



## Gloucester Department of Community Engagement and Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Growing business in Gloucester topic of breakfast forum**

A myriad of creative ideas came out of a business forum, “Growing Gloucester Forward,” which was hosted Wednesday morning by the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors at American Legion Post 75, White Marsh.

Approximately 75 business and government leaders broke into small groups during the event to discuss ideas on how Gloucester can be more business-friendly and how to make the County more attractive overall to the business community.

Several of the recurring themes during the two-hour forum were education and outreach. One of the main driving forces that brings people to Gloucester who want to open a business is the quality of the school system.

As far as outreach, it was suggested business owners whose businesses extend out of Gloucester County could be trained as “ambassadors” to other communities.

Another idea was offered that would provide a “roadmap” for expanding business in Gloucester. This would include a liaison - perhaps another business owner - who has successfully navigated the waters, to guide others through the process. This liaison could be an additional asset to the County’s Economic Development department, which currently works regularly with businesses to help them thrive in the community.

Another participant said one of the keys to selling business in Gloucester is to restore and refurbish existing buildings in the County. An example was given saying that the Gloucester Point corridor is one prime example of what people see when they are first entering the community. The board of supervisors has made improvements to the corridor one of its priorities for the coming months.

Others said making Gloucester a destination is key to the success of its businesses. Rather than making Gloucester a day trip, efforts should be made to encourage people to come and stay for several days or a week.

Another common theme of the forum was the need for action to be taken to ensure that there is controlled growth in the community. Wanting to grow, while maintaining the small town feel of Gloucester was noted as important to most business owners and citizens.

Finally, there was some discussion on infrastructure needs to help support business, including broadband internet and the implications of tolls on the George P. Coleman Bridge.

In wrapping up the forum, J.J. Orth, Abingdon district representative on the board of supervisors, expressed his appreciation for all of the input and said none of the suggestions would be taken lightly. He also said he hopes this is the first of many similar discussions that will be taken place to help facilitate business growth in the community.

The forum was co-sponsored by the Gloucester Main Street Preservation Trust, the Gloucester Main Street Association and Gloucester Economic Development.

For more information, contact the Community Engagement and Public Information office at 804-693-5730 or e-mail [qsheppard@gloucesterva.info](mailto:qsheppard@gloucesterva.info).

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#End of announcement