

PRESS RELEASE:

TAZEWELL, VIRGINIA ISSUED BDO ZONE ‘A’ RATING FOR WOODY BIOMASS

– ‘A’ Rating to Advance the Bioeconomy in Virginia –

September 28th, 2023



Tazewell, Virginia issued BDO Zone ‘A’ rating for 625,000 green tons per year of woody biomass.

The [ATIP Foundation](#), [Ecostrat](#), [Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission](#) and the [Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority](#) are pleased to announce the issue of a new Bioeconomy Development Opportunity (BDO) Zone rating for woody biomass.

Funded by the US Department of Agriculture through a Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG), the “Advancing the Bioeconomy in Virginia” Initiative’s primary focus is on business development and job creation through the conversion of waste wood to jet fuel. These efforts are led by the ATIP Foundation, in partnership with Ecostrat, Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC), The Center for Risk Management of Engineering Systems at the University of Virginia (UVA), Commonwealth Center for Advanced Logistics Systems (CCALS), and Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA).

Wes Jurey, President & CEO of ATIP Foundation emphasized, “Advancing the Bioeconomy in Virginia is a comprehensive approach to establishing the Bioeconomy in a 12 County Region in western Virginia. Similar to city bond ratings, this BDO Zone ‘A’ rating should encourage investment opportunities within the bioeconomy cluster in Virginia.”

The Tazewell, VA BDO Zone is rated ‘A’, reflecting “high quality”, attributed to the region's abundance of small-diameter roundwood and forest residues. Currently, there is minimal competition for biomass within the area along with significant biomass resources at favorable prices, forming a robust foundation for substantial biomass-based initiatives. The well-established terminal infrastructure and the 180-acre development site contribute to this advantage, along with versatile zoning, convenient access to natural gas, and close proximity to the interstate highway system. Extending across a 75-mile drive radius from Tazewell, the BDO Zone generates an impressive 625,000 green tons of woody biomass annually.

Jonathan S. Belcher, Executive Director/General Counsel, Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority stated, “Wood products and energy are two very important and significant industry sectors in this region, and the BDO Zone is a great interconnection between those two important sectors. We look forward to the jobs and economic opportunities which this designation positions the region to attract, and for the hard work of all those involved in this innovative project for the area.”

Scotty Wampler, Executive Director, Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC) added, “The BDO Zone designation for Tazewell County provides a valuable marketing tool in the region’s efforts to promote effective economic diversification. We have every confidence this innovative approach to economic development in the coalfields will serve the region well in the coming years.”

The Tazewell BDO Zone marks a significant milestone as the first-ever BDO Zone rating for Forest Residues, Pulpwood, and Sawmill Residues within the state of Virginia. This achievement underscores the dedication and innovation that have driven this partnership to establish a pioneering model.

Jordan Solomon, Chairman of the BDO Zone Initiative, added, “This achievement is a direct outcome of the seamless collaboration among a diverse team of organizations, all united in their mission to propel the bioeconomy within the vibrant 12 County Region of western Virginia. Government backing through the USDA's RBDG program has been instrumental in recognizing the significance of projects centered on biomass. This significant milestone not only underscores the region’s dedication to innovation and sustainable economic growth but also paves the way for groundbreaking bio-based investment prospects within the region.”

To see the full BDO Zone Rating for Tazewell please click [here](#), or visit www.bdozone.org.

About Tazewell County

Nestled in the heart of the scenic Appalachia, Tazewell County embodies the essence of Southwest Virginia's natural beauty. Surrounded by the majestic Back of the Dragon mountains, the meandering Clinch River, and expansive farmlands, Tazewell invites you to experience the region's stunning landscapes and outdoor adventures.

Tazewell County, situated in central Virginia, offers an attractive demographic backdrop for economic growth. With a 2023 population of 39,034, the region boasts a robust employment count of 15,680 individuals and impressively low unemployment at just 4.4%, signaling a thriving and stable labor market that makes it an appealing destination for investment.

Complementing this vibrant community is the Bluestone Business Park, an exceptional investment opportunity in Tazewell County, Virginia. Spanning 180 acres, this mixed-use development offers versatile land use options and enjoys a strategic location along US 460, providing seamless access to major highways. Its proximity to Virginia Tech, participation in the Virginia Enterprise Zone program, and a range of pre-graded sites, including a 40,000 ft² speculative building, ensure cost-effective operations for businesses, making it a dynamic hub for research, technology, and advanced manufacturing.

Tazewell County's strategic positioning at the crossroads of major interstate highways opens the gateway to over half of the U.S. population within a day's drive. A robust rail network served by CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern, along with the presence of leading IT, data center, and manufacturing companies, underpin the region's industrial potential. Furthermore, the nearby Port of Virginia, a prominent global gateway, facilitates seamless connectivity to international markets.

In summary, Tazewell County offers a harmonious blend of natural splendor, economic vitality, and strategic advantages. It beckons businesses and individuals alike to be part of a thriving and connected community, where nature's playground meets unparalleled accessibility and opportunity.

About ATIP Foundation

The ATIP Foundation launched the Advancing the Bioeconomy in Virginia in 2022, making significant progress on four primary objectives: (1) a GIS Database of all bio waste in the region we are serving; (2) the development of partnerships among local, county, and regional stakeholders; (3) recruitment of business and industry; and (4) in our first year, completion of an analysis by Ecostrat, one of our project partners, to evaluate the potential for financial institutions to invest in the development of the bioeconomy sector in Virginia.

For more information about the **ATIP Foundation**, visit www.atipfoundation.com or contact **Wes Jurey, President & CEO** at wesjurey@gmail.com.

About the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC)

The Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC) serves the Virginia coalfield counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Tazewell. As an Economic Development District designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, CPPDC provides project development and project management assistance to its four member counties and their 12 towns and works to support economic development, quality of life and strategic planning efforts throughout the district.

For more information about the **Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission**, visit www.cppdc.com. The BDO Zone Local Development Leader (LDL) is **Scotty Wampler, Executive Director** (swampler@cppdc.org).

About Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority and Southwest Virginia's e-Region

The Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA), created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1988 to enhance and diversify the region's economy and help create jobs, markets Southwest Virginia's e-Region and its focus on electronic information technology, energy, education, emerging technologies, and entrepreneurship. Located in Southwestern Virginia, the region includes Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, and Wise counties and the City of Norton.

For more information visit www.vceda.us, www.e-region.org or contact **Jonathan S. Belcher, Executive Director/General Counsel** (jonathan@vceda.us).

About *The BDO Zone Initiative*

The BDO Zone Initiative is an economic development platform that enables local communities to deploy powerful economic development tools – BDO Zone Ratings – to drive, accelerate, and catalyze biobased investment and commercial project development in BDO Zones.

A BDO Zone rating is a standards-based technical risk assessment of biomass feedstock, supply chain, and infrastructure attributes of a region with respect to the feasibility and development potential of new biofuel, renewable chemical, biogas, bioproduct, or clean hydrogen plants.

BDO Zone ratings help regions and communities attract new biobased project development and participate in the growing global bioeconomy by demonstrating the maturity of local biomass supply chains and whether or not they are developed enough to support biobased manufacturing without excessive risk.

For more information on the **BDO Zone Initiative**, please contact info@bdozone.org. To view all current and upcoming BDO Zone designations, visit www.bdozone.org or check out the BDO Zone [LinkedIn](#) page for all news and updates.

About Ecostrat

Ecostrat is the North American Leader in supplying biomass due diligence for biofuels, renewable chemicals, biogas, and bio-product project development and finance. Ecostrat led the USDOE/BETO funded project to develop the new investment [Standards and Ratings for Biomass Supply Chain Risk](#) which were subsequently used in the development of the [CSA W209:21 Biomass supply chain risk National Standard of Canada](#).

The Advisory Group combines the BSCR Standards with powerful predictive analytics to understand and minimize supply chain risk. The Biomass Supply Group has 25 years of experience in sourcing and supplying more than 5 million tons of biomass feedstock for bioenergy, biofuel, and biochemical projects across North America.

Jordan Solomon is Chairman of the BDO Zone Initiative and President of Ecostrat. He has overseen the development and operation of biomass supply chains for more than 5,000,000 tons of feedstock over two decades for bioenergy, biofuel, and biochemical projects.

Jordan Solomon can be reached at jordan.solomon@ecostrat.com. For more information about **Ecostrat**, visit the company's website at www.ecostrat.com/standards or check out the Ecostrat [LinkedIn](#) page for all news and updates.