



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Employment Commission

703 East Main Street

Dolores A. Esser
Commissioner

Post Office Box 1358
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1358

For release: April 16, 2007

Contact: Joyce G. Fogg
(804) 786-7592

VIRGINIA EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION ANNOUNCES THE EXTENSION OF THE GALAX COORDINATED ECONOMIC RELIEF CENTER

~CERC will continue to provide services through June 30, 2007~

RICHMOND – The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) today announced that it will extend the life of the Coordinated Economic Relief Center (CERC) in Galax through June 30, 2007. On March 21, 2006, the Economic Crisis Strike Force was activated, and state agencies opened the CERC to assist workers affected by sudden economic dislocation in the Twin County Region.

“The partnership between our region and the Commonwealth has been a strong one, and over the past year, a large number of our residents have received necessary services in the face of plant closures and layoffs,” said C.M. Mitchell, Mayor of Galax and Chairman of the Economic Crisis Strike Force Advisory Committee. “The Governor’s Office and the agencies of the Commonwealth have worked diligently to help us reengineer the economy. We appreciate the benefits that have been extended to our region and look forward to a continuing relationship.”

Last year over 10 percent of the workforce in Galax was affected by job losses in the manufacturing, furniture and textile sectors. Since its inception, the Galax CERC has served over 8,600 customers, made over 14,600 referrals to services, and placed nearly 400 individuals in new jobs.

“The VEC is pleased to continue this partnership with the community to offer access to a wide range of assistance options in the pursuit of new skills and employment opportunities. The continuation of the CERC shows the commitment of Governor Kaine to ensure that services are available to displaced workers and their families in this region,” said Dee Esser, Commissioner of the VEC.

This is the second extension of services granted to the CERC, which was initially opened in April 2006 for one six-month period. Services available include:

- Information on employment opportunities with local companies
- Job Fairs
- Assistance from private and non-profit organizations
- Assistance from faith-based and mission-oriented organizations
- Intake for unemployment insurance claims (Virginia Employment Commission)
- Intake for job search (VEC)
- Job Search Assistance services (VEC)
- Monthly cash assistance payments (Department of Social Services)
- Child and family healthcare insurance (FAMIS, DSS)
- Assistance with emergency medical bills (DSS)
- Childcare assistance (DSS)
- Food Stamps (DSS)
- Cash payments for fuel assistance (DSS)
- Community college workforce training programs (Virginia Community College System)
- Workforce Investment Act services (federal program).

###