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Exit Maryland: Bechtel finalizes its move to Virginia

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Engineering giant Bechtel Corp. will relocate much of its remaining Maryland workforce to Reston, where it plans to lease 175,000 square feet and invest \$10 million, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe said Wednesday.

Bechtel CEO Bill Dudley telegraphed the move in October, when he informed then Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley the San Francisco-based firm would be best positioned to compete if its operations were consolidated elsewhere. Virginia then swooped in with a \$500,000 grant from the Governor's Opportunity Fund, and a \$4 million Virginia Economic Development Incentive Grant to secure the move.



Bechtel is leaving Maryland for Reston.

"Since relocating our global operational headquarters to Reston in 2011, we have enjoyed immense support from the business community of Fairfax County and the commonwealth," Dudley said in a statement. "Reston has proven to be an ideal location for Bechtel. Conveniently situated between two airports, it facilitates international and domestic travel, which is key to our business, provides access to a highly skilled workforce, and offers an enjoyable work/life environment for our employees."

In addition to Virginia, Bechtel scouted locations in Texas and Arizona. Charlene Wheelless, Bechtel spokeswoman, said the firm is in the final stages of nailing down a Reston location for the 700 employees who will move from Frederick.

Its corporate operations and its Nuclear, Security & Environmental unit are headquartered at 12011 Sunset Hill Road in Reston.

The Bechtel announcement comes three days after Bethesda-based Marriott International revealed its plans to leave its existing, 900,000-square-foot headquarters, kicking off what is likely to be a heated competition between Maryland and Virginia for the hospitality giant. Unleashing the Bechtel move now may be a coincidence, but it's one Marriott will certainly notice.

Bechtel, the lead contractor on the first phase of the Silver Line, relocated its global operational headquarters to Reston in 2011. The company committed at the time, with the assistance of a

conditional \$9.5 million Maryland incentive package, to maintain its Power Business Unit in Frederick. That commitment lasted three years.

McAuliffe described Bechtel's move as key to "building a new Virginia economy."

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