



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Wise County

Program Title: Elam Farm Site Development Project

Program Category: Community Development, Economic Development, & Land Use

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Brian Falin

Title: Industrial Development Supervisor

Department: Economic & Industrial Development


Telephone: 276-328-2321 Website: www.wisecountyva.gov

Email: falin_b@wisecountyva.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Michael Hatfield

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

2025 VACo Achievement Award Nomination Form

Project – Elam Farm Site Development Project

Project Executive Summary

The Elam Farm Site Development Project began in 2019 in response to the VEDP Site Characterization program report. The Elam Farm Site is a 204-acre parcel that is part of the Lonesome Pine Regional Business and Technology Park in Wise, Virginia. The site was purchased by the Wise County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) in 2013 to expand the Park but had remained undeveloped since that time. The undeveloped nature of the site resulted in the Park receiving a Tier 2 status in the VBRSP program. Wise County and IDA officials were committed to elevating the Park to a Tier 4 status, so a multiphase development project was initiated. The project leveraged funding from local, regional, state, and federal sources to ensure completion of the \$4.8 million project that included a Master Plan update, site due diligence, access road development, utility infrastructure to the site and earthwork to create a 65-acre site. In June 2024 the Lonesome Pine Regional Business & Technology Park was designated as a Tier 4 Certified Site in the VBRSP program because of these efforts.

2025 VACo Achievement Award Nomination Form

Name of Community

Wise County

Chief Operating Officer

Michael Hatfield, County Administrator

Address of Nominee

PO Box 570

City, State, Zip

Wise, Virginia 24293

Phone

276-328-2321

Website

www.wisecountyva.gov

Email

Hatfield_m@wisecountyva.gov

Name of Project

Elam Farm Site Development Project

Brief Overview of Project

The Elam Farm Site Development Project began in 2019 in response to the VEDP Site Characterization program report. The Elam Farm Site is a 204-acre parcel that is part of the Lonesome Pine Regional Business and Technology Park in Wise, Virginia. The site was purchased by the Wise County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) in 2013 to expand the Park but had remained undeveloped since that time. The undeveloped nature of the site resulted in the Park receiving a Tier 2 status in the VBRSP program. Wise County and IDA officials were committed to elevating the Park to a Tier 4 status, so a multiphase development project was initiated. The project leveraged funding from local, regional, state, and federal sources to ensure

completion of the \$4.8 million project that included a Master Plan update, site due diligence, access road development, utility infrastructure to the site and earthwork to create a 65-acre site. In June 2024 the Lonesome Pine Regional Business & Technology Park was designated as a Tier 4 Certified Site in the VBRSP program because of these efforts.

INNOVATIVENESS of the Project

The Elam Farm Site was purchased in 2013 by the IDA utilizing regional economic development funds available through the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority. As with many other rural communities, the limited availability of funding for site development was the primary reason the property was left undeveloped until 2019. While the site was being actively marketed, the lack of access and utilities greatly diminished the likelihood of a project choosing the site. When the Lonesome Pine Regional Business and Technology Park received a Tier 2 designation in 2019, Wise County and IDA officials began making serious plans to elevate the certification of the Park. A local financial commitment was secured from the Wise County Board of Supervisors for an update of the existing Master Plan for the Park to add the Elam Farm Site. This Master Plan update included the completion of due diligence reports and preliminary site designs intended to be utilized in securing funding for engineering design and construction of a multiphase project. Utilizing Master Plan as a framework, officials began researching and identifying potential funding sources for development of the site. Because the Elam Farm Site was a former surface coal mine site, an application for funding through the Virginia Energy Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization (AMLER) program was submitted in March 2021 for Phase 1 of the project which was to include engineering and construction of a new access road and the installation of water, sewer, and natural gas utilities to the site. The funding

