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Virginia trip educates leaders

Marketing, planning urged

By Andrea Uhde

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A recent trip that Oldham leaders and developers took to the Richmond, Va., area helped focus new attention on communications, planning and regionalism, said Joe Schoenbaechler, executive director of the Oldham County Economic Development Authority.

Fifteen people went on the two-day tour of Hanover County, a community north of Richmond that's been identified as a big twin to Oldham, Schoenbaechler said. The authority organized the trip.

"We learned a variety of things both from their government perspective, which had a lot to do with planning that they do" and their approach to marketing the region and attracting businesses, Schoenbaechler said.

He said the local government has a five-year plan and "we could see there was certainly a value to knowing well ahead of time what your goals and what your objectives would do."

He said they also see a need to increase the county's activities with Greater Louisville Inc. to form a partnership that helps Oldham attract more business.

Hanover has 100,000 residents, or about 40,000 more than Oldham, and its largest city shares similarities with La Grange, including a train that runs through the center of town.

The authority looked at 121 counties in 14 metropolitan areas often seen as Louisville's competitors, and it identified Hanover as a place with similar growth rates, income levels and education, among other things.

But Hanover is more developed, with 3,500 businesses.

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