



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Terry McAuliffe

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Office of the Governor

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**Governor McAuliffe Announces 30 New Jobs in
Washington County**

*~ Universal Companies to invest \$1.5 million to expand distribution
operation in Southwest Virginia ~*

RICHMOND – Governor Terry McAuliffe today announced that Universal Companies, the leading single-source supplier of spa products, will invest \$1.5 million to expand its distribution operation in Washington County. Virginia successfully competed against Tennessee for the project, which will create 30 new jobs.

“The combination of Virginia’s central location on the East Coast, paired with our extensive transportation infrastructure, makes the Commonwealth an ideal hub for the distribution and global logistics industry,” **said Governor Terry McAuliffe.** “Universal Companies has been an

important corporate steward and employer in Southwest Virginia and Washington County for nearly 15 years, and we are proud that the company is once again investing in the Commonwealth and adding 30 well-paid jobs. As we continue to diversify and build the new Virginia economy, it is critical to support this vital sector and the growth of our existing businesses.”

“Universal Companies’ expansion brings more economic activity and job diversity to Washington County and the surrounding area, and we congratulate the company on its decision to invest and grow in Virginia,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore.** “The Commonwealth’s distribution industry is thriving, employing nearly 80,000 Virginians who are helping transport goods and services to customers around the world. Universal is a testament to the growth of this sector and we look forward to the company’s next chapter of success in the Commonwealth.”

Founded in 1982, Universal Companies is committed to delivering innovative and complete spa solutions to more than 30,000 customers around the world. Universal not only offers spa products and equipment, but also industry-leading advanced education in the spa and wellness industries.

Brenda Elliott, CEO of Universal Companies explains, “Universal is dedicated to investing in our local economy by bringing more career opportunities to our region. We have seen significant growth since our founding and see only more in our future. We employ the full spectrum of employees from entry-level to corporate executives. We are proud to partner with Washington County to advance our distribution operation.”

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) worked with Washington County to secure the project for Virginia. Governor McAuliffe approved a \$90,000 grant from the Commonwealth’s Opportunity Fund to assist the County with the project. In addition, the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission approved \$210,000 in Tobacco Region Opportunity Funds for the company. Universal Companies is eligible to receive state benefits from the Virginia Enterprise Zone Program, administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, and funding and services to support the company’s employee training activities will be provided through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program. The company is a graduate of VEDP’s award-winning Virginia Leaders in Export Trade (VALET) Program. VALET is an application-based, two-year international export acceleration program.

“Washington County is pleased to share in today’s good news,” **said Randy Pennington, Chair of the Washington County Board of Supervisors.** “Universal Companies is a valued member of our business community and we are excited they decided to grow and reinvest here at Oak Park: Center for Business and Industry.”

“On behalf of the Virginia Tobacco Commission, I want to congratulate Universal Companies on its decision to expand operations in Washington County, Virginia, bringing 30 new jobs to the area,” **said Senator Bill Carrico, a member of the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission.** “It is certainly a cause for celebration when a business is successful enough to

expand its operation and grow its workforce. I look forward to many more positive announcements from Universal Companies in the future.”

“I’m very excited to see Universal Companies expanding in Southwest Virginia,” **said Delegate Israel O’Quinn.** “Thirty additional jobs and a capital investment of \$1.5 million is certainly welcome news. Universal Companies is well respected around the globe and we’re proud to have them right here in our region.”

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