application was approved for ~\$1.7 million and Phase 1 of the project design began in May 2022. Over the course of Phase 1 of the project Virginia Energy allocated additional funds to the project bringing the final funding to ~\$1.9 million. To ensure completion of Phase 1 of the project, the locality also applied and was awarded funding from the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority in the amount of \$700,000 bringing the Phase 1 total to ~\$2.6 million. Construction on Phase 1 of the project began in November 2023 and was completed in December 2024. While Phase 1 of the project was ongoing, Phase 2 was developed which would provide additional site clearing, earthwork and E&S measures for the site. Local officials had been engaged with the VEDP Real Estate Solutions team throughout the project and an application to the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) was submitted and in January 2023 the project was awarded \$750,000 from the program for Phase 2 of the project. The final piece of funding for the project came as the result of the anticipated community impacts of the project. Through support from Congressman Morgan Griffith and his staff, the locality was awarded \$1 million from a HUD Community Development initiative to supplement the local, regional and state funding that had been secured for Phase 2. Construction for Phase 2 began in June 2024 and ran concurrently with Phase 1.

The innovative, multiphase approach to development and funding of the project allowed the locality to reach its goal of obtaining a Tier 4 Certified Site status in the VBRSP program. The ability of the locality to leverage local investment and commitment to the project with relationships and involvement with regional, state, and federal agencies ensured a successful project and awarding of ~\$4.3 million in grant funding. The Elam Farm Site is receiving significant project attention, and the locality is actively engaged with a developer who is

projecting significant capital investment and job creation at the site which will have a major community impact to not only Wise County but the entire SWVA region.

TRANSFERABILITY of the Project

Site development projects for rural communities represent a significant challenge from a funding perspective. Specifically, rural communities located in the coalfields of far Southwest Virginia face additional challenges presented by mountainous terrain which typically results in increased development costs compared to relatively flat sites found elsewhere in the state. The Elam Farm Site Development Project is a prime example of how a community can leverage local support with a variety of funding sources to achieve their site development and enhancement goals. The steps and processes taken by Wise County in this project could be replicated by communities throughout the SWVA region and beyond. This project has proven that by taking a targeted, multiphase approach significant site development can occur in rural communities. Although the timeframe may be slightly longer, this project was successful because the locality recognized that while the entirety of the ~\$4.8 million project could seem daunting or overwhelming, it was ultimately the ability to break the project into multiple phases and approach funding in that manner. This approach provided the opportunity to gain financial and programmatic support from the local Board of Supervisors for pre-development work, which in turn led to success with larger funding awards. The transferable message from this project to other localities would be to gain local support early, develop an accurate plan of development, create a multiphase approach to development, develop effective relationships with funding agencies, research and identify funding opportunities that match locality goals and objectives, put the plan in motion, and stay organized!

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AND LEVERAGE CREATED

Community support and commitment was an early goal of the Elam Farm Site Development Project for the locality. It was important for the economic development staff to educate both elected officials and the public on the long-term benefits that could be recognized by the development of the site. The Wise County Board of Supervisors quickly recognized the importance of the project to the continued success of the Lonesome Pine Regional Business & Technology Park and how improving the site readiness would provide better opportunities for new capital investment and job creation. The locality made a significant financial commitment to the project pre-development phase by funding the Master Plan update for the Park and a variety of due diligence reports totaling more than \$250,000. Additionally, the locality provided additional funding during Phase 1 of the project, approximately \$300,000, which was used as leverage and match funding for securing additional state and federal funds. To continue its commitment to the project, the Board also authorized an amendment to the county Enterprise Zone designation to include the site and provide tax incentives for future development on the Elam Farm site for real estate and M&T taxes. This programmatic and financial support was made possible because of the effective structure of the project in ensuring that the locality would not incur long term debt on the development of the site. Based on projections from target industry sectors, the economic benefits that would be recognized by a significant development on the site would be more than \$1 million annually.

MEASURED OBJECTIVES

Due to the nature of the project, the majority of measured objectives to this point are construction related objectives. The construction of the project has resulted in the development

of 2,417 linear feet of water line, 1,849 linear feet of sanitary sewer line, 1,300 linear feet of natural gas line, 1,300 linear feet of access road and storm drain, 2,600 linear feet of curb and gutter, 33,000 square feet of pavement, and more than 60,000 cubic yards of earthwork. In addition to these measurables, a total of 20 local jobs were supported through the engineering/design (12) and construction (8) phase of the project. Other objectives of the project included the elevation of the Lonesome Pine Regional Business & Technology Park to a Tier 4 Certified Site in the VBRSP program (achieved in June 2024) and increased marketability and site attractiveness. The Elam Farm Site is receiving significant project attention, and the locality is actively engaged with a developer who is projecting significant capital investment and job creation at the site which will have a major community impact to not only Wise County but the entire SWVA region.

