

M.R. Williams receives grant money from city and county

BY RYAN HEDRICK

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Local distribution company M.R. Williams was presented a check for almost \$60,000 Thursday morning as part of a five-year incentive grant between the company, the city of Henderson and Vance County.

The deal, called a local economic development incentive grant, was reached in 2015 to persuade M.R. Williams, who was looking to expand their operations, to keep their operation in Vance County.

"We had run out of space. We had limited real estate at our existing location and were looking for solutions to that problem," said M.R. Williams founder and board chairman, Mike Williams, who attended the check presentation on his company's behalf. "Of course one of those solutions was to move the whole operation to another facility."

Williams said that he never wanted to move the business out of Henderson because he would leave a lot of his employee base behind, but he explored the option and even received some lucrative offers to move to Virginia or South Carolina.

Eventually, Williams was able to develop a workable expansion plan at his main Raleigh Road location, but he said that the final decision came down to economics.

"We looked at what was being offered at other locations, but the city and county came together and gave us some tax relief on the new addition," Williams said.

According to Vance County Finance Director, David Beck, M.R. Williams will get back the additional taxes they are paying on their expansion over the next five years, while still paying the full taxes on the original property.

The check that M.R. Williams was presented Thursday was the first installment of the grant agreement.

Over the lifespan of the deal, M.R. Williams will receive just shy of \$300,000 in tax relief. Since the county's tax rate is higher than the city's, each year they will return roughly \$36,000, while the city returns just over \$20,000.

Williams said that he and those at his company were glad to see the city and the county come together to focus on retaining one of the few remaining local, family-run businesses in the area.

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FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission Director, Stuart Litvin, and EDC board chairman, Tom Church, presented Williams with the check.

After the presentation, Litvin said that it was important that both the city and county work together to keep the businesses that are already here happy.

"These programs are important when the city and the county work together to offer these local economic development incentives to keep our existing businesses here and help them to expand," Litvin said.

Litvin mentioned that the grant comes with some obligations that M.R. Williams must meet, such as maintaining the number of



RYAN HEDRICK / Dispatch sta

EDC board chairman (left) Tom Church and EDC Director Stuart Litvin (right) present M.R. Williams founder Mike Williams, with a grant check for almost \$60,000.

Currently, M.R. Williams employs roughly 220 people in the area. However, Mike Williams said the expansion will allow his company to double — and possibly even triple — their volume, which will call for more employees.

people they employed at the time the grant agreement was reached.

Williams didn't seem to think that would be a problem, saying the company has already added more jobs and plans to do so even more in the future.

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However, Williams said the expansion will allow his company to double — and possibly even triple — their volume which will call for more employees.

"This creates not only additional tax base, but also... additional jobs," Litvin said. "So it is a win, win, win for every body."