

Your Regional Commission



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N R V R C . O R G

Old Prices Fork School Community Revitalization Project

The Old Prices Fork School Community Revitalization Project has been awarded \$2.5 million from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Vibrant Communities Initiative (VCI). The project's first phase, which is already underway, converts the former classrooms of the old Prices Fork Elementary School into 16 two bedroom apartments, with 10 affordable and six market-rate units for people 55 and older. Phase I is funded in part with state and local HOME funds.



The second phase, which includes VCI funding as well as \$500,000 in Appalachian Regional Commission funding, includes two components: (1) the Old School Food Center, which will provide innovative economic development opportunities for new or expanding local food-based entrepreneurs through the creation of a commercial incubator kitchen, farm-to-table restaurant, retail market, craft brewery and business competition with support services, and, (2) 16 new apartments with a mix of affordable and market rate units.

The project is a unique and unprecedented collaboration of 21 public and private organizations including the Regional Commission, Montgomery County, Town of Blacksburg, Virginia Community Capital, Community Foundation of the NRV, Taylor Hollow Companies, the New River Valley HOME Consortium, Beans and Rice, and Old School Food Company.

Project planning and design will continue through 2016, with construction slated to start at the beginning of 2017.

For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie (jwilsie@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313 x204.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Old Prices Fork School Community Revitalization Project
- Project Updates
- NRVRC Meeting Summary
- The Competitive Edge

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee
Tuesday, August 2nd, 1:30 p.m.
NRVBC - Conference Room

Commission Board Meeting
Thursday, August 25th, 6:00 p.m.
NRVBC - New River Room

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Transportation

The New River Valley Passenger Rail Study was chosen to receive a 2016 Excellence in Regional Transportation Planning Award. Each year the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) recognizes noteworthy projects and practices in rural and small metropolitan areas that help meet regional needs through various program areas.

In 2016, the awards program chose 30 projects that help meet regional needs in innovative ways, through cooperation with partners, increasing system and community resilience, and in many cases using creative funding. Award winning projects serve as models for many different transportation program areas that rural development organizations engage in. A full list of recipients is available online here: <http://ruraltransportation.org/excellence-in-regional-transportation-award-winners-announced/>.

Regional Commission staff attended this year's National Regional Transportation Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The Passenger Rail Study work was presented during the Opening Plenary Session, Inspiring Innovations from the Field. The conference also provided an excellent opportunity to learn about DOT and regional collaboration, freight and safety planning, and learn about the future directions of Federal transportation programs.

The Regional Commission received its first Excellence in Regional Transportation Planning Award in 2009 for the Employment Mobility Study, and has received a total of six (including the 2016 award). The Regional Commission was pleased to partner with the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Passenger Rail 2020 Committee on this project.

For further information about the project visit: <http://nrvc.org/nrvpassengerrailstudy/> or contact Elijah Sharp (esharp@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 210.



Results are in from Clean Commute Month

Every year in May RIDE Solutions produces events and activities to promote commuting alternatives. The New River Valley demonstrated strong participation in each of the following events:

Clean Commute Challenge: Clean Commute participants pledge to use a cleaner commute mode – biking, walking, riding the bus, carpooling – on one or more days this month. There's a Cleanest Team competition open to any group (workplace, clubs, informal groups), too. Final results can be found here: www.ridesolutions.org/leaderboard and include 2,421 trips logged and 61,398 miles taken off the road this year.

Blacksburg swept the main categories this year:

Clean Commuter of the Year – Kali Casper

Cleanest Team - the Town of Blacksburg Employees



Extraordinary Bike Professional and Bike Hero Awards: RIDE Solutions has been recognizing individuals in our service area who are improving opportunities for cycling as transportation both in professional and personal capacities. Two Town of Blacksburg planners shared the Extraordinary Bike Professional Award. The 2016 Bike Professional Award was presented to Anne McClung, Director of Planning and Building, and Kali Casper, Comprehensive Planner. Anne and Kali were nominated by Beth Lohman for their efforts in bringing the Bicycle Master Plan to completion as staff liaisons to the Town Corridor Committee. The Committee had been working on the plan for over four years – on a volunteer basis – when Anne and Kalie joined the effort and brought their professional planning expertise to bear on the project. Because of their work, including Anne's ability to allocate the resources needed to make this happen and Kali's dedication to completing the plan narrative and data analysis, the plan was complete and brought before Council for approval within two years.

Bike Shorts Film Festival: The theme celebrates Bike Month, and films are sure to have two things in common: directors with a heart for making film and a bicycle. The festival features short films produced by local, national and international filmmakers.

Clean Commute Hospitality Station: One Friday in the month we thank those who take the clean commute pledge with a commuter pit stop.

