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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HIGHER ED CENTER PARTNERS WITH  
ETSU IN NEW INTERNATIONAL GRANT**

**The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon will partner with the School of Business at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) in a new international grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education. The award from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) will focus on new higher education strategies to support rural entrepreneurs in the Appalachian area, Canada, and Mexico. The multi-year award is one of only nine such grants made by the Department of Education this year under the North American Mobility Program.**

**The Higher Ed Center and ETSU will team with the University of New Mexico as well as two universities each in Canada and Mexico. One of the Mexican partners is the Tecnologico de Monterrey, Mexico’s largest private university. The “Tec” has worked closely with the Higher Ed Center the last three years on the “SW VA/NE TN International Business Study in Mexico” program for college students in the Tri-Cities.**

**George Hiller, Director of International Programs at the Higher Ed Center and Dr. Jon Smith of ETSU’s School of Business will be the local team leaders for the new grant. Both also currently hold grants from the Department of Education’s Business and International Education program and have collaborated on several international outreach programs for the Tri-Cities. Smith noted: “I am pleased to expand our regional economic development collaboration with the Higher Ed Center. We have an opportunity to become a North American leader in using higher education resources to develop globally-savvy entrepreneurs.”**

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