



Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PULASKI COUNTY TO LAUNCH NEW STRATEGIC WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE**

~Board of Supervisors and EDA Partner to Appoint Peter Huber as the New Community  
Workforce Innovation Adviser to Help Local Bus. & Industry meet their Employment Needs~

(Pulaski, Virginia) – September 24, 2018, the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors and the Pulaski County Economic Development Authority (EDA) embarked on a new and strategic initiative to assist local businesses and industries with meeting their employment demands through the appointment of Mr. Peter Huber as the county’s first Community Workforce Innovation Adviser.

The EDA officially changed their name and focus on April 23, 2018, and since have been working diligently on their broadened role in supporting not only the County’s traditional industrial development efforts, but also new non-traditional economic development initiatives, projects and programming. These ventures include strategic marketing, community engagement, small business support, entrepreneurship, tourism, commercial and retail development, residential development, economic diversification and most importantly, workforce development.

“The EDA takes its mission seriously and we feel one of the most daunting challenges facing Pulaski County, and many if not all of the communities in Southwestern Virginia, is meeting the employment demands of our existing business and industry and developing the capacity to serve future employers who choose Pulaski County,” stated Jon Wyatt, Chair of the Economic Development Authority.

The strategy behind the creation and appointment of a Community Workforce Innovation Adviser was to systematically inventory and evaluate all existing programs and agencies that are part of the workforce development landscape; spend time with local employers to better understand their specific employment needs and how to fulfill them; identify gaps and opportunities in the workforce development continuum; and ultimately develop strategies

and/or programs to fill any gaps and seize upon opportunities. The position is intended to help the county strengthen its workforce pipeline, as well as help to fill it.

“In today’s highly competitive business recruitment environment, a community’s biggest asset is its people,” stated Jonathan D. Sweet, County Administrator. “With the new currency of the 21<sup>st</sup> century being talent, it is even more important for the County to employ creativity in cultivating a skilled workforce in both quality and quantity.”

In March of this year, Pulaski County reached a 135-month low (December 2006) in unemployment with a rate of 3.1%. For the same month, the Virginia rate stood at 3.4% and the national rate was 4.1%. This is the second lowest monthly unemployment rate the county has experienced since October 2000 when the rate reached a low of 2.6%, nearly 18 years ago.

“The general mission of the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board is to ensure our businesses have the workers they need in order to be competitive in their marketplace and to ensure our citizens can earn a family sustaining wage. We cannot accomplish this alone,” stated Marty Holliday, Executive Director, NR/MR Workforce Development Board. “We are thrilled with Pulaski County’s partnership in our mission and applauded them for their original approach and investment in creating a Community Workforce and Innovation Advisor position to serve their constituents. We look forward to seeing where this new opportunity will take us.”

Peter Huber was officially appointed to the position by the Board of Supervisors at their regularly scheduled meeting and by the Economic Development Authority at their meeting on September 24, 2018. His service as the county’s first Community Workforce Innovation Adviser will commence on October 1, 2018. The appointment is for a term of one (1) year and shall answer directly to the Board of Supervisors and the Economic Development Authority. He will be working closely with the county’s administration and the economic development department, as well as the many federal, state, regional and local departments, agencies and organizations who serve a role in workforce development.

“The appointment of Peter Huber to this advisory function was considered to be a logical one, due to his experience in this arena, his tremendous familiarity with the county and our many employers, and the fact he shares our passion to help solve the workforce challenge,” stated Andy McCready, Chair of the Board of Supervisors. “One of the most exciting things that could result from this assignment is the development of new and creative approaches to meeting our business community’s employment needs.”

Peter Huber retired from Pulaski County in January of 2017, after more than 30 years of service, seventeen of them in the capacity as County Administrator. Mr. Huber has previously worked as a Town Manager of Saltville, VA and as a Planning Director for the City of Parkersburg, WV after leaving the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission in 1982. He has a B.A. from Emory and Henry College in Land Use Analysis and Planning and a M.A.T. from Appalachian State University in Geography with an emphasis in regional planning.

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