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PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY
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Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill receives Quest/McCallum Sweeney Certification

DANVILLE, Va., 7/6/2021 – The state’s largest premier megasite has now achieved another certification milestone that will continue to make it more attractive to potential developers. The Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill has received the highly coveted Quest (formerly McCallum Sweeney) **Megasite / Superpark certification** to validate the site’s readiness to companies looking for robust industrial sites. Having received the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) Tier 4 Certification in 2018 for the Superpark and the VEDP Tier 5 site certification for the Megasite pad site in 2019, this provides the localities both state and 3rd party engineering firm certifications. Domestic and international companies in major industry sectors seek to build new facilities on sites that are suitable for risk free development.

"Having the Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill certified by Quest Site Solutions is another example that the investments we have made in this site are worth it," said Bob Warren, Chairman of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors. "Quest Site Solutions is renowned for its work with transformative projects across the country, and this certification of the Southern Virginia Megasite will help us attract a transformative employer to our region. This designation is yet another validation of the time, energy, and money that has been invested in the site. The Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill is truly unique in its infrastructure, site readiness, and access to workforce, and this certification is the latest recognition of the site’s quality."

The Southern Virginia Megasite covers over 3,528 acres and has access to over 300 megawatts of electricity from American Electric Power, more than 5.75 million of gallons per day (MGD) of water, 3 MGD of sewer capacity, natural gas from the Transco Gas Pipeline that runs through the site, Class I rail service from Norfolk and Southern, and Terabyte fiber speeds. It has access to I-785 connecting it to the I-73, I-40 and I-85 corridors and is within 3.5 hours of the Port of Virginia by way of U.S. Highway 58. It is also in proximity to international air flights from the Piedmont Triad and Raleigh Durham International Airports. In addition, it is positioned in a labor shed that includes a half million employees and a population of over a million people with a workforce pipeline that extends from middle school through higher ed providing an array of certified skills and training to meet the skills of manufacturers.

"Quest Site Solutions is a leader in site evaluation and certification services," said Alonzo Jones, Mayor of the City of Danville. "Having such a highly-regarded team provide this certification elevates the visibility of the region on a global scale and enhances our ability to market this site to large end-users. This certification would not have been possible without the continued support from our local, regional, and state partners and is a large step forward in attracting a transformational project to the Southern Virginia region."

The recognition of site and talent development in tandem has repeatedly been referenced as an important element in industry recruitment. During a recent announcement Governor Northam commented, "Danville-Pittsylvania County has developed an inventory of business-ready sites and training programs to ensure a strong pipeline of skilled workers, enabling Southern Virginia to attract global businesses."

The Quest certification is a designation reserved for sites that are considered ready for business, assuring businesses and site consultants that the site is ready for any major industry or manufacturer that needs a large, unencumbered site, a strong transportation infrastructure and a solid labor supply. Sites require at least 1,000 acres, Interstate access, potential railroad access, and sufficient utility services. The site must also pass a number of due diligence studies to prove that any operations on the land would not damage the environmental, historical, or cultural nature of the area.

This certification demonstrates a state of readiness that puts it on the top of a limited list of large sites that can be developed quickly, since due diligence that companies need in order to make an informed decision on a site has already been completed. It is a competitive advantage for companies who look to invest in the region. In addition, the site is situated in the federally designated Opportunity Zone, the Virginia Enterprise Zone, and the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission footprint.

Since the early 2000's, third-party evaluations have become the seal of approval needed to speed the selection process in order to meet the lofty time lines of major company decision makers seeking to develop megasites, minimizing risk and time loss to companies. McCallum Sweeney which has now become part of the Quest Site Selections group, was one of the leaders in site certification from the early days with many of the large original equipment manufacturer (OEM) sites that have been developed across United States, particularly in the south east, bearing their stamp.

"I am extremely pleased that the investments of RIFA, as well as those from surrounding localities and utility providers, have been validated with this top-notch certification," said Ron Scarce, Vice-Chairman of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors and Vice-Chairman of the Regional Industrial Facility Authority. "The track record of sites that are certified by Quest Site Solutions is extremely strong, and I am confident that this certification will facilitate the arrival of new industry that will positively impact our entire region. This certification adds to the significant positive economic momentum Pittsylvania County, Danville, and our entire region is already experiencing."

The certification verifies the site's ability to meet criteria for Mega Site / Super Park certification that ensure the success of major development projects. It verifies that the due diligence has been completed in environmental site assessments, wetlands, species, archaeological and geotechnical areas. In addition, it assesses the transportation network in terms of highways, rail, port and airports. It also includes assessments of the community and labor force, the compatibility of utilities to provide reliable service at needed capacities inclusive of electric, gas, water, waste-water, and telecom.

"This is a significant milestone in the development of the Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill," said Sherman Saunders, Member of the Danville City Council and Chairman of the Danville Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority. "By receiving this highly coveted certification through Quest Site Solutions, we are providing reassurance to prospective industry that the region has taken the appropriate steps to prepare this site and extend infrastructure necessary to begin operations with ease. This, paired with our extraordinary workforce training programs, proves that Southern Virginia is invested in their future success."

In advising companies as to the mistakes to avoid in site selection, a 2019 Deloitte report stated, "Few corporate decisions have as many immediate and long-term implications on tax structure, cost of goods sold, supply chain, labor force, and overall operating success as the choice of location. Several factors have emerged to make site selection increasingly complex. These include: Fast-track expectations, globalization, strict environmental

legislation, tightening labor availability, scarcity of certain labor skills, and utility consolidation”. With each degree of complexity “Comes a new set of considerations requiring a higher degree of analysis to avoid risk and make the right certified-decision. Leading a site selection process requires a unique set of capabilities. The team must have the ability to logically analyze myriad factors, the savvy to negotiate and build consensus with management, and the judgement to remain unbiased throughout the process.”

The process is structured so a site is ready to go when opportunities arise so that a company can accommodate its strategic timeline and locate operations on the Certified site within 18 to 24 months. It is becoming increasingly rare for companies to select an undeveloped, unimproved property on which to locate or expand their business. If these companies cannot find an existing building to suit their needs, they strongly prefer shovel-ready sites with a substantial amount of due diligence already completed.

The study was funded by the Danville Regional Foundation and supported by work from the Southern Virginia Regional Alliance, the City of Danville, Pittsylvania County and Dewberry, who managed the engineering process locally. Site development efforts have local, regional, multi-state and federal support to include the City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, the DanvillePittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority, the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the state of North Carolina, Golden Leaf Foundation, and the City of Eden, North Carolina.

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About Southern Virginia Regional Alliance

The Southern Virginia Regional Alliance (SVRA) is a regional economic development organization whose mission is to collaborate to create a strong economy that will enhance the region’s tax base and maintain a high standard of living and sustained quality of life for its citizens, while sharing this vision and opportunity with others that can contribute to these outcomes.