partnerships on the local level. “This grant allows us to make maximum use of our resources developing much needed real estate product for economic development. The return on this investment will be immense for the Roanoke region,” Doughty said.

“The Edge Grant provided by Appalachian Power will allow our organization to place a spotlight on our economic development strategy for the Huntington, West Virginia region,” said Huntington Area Development Council President and CEO Dave Lieving. “It will help us to refine our focus and market our region to attract good jobs in the communities we serve.”

Appalachian Power has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is a unit of American Electric Power, one of the largest electric utilities in the United States, delivering electricity and custom energy solutions to nearly 5.4 million customers in 11 states. AEP owns the nation’s largest electricity transmission system, a more than 40,000-mile network that includes more 765-kilovolt extra-high voltage transmission lines than all other U.S. transmission systems combined. AEP also operates 223,000 miles of distribution lines. AEP ranks among the nation’s largest generators of electricity, owning approximately 31,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the U.S.

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