SECONDARY BENEFITS

The Elam Farm Site Development Project has served as a catalyst for economic development activity in Wise County. The innovative and creative approach to the project has resulted in an increase in media attention at both a regional and state level which has provided the locality with the opportunity to further market and promote business recruitment and attraction efforts.

Additionally, the development of the site has improved the overall appearance of the Lonesome Pine Regional Business & Technology Park and serves as a new gateway entry into the Park. The locality is currently developing a new marketing plan for both the Park and general economic development efforts to include a new logo and branding, redesigned marketing materials, and a dedicated economic development website. In addition to the capital investment and job creation benefits that will be created by the development of the Elam Farm Site, indirect benefits will

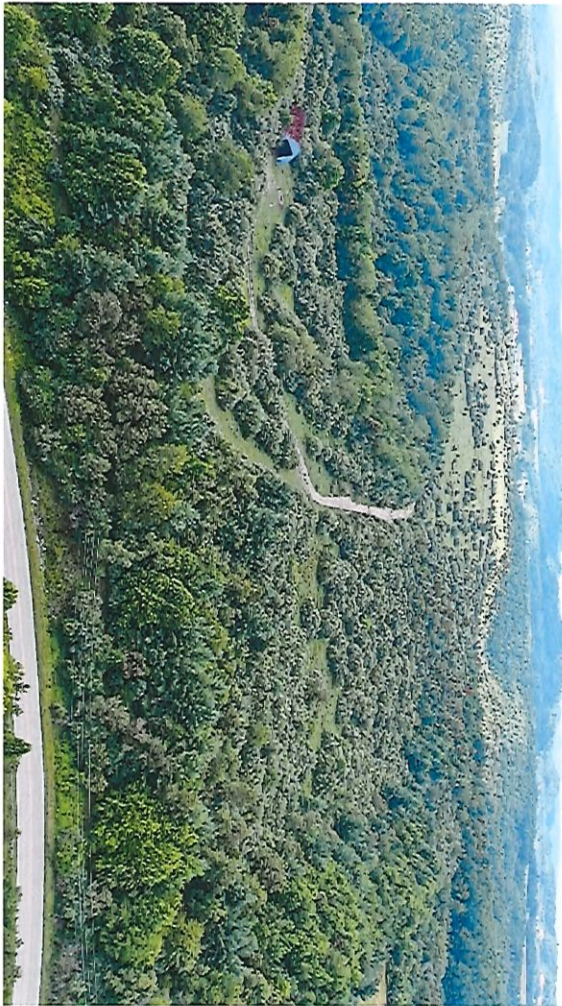
continue to be recognized as interest and project development is ongoing. Since the initiation of the Elam Farm project, Wise County has proudly announced 3 major economic development project wins that will create more than 300 new jobs for the SWVA region. While these projects are not directly related to the Elam Farm project, the results prove that the locality is taking a progressive and effective approach to economic development and the Elam Farm project has been a major part of the successful efforts and marketing message for the locality.

