



MARYLAND — More than a year after legislation allowing for the private manufacturing and retail sales of medical marijuana, Maryland set a Nov. 6, 2015, deadline for growers, processors, and dispensaries to apply for business licenses. The state received more than 1,000 applications. Among them were 146 applications for growing facilities and 811 for dispensaries — far above the available 15 licenses for growing and 94 for dispensaries. Preliminary licenses were originally expected to be issued in January 2016, but the large number of applicants has caused the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission to extend the review process indefinitely. Once preliminary licenses are issued, businesses will have one year to complete the final requirements and request a final inspection.



NORTH CAROLINA — Honda Aircraft Co., the aviation arm of Honda Motor Co., delivered its first business jet — the HA-420 HondaJet — just before Christmas 2015. The jet is manufactured in Greensboro, N.C., where Honda Aircraft Co. is headquartered and is part of a growing aviation cluster. The company employs about 1,700 people and builds four jets per month. The jet, which can be configured for up to seven people, was certified as airworthy by U.S. regulators in early December 2015, paving the way for filling more than 100 HondaJet orders.



SOUTH CAROLINA — Despite historic flooding in October 2015, economists in South Carolina said the economy is strong going into 2016. The findings were released at a December economic outlook conference at the University of South Carolina, which also estimated that the final cost of the flood may exceed Hurricane Hugo's \$7 billion price tag. USC economists predicted the rebuilding effort will create a temporary stimulus, potentially adding a 0.5 percentage point to statewide employment growth in 2016.



VIRGINIA — As part of the fiscal year 2017-2018 budget, Gov. Terry McAuliffe has proposed a \$2.43 billion bond package that would fund a wide range of investments to help diversify the state's economy. It includes \$850 million for research-oriented projects at four-year colleges and universities and \$214 million primarily for expanding STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs at community colleges. Money is also allotted for developing state parks, improving wastewater treatment systems, and enhancing capacity and operations at the Port of Virginia. The bond package is subject to approval by the Virginia General Assembly.



WASHINGTON, D.C. — The District has agreed to pay the U.S. Army \$22.5 million for just over 66 acres of the former campus of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, which moved to Bethesda, Md., in 2011. A proposed two-decade project would result in a mixed-use development site containing residences, charter schools, office space, homes for homeless veterans, and more. It is expected to create more than 2,000 construction jobs and to bring in more than \$30 million in new annual tax revenue once completed.



WEST VIRGINIA — West Virginia has lately been making strides in renewable energy. In November, Canadian developer Enbridge purchased a 103-megawatt wind farm in Grant County for \$200 million, with operations expected to begin in December 2016. Then in December, Enbridge entered into an agreement with San Francisco-based software firm Salesforce that requires Salesforce to buy 125,000 megawatt-hours of electricity annually from the new wind farm over 12 years. The regional grid currently powers most of Salesforce's data center load.