

**West Virginia Coalition for Technology Based Economic Development**

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**TechConnectWV Announces Chemicals & Advanced Materials Blueprint for Economic Growth**

TechConnectWV today released its Chemicals and Advanced Materials Blueprint, a detailed strategy for growth in one of West Virginia’s most important industry clusters. The Blueprint was produced in collaboration with the Battelle Institute, the world’s largest non-profit research organization, and the Chemical Alliance Zone.

In joining TechConnectWV for the announcement, West Virginia Secretary of Commerce Keith Burdette said, “The strategies laid out in this Blueprint will help guide efforts to further develop the chemicals and advanced materials cluster in the state. They represent the type of public-private partnership that is required to succeed in the innovation economy.”

TechConnectWV is a non-profit coalition working to diversify and grow West Virginia’s economy through innovation-based development. Two years ago, in a comprehensive plan for technology-based development in the state, TechConnectWV identified chemicals and advanced materials as one of West Virginia’s four key technology platforms—areas where West Virginia has the best chance of developing a robust innovation economy. Blueprints for three platforms—advanced energy, biometrics, and biotechnology—were previously released by TechConnectWV and are available at [www.techconnectwv.com](http://www.techconnectwv.com).

“Studies show that the best way to create more jobs in any state is to grow them at home, and that’s what TechConnectWV promotes, by connecting researchers with industry and supporting the commercialization of products, services, and technologies in the innovation economy,” said Anne Barth, Executive Director of TechConnectWV.

The Chemicals and Advanced Materials Blueprint outlines West Virginia’s assets in the cluster, which include a large base of specialty chemicals and advanced materials companies, significant research programs at West Virginia University, Marshall University, and the National Energy Technology Laboratory, private sector R&D firms such as MATRIC Research and Touchstone Research Laboratory, unique pilot plant facilities at the WV Regional Technology Park, new technical training institutions, the Chemical Alliance Zone’s technology incubator, and a number of economic development groups supporting growth in the cluster.

“Bringing these key stakeholders together to guide coordinated development in the chemicals and advanced materials sector is the first strategy,” Barth said. “As the Blueprint notes, West Virginia has several opportunities for growth in the cluster, whether in new job opportunities as baby boomers working in the sector reach retirement, or in the multiple markets for composites produced in state, or in new technologies for solving critical water issues, to name a few.”

Keith Pauley, President and CEO of MATRIC Research, noted the region’s history as a world leader in chemical and technology research, and said future growth and opportunities will hinge on leveraging assets and intellectual capital to create jobs. “The future is in bringing new products and technologies to market through cutting-edge research, which in turn creates new companies and high-wage jobs,” Pauley said. “It’s going to take a concerted effort by the public and private sectors to achieve success,” he added.

Other strategies spelled out in the Blueprint include leveraging assets to achieve industry recruitment and expansion in the cluster; enhancing West Virginia’s position in chemicals and advanced materials R&D and associated innovation-based development; and assuring West Virginia has a world-class workforce able to meet the demands of the cluster.

“The combination of strategies and action items laid out in the Chemicals and Advanced Materials Blueprint will help West Virginia best optimize its existing assets and resources to realize the potential for economic diversification and higher wage jobs in this sector,” Barth said.

TechConnectWV works to enhance awareness, spur collaboration, and raise the discussion of issues surrounding technology-based economic development. Its goals are to diversify the state’s economy, promote economic prosperity, and create high-paying jobs. For more information, contact Anne Barth at 304.444.2918.

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