Conclusions/Outcomes

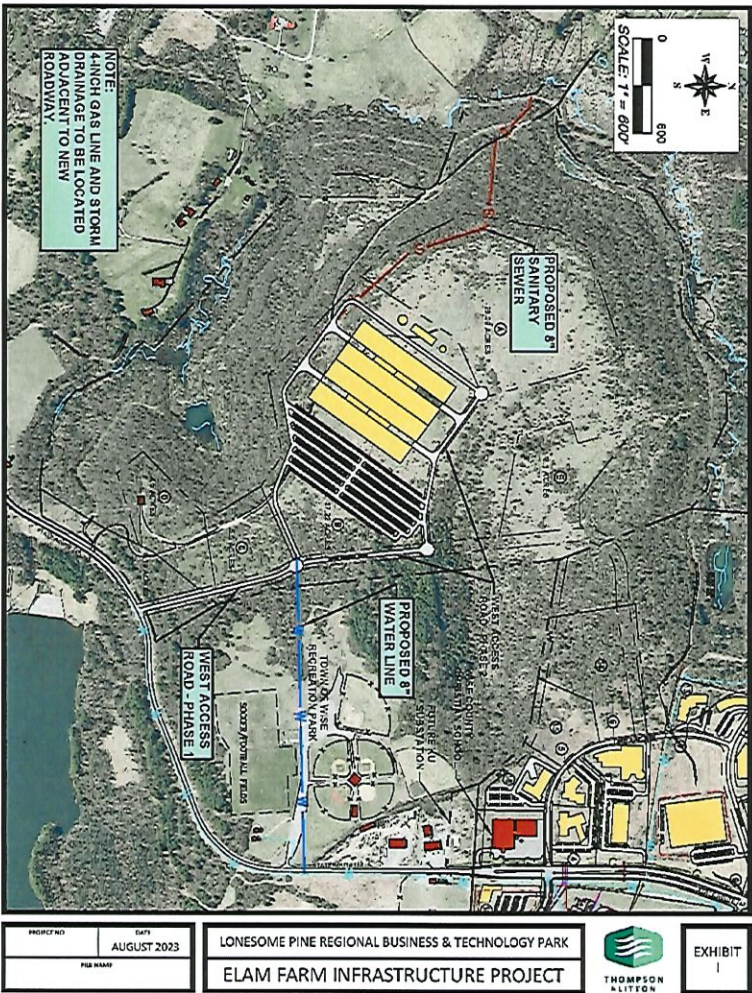
The Elam Farm Site Development Project represents the largest investment in economic development sites and buildings in Wise County in over a decade. The project is a true testament to the collaboration that is necessary for rural communities to stay relevant in today's economic development environment. The availability of business-ready sites is a key topic in Virginia and the entire nation and Wise County has proven that small, rural communities can be competitive for both funding to develop sites and significant projects for those sites. This project leveraged relationships with and investment from 6 funding sources including local, regional, state and federal sources to ensure the successful completion of the ~\$4.8 million project. Combined with effective engagement with project engineers, construction contractors, regulatory agencies, zoning officials, and a host of other involved agencies, the success of this project was a true team effort. Wise County will reap the rewards of this successful project for generations to come.

Elam Farm Site Development Project
Wise County, Virginia

2025 VACo Achievement Award Application Support Documents



Elam Farm Site (pre-development) – July 2023



Elam Farm Project – Preliminary Engineering Design



Elam Farm Site (Phase 1) – April 2024



Elam Farm Site (Phase 1 & 2) – October 2024

Elam Farm Site Development Project Financing

Phase	Cost	Source
Pre-development	~\$580,000	Wise County, Wise County IDA
Phase 1 – Infrastructure	~\$2,500,000	Wise County IDA, AMLER, VCEDA
Phase 2 – Site Development	~\$1,750,000	VBRSP, HUD Community Development
Total Project	~\$4,830,000	

Elam Farm Site Development Project Timeline

Virginia Business Ready Sites Characterization Report	September 2019
LPRB&TP Master Plan Update	April 2022
Virginia Energy AMLER Funding Award – Phase 1	May 2022
Phase 1 Engineering Design/NEPA Begins	June 2022
VBRSP Funding Award – Phase 2	January 2023
HUD Community Development Funding Award – Phase 2	March 2023
Phase 1 Construction Begins	November 2023
VCEDA Funding Award – Phase 1	December 2023
Phase 2 Construction Begins	June 2024
Construction Complete	December 2024

Elam Farm Site Development Project Partners

Wise County Board of Supervisors
Wise County Office of Economic & Industrial Development
Wise County Industrial Development Authority
Thompson & Litton (Master Plan & Project Engineer Phase 1&2)
Virginia Department of Energy (AMLER Funding)
Wise County Building & Zoning Department
Virginia Department of Transportation
Town of Wise (Water & sewer utilities)
Old Dominion Power Company/Kentucky Utilities (Electric utility)
Appalachian Natural Gas Distribution (Natural gas utility)
McFall Excavating (Construction contractor Phase 1&2)
Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (Phase 1 funding)
Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VBRSP funding)
Congressman Morgan Griffith & staff
Housing and Urban Development (HUD)