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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Craven County Hires New Economic Development Director**

NEW BERN, N.C. – Jeff Wood of Morgantown, West Virginia has been selected as Craven County's new Economic Development Director. Wood currently serves as Director of Economic Development for the West Virginia National Guard in Charleston, West Virginia where he manages a staff of 30, provides day to day management of a \$150 million dollar flood recovery program and directs the efforts of the West Virginia National Guard in regards to community and economic development.

Wood manages relationships for the Guard of over a million acres of private land where the Guard performs various types of training. As Economic Development Director for the West Virginia National Guard, Wood negotiated to create a public-private partnership that includes 10,000 acres of private land and a \$5.2 million dollar investment from the United States Department of Interior for the planting of up to three million apple trees to create the Patriot Gardens agriculture diversification program designed to assist West Virginia National Guard Veterans experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder with community reentry and employment opportunities. Wood designed the program along with the landowner and the apple industry to ensure the apple trees would provide varieties to attract food manufacturing to the area for decades to come. The entire project was at no cost to the West Virginia National Guard, but royalties from a portion of the trees will go to the Guard tuition reimbursement program.

Wood has more than 15 years of experience in economic development with a successful track record of winning projects for his communities that lead to job creation and new industry. In addition to his current position, Wood has served as a Project Manager for the Florence County Economic Development Partnership in Florence, South Carolina where his efforts led to the announcement of Otis Elevator establishing in Florence County and creating 360 jobs and providing a \$40 million investment and he made a successful application to the South Carolina Coordinating Council for two projects where nearly \$3 million was obtained to assist in the creation of over 500 jobs. Wood also served as an Energy Development Specialist with the West Virginia Division of Energy in Charleston, West Virginia where his efforts led to the announcement of the West Virginia National Guard Mine Resistant Ambushed Protected training facility on surface mine property to be used to train soldiers before they were deployed to war and an infusion of \$9.4 million into the local economy.

Wood served as the Director of Business Development for Mid-Atlantic Technology Research and Innovation Center (MATRIC) in South Charleston, West Virginia and as Vice President of the Business Industrial Development Corporation/Charleston Area Alliance in Charleston West Virginia,

where he was the lead person on the creation of MATRIC and promoted MATRIC's technical assistance program to entrepreneurs within the state of West Virginia.

Wood earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Service Administration with a minor in Business and Economics from the West Virginia University Institute of Technology and he completed the International Economic Development Council program of study from the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute.

Jack Veit, Craven County Manager, stated, "We are very excited to add Jeff and his experience to Team Craven. He has the skill set, success record, and knowledge we need in our next economic development director to help take Craven County's Economic Development program to the next level."

Wood was selected from a competitive applicant pool obtained in a nationwide search Craven County conducted to fill this position and he begins work as Craven County's Economic Development Director on January 9, 2019, with an annual salary of \$92,162.

The Economic Development Director is responsible for implementation of economic development initiatives on a county-wide basis including recruiting new businesses, working to expand existing businesses and developing a strong, sustainable economic development program for Craven County. The Economic Development Director also serves as the Director of the Craven 100 Alliance (C1A) a public-private alliance formed in 2014 that collaborates on long-term planning and sets the direction for economic development in Craven County.

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