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Lt. Gov. Austin Davis Touts New Funding for Site Development to Create More Shovel-Ready Sites for Businesses in Rural Pennsylvania

Bedford, PA – At a news conference today in Bedford County, Lt. Gov. Austin Davis highlighted how investments through the [PA SITES](#) (Pennsylvania Strategic Investments to Enhance Sites) pilot program will benefit rural communities to prepare sites for future development, attract new companies or allow employers to expand, creating more jobs and economic opportunity across the Commonwealth.

“The adage ‘if you build it, they will come,’ that’s not just a quote from a baseball movie,” said **Davis**. “It’s what major corporations are looking for, and if you don’t have shovel-ready sites, you’re at a significant disadvantage. Because of the state budget we passed last year – with bipartisan support – we were able to launch a pilot program for site development. [The Bedford County Development Association was one of seven recipients of that initial round of grants](#). That’s a big win for a rural community like Bedford County. Every job created has downstream economic impacts – more families buying goods and services, spending money at small businesses and helping to revitalize the community as a whole.”

The Bedford County Development Association is receiving a \$338,880 grant to develop a pad-ready site at the Bedford County Business Park II in Bedford Township. The grant funds will be used for excavation, removal of unsuitable soils, seeding and mulching and creation of a gravel access drive. These funds are part of the larger \$10.6 million in new funding announced by the Governor last week to help sites across the Commonwealth become “shovel-ready.”

“I’m thrilled to be in Bedford County to highlight the importance of the PA SITES program. With its long history of manufacturing and excellent workforce, this region has what businesses are looking for when deciding where to locate,” said **Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Executive Deputy Secretary Mike Hanna, Jr.** “We know that investing in site development works, which is why it’s essential for the Shapiro-Davis Administration to secure additional funding to make sure Pennsylvania can compete with other states for business projects. The Governor’s call for a \$500 million infusion into PA SITES is the bold investment that all of the Commonwealth’s regions deserve.”

DCED received 102 applications for the PA SITES pilot program requesting more than \$236 million in funding – outweighing the existing funding from the 2023-24 budget and demonstrating the need for more state investments to make sites more competitive for prospective businesses through better transportation access, utility extensions, or grading of pad-ready sites.

These enhancements will help previously utilized or underdeveloped sites become shovel-ready for businesses to relocate, expand, and create jobs in Pennsylvania – and the Governor’s 2024-25 budget proposal includes \$500 million in PA SITES funding to build on this progress.

“Between location and space, Bedford County is an ideal location for businesses to thrive,” said **state Sen. Pat Stefano**. “It’s due to the hard work of the Bedford County Development Association and the partnership of other county stakeholders that keeps the soil in Bedford County rich with opportunity and ready for new or expanding businesses to plant their roots. I’m thrilled that the Administration also sees the benefit in having the business park ‘shovel-ready.’”

“Bedford County is home to a strong workforce that will be bolstered by this grant,” said **state Rep. Jesse Topper**. “I look forward to this project being brought to fruition through the PA SITES pilot program and thank the Department of Community and Economic Development for recognizing all that our community has to offer.”

“Development of sites, especially in rural areas, is a huge challenge,” said **Bedford County Development Association Board Chair and President Jeff Crist**. “It takes a vision, planning, persistence and assembling a financing package that enables implementation. To do that, we need strong partnerships. Thankfully, we have partners in Harrisburg who understand economic development.”



Lt. Gov. Austin Davis speaks at event in Bedford County; additional photos/video available at PACast.com.

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