



***Commonwealth of Virginia***  
***Office of Governor Terry McAuliffe***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: June 20, 2014

**Office of the Governor**

Contact: Rachel Thomas

Phone: 804-225-4262

Email: [Rachel.Thomas@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:Rachel.Thomas@governor.virginia.gov)

## **Governor McAuliffe Announces 98 New Jobs in Augusta County**

*~Bloomaker USA Inc. to Invest \$2 Million, Create 98 Jobs Over  
Next Three Years~*

RICHMOND – Governor Terry McAuliffe announced today that Bloomaker USA Inc. ([www.bloomaker.com](http://www.bloomaker.com)) will expand its existing horticulture operation, located in Waynesboro. The company, which has developed and patented a new floral category – long lasting flowers – will invest more than \$2 million to build a new greenhouse, create 98 new jobs in the area, and grow its sales from \$10 million annually to over \$25 million annually in five years. The Commonwealth of Virginia is partnering with Augusta County and Bloomaker on this project through the Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID).

Speaking about today’s announcement, Governor McAuliffe said, “Agriculture and forestry are now fully integrated into the state’s strategic economic development platform and I’m committed to creating more jobs in those sectors during my administration. Bloomaker’s announcement today represents the fourth AFID facility grant I’ve awarded during my administration, and it’s a great win for Virginia and Augusta County. Supporting the further development of this

innovative and patented product is a unique way for Virginia to diversify our economy, especially in agriculture, Virginia's largest industry."

Bloomaker will triple the size of its existing operation, increasing capacity for growing, packing, and shipping its patented "Long Life Tulips" and Amaryllis flowers which bloom, in the home, for four to eight weeks. This expansion will allow the company to further meet the growing demands of its major retail customers domestically to major greenhouse retailers internationally to Canada.

"I am thrilled about the new jobs and investment the Bloomaker expansion brings to the area, and the new energy it brings to Virginia's horticulture and nursery industry," said Todd Haymore, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry. "As the fifth largest agricultural sector in the Commonwealth, the greenhouse and nursery industry generates \$272 million in farm sales alone, representing nearly 8% of the state's distribution of cash receipts for agricultural commodities. Bloomaker's success is a tribute to the leadership of the organization, the quality of its products, as well as the positive business environment and excellent location the Commonwealth offers companies agriculture-based business serving regional, national and international markets."

The company, in partnership with Virginia and Augusta County, will work with Columbia Gas to extend a nearby natural gas line, about one mile away, to the site. This will strengthen the company's competitiveness, especially in the long term, by greatly reducing its costs of heating the greenhouse.

"Bloomaker has really emerged as a trendsetter within the Augusta County business community," said Larry Wills, Chairman of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors. "We are proud of the company's success and its drive to introduce a new floral category in the marketplace."

Carolyn Bragg, Augusta County Board Member and representative of the magisterial district where the company is located commented, "Bloomaker continuously innovates and rises to the top; while a fairly new company to the County, Bloomaker's achievements are truly impressive and bring an added facet to the economy of the region."

Governor McAuliffe approved a \$50,000 grant from the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund grant to assist Augusta County with the project. Through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program, Bloomaker will receive additional funding and services to support its training and retraining activities.

"We are excited for this investment, the partnership with Augusta County and continued growth for the floral industry," said Joep Pasternostre, President of Bloomaker. "It is the marriage of Dutch entrepreneurship and the American drive and freedom that has created our success. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity that this great country has granted me."

"It is very gratifying to see the Agriculture and Forestry Industrial Development Fund (AFID) being utilized for this important economic development project for Augusta County and Virginia," said Del. R. Steven Landes, R-Weyers Cave, who sponsored the legislation creating AFID in 2012. "It is also gratifying to see that Governor McAuliffe is making good on his promise to make economic development and job creation one of his top priorities, and I know all the members of the General Assembly look forward to working with him to accomplish that goal."

Senator Emmett Hanger, R-Augusta County, who has been a strong supporter of AFID since its inception, added, "Having diverse tools in our economic toolbox is important for Virginia and is an asset for our region. The AFID program continues to show a strong return on our investment and we're pleased to be here today announcing another great win for this program and for our agricultural community that we continue to work together to support."

According to a 2013 economic impact study conducted by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, agriculture and forestry are two of Virginia's largest industries with a combined economic impact of \$70 billion annually. Agriculture generates more than \$52 billion per annum, while forestry induces over \$17 billion. The industries also provide more than 400,000 jobs in the Commonwealth.

#### **About the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund**

*The AFID Fund was created during the 2012 session of the General Assembly and is being embraced by the McAuliffe Administration as an important tool in growing the Commonwealth's agriculture and forestry sector and helping to make Virginia the leading exporter of agricultural and forest products on the East Coast. More information about the AFID grant, which has the flexibility to assist projects large and small throughout Virginia can be found at <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/afid.shtml>.*

###