



VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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Expanding Opportunities in the Mid-Ohio Valley

Lindsey Kerr Piersol, Executive Director
Wood County Economic Development Office

Lindsey Kerr Piersol serves as the Director of the Wood County Economic Development Office. She works in conjunction with federal, state and local entities to promote and advance industrial, commercial, agricultural and recreational developments in the county.

Since becoming director in 2016, Piersol has helped the development office establish a countywide property database to promote site readiness, instate a Customer Relationship Management System of Wood County employers, complete a rebranding campaign, launch a new website, build relationships with hundreds of area businesses, create and retain jobs, and much more.

Prior to her current role, Piersol was the Public Affairs Liaison for Ohio State Treasurer Josh Mandel, where she was responsible for 23 counties in the central and southeastern areas of the state. She also served as the Economic Development Specialist for the City of Delaware, Ohio – the fastest growing city in the fastest growing county in Ohio.

A native of the Mid-Ohio Valley, Piersol earned her undergraduate degree in psychology and political science from The Ohio State University.

The Wood County Economic Development (WCED) office serves as the development catalyst for Wood County, West Virginia. The WCED is comprised of two organizations – the Wood County Development Authority, a public entity, and the Parkersburg-Wood County Area Development Corporation, a private entity.

Established in the 1970s, the Wood County Economic Development office has played a role in hundreds, if not thousands, of projects county-wide. We like to classify ourselves as problem solvers and have helped businesses begin in Wood County, relocate to Wood County, find employees here, train employees here and much more.

Our office was created to encourage businesses and, through loans, investments or other



business transactions, assist in the locating of new businesses and to promote the expansion of existing businesses. We help maintain the economic stability of the county and provide maximum opportunities for employment by being an information resource to businesses. We work in conjunction with federal, state and local entities to promote and advance industrial, commercial, agricultural, and recreational developments in the county.

If you are from Parkersburg or have ever driven on Interstate-77 by Mineral Wells, West Virginia, there is a great chance you've seen or heard of Coldwater Creek. Coldwater Creek was a clothing distributor who went through the Wood County Development Authority to build



Lindsey Piersol (center) with state officials and executives from Hino Motors Manufacturing U.S.A. at press conference announcing the company's plan to purchase the former Coldwater Creek facility



Hino Motors Manufacturing U.S.A. is converting Wood County's former Coldwater Creek distribution center into the new home of Hino Truck production in the United States

their 962,000-square foot distribution center in Wood County, West Virginia over 20 years ago. In 2014, the company filed for bankruptcy and vacated the building – leaving it once again in the hands of the Development Authority.

The building – made of tilt-up concrete walls – has exceptionally high ceilings, thick floors and a plethora of parking for both regular automobiles and tractor trailers. When I moved home from Columbus, Ohio to take my position as Executive Director of the WCED, I was surprised that no one had acquired the building, given its vast potential.

In September 2017, the dynamic of our office and frankly, our community, changed when Hino Motors Manufacturing U.S.A. announced, in conjunction with our office, that they would be purchasing the former Coldwater Creek facility from the Wood County Development Authority.

Hino Motors Manufacturing U.S.A., Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hino Motors, Ltd. (Japan) and a Toyota Group Company. The company manufactures the number one selling medium and heavy-duty truck in Japan. Hino Motors has been a valued member of the Wood

County business community since 2007, when it opened a facility in nearby Williamstown, West Virginia, to become West Virginia's first vehicle assembly operation. Its new plant, which is four times the size of the Williamstown facility, will provide the company with significant efficiency gains and combine several assembly operations under one roof.

Hino, in conjunction with the Wood County Economic Development office, worked for over a year to ensure that this project came to fruition. That hard work and time paid off when the project was announced to the public. Hino's expansion into the former Coldwater Creek building will translate into a \$100 million project, as well as 300 retained jobs and 250 new jobs by 2020. Additionally, a new truck line will be born under the roof of what is now 701 Hino Drive – the XL Series truck.

At the beginning of March, our office was honored to attend the unveiling of Hino's emergence into the Class 8 truck market at the NFTA Work Truck Show in Indianapolis, Indiana. The new truck line, which will be produced in Wood County, is powered by Hino's legendary A09 turbo diesel 8.9-liter inline 6-cylinder engine, boasting a B10 life of 1,000,000 miles,

per Hino's press release from the show. The Hino expansion is the biggest industrial project in Wood County since DuPont opened its doors 70 years ago in Washington, West Virginia, in 1948. I am so excited to work alongside such a wonderful company who cares about their community and who, just by existing, is bringing other companies to our state.

Since the announcement of the Hino expansion, our office has experienced an influx of calls from downstream opportunities and vendors looking for a location in our County. We are currently working with several businesses to find them a location and assist them with build-outs, equipment purchases and finding quality employees so that they can be up and running with the new Hino plant – sometime in late 2018 or early 2019.

To say that the Wood County Economic Development office is thankful, excited and ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work is an understatement. If you are reading this and want to know more about what we do or want to open a business in Wood County, I encourage you to give us a call! ▽