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## AT THE CENTER OF GROWTH FOR VIRGINIA



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## FREDERICKSBURG REGION JOINS STATE EFFORT TO CERTIFY PROPERTIES

**Regional pilot project will help give local properties and Virginia a better competitive edge in economic development.**

The Fredericksburg Regional Alliance has initiated a pilot program to demonstrate the importance of site certification in marketing properties to site consultants and buyers.

"In today's economic development environment, prospects are looking for properties that are construction ready. If a property is not at this stage, the property owner must be able to show due diligence has been completed to address shortcomings," said John Loftus, Site and Building Manager at the [Virginia](#)

"Site selection is a process of elimination. Site consultants look for 'certified sites' because it shows that an area is serious about attracting new business and also expedites the site location decision process," said FRA President Curry Roberts.



To remain competitive, successful economic development and marketing organizations maintain an inventory of "certified sites." These certifications are awarded by well-recognized engineering and consulting firms that work with both the public sector and the land owners.

Site certification is not yet prevalent in Virginia. Currently, about 12 sites statewide are certified. The Quantico Corporate Center in Stafford is certified by Dominion Power, through its Data Center Site Certification Program.

In order to close this competitive gap, VEDP is currently working on a program to evaluate some sites in Virginia. In addition, VEDP will recognize and market the sites that have been certified by other recognized organizations.

Two local firms, Bowman Consulting and Froehling and Robertson, are teaming to conduct the certification audits in the FRA pilot project. One site in each locality and one site owned by the University of Mary Washington (UMW) will be identified and audited. The Alliance will contribute up to 75 percent of the cost for the six audits.



## **ALLIANCE MAKES STRONG PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 'CARDINALS'**

"Too often, consultants' reports are accepted, then shelved to gather dust. We value the expertise of the veteran economic development professionals who have recommended specific strategies to maximize the Alliance's effectiveness," said

FRA President Curry Roberts.

His comments refer to the findings from three economic development experts who recently conducted an in-depth review of the Alliance's activities.

The Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA) offers the program to its member organizations through its Cardinal Community Assistance Program. Each of the evaluators has achieved "Cardinal" recognition through VEDA for their outstanding professional accomplishments. The three Cardinals conducting the FRA study were Robin Sullenberger, Greg Wingfield and Mark Kilduff.

Significant progress has been made in several areas.

## **Marketing**

- A "refresh" of the FRA website was completed on May 1.
- The Alliance newsletter has been reformatted to coordinate with the refreshed website.
- The Alliance now utilizes the easier-to-remember URL "[FredRegion.com](http://FredRegion.com)."
- The new "FredRegion.com" URL will be used for staff email addresses by June 1.
- A third-party outreach marketing firm has been retained to qualify and generate marketing leads with firms within the region's identified industry clusters.
- In response to the Cardinals' recommendation for the Alliance to develop an international marketing strategy, FRA has increased its marketing budget by \$30,000 for FY 2016.
- Five new private sector investors have joined the Alliance during the current fiscal year.
- International marketing initiatives will expand as funding is available.
- The Alliance has conducted a deep-dive analysis within each of its targeted cluster industries to identify sub-cluster industry companies that are not located here, but do business in the region. These prospects will be further refined and targeted for a variety of marketing approaches.
- FRA is now treating the 400+ research requests it receives annually as

prospect inquiries when appropriate.

## **Product/Product Development**

- FRA is initiating a local program to aid localities and property owners develop true "ready to go" industrial properties. The Alliance will pay 75% of the cost for six site audits. These audits are a vital part of the site certification process and the properties will become part of Virginia's growing statewide inventory of certified properties.
- The Alliance identified two firms Bowman Consulting and Froehling and Robertson, Inc. to partner in conducting the property audits.
- All site and building information on the new FRA website is now displayed consistently, using the VEDP [My Virginia Scan](#) system. This system allows all properties to be listed regardless of building size or acreage.
- The Alliance is working with the University of Mary Washington (UMW) Department of Economics to conduct an in-depth commuter study next fall to quantify the volume and skill level of the region's commuters.

## **Communications**

- FRA is increasing its performance updates to the regional boards of supervisors, city council and economic development authorities. Updates are now being made in May-June and September-October.
- The Alliance hosted "Economic Development 101," a program aimed to help local elected and department officials, economic development professionals and members of economic development authorities learn details about the ways the state, region and localities work together in economic development. Liz Povar, VEDP Vice President of Business Expansion, and Rob McClintock, VEDP Vice President of Research, presented the program to over 40 local officials. To view the presentation, click [here](#).
- The FRA electronic newsletter is now sent quarterly to over 2,000 recipients.

## **Metrics**

- Robust metrics will be integrated into the Alliance's revised Strategic Plan. Data collection is currently underway and the plan is expected to be completed later this year.

The full report from the Cardinal Community Assistance Program is available upon request from the Alliance.

## 'REFRESHED' FRA WEBSITE EMPHASIZES REGIONAL ASSETS

The Alliance's website has undergone a comprehensive "refresh," making it easier for prospects to learn about the region and its economic development opportunities.

It also has a new address: [www.FredRegion.com](http://www.FredRegion.com).



The refreshed website offers the many updated features, including:

- Easier to navigate
- Works on mobile devices
- Focuses on the information that site and buyers want
- Highlights the region's cluster industries
- Gives the FRA team a way to highlight information on the home page
- Makes it easy for staff to keep the site updated
- Makes the site more visible to search engines
- Builds regional awareness through its new name and content

Two local firms, [Rambletype](#) and [Spangler Erkert and Associates](#), are partnering on the project. Additional improvements are underway.

## CONGRESSMAN WITTMAN FOLLOWS UP WITH LOCAL DOD CONTRACTORS ON CONCERNS

At the request of Congressman Rob Wittman, the Alliance recently hosted a briefing session with approximately 20 Department of Defense (DOD) contractors and local government officials. This was a follow up from a meeting last October with the Congressman where concerns about changes in contracting protocols were discussed.

Congressman Wittman reported on work underway through the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. Rep. Wittman is a member of both committees.

He told attendees that the committee is following up on the concerns voiced last fall by the DOD contractors at the Alliance meeting.

"Marine Corps Systems Command (MARCORSYSCOM) has determined that a number of engineering functions at its headquarters are inherently governmental in nature and has taken steps to insource these previously contracted services.



"While the committee supports the proper alignment of functions that are inherently governmental in nature, as required by law, it is concerned that after this particular determination was made and engineering services were consolidated at the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command's (SPAWAR) Atlantic Center, these same engineering services that were deemed inherently governmental were subsequently re-outsourced by SPAWAR to contractor performance. The committee is concerned about the inconsistent classification of these positions and, if not inherently governmental in nature, the potential for inefficiencies and increased contract oversight costs associated with the geographic separation of MARCORSYSCOM and the contractors providing engineering services," according to a meeting summary provided by Rep. Wittman's office.

He also noted that the House Committee on Armed Services has requested a status report by next winter.

"The committee notes the Department of the Navy could potentially achieve greater synergy and avoid these inefficiencies by leveraging the Government's localized engineering capacities resident within the Navy's Surface Warfare Center system," it continued. "The committee directs the Commandant of the

Marine Corps to brief the House Committee on Armed Services by February 1, 2016, on the status of engineering support functions, both governmental and contracted, that support MARCORSYSCOM.

Please click [here](#) to see the material distributed at the meeting.

## NEW E-MAILS FOR ALLIANCE STAFF

The new easy-to-remember URL (www.FredRegion.com) for the Alliance website has triggered changes in the email addresses for FRA staff. Please make a note of them in your records:



Curry Roberts [croberts@fredregion.com](mailto:croberts@fredregion.com)  
Todd Gillingham [tgillingham@fredregion.com](mailto:tgillingham@fredregion.com)  
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