



NEWS RELEASE

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Living Wage Certified

TVS continues commitment to employees as Living Wage Certified

Brevard, NC (August 1, 2019) – It has been a year since Transylvania Vocational Services (TVS) became the 55th business in Transylvania County to be Living Wage Certified by The Living Wage Coalition of Transylvania County (LWCTC). TVS is the second largest living wage certified employer in the county.

TVS joined over 50 other businesses in Brevard and is looking to be reevaluated in 2020. The LWCTC requires businesses to recertify every two-years.

“We wanted to be living wage certified as a way to show our commitment to our employees,” said TVS CEO Jamie Brandenburg.

In 2018, the living wage in Transylvania County was \$12, or \$11.50 with benefits. In 2019, the living wage has grown to \$12.60. There are no laws that enforce businesses in the area to pay their employees a living wage, it is completely a voluntary action.

Since becoming living wage certified, TVS has seen a steady growth of around 20 employees in the past year and is estimating 25 more positions to be available in 2020.

“We want to be there for our employees,” said TVS HR Director Lauren Hayes. “We don’t want to lose our current employees and we want to remain competitive in the area.”

Hayes evaluates wage surveys quarterly to help keep workers at a living wage and allow for an easy recertification from the LWCTC in 2020. “Estimating the living wage is important when looking at evaluations of different jobs,” Hayes said.

Looking ahead, TVS has a continued focus on process improvement and is making movements to keep up with the rising cost of living in Transylvania County.

“We want to continue with this commitment,” Brandenburg said. “Our employees are a huge part of our success and we want to share that success with them.”

Team Leader AJ Spears said, “This place means a lot to me and becoming living wage certified has really helped with feeling more comfortable in life and with paying bills.”

Last year, Elaine Long of the LWCTC wrote, “We are pleased to welcome TVS into our network of living wage certified employers and we commend TVS for increasing wages so that each employee in their company is making at least a living wage.”

The LWCTC is an affiliate of Just Economics (JE), an Asheville-based non-profit and the largest living wage certification program in the United States. JE bases their hourly wage from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Fair Market Rents (FMR). Affordable housing in the area is a key area of concern and, "no more than 30 percent of a person's gross income should be spent on housing," according to HUD.

"Paying our associates, a living wage honors the initiative and loyalty of our associates and is also a smart business strategy," Brandenburg said. "Recruitment and retention are vastly improved when team members are honored with a sustainable combination of wages and health benefits.

We see this as a way to give back to our employees, respect their loyalty and reward the work they do for us and our customers."

The federal minimum wage has been \$7.25 an hour since 2009. However, studies have shown that with being paid a living wage worker morale improves, along with worker health and the overall quality of services. Businesses also have lower absenteeism, turnover rates and recruiting and training costs.

The ten-year period of federal minimum wage not being raised begs companies to adjust pay. The living wage allows working people to become self-sufficient and rely less on social services along with stimulating the economy.

Please visit www.livingwagec.org or www.justeconomicswnc.org for more information.



About TVS

TVS is a social enterprise contract manufacturer specializing in the blending and packaging of dry food and beverage products. Founded in 1967, their mission is to provide quality employment, job training and residential & community services to individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment. For more information go to www.tvsinc.org

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