For further information, please contact Christy Straight (cstraight@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313 x209.

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board



In November 2014 the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (WDB) was awarded a \$50,000 State Incentive Grant (funded through Workforce Investment Act Funds overseen by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration), to support a Roving Computer Lab concept. The funds were used to purchase equipment, software and develop partnerships and procedures to support the project. For the last 19 months, the WDB partnered with a variety of businesses and organizations to utilize this resource throughout the region.

By working with industry and employment support organizations, the WDB can support job seekers, as well as current employees, in acquiring the necessary digital skills that will open up career opportunities and create a stable and thriving workforce in our region.

What Is the Roving Computer Lab (RCL)?

Actually there are eight labs: six laptop computer labs containing sets of five or three laptop computers; and two tablet labs – one with seven iPads and one with six Acers. Each lab is internet ready with the full suite of Microsoft Office installed. They include all necessary power cords, printer connections and a wireless mouse per laptop along with a traveling case for easy storage and mobility. Available accessories to accompany the labs include a portable printer, micro projectors, accessibility devices, lightening and HDMI cables, wireless router to connect all laptops and/or tablets to available internet and jump drives for saving data from the labs after use. Training and technical support for use with the labs is available through WDB staff and partners. The WDB is able to add software and direct links to websites for partners and particular programming uses to support client self-sufficiency. Assistive technology and employment supports for people with disabilities with certified Ticket to Work staff and resources are also available.

Checking Out the RCL

The RCLs are free to use by businesses and organizations in their offices or in a community space. Check out procedures are simple and flexible. The WDB provides the technical support for the equipment and will keep software and hardware up to date and serviced. Labs may also be loaded with specialized training or assessment software for targeted employer and organizational needs. The WDB will provide training on use of the labs and can support businesses and partners in outreach and employment supports for job seekers and employees. This resource has been used by businesses, nonprofit, community and governmental agencies for job fairs, orientations, and new and current staff trainings.

In the last 19 months 115 businesses and over 1,000 individuals have been reached with this regional resource.

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

NRVRC Meeting Summary

May 26, 2016 Meeting

Economic Development:

- The Virginia Main Street program is hosting their Downtowns Intersection conference July 11-13 in Staunton.

Transportation:

- A funding decision regarding the next phase of activity for NRV Passenger Rail, a Rail Modeling Study, was announced at the Commonwealth Transportation Board meeting.
- Communities considering submitting transportation projects for 2016 House Bill 2 prioritization should begin working on applications.

Regional:

- The NRV Mayors and County Chairs bi-annual meeting was held June 20th.
- The Commission continues to coordinate quarterly local government managers meetings. The group meets for informal discussions on local trends and upcoming regional opportunities.
- Building Collaborative Communities Regional Tourism project is advancing. Following a decision on the communication platform to use, the project will shift into evaluating local tourism plans for intersecting markets and evaluating models of collaboration.

Commission:

- Annual dinner attendance total was 112.

June 23, 2016 Meeting

Transportation:

- The NRV Passenger Rail project received positive news with the inclusion of a Rail Modeling Study in the Commonwealth Transportation Board budget. The study is scheduled to take place in FY19 (July 2018-June 2019).

Regional:

- ReNew the New Steering Committee will hold scouting meeting on the river July 28th to prepare for the August 27th clean up event. The LEAD program will provide up to \$9,000 in funding for the first year event expenses. Sponsorship funds and/or in-kind donations have been received from Backcountry.com, NRV Chapter of Trout Unlimited and VA Dept. of Environmental Quality.
- POWER grant applications are taking shape in Giles County for three boat launches and a regional cluster development project around unmanned systems/IT/Advanced Manufacturing.

Commission:

- Items authorized for surplus were sold on GovDeals.com.
- The Commission was asked by statewide partners to serve as lead applicant/fiscal agent for an Agritourism Economic Impact Study for Virginia. This is a direct result of previous staff performance on grant management with the funding agency.

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

Pembroke and Narrows DHCD Grant Project Progress Report: Downtown Revitalization and Outdoor Recreation Business Development

Regional Commission staff, and town staff and residents from Pembroke and Narrows in Giles County are currently working to encourage downtown redevelopment of commercial properties, and attract or start new businesses to serve visitors and local shoppers. The project focuses on highlighting opportunities and resources for outdoor recreation, including the New River, hiking trails, sports and camping. Giles County has many great outdoor amenities, and several ongoing efforts to increase tourism are working to make sure Giles County businesses capture more spending by visitors at stores, restaurants and hotels. The project in Pembroke and Narrows also aims to identify key retail properties and business opportunities for local entrepreneurs in the towns, helping local residents to gain the economic benefits from visitors to the natural beauty in the region.

The Towns have contracted with Hill Studio from Roanoke to create draft architectural designs for redevelopment of downtown areas, and conduct preliminary engineering work that will be used to create cost estimates for construction projects and other investments in key downtown properties. Hill Studio will be conducting public input sessions and displaying their initial sketches of redevelopment concepts for both Pembroke and Narrows. The sessions will occur on August 9th and 10th, in the Town Hall building of each town. More details on the schedule for the workshop sessions for each town will be available closer to that date, on the Town websites:

Town of Narrows: <http://www.townofnarrows.org/>

Town of Pembroke: <http://www.pembrokeva.org/>

The project is part of a Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) 'Downtown Revitalization' Planning grant, which provides funding to develop a plan for downtown redevelopment and economic restructuring focused on developing businesses in target sectors related to the outdoor recreation and tourism economy. The Towns will use this plan as a basis for securing a DHCD Community Improvement Grant, which would provide several hundred thousand dollars to make investments in top priority projects to improve infrastructure and provide repairs to key properties in the towns. The project is scheduled for completion at the end of 2016, with the towns applying for CIG grant funding in spring 2017.

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

Planning Conferences/Information

Virginia Tech's Land Use Education Program (LUEP) held its annual **Legal Seminar** on **June 3rd** in Charlottesville. The event was packed with information for local planning commissioners and staff. Presentations focused on: General Assembly Session Review, Cash Proffers Legislation, and GO Virginia & Regional Economic Development. Presentation materials and video from the seminar are accessible through the following link on the LUEP website: <https://planvirginia.com/news/news-to-share/258-2016-legal-seminar>.

The **APA Virginia Annual Conference** is coming up at Wintergreen, **July 17-20**. Program and registration information is available at <https://planvirginia.com/2016apavirginia>.

Registration is now open for the **Rural Planning Caucus Annual Conference** which will be held at Mountain Lake Lodge in Giles County, **October 19-21**. A draft conference agenda/schedule is available on the RPC website at: <http://rpcva.org/>. AICP CMs are available. This is a great training and networking opportunity right in our backyard. Regional Commission staff member Christy Straight is the current Chair of RPC. If you have questions about the conference, please contact Christy at 540-639-9313 x209 or cstraight@nrvc.org.

The final **Key Bills** document from APA Virginia for the **2016 General Assembly** session is now available on the APA-VA website at: <https://www.planning.org/media/document/9105436/>.

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

THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

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

Doug Hudson
Michael Solomon
Incubator Managers

July – August 2016

Notice of Sale by New River Valley Development Corporation July 5, 2016

The New River Valley Development Corporation (NRVDC) is announcing the sale of equipment and inventory items that have come into the possession of NRVDC, in relation to a loan debt. NRVDC is selling the items to recover this debt, with equipment from the retail store that includes the following: a large oak bar, wood wine racks (6+), cabinets and granite countertops, computer equipment, metal signage, lighting, sinks and other equipment and furnishings from the store.

NRVDC reserves the right to negotiate for the best price for any and all items that are in storage at the New River Valley Business Center, at 6580 Valley Center Drive, in Radford, Virginia. Buyers are responsible for transportation of all items from the storage bay in Radford to the buyer's destination, and all items are sold 'as is' with no guarantee of condition beyond visual inspection.

The NRVDC will accept private bids for any items or the entire lot, with all equipment items going to the highest bidder. NRVDC will accept bids beginning on July 5, 2016, with final bids due by July 19, 2016 or when the sale ends at the discretion of the NRVDC.

For more information about the status of the private sale, contact Patrick O'Brien, 540-639-9313 ext. 206, or email: pobrien@nrvc.org .

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

For Business Center information contact:

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incubatormanager@nrvc.org or www.nrvc.org/nrvbc.html

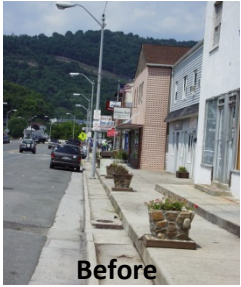


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Rich Creek Downtown Improvements

The Regional Commission continues to assist the Town of Rich Creek with their downtown improvements through grant applications and administration. Using the Town’s 2004 Strategic Plan for Downtown Enhancement as a guide, the Regional Commission has helped the Town secure over \$1.7 million in funding from the Virginia Department of Transportation. This funding has been matched by local funds to improve Rich Creek’s downtown core. Improvements to the downtown include new sidewalks, curb and gutter, stormwater systems, streetlights, landscaping, parking, seating, and improved business access. The improvements are ongoing, with two of the three phases of the Town’s downtown enhancement project already being completed and additional grant funding pending. This year, construction is set to begin on the last phase of the project, with consultants working on the final engineering and environmental plans.



Before



After

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

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