Southern Virginia
REGIONAL ALLIANCE

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SoVa COVID-19 Task Force Formed

DANVILLE, Va., April 6, 2020 – Local and regional economic developers have joined chambers of commerce from across the region to form the SoVa COVID-19 Task Force to monitor COVID-19 impacts and subsequent needs while collecting information and economic resources for Southern Virginia companies.

Businesses are perplexed in a world that has been traumatized by the COVID-19 pandemic. They need a source to answer their immediate critical questions: What is an essential business? How do I pursue stimulus grants and loans? How do I implement employee screening? This is the time when regional collaboration between agencies can streamline assistance and direct it where it is most needed.

On the front-line daily interfacing with federal, state, and local agencies as well as area businesses and industries facing these problems, economic developers and chambers are inundated with information and resources that need to be easily accessible to the companies they represent.

Stephen Moret, President and CEO of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership stated, "Collaborative efforts among localities in each region of Virginia will be essential to ensuring that we effectively address the challenges we face, as well as prepare for a successful economic recovery once social distancing guidance can be softened."

The task force members include economic developers and representatives from local chambers of commerce in the Southern Virginia region which includes the counties of Halifax, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania and the cities of Danville and Martinsville. As businesses and organizations have needs that surface related to COVID-19, the chambers of commerce and economic developers are aligning resources and solutions for a more effective and timely resolution.

Key actions of the task force include:
- Weekly conference calls between the region's localities to collaborate and share information
- Local interface with businesses and collaborative sharing of questions and industry solutions
- Linking industry to industry as well as industry to professional service providers for solutions
- Creation of a website page for COVID-19 resources and time sensitive social media postings
- A task force news blast to quickly disseminate the latest news and resources to the team
- A calendar that lists shared events and webinars to broaden outreach

The task force has scheduled weekly Zoom meetings to discuss collaborative efforts to address the major issues affecting businesses locally inclusive of how to identify essential businesses, available financing assistance, state-to state cross-border traffic of workers and goods and processes for employee health screenings.

A list of COVID-19 economic resources has been developed and is available at www.svra.org. This webpage allows businesses to find vital information on the status of COVID-19 regulations and support. Resources include federal and state program listings, information from professional service organizations, local assistance and webinars recordings. The list is continually updated with the latest information. Key issues are also being shared on social media platforms. In addition, the task force has compiled a one-page fact sheet with key information and resources and they have been coordinating meetings and conference calls to compare local issues and solutions.

"It is our responsibility as a business community to work collaboratively to stop the spread of COVID-19 and return Virginia to a healthier and more prosperous position." stated Barry DuVal, President and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. "Regions grow across economic boundaries and the SoVa COVID-19 Task Force will foster positive collaboration between localities and the business community to help transition from the current crisis to a brighter future. I commend the Southern Virginia Regional Alliance for its leadership to develop this task force and look forward to engaging alongside their efforts."

The task force will continue to work diligently on staying updated on changing developments at the state and federal level. The group has reached out to experts to gain advice for solve rising problems. By sharing these responses and categorizing frequently asked questions, our region can more effectively respond to business and industry needs.

Special thanks to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Virginia Economic Developers Association, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Hunton Andrews and Kurth, Virginia Small Business Development Centers and many other state and federal organizations for the support provided.

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About Southern Virginia Regional Alliance

The Southern Virginia Regional Alliance (SVRA) is a regional economic development organization whose mission is to collaborate to create a strong economy that will enhance the region's tax base and maintain a high standard of living and sustained quality of life for its citizens, while sharing this vision and opportunity with others that can contribute to these outcomes.