

# Your Regional Commission



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N R V R C . O R G

## Expanding Clean-up Efforts on the New River

The New River Valley Regional Commission is facilitating the expansion of clean-up efforts along the New River. Working with Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties, and the City of Radford, the Regional Commission is assisting clean-up efforts to become a regional impact. Using Giles County's ReNew the New organization, a proven local entity working in Giles County for the past 14 years, clean-up efforts along the river will be coordinated on a regional basis for the first time.

Cleaning up the New River has been ongoing in the communities along its banks. Working together as a region to improve the river's health and aesthetics provides greater benefits to local communities as a whole because it pools limited resources needed for river clean-ups together for a much greater impact. Cleaning up the river also helps the region economically, as it ensures the river's continued use as a tourism asset.

In December 2015, the Regional Commission opened a dialogue with the Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties, and the City of Radford, to address the possibility of a regional clean-up effort. The localities agreed to use ReNew the New as a model for the region. ReNew had held successful clean-up events in Giles County since 2001, and had a way to organize events that could possibly be replicated in other areas. Leaders in Economic Alliance Development (LEAD), a consortium of state and federal agencies, worked with the Regional Commission to organize an approach to expand ReNew the New in the region. Over the next several months, the Regional Commission assisted representatives from local governments, businesses, advocacy groups, and private citizens, in working together to create a plan for a regional clean-up event, based on the past events held by ReNew the New. A steering committee met in February and March, while three sub-committees met in March to create plans for a luncheon to build community support, the clean-up event itself, and the organizational structure to manage future events.



The Regional Commission and LEAD held a luncheon in April to present the plan for the clean-up event to the local government leaders, advocacy groups, industry leaders, and the media. Response to the river clean-up event was enthusiastic, with leaders from each group voicing support for the effort.

*Article Continued on page 5.*

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## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

**NRVRC Annual Dinner**  
Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m.  
Draper Mercantile

**Transportation Technical Advisory Committee**  
Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 p.m.  
NRVBC - Conference Room

**Commission Board Meeting**  
Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m.  
NRVBC - New River Room

**Virginia's First /Commerce Park**  
Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 p.m.  
NRVBC - Conference Room

**HOME Consortium Board**  
Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2:30 p.m.  
NRVBC - Conference Room

**Commission Board Meeting**  
Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00 p.m.  
NRVBC - New River Room

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## Transportation

The Regional Commission recently partnered with the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization to complete a Regional Transit Study. The focus of the work is on bus stops. Particularly stops where the region's four public transportation provider's services overlap. Overlapping stops are important because they create opportunities to expand the public transportation service area beyond a single community. In the New River Valley, transit services overlap in eight locations.

Key findings and recommendations include: 1) assigning a service environment that links demand to minimum design requirements; 2) synchronizing arrival/departure times; and 3) creating bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within a ½-mile of stop locations. Each strategy is aimed at attracting and retaining ridership. As a starting point, the study provides some insights and lessons learned by other communities during the application and evaluation of investments/policy changes.

More than 800 survey responses were collected between April 2015 and February 2016. In general, most riders felt comfortable and even more felt safe at existing bus stops. Riders would like to see more amenities such as a bus schedule, seating, shelter, and lighting. The combination of survey responses, case studies, and feedback from subject experts was utilized to develop study recommendations.

Bus stops are only a single component of attracting and retaining transit ridership. Service availability, diversity in ridership, connectivity to other modes of transportation, and even bus operators have a role in the quality of a public transportation system. As adjustments to the transit system are made, those who use the services will need to help evaluate the value of investments.

The study process was led by the Regional Transit Coordinating Council. The Council was established in 2012 to improve dialog between the region's transit partners. For further information about the project visit: <http://nrvc.org/regionaltransitstudy/> or contact Elijah Sharp ([esharp@nrvc.org](mailto:esharp@nrvc.org)), 540-639-9313, ext. 210.

## Baskerville Neighborhood Rehabilitation Project Closeout

The final homeowner rehabilitation was recently completed in the Baskerville Neighborhood Rehabilitation Project, funded in part by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The Baskerville neighborhood is located off Route 100, just west of the Town of Dublin. Served by town utilities, an additional task of the grant included improvements to portions of the water and sewer system serving the neighborhood. The final rehab, a four bedroom two bathroom home for a household of six, represented the last of 15 homes that were either rehabilitated or rebuilt within the neighborhood.

The Regional Commission first became involved in the project in 2008, when members of the neighborhood expressed a need for housing repair to County staff. The County was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Planning Grant in 2009 to document the needs of the neighborhood more thoroughly and prepare for a competitive grant application, which was submitted in 2010. Since that time, the County has been working to administer a \$1,000,000 grant to assist low-to-moderate income households with housing rehabilitation. In addition to DHCD funds, several other significant sources of funding totaling over \$300,000 helped make the project possible, including local HOME Consortium funds, the Weatherization Program, the Town of Dublin, and Pulaski County.

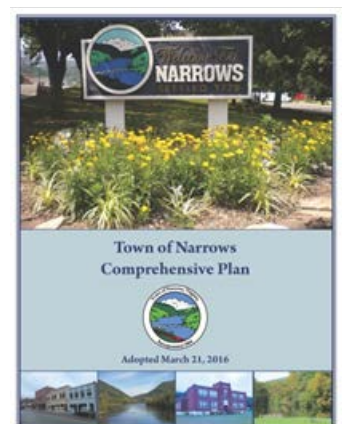
The Baskerville Neighborhood Rehab project will officially close out this spring, and Pulaski County is currently planning how it will address additional housing needs within the community.

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

## Local Technical Assistance

**Town of Narrows Comprehensive Plan:** The Narrows Town Council adopted a new Comprehensive Plan on March 21, 2016. Regional Commission staff provided technical assistance to the Narrows Planning Commission and Town staff in developing the plan. Citizen input received through a community survey and community meetings helped shape the goals and objectives included in the plan. Congratulations to the Town of Narrows!

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



## New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board



For a number of months, the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board) has been leading the region towards "sector strategies" through the use of Sector Partnerships. Below is a brief summary of the recent regional workshops:

### The Challenge

- Middle-skill jobs make up the largest portion of the labor market
- Employers cannot find enough workers trained to the middle-skill level
- Sector partnerships help solve this problem

### A Solution

- Ensure our region's businesses and industries have a talent pipeline filled with skilled workers
- They then will be competitive in both today's and tomorrow's marketplace,
- It