

PRESS RELEASE

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National Association of Counties Honors Business First Greater Richmond with 2008 Achievement Award

Richmond, Virginia — The National Association of Counties (NACo) recently acknowledged Business First Greater Richmond and its partners with a 2008 Achievement Award. This submission was recognized in the community and economic development category for its regional approach to servicing the needs of existing businesses.

Sara J. Dunnigan, Vice President of Existing Business Services of the Greater Richmond Partnership, Inc., states, “Our primary goal is to quickly connect existing businesses with the right information, resources and programs in ways that best support individual firms and also improve the business climate. This award affirms that our program is recognized as one of the best in its class.”

The Business First program was formally established in the fall of 2006 and builds on a 13-year commitment to focus on the needs of business through a proactive outreach effort. Partners include the Greater Richmond Partnership, Inc., the Greater Richmond Chamber, and the economic development professionals in Chesterfield County, Hanover County, Henrico County and the City of Richmond. It is supported by volunteers from the business community and a network of resource partners who share a commitment to business success.

Business First Greater Richmond uses face-to-face interviews with business leaders and CEO's, an innovative and award-winning approach, and smart technology to better understand and respond to issues facing business. Since the program's launch, it has touched more than 800 businesses representing more than 50,000 jobs in the community. Interviewed firms have shared plans to create more than 2400 new jobs and invest \$71 million dollars in the community.

Business First Greater Richmond has benefitted the community and companies in many ways including:

- Advocating for business on issues related to their expansion and growth
- Connecting companies to workforce training resources and future employees
- Assisting companies in identifying and selling to new customers in international markets
- Providing research, business planning and technical support
- Working with program partners to formulate strategies on how to best address regional business challenges

Chesterfield County submitted the application and received notice that Business First Greater Richmond will be honored at the annual NACo conference in Kansas City in July.

Business First Greater Richmond is a business retention and expansion program supported by the Greater Richmond Partnership, Inc. More information on the program is available at

www.businessfirstrichmond.com.

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