



Your Regional Commission

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N R V R C . O R G

Regional River Clean-up Event receives awards

The New River Valley Regional Commission and the ReNew the New Committee received two awards for the “Fall into the New” river clean-up event, held in August in Radford. The Regional Commission received the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) 2016 Innovation Award for their role as convener and facilitator of the clean-up event. The Regional Commission received the award during NADO’s 2016 Annual Training Conference, held in October, in San Antonio, Texas.

The ReNew the New Committee, a volunteer organization based out of Giles County, also received an award for the Fall into the New clean-up event. ReNew the New received the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Society’s (SWCS) 2016 Merit Award during the SWCS’s annual meeting in November. Paul Moody, owner of New River’s Edge, Inc. in Giles County, received the award on behalf of ReNew the New, from VA SWCA president, Scott Gordon. The



SWCA Merit Award recognizes organizations for their outstanding conservation effort or activity by a group, business, or organization.

Fall into the New hosted 450 volunteers from Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties, and the City of Radford, and cleaned up 10 miles of the New River. Volunteers represented student groups, businesses, river advocacy groups, and the general public. Outfitters and local youth groups donated 150 canoes for the volunteer’s use, and 4 tons of trash and hundreds of tires were removed from the New River.

Check out a three-minute event promotional video on the Commission’s you tube channel: [youtube.com/nrvrc](https://www.youtube.com/nrvrc).

For further information, please contact Michael Gottfredson (michaelg@nrvrc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 205.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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- Project Updates
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UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Regional Transportation Meeting
Tuesday, January 17th, 1:00 p.m.
NRVBC - Conference Room

Outdoor Expo Planning Meeting
Thursday, January 19th 9:30 a.m.
NRVBC – Training Room

Commission Board Meeting
Thursday, January 26th, 6:00 p.m.
NRVBC - New River Room

Commission Board Meeting
Thursday, February 23rd, 6:00 p.m.
NRVBC - New River Room

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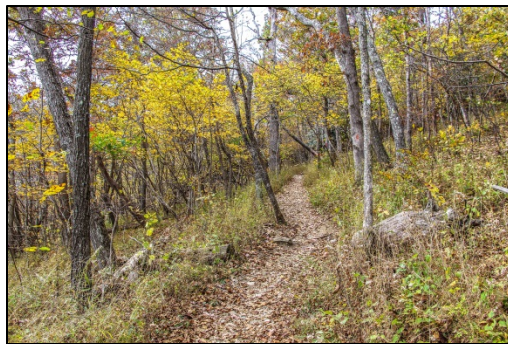
Transportation News

The middle of May is known for Damascus Trail Days. While many Appalachian Trail hikers make it a point to be in Damascus, VA for the celebration, many continue their hike weeks and even months afterwards. In fact, approximately 200 hikers traveled into the Town of Pearisburg each week, between May and June of this year.

In 2016, the Commission deployed infrared trail counters throughout the region. In addition to counting users along the Appalachian Trail, counts were also acquired on the Radford Riverway in Bisset park, Heritage Park Trail in Blacksburg, and Buffalo Mountain in Floyd. The Radford Riverway regularly attracted more than 300 users on Wednesdays and Sundays in October. Heritage Park's trail averaged more than 120 users each day.

Even though vibrant leaves and blooms were hard to find this fall season, around 50 people pleasantly meandered to the top of Buffalo Mountain every Saturday and Sunday. Those who visited were surrounded by golden leaves along the pathway and greeted with a breathtaking panoramic mountain top view. In the middle of October the view stretched for miles. Pilot Mountain, which is located in North Carolina, is visible on clear days.

The New River Valley Regional Commission provides trail counter services throughout the region. The latest information is always available online here: <http://nrvc.org/trailcounterprogram/>. For more information or to schedule a trail count contact Elijah Sharp (esharp@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 210.



Local Technical Assistance

Giles County Comprehensive Plan Update: Regional Commission staff are assisting the County Planning Commission and staff in developing an updated comprehensive plan. The community survey has closed and responses are being tabulated. A summary of the response data will be presented to the Planning Commission at an upcoming meeting for use as a reference in developing goals and objectives for the plan update.

For further information, please contact Patrick Burton (pburton@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 217.

TimeBank

After two years of research and planning, the New River Valley TimeBank, a project developed and supported through the efforts of the NRV Livability Initiative, the NRV Aging in Place Leadership Team, and the HOME Consortium, was launched. A TimeBank helps connect neighbors through the exchange of services. TimeBanks are driven by the reciprocity of members who both give and receive assistance. Members list skills and services they can offer and request what they need. TimeBanks recognize that every person has something to contribute and builds on the concept of "pay it forward." For more information, visit <https://nrvc.timebanks.org/>



**NEW RIVER VALLEY
TIMEBANK**
A neighbor to neighbor network
to share skills and services

For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie (jwilsie@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 204.

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board

The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration has awarded \$6 million in H-1B Job Training Grants to a multi-partner/multi-jurisdictional collaborative headed by the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board. The four-year project, titled Pathways to the American Dream, will train local workers in the region and decrease the reliance on skilled foreign workers.

Pathways to the American Dream will:

1. Create a regional workforce strategy for sector partnerships in manufacturing, healthcare and information technology (IT) industries.
2. Increase opportunities for un- and underemployed adults and incumbent workers to earn skills or credentials in middle- to high-skilled occupations.
3. Develop strategies that increase training and education opportunities for disadvantaged populations.
4. Provide evidence-based design data and outcomes so Virginia legislators can adopt policies for sustaining and scaling innovative sector partnership training programs.

Besides offering training opportunities, other aspects of the project will include:

- The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) at Virginia Commonwealth University will work together to create a comprehensive online career pathways platform that is accessible to participants with a broad range of literacy levels. Participants can access the platform to map out their own individual education and training strategies along their career pathway.
- The project also aims to create a system with education and training partners that credits the learning for working and nontraditional learners to help them advance toward credentials more quickly.

The geographic area to be served by the project includes the following counties and cities: LWDA 1 - Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Norton, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, and Wise; LWDA 2 - Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Floyd, Galax, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Radford, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe; LWDA 3 - Alleghany, Botetourt, Clifton Forge, Craig, Franklin, Roanoke, and Roanoke City; and LWDA 17 - Danville, Henry, Martinsville, Patrick, and Pittsylvania.

For further information please contact Marty Holliday (marty.holliday@nrwrwb.org), 540-633-6764.

NRVRC Meeting Summary

November 17, 2016 Meeting

Economic Development:

- The GO Virginia Statewide board meet on December 5th and took action on the map and guidelines to establish a Regional Council. Once the guidelines are in place, regions can begin their work to organize. The first substantial deadline will be mid-February to submit a Notice of Intent to Organize, which needs to include Regional Council membership, leadership positions, identification of the support organization(s), process used to identify council members and the industry sectors represented. The first opportunity to get Regional Council certification will take place at the March 12th GO Va statewide board meeting, if proper submittal is made by mid-February. Between March and June 30th the Regional Council will need to develop and adopt an Economic Diversification Plan and gap analysis. This will position the Regional Council to access funding July 1 for per capita and statewide competitive pots of funds, provided the General Assembly appropriates the funding in the upcoming session.
- The broadband survey in Montgomery County, Blacksburg and Christiansburg is nearing 1,200 responses since launching the end of September.

Transportation:

- Staff is continuing to support NRV Passenger Rail 2020 in exploring ways to advance the Rail Traffic Control Study funds currently budgeted for FY19 into FY18.

Regional:

- The Mayors and Board of Supervisor's Chairs regional meeting was held December 2nd at Noon. The Regional Commission Board Chair facilitates this meeting twice annually.
- A New River Watershed Roundtable meeting was held on December 2nd at 10:00-11:30 am in the New River Room at the NRV Business Center. This meeting focused on lessons learned from successful roundtables across Virginia.
- The NRV Hazard Mitigation Plan 5-year update is underway in collaboration with local governments and agency partners across the region. A project website can be visited at the following link <http://nrvc.org/hazardmitigation/#home>
- Ken Vittum, Town Manager for Pearisburg since 1988, retired at the end of December. Todd Meredith filled the position.

Commission:

- Staff is busy progressing items from our retreat in late September. Steps are being taken to further develop our internal culture, understand our economic development niche, along with tools for project management and data services.

December 2016 Meeting CANCELLED

**AGENDAS AND MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
WWW.NRVRC.ORG**

Giles County receives planning grant for downtown revitalization in Glen Lyn, Pearisburg, and Rich Creek

Giles County has received a planning grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to create a plan to encourage business development and revitalize the downtown areas in Glen Lyn, Pearisburg, and Rich Creek. The grant provides resources to engage the towns' citizens, businesses, and property owners in the downtown districts in order to develop a vision for the future of each town, and identify development projects and strategies to encourage business growth that support a thriving downtown area for each community. In addition, New River Valley Regional Commission (NRVRC) staff provides economic research to identify potential business opportunities, especially related to tourism and the increasing visitation to Giles County's outdoor recreation attractions. Giles County will engage an architect or design firm to develop specific redevelopment project designs and cost estimates for rehabilitating buildings in the downtowns.

Giles County applied for the grant in order to build on the ongoing initiatives of Giles County, including efforts to promote outdoor recreation tourism, investments in outdoor recreation amenities focused on the New River, and the current DHCD grant in Narrows and Pembroke to undertake a similar planning process. This new planning grant helps to ensure that all five towns, Giles County, and other regional partners are working together to pursue complementary economic development strategies that maximize the benefit of these ongoing investments in outdoor recreation tourism. In addition, the grant helps prepare the Towns to apply for future DHCD grants to implement the development projects and business support programs they identify in the planning process.

For further information, please contact Patrick O'Brien (pobrien@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313 x206.

Virginia Farm Business Development Program Grants

In late November 2016, the Governor's Office announced the first recipients of grant awards from a new program within the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). The Virginia Farm Business Development (VFBD) Program offers a reimbursement grant designed to help farms and small agribusinesses engage in business planning, market research, succession planning, and other related activities. Under the new program, it is expected that VDACS will award approximately 30 grants each year of up to \$5,000 to farms or small agribusinesses with fewer than 20 employees that have been in operation for at least three years.



A program factsheet, guidelines, and application are available at:

<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agriculture-virginia-farm-business-development-program%20.shtml>

Virginia's Outdoor Lovers Expo

Planning for the Outdoor Expo is moving along! Sponsors are still needed to participate in the event, a sponsorship packet can be found on the website: <http://www.swvaoutdoorexpo.com/>

The Commission plans to have a complete list of vendors and sponsors by February 1st.

To learn more about the expo please visit <http://www.swvaoutdoorexpo.com/> or contact James Jones (jjones@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 203.

THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

Publication of the New River Valley Business Center
A Small Business Incubator

Michael Solomon
Incubator Manager

January – February 2017

TechPad completes payment on NRVDC loan

The New River Valley Development Corporation (NRVDC) would like to thank TechPad for their successful repayment of a \$15,000 loan they received in 2011 to upgrade the facilities of their technology-focused co-working space in downtown Blacksburg. Located above PK's restaurant on Main Street, TechPad is a 6,000 square foot space which provides gigabit internet service and shared office amenities for teleworkers, start-ups and entrepreneurs. In addition, TechPad hosts regular 'meet-ups' for technology entrepreneurs and hackers, and connects members to other entrepreneurship and technology business resources in Blacksburg and the New River Valley. Membership is available on a month-to-month basis, ranging from \$250/month for a private desk, to \$800/month for a private suite. Membership provides access to all shared amenities, including desk, chair, kitchen, printer, and wifi access. For more information, visit their website at: <http://www.techpad.org/>. The NRVDC is excited to see the ongoing success of their investment in TechPad!

The NRVDC revolving loan fund has additional funds available to invest in New River Valley small businesses. Loans of up to \$15,000 are available on favorable terms to businesses that meet RLF application requirements. In addition, NRVDC staff can help applicants to access other lenders and a variety of small business development services, such as counseling and networking opportunities.

For more information, please visit our website (<http://www.nrvdc.org/dcfinance.html>), or contact Patrick O'Brien, pobrien@nrvdc.org or 540-639-9313 x 206.

For further information on the New River Valley Business Center, please contact Michael Solomon (msolomon@pulaskicounty.org), 540-633-6730.

For Business Center information contact:

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AC Wilson Building Renovations in Radford

When Taylor Hollow Construction acquired the AC Wilson building on West Main Street in Radford, it had been vacant for 30 years and was very close to falling down. The reconstruction was completed this year and the historic building is now home to 10 beautiful two bedroom apartments for low and moderate income people and two commercial spaces. The New River Valley HOME Consortium provided \$555,955 of local HOME funds to assist in the redevelopment of the property.

One of the commercial spaces has been leased to the Radford Coffee Company which uses the proceeds from the business to support a tax-exempt nonprofit that funds about six schools in Nicaragua. The other commercial space has been leased to Kibbles on Main, a long time Blacksburg business providing pet food and supplies that decided to open a second location in Radford.

AC Wilson was redeveloped by Taylor Hollow Construction, a New River Valley development company specializing in historic tax credit projects.

For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie (jwilsie@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 204.

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