

For Immediate Release

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**ROANOKE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT WINS WEBSITE AWARD
*REDESIGNED SITE OFFERS NEW TECHNOLOGIES, FEATURES, AND SERVICES***

ROANOKE COUNTY, VA (September 1, 2011) - The Roanoke County Department of Economic Development recently received an award through the Southern Economic Development Council's 2011 Communication Awards Competition for the department's newly redesigned website. The competition is open to economic development organizations in 17 states across the American South. This year, the Council received more than 100 entries in 20 categories.

The Economic Development Department officially launched its new website to the public in April of this year. The site includes new tools and user-friendly features geared toward assisting companies and site selection consultants with community demographic and real estate information. Site visitors are encouraged to watch economic development videos, sign up for text message or email alerts related to economic development in Roanoke County, and connect with the County through Facebook and Twitter.

The site also provides features for users who are on-the-go with a mobile version of the website designed specifically for easy access on smart phone browsers. Visitors to the new website can also download two free iPhone Apps that allow users to quickly search for businesses, services and facilities in the community.

The Department's entry was designated "Superior." The Superior ranking is the highest award given in each category, recognizing excellence in design and function for communication related projects within the economic development community. Roanoke County competed in the "Large Division" category (communities with budgets over \$500,000).

The judging criteria for the multi-media and website awards category included:

- 1- Appearance/Visual Integrity
- 2- Clarity of Message
- 3- Message - Does the message have impact?
- 4- Concept - How clever or unique is the concept/idea

Judges for the Communications Awards Competition are economic development consultants, practitioners and design professionals from across the southern U.S. that work with clients in developing strategies for growth in their communities. "We are most proud of the fact that we are recognized at the highest level by our professional peer group for excellence in our website. This validates our goal of creating a user-friendly site for corporations and consultants to access when they are searching for a new business location," said Jill Loope, Acting Director of the Roanoke County

Department of Economic Development. The website was designed in cooperation with CivicPlus, a national leader in community engagement technology that has designed and developed over 900 local government websites for cities and counties throughout North America. CivicPlus was recently selected by Inc. Magazine as One of the Fastest-Growing Privately Held Companies in the U.S.

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About SEDC

Tracing its roots to 1946, the Southern Economic Development Council is the oldest and largest regional economic development association in North America, representing 17 states in the American South and including a network of more than 1,200 economic development professionals.

About CivicPlus

CivicPlus develops, designs and manages award-winning community engagement systems that use advanced technology to connect people with government in new, more efficient ways. Founded in 2001 in Manhattan, KS, CivicPlus serves nearly 900 cities and counties throughout North America with cost-effective website solutions for communities of all sizes. The innovative CivicPlus Government Content Management System™ includes more than 60 customizable, integrated eGovernment applications including Citizen Request Tracker™, MuniMobile™, Facebook and economic development tools. Over the past two years, CivicPlus has won more than 190 website awards, including the Center for Digital Government's Best Fit Integrator Award of 2009 for delivering extraordinary digital solutions to public IT projects.