



News Release

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FORBES.COM CALLS STAFFORD “BEST PLACE TO GET AHEAD”

Stafford, VA – Forbes.com has called Stafford County one of the best places in the United States to get ahead.

The business Web site looked at income and job data from the U.S. Census and Department of Labor Statistics, and ranked locations where median income was rising the most quickly. They limited their list to counties where the median income was at least \$75,000. They also studied job growth information as far back as 2000.

“Congratulations to the people of Stafford County for this well-deserved recognition,” Governor Timothy M. Kaine said in a statement provided to Stafford County by his office. “Virginia was recently named a top state to do business by Governing Magazine, sharing that honor with Utah and Washington. It is clear that the recognition would not have been possible without the contributions of the citizens, the government and the businesses of Stafford County.”

Forbes.com stated that “Stafford County has a proven ability to land federal jobs and companies with government contracts, as well as to attract businesses from all over the country...”

“We have worked extremely hard over the past several years to make Stafford County an employment center, where our residents can work at high-paying, professional jobs rather than commute out of the county,” said Chairman of the Board George Schwartz. “Our efforts are paying off with the addition of Fortune 500 companies, world renowned businesses, high quality educational institutions and major Defense Department contractors.”

Stafford will also have its own 100-bed, state-of-the-art hospital, when Medicorp’s Stafford Hospital Center opens in early 2009. The full-service acute-care facility will offer a full service emergency department and include surgical, labor and delivery, intensive care, cardiac, respiratory and neurological services.

(More)

Recent statistics from the Virginia Employment Commission indicated that Stafford is fourth in Virginia in terms of the growth in businesses, by percentage, with an increase of 36.7 percent from 2002 to 2007. In addition, the Commission's data places Stafford third in the Commonwealth in at-place employment growth with a 34.3 percent increase. Stafford now has 2,132 businesses and 34,832 individuals employed in the county. Professional and technical services jobs more than doubled from 2002-2007 in Stafford.

Stafford's new professional jobs growth in the last five years has propelled the county's average weekly wage to more than \$40,000 a year for the first time, placing the county second, by percentage, in the Commonwealth in terms of average weekly wage growth. According to the Virginia Employment Commission, Stafford experienced an increase of 43.3 percent in its average weekly wage from 2002 to 2007.

Stafford was the recipient of another recent accolade from Forbes.com. Earlier this year, it stated that Stafford was the 11th wealthiest county in the United States. Forbes.com based their rankings on median household income data estimates from the 2006 census. Stafford's median household income is listed at \$85,014.

For more information on the Department of Economic Development, please call (540) 658-8681 or visit its Web site at www.GoStaffordVa.com.

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