



MARYLAND — Medical supply manufacturer Medline announced in December 2017 that it will build a new 1.1 million-square-foot distribution center in Perryville. The Illinois-based firm's new facility will replace one in Havre de Grace. The center is expected to provide 200 new jobs over six years and, including the current workforce, will bring the total number of jobs to more than 300. Construction is expected to begin in 2018 with an opening in late 2018 or early 2019.



NORTH CAROLINA — In February, the newest session of the NC Farm School began giving guidance to farmers and aspiring farmers looking to start a new operation or diversify an existing farm. The four-month program consists of eight business planning seminars taught by experienced farmers and NC State University specialists who help students create viable business plans; it also offers tours of economically sustainable farms and introduces students to local agents who help them follow through with their plans and connect them to local resources. The program has been running since 2012 and is a partnership of NC State's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics and NC State Extension.



SOUTH CAROLINA — In December 2017, Samsung announced a five-year partnership with the state, Clemson University, and the University of South Carolina to advance high-tech manufacturing research and development. The R&D program, named the Palmetto Consortium for Home Appliance Innovation, is designed to foster innovation and collaboration while developing a new generation of manufacturing professionals in South Carolina. Research is expected to occur in consumer electronics, energy efficient technology, sensor technology, and other areas.



VIRGINIA — The first U.S. manufacturing plant of American Merchant will be located in Bristol, the company announced in December 2017. American Merchant is a newly formed subsidiary of Hong Kong-based home textile manufacturer Merchant House International Ltd. Merchant House will invest \$19.9 million in the new textile plant, which will focus on home décor products. It is expected to bring more than 400 jobs to the region, with funding for employee training being provided by the Virginia Jobs Investment Program. American Merchant says it hopes to start production in early 2019.



WASHINGTON, D.C. — At the end of 2017, D.C.'s office leasing activity was 43 percent below its 10-year average, according to the Washington, D.C. Economic Partnership's 2017-2018 Development Report released in mid-December. The report found that the main reason for the slowdown was lower federal government leasing, likely due to a large reorganization occurring at the General Services Administration. A steep decline in new leases for co-working spaces was also a contributing factor. In 2017, there were 198,000 square feet leased to co-working spaces, as opposed to 380,000 square feet in 2016.



WEST VIRGINIA — An opioid crisis is engulfing the nation, and economists at West Virginia University say it is the biggest inhibitor to the state's economy. In November 2017, the university's Bureau of Business and Economic Research estimated that the opioid crisis is responsible for a \$1 billion void in the state's economy. That figure includes productivity loss from deaths and reduced productive hours and the cost of resources such as substance abuse treatment and law enforcement. West Virginia has been one of the hardest-hit states in the nation, having the most opioid overdose deaths per 100,000 people in 2016.