

Environmental Design Group Gets County Support to Locate in Spotsylvania

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BY JEFF BRANSCOME

Spotsylvania is giving the National Academy of Environmental Design up to \$500,000 to open its primary office in the county. Much of the money will go toward the salaries of an executive director and a staff member. The nonprofit academy, or NAED, must lease space in the county by Jan. 1, 2013, according to its agreement with Spotsylvania.

It's scheduled to move into part of a vacant building in Ni Village—a development that will eventually include houses, shops, offices, restaurants and pedestrian trails near Massaponax High School off U.S. 1.

“We are offering some incentives to NAED that we probably wouldn't offer a profit-making company, but education is one of the primary functions of government, and the National Academy will help us fulfill that function,” Spotsylvania Supervisor Paul Trampe said. “For that reason, I feel going the extra mile is justified.”

The county Board of Supervisors is providing the academy with \$200,000 this fiscal year and \$300,000 in 2013–14, pending a satisfactory review of its performance. NAED is a coalition of academics and industry leaders who research issues such as climate change, resource depletion and energy security. It has more than 500,000 members.

“It will bring a lot of attention to the county,” said Frederick Steiner, president of NAED and dean of the School of Architecture at The University of Texas at Austin.

The academy's presence, he said, will attract businesses involved in sustainability initiatives. NAED will be the first tenant of the Center for Sustainability and Green Technologies—currently a vacant 44,000-square-foot building near the Spotsylvania School Board office. The education center will be a partnership of colleges focused on resource conservation, green technology and sustainable living.

Spotsylvania supervisors approved the 333-acre Ni Village—owned by Luck Development Partners—last October. The company is a subsidiary of Luck Stone, which has several quarries in the Fredericksburg area.

Luck Development General Manager Eileen Dahlstedt said the company has been in talks with NAED for more than two years. Spotsylvania could become the first locality in Virginia to be known for its sustainability efforts, she said.

“We think the recognition and significance of this center will assist Spotsylvania in creating a brand for itself,” Dahlstedt said.

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