



Jim Spencer
BEDA Executive Director

Jim Spencer was hired by the City of Bluefield Board of Directors in 2015 as the Community & Economic Development Director after retiring as the County Administrator for Tazewell County, VA. He also became the Executive Director for the Bluefield WV Economic Development Authority (BEDA) when it was created in 2019.

Jim is a graduate of Bluefield State University (HBCU) with a BS in Applied Science and BS in Civil Engineering Technology. Jim worked for Tazewell County, VA for 23 years; first as their Public Service Authority Administrator and later County Administrator. In 2012 he won the Governor of Virginia's award for the "Most Innovative Use of Technology in Economic Development for the Virtual Marketing Assistance Program. In 2004, Jim was appointed by Governor Warner to serve on the Virginia Resources Authority Board of Directors (VRA). He was reappointed by Governor Kaine and Governor McDonnell and served 8 of his 12 years on the VRA as Vice-chair. Jim was involved in over \$120 million in capital projects while with Tazewell County with over half funded by grants.

Jim's accolades continue in West Virginia where he developed the Commercialization Station, a mixed-use incubator focusing on manufacturing, which was funded by a \$2.04 million EDA POWER Grant matched with local funding. In addition, Jim helped secure \$3.65 million in grant funding to develop "shovel-ready" pads at the City's Property at Interstate 77 at Exit 1. This "shovel-ready" property would eventually become home to Omnis Building Technologies and their \$40 million investment to build a manufacturing facility and create 150-300 jobs. Jim also sought Opportunity Zone designations for two tracts in Mercer County, one of which being the City's Exit 1 site.

Jim has a passion for entrepreneurial support and developed a program providing workshops to local entrepreneurs and the "Entrepreneur 2 Entrepreneur" event which allows aspiring entrepreneurs to meet business owners and learn about their successes and failures. These entrepreneurial support programs are what enticed Intuit to select the City of Bluefield as a "Prosperity Hub" location which is currently creating 200-500 jobs. The regional entrepreneurial classes are offered in the Small Business Success Center located in Bluefield, WV in partnership with support from Intuit.