



# VIEWS&VISIONS

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## Jefferson County: A Great Location for Doing Business

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John Reisenweber is executive director of the Jefferson County Development Authority. Previously, Reisenweber worked as a commercial lender with Centra Bank and United Bank. He also served five years as regional representative for U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito during her time in the U.S. House of Representatives. He has also worked for the United States Department of Commerce, and as a consultant for Booz Allen and Hamilton in northern Virginia.

In 2014, he was appointed by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin to the West Virginia Infrastructure, Jobs, and Development Council. In addition, he serves on the boards of the Region 9 Economic Development and Planning Council, the Jefferson County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board.

Reisenweber also teaches as an adjunct professor in the environmental studies department at Shepherd University. He is a past board member of the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce and past president of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Martinsburg Rotary.

A Martinsburg native and Hedgesville High School graduate, Reisenweber earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Washington and Lee University and a master's degree in political science from Oregon State University. He is a graduate of both Leadership West Virginia and Leadership Jefferson.

With a strategic Mid-Atlantic location just 60 miles from Washington, D.C., and ready access to major transportation routes, Jefferson County is ideally situated for doing business. As one of the fastest growing counties in West Virginia, Jefferson County is an economic driver for the state, with a low cost of doing business, low utility rates and a skilled and loyal workforce.

Jefferson County is home to a strong business community. The Jefferson County Development Authority (JCDA) provides help to businesses relocating or expanding in the region as well as business startups. In addition to facilitating site selection with shovel-ready sites and prime commercial/industrial properties, the JCDA assists with financing options and fast-track permitting. The State of West Virginia complements Jefferson County's business-friendly environment with incentives including tax credits and financing and training programs.

The JCDA understands the local economy and the competitive advantages it can offer target industries from small, family-owned businesses to large, national corporations. Jefferson County is ideal for manufacturing, government agencies, information technology, health care, education and tourism. As one of the larger producers of agricultural products in the state, Jefferson County has an established and growing agribusiness as well.

Currently, several projects are underway or nearing completion in the Burr Business Park in Kearneysville. Randox Laboratories, an Ireland-based medical technology company, recently finished its North American headquarters in Jefferson County. The 36,000-square-foot facility includes a manufacturing component, a research and development lab and a diagnostic



## Jefferson County Development Authority

lab in addition to improved warehousing, storage and office space. With the expansion, the company will hire approximately 50 additional employees for jobs that will be high-level Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) opportunities for Jefferson County.

Other new additions to the Burr Business Park include Dura-Trac Flooring, McGee Civil Construction and McGinn and Company. Dura-Trac Flooring, a leading provider of temporary flooring designed for special events, employs 10 people at its new building for sales, warehousing and ancillary manufacturing operations. McGee Civil Construction, an engineering, construction and land development company, moved its office and maintenance facility to Jefferson County from northern Virginia. Refuse and recycling hauler Apple Valley Waste will be moving to another location in the business park when its new facility is finished later this year.



Once companies get established in Jefferson County, they tend to find that the workforce is hard-working and loyal, leading to a low turnover of employees. For example, Kent Cartridge, a leading manufacturer of shotshell ammunition for hunting, sport shooting and training rounds, has been here since 1997 and completed a 20,000-square-foot addition to its manufacturing/warehouse facility in Kearneysville earlier this year. As a part of Jefferson County's commitment to supporting and promoting existing businesses, the JCDA partners with the West Virginia Development Office on its business retention and expansion program. Staff visit with existing companies to get a close look at current conditions, future plans and ways the JCDA can assist them.

Through a partnership with the West Virginia Small Business Development Center, a small business coach who works out of the JCDA office provides entrepreneurs and small businesses with in-depth, one-on-one business consultative services at no cost.

Coordinated by the economic development organizations in Jefferson, Berkeley and Morgan counties, the Eastern Panhandle Entrepreneurs Forum provides free networking and educational opportunities for entrepreneurs and the business community on a quarterly basis.

Along with the close proximity to the Washington, D.C./Baltimore metropolitan areas, Jefferson County has many assets that promote business development while also enhancing the quality of life for local employers and their employees. Several distinguished K-12 and higher education institutions contribute to the county's skilled and employable workforce including Jefferson County Schools, Blue Ridge Community and Technical College, Shepherd University and American Public University, one of the nation's largest online universities. Availability of health care services is often another asset considered in determining a business location. Jefferson Medical Center in Ranson was recently named one of the

Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals in the nation. Additional community benefits include many historical and cultural opportunities, recreational activities and other amenities for residents and visitors of all ages.

Thanks to the uncommon combination of location and quality of life, living in Jefferson County is an unrivaled experience for individuals and families. The same traits that make it an attractive place for relocating or expanding businesses make it a pleasure for the business owners and their employees who live here. ▼