



Your Guide TO DOING BUSINESS WITH West Virginia Department of Transportation



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WEST VIRGINIA WINS \$500M HYPERLOOP CERTIFICATION FACILITY

Approximately 18 months ago, West Virginia set a goal of establishing itself as a cradle for developing new technology. That effort bore its largest fruit so far Oct. 8, when Virgin Hyperloop One chose an 800-acre site in the Mountain State for the \$500 million Hyperloop Certification Facility, a 6-mi. test track where the U.S. Department of Transportation will verify the safety of the new technology. The site is a former coal mine that straddles Tucker and Grant counties, south of the thin strip of far-western Maryland.

The certification facility, which will take at least five years to build, is a key step in the development of hyperloop technology, which Virgin Hyperloop claims can move passengers or freight at more than 500 mph in pods that travel through low-pressure tubes without creating pollution.

Virgin chose the West Virginia proposal over about a dozen others, including one from planners in Columbus, Ohio, who have proposed a hyperloop system linking their city with Pittsburgh and Chicago.

West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice teamed with West Virginia University (WVU) and others in early 2019 to form a consortium to retain and attract startup companies, support emerging growth companies and recruit "large, globally significant" operations to the state, said Sarah Biller, executive director of Vantage Ventures in WVU's John Chambers College of Business and Economics.

"Of all the efforts we've made, this is the biggest prize and we're thrilled Virgin Hyperloop has chosen West Virginia," Biller said in interview after the announcement in Charleston. "I think they were really surprised to find this 360-degree perspective they needed was available in West Virginia."

Ryan Kelly, vice president of marketing and communications of Virgin Hyperloop, said the 800 acres donated to the project by developer Western Pocahontas Properties was a key to picking the West Virginia proposal. That — and the public-private partnership of government, higher education and industry — won the day, Kelly said. "West Virginia put together a package that covered everything we need," he added. Biller also cited the availability of free property from one owner, which eliminated the need to assemble a series of parcels from various owners.

"In this case, it's a significant benefit to get the property from one owner," she said. "It's not only free, it's frictionless. It is almost a seven-mile-long site and in many instances that can be a problem [if there are multiple owners]."

Justice called the announcement "a fantastic day" for West Virginia. The project is expected to create 7,300 construction and manufacturing jobs over the next five years and 6,000 permanent jobs, including 150 to 200 engineers.

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About The WVDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on WVDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.



About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with WVDOT as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program. We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

HOW TO PREP YOUR WHEEL LOADERS FOR WINTER WORK

Metal Pless product pro's top tips to make sure your fleet & operators are covered

As wheel loaders continue to play a larger role in snow removal, many contractors and state and local municipalities are taking steps to help their fleet's wheel loaders be more productive in snow-removal applications during periods when construction work is on hold. And the opportunities to gain new clients and more work is two-fold: engaging clients for snow removal jobs during the winter could turn into construction projects from those same clients in the spring. Diversifying your firm's offerings can only help in the long run. The following list features a few things to keep in mind if you're considering multitasking your equipment this winter.

Attachments

With the right combination of wheel loader and plow attachment, a wheel loader operator can plow more than 10 acres an hour. You will want to check with your equipment dealer for assistance selecting the right attachments for your wheel loader. Relatively new to the United States, hydraulic snow blades have been in heavy use in Canada for many years.

As with other equipment exposed to extreme winter weather, these expandable snow blades require special use and maintenance care. When it comes to teaming hydraulic snow blades with wheel loaders, Jason Whittemore, sales manager for snow removal equipment manufacturer and distributor Metal Pless, provides expert insight.

"The weight of the loader and traction ability—the type of tire used—are key factors for properly matching the size of the snow blade to the loader," Whittemore said. "For example, a 25,000-pound wheel loader with good snow tires can handle a bigger blade than a 30,000-pound loader with regular tires."

Moldboard

Whittemore added that the size of the moldboard is another consideration. "A 12-22 unit has a 12-foot moldboard and 5-foot wings; while a 10-22 unit has a 10-foot moldboard and 6-foot wings. The wings contain the load of snow being plowed, enhance safety and direct the snow where the operator needs it to go," he said. He noted that the combination of three-spool hydraulic controls and a quick coupler available on some wheel loaders, for example, allows for fast switching between a bucket and a fully controllable snow blade.

Blade Position

According to Whittemore, it's fairly easy to learn how to position hydraulic snow blades. "The key is in finding the correct height and dumping/tilting angle," he said. "Once it's set, leave it there." He noted that leveling guides on their blades allow the operator to match black- and red-colored pieces on the blade for proper leveling.

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Supportive Services Offered:

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CEI is an educational organization providing the highest quality construction training in the industry. Over 100,000 owners, estimators, project managers, field supervisors, office support staff, foremen, laborers, and key management personnel have attended courses that are offered nationwide. The courses provide students with construction skills training and the critical information needed to be effective within their companies and organizations.