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Central Virginia Region Could Lose 24,000 to 38,000 Jobs Due to COVID-19

Charlottesville, Va. (April 30, 2020) – The Central Virginia region may lose between 24,000 and 38,000 jobs as the COVID-19 induced recession peaks by the end of June 2020, according to a preliminary study from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. Across the state, initial unemployment insurance claims have started to drop, but pandemic triggered job losses are expected to continue into the third quarter of 2020. Virginia job losses could peak between 600,000 and 1 million jobs as a result of the pandemic.

Unemployment levels in the Central Virginia region, which includes the City of Charlottesville, and the Counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson and Orange, could reach between 13% and 21%. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, this region's unemployment levels had been trending downward and were at 2.9% in February 2020.

"Before the pandemic, the Central Virginia region had one of the lowest unemployment levels in all of Virginia," said Helen Cauthen, president of the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development. "Overnight, our organization has shifted from attracting new business to responding to COVID-19."

The most impacted industry was accommodation and food service, which could experience 8,860 to 12,744 jobs lost. Retail trade was the next most impacted industry with 2,541 to 4,661 potential jobs lost. Both of these industries are among the lowest paying in the Central Virginia region with average yearly wages at \$19,803 and \$29,267, respectively.

The Central Virginia Partnership is proactively working with its economic developers representing its nine partner localities, seven chambers of commerce in the region, the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center, the Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center, and the University of Virginia, to lead a collaborative forum to learn about local challenges, explore creative solutions and develop action-oriented strategies. "After the initial evaluation of the new business climate, we recognized we

we're all in this together," stated Alan Yost, Greene County director of economic development and tourism. "It was encouraging to share our challenges and possible solutions. The collaboration between localities and a variety of organizations has developed unique initiatives. Our On-line Farmers Market and e-Commerce initiatives are just a couple of examples."

"As a collaboration of business, government and higher education," said John Egertson, Culpeper County Administrator and current chairman of the Partnership's board, "the Partnership is uniquely positioned to advance innovative strategies for regional economic prosperity. The Partnership is working to better understand our region's challenges in order to proactively address them."

The Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development serves economic development needs in the City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson and Orange. Helen Cauthen is the president.

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