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News Release
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VOLVO ANNOUNCES THE CLOSURE OF ASHEVILLE MANUFACTURING FACILITY

Asheville, NC – Earlier today Volvo Construction Equipment (Volvo CE) announced the consolidation of its North American industrial operations. As a result of this restructuring the Asheville, NC manufacturing facility will shut its doors by March 31, 2010. The closing will eliminate the jobs of Volvo's 228 employees at the manufacturing plant. Volvo's corporate office and Volvo Rents are completely unaffected by the factory closing.

In 2006 Buncombe County and the State of North Carolina awarded Volvo incentives to expand its operations in Asheville. However, Volvo never received any local or state funds because they did not meet the agreed criteria outlined in the incentive agreement. "What is important now is how our community can pull together to support these families and help them find new jobs here in Buncombe County" said County Commission Chairman David Gantt.

The Employment Security Commission (ESC), in conjunction with the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board and Joblink Career Center, will begin working with Volvo's employees in the coming weeks to discuss their options. "We are prepared to work with the employees to provide assistance with resume writing, interview preparation, and retraining opportunities through technical schools such as A-B Tech," said Rick Elingburg with the Employment Security Commission's rapid response team.

The EDC has already begun discussions with other manufacturers in the community to encourage them to interview the highly trained workforce from Volvo for any available positions. "We are optimistic that these talented workers will find employment in our community. In the coming weeks we anticipate some expansion announcements that may be able to absorb some of these individuals," said Bob Roberts, Chair of the EDC. The EDC and the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce are also hosting the Homecoming Job Fair on December 29 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Biltmore Square Mall. The job fair will showcase employment opportunities at over 50 companies in Buncombe County.

The City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and the EDC are constantly working to bring manufacturing facilities to the area. Community leaders look forward to working with Volvo to bring another company into the space. "A facility of this size, with these amenities, is an extremely attractive piece of property to manufacturers. A well cared for facility, the possibility of rail service, ease of access from major highways, and the designation as a foreign trade zone are all assets that manufacturers look for and are available in this space," said Ben Teague, Executive Director of the EDC.

The EDC for Asheville-Buncombe County is a public-private partnership committed to: creating and retaining high quality jobs, community leadership, and being a resource for better business decisions. The EDC accomplishes this mission through its four core services: business retention & expansion, small business & entrepreneurship, research, and marketing & recruitment. The EDC is funded by Buncombe County, the City of Asheville, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Advantage Asheville Campaign.

The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce is a 2,100+ member organization representing 86,000 employees. Chamber members collaborate with community organizations and coalitions to support the community and each other with the mission of increasing the region's livability by advancing its economic vitality. The Asheville Chamber works diligently to ensure that Asheville continues to prosper while also protecting the natural beauty of the area. In 2006, the Chamber moved to a new location and is now home to the 4,000 square foot Visitor Center which welcomes 200,000 visitors per year.

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