

For immediate release

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Buzz Foods to Expand Through AML Pilot Program

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – In conjunction with Agriculture and Conservation Day at the West Virginia Legislature, Buzz Foods President Dickinson Gould and West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt announced an economic development project to begin in the Kanawha Valley. Through an Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Pilot Program administered by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, Buzz Foods will expand current operations to include a top-of-the line livestock slaughter and processing facility. Construction is set to begin Summer 2019.

“Our planned expansion will serve as an exciting piece of agricultural infrastructure for the region and an important link in the local food supply chain. Adding slaughter and value-added processing activities to our current business will create new selling opportunities for local livestock producers and will help the local meat industry meet consumer demand,” said Dickinson Gould. “West Virginia is home to world-class beef, pork and lamb producers but much of the value of what is created here is lost when the animals are shipped away to be processed. This project can begin to change that model and create great job opportunities in the process.”

Buzz Foods was awarded an AML grant in 2018. The company has been working with several partners including the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Charleston Area Alliance, the West Virginia Small Business Development Center, the West Virginia National Guard, and Refresh Appalachia to facilitate the project. The new facility will create an estimated 25 to 30 full-time jobs and an additional 15 to 20 temporary jobs.

“As we look for ways to diversify our state’s economy, we should not overlook processing jobs in agriculture sectors. Development projects like the Buzz Foods expansion will create vital opportunities for West Virginia farmers and entrepreneurs,” said Commissioner Kent Leonhart. “Once this project is complete, consumers should look forward to eating value-added meat products raised and processed right here in West Virginia. This is a win for the mountain state and a win for our livestock producers.”

Project goals include supply chain development, job training, as well as workforce and business development and opportunities for local farmers to participate in value-added product expansion. Costs covered by the grant include AML reclamation and remediation costs, land acquisition and related costs, site development, facility construction, meat processing equipment and operation costs.

For questions or more information, contact Annie Stroud at 304-925-4781 x114 or annie@beef.buzz

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