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## Region Responds to Fort Lee Growth – Event connects local businesses with federal agencies and prime contractors –

**CHESTER, VA** – With \$1.9 billion in construction coming to Fort Lee by 2011, the region's small businesses want to know how they can get a piece of the pie. Today, at John Tyler Community College's Nicholas Student Center, businesses are discovering the region has mobilized to support them in the process.

Today's "Piece of the Pie: Key Ingredients to Success" event offered businesses a rare opportunity to meet face-to-face with federal agencies and prime contractors needing small businesses for a variety of construction and construction-related contracts.

"Under the direction of the Crater Procurement Assistance Center, the region's stakeholders have truly come together to put on an invaluable session providing the type of information and contacts our businesses need to take advantage of the growth occurring at Fort Lee," said C. Renée Wyatt-Chapline, Executive Director of Virginia's Gateway Region and one of the event's hosts.

The morning session began with a welcome from Richard M. "Dickie" King, Jr., on behalf of the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors, and Millard D. "Pete" Stith, Jr., Chesterfield Deputy County Administrator, Community Development. Both speakers touched on the regional cooperation that has been at the heart of the area's response to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's (BRAC) recommendation to double the size of Fort Lee by 2011.

"We are very blessed in Virginia to have the military might we have," Stith said, "and each time BRAC comes around we seem to walk away with a little bit more."

Stith told the crowd the region's growth over the coming years is going to be phenomenal.

Ronald E. Bew, Small Business Administration (SBA) District Director followed the welcome with an overview of the matchmaking process that will be going on throughout the day. Over 400 appointments are scheduled throughout the day for event participants to meet with prime contractors, top lenders, SBA specialists and business consultants, as they explore opportunities related to Fort Lee's growth.

Jack Beecher, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Small Business Program Office Chief, representing the Norfolk District, provided the audience with an overview of his involvement in BRAC contracts. He reported the Army Corps is about three months behind schedule awarding contracts for BRAC due to the funding schedule, yet the Corps has already received and awarded several substantial BRAC contracts.

Beecher assured the crowd, "There is a lot of work coming, especially at Fort Lee."

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Curt Savoy, Manager of the Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) Program at Fort Lee, concluded the session with a presentation on the installation's housing activity. RCI has spent the last six months developing a community development master plan, which represents a 50 year plan for privatizing, sustaining and maintaining a quality residential community at Fort Lee. The plan will be sent to Congress on Monday, an approval is expected within 45 days, and from there, Fort Lee will begin a 52 month initial development period.

Following the morning session, matchmaking appointments with prime contractors and capital access experts are being held from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. At 6:00 p.m., those who missed the morning session, will be able to attend a repeat session providing an update on BRAC and RCI opportunities at Fort Lee.

The Piece of the Pie event is sponsored by Chesterfield County, Crater Procurement Assistance Center, Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce, SunTrust Bank, and Apartment Connection. The event's hosts include the Chesterfield County Division of Community Development and Department of Economic Development, the U.S. Small Business Administration, Association of the United States Army, Capital Relocation, County of Chesterfield, Crater Procurement Assistance Center, Crater Small Business Development – Longwood University, Fort Lee Credit Union, Hale's Electrical Service, Logistics Management Resources, Inc., Prince George County, Randstad Work Solutions, Virginia's Gateway Region, Colonial Heights Chamber of Commerce, Dinwiddie Chamber of Commerce, Hopewell-Prince George Chamber of Commerce, and the Petersburg Chamber of Commerce.

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*Virginia's Gateway Region exists to enhance the economic development opportunities for the cities of Colonial Heights, Hopewell and Petersburg, and the counties of Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Prince George, Surry and Sussex. The Gateway Region is a private, nonprofit economic development organization that is publicly and privately funded to facilitate new business opportunities, work with existing businesses, advance resources that will enhance the economic viability of the region and foster regional cooperation among the public and private entities that are involved in economic development activities. For more about VGR visit [www.gatewayregion.com](http://www.gatewayregion.com).*