



Joint Yancey County Planning & Economic Development Commission
& Yancey County Government Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17 February 2019

**Yancey County Economic Development Commission, County Commissioners
Respond to Confirmation of Closure of Hickory Springs Manufacturing's
Micaville Facility**

In a telephone conversation with Darrell Bryant, Vice President of Human Resources for HSM, the parent company of Hickory Springs Manufacturing, on the morning of 17 February 2020, Yancey County Economic Development Director Jamie McMahan received formal confirmation from the company that the permanent closure of Hickory Springs' Micaville facility in Yancey County would occur between April 23 and May 6, 2020.

Inquiries regarding the plant's closure were received by the Yancey County Economic Development Commission the preceding week from members of the public. Prompted by those inquiries in an initial call to local plant management in Micaville on Friday, February 14 Yancey EDC Director Jamie McMahan asked whether plans for a closure of the facility had been announced. He was informed at that time that no plans had been announced but was also told that HSM's corporate management had scheduled a meeting with employees at the facility to occur at 3:00 o'clock p.m. later that afternoon. McMahan made a follow-up telephone call to HSM VP Bryant on the morning of February 17 and was informed of the closure at that time with the explanation that HSM wanted to ensure that its workers had been notified of the decision to close the facility by the company directly prior to any formal public announcement being made.

“I am saddened to hear that such a pillar of our workforce community is closing its doors. Hickory Springs has been a great employer for many years to many people. We will work to support these employees during this period of transition” said Yancey County Manager Lynn Austin, responding to the news.

“Hickory Springs has been an employer in our community and a corporate citizen of Yancey County for more than fifty years and we are sad to hear that their Micaville facility will be closing” said EDC Director McMahan. “Our primary concern at Yancey EDC is for a smooth transition, working with HSM to make sure that the employees at the Micaville facility find alternative employment as swiftly as possible. I am very encouraged from my conversations with the human resources department at HSM that they will work with us to make sure this happens effectively, either finding employees positions at other HSM facilities or making sure that they have the resources to locate gainful employment elsewhere as soon as possible. The company has already assigned a team to this transition process and as of this morning my office has been in touch with staff at the NC Department of Commerce and our local NC Works Career Center to assist with that process from our end as well. While a plant closure is never good news for a community, we are fortunate to currently be experiencing a robust labor market with many hiring opportunities in our county and within easy commuting distance in our region and I’m confident those who want to find a well-paying job elsewhere will be able to do that relatively quickly.” added McMahan.

According to the company formal closure of the Micaville facility will be completed sometime between April 23 and May 6, 2020 to allow for the orderly conclusion of business at the facility and to allow ample time for the employees to make the transition. “We are saddened with the news from a wonderful corporate partner here in Yancey County as Hickory Springs has made its decision to close its Yancey County operation. Hickory Springs has been a great asset to the county’s economy for so long, employing so many faithful people. We want to offer any and all help we can within our ability to reestablish employment as soon as possible. Thank you to all employees of Hickory Springs Manufacturing” said Yancey County Commission Chair Jeff Whitson in an official statement on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners. “Though we are sad to hear this news, we are appreciative that the company is giving workers a two-month window to get an early start on making alternative plans to find work and begin their job search” said Yancey County Commissioner Jill Austin.

Further details will be provided to the public as they are made available by the company and received by Yancey EDC or the office of the Yancey County Manager.

###