

**Statement from Mayor Duke Pierson on behalf of the City of Ranson, WV
on the Rockwool-Ranson Manufacturing Plant**

I write on behalf of the City of Ranson to make sure that our community and local citizens know that we hear and understand the concerns that are being raised about the planned Rockwool manufacturing plant in Ranson, and to convey how important it is for Ranson to fully address those questions and concerns.

As the mayor of Ranson, I was and am proud to lead an effort to recruit Rockwool to Ranson and Jefferson County. It represents one of the largest private investments in Jefferson County that will provide more than \$150 million in direct economic investment, more than \$54 million in total payroll in its first five years of operation, and at least 150 family-wage jobs for local citizens. The median compensation for workers at the Rockwool plant is expected to be 30% higher than median income for Jefferson County workers, and 76% higher than income for current Ranson workers. The site where Rockwool will be constructed is (or will be) served by two Class I freight railroad lines, the relatively-new Route 9 highway upgrade, the new natural gas energy investments being made by the State of West Virginia in the eastern panhandle, and other major infrastructure, much of which has been in the planning and implementation stage for more than a decade. The Rockwool-Ranson project has been a true partnership between state, county and local government.

Over the last several days, I have appreciated residents contacting me with concerns. People are raising legitimate questions about what kind of economic development our community should be attracting, what impact the Rockwool plant might have on local quality of life and, importantly, what the health impacts could be from the air emissions from the Rockwool plant. We have heard your concerns and because of your concerns I have requested, and Rockwool has agreed to set a date in the near future to have a public forum, interactive discussions with citizens and stakeholders, and a full question and answer session. We are also aware that the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, which has authority and responsibility for the Clean Air Act permits for the Rockwool plan and assurances that the permits will protect public health and safety, is willing and ready to address concerns that are being raised. I appreciate Rockwool's commitment to have an open dialogue and be a responsible member of our community. They don't have to do this as they have gone through and completed the federal and state process to obtain a Clean Air Act permit. But, I appreciate their willingness to do so. I hope and encourage you to participate and attend. I sincerely hope that an open dialogue will help clarify some of the information.

Over the last 18 months I have had numerous opportunities to interact with representatives of Rockwool. I have been impressed with their candor and professionalism and desire to be part of the community. I look forward to continuing my dialogue with Rockwool about concerns that residents have shared with me and methods to address those concerns.

Ranson was formed by and as an industrial manufacturing community by the Charles Town Mining and Manufacturing Company. At one time it was the hub of manufacturing in Jefferson County. It has a proud past as an industrial manufacturing community - while also working for the last 20 years on a sustainable vision to clean up contaminated brownfield sites left by our proud, but sometimes painful, industrial legacy. Ranson has an opportunity to recruit additional 21st century, high-tech manufacturing to the area in and around the long-standing Burr Industrial Park - an area identified long ago as a prime location for manufacturing and an area that will have adequate infrastructure to do so.

Ranson's vision for manufacturing investment and jobs is based upon more than five years of community-based planning and citizen engagement, much of it sponsored by President Obama's "Partnership for Sustainable Communities" initiative, which provided Ranson in 2012 with a "Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant" from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This sustainability grant enabled Ranson to work closely with citizens and organizations in the community to completely reformulate our comprehensive land use and economic development plan, and our zoning and planning codes, to foster more sustainable development. Manufacturing investment was part of that plan from the beginning, and the Jefferson Orchards/Burr Industrial Park area of Jefferson County and the City of Ranson is where we, as a community working together, decided that we wanted to recruit manufacturing. I encourage citizens to see www.RansonRenewed.com for more information on our plans and actions to promote sustainable community development.

Rockwool is a part of that vision and plan. I attach a briefing packet with my statement here, which provides additional information about how the Rockwool plant was considered, recruited, and approved in Ranson. This includes details on 11 public hearings, meetings, and public workshops conducted with advance public notice and outreach since March 2012, particularly during the 2017 period, that formed the basis of the planning for manufacturing development at the Jefferson Orchards site, and the planning of the Rockwool plant there. The attached packet also includes information sheets provided to the City of Ranson from Rockwool, and a detailed letter from the WV Department of Environmental Protection concerning the air permitting process and issues.

I look forward to having a dialogue with various stakeholders about this possibility of continuing to bring responsible manufacturing and high-tech opportunities to Ranson and our community. Rockwool has shared on numerous occasions their commitment to sustainability. It is one of the many reasons why the project presented an exciting opportunity when it was first presented to us.

While I am pleased with the investment, job opportunities and potential for further economic development and potential Rockwool brings, I am also committed to hearing your concerns and expressing them directly to the executives of Rockwool who have always been receptive to listening. I have lived here all my life, raised my children and grandchild here, and I am very proud of our community. I am listening, take your concerns seriously, and will share them directly with Rockwool's executives.

Rockwool has designated Leslie McLaren at leslie.mclaren@ROCKWOOL.com to answer your specific questions. Ms. McLaren is the North American Manager for Corporate Communications & Stakeholder Relations and is aware of the concerns that have been raised. You can also email me at dpierson@ransonwv.us. I am happy to receive your emails, seek specific answers and forward your questions to the appropriate people. We will not, however, be engaging in Facebook and/or social media debates as the individuals administering and posting on our social medial sites are not policy makers.

Thank you.
Mayor Duke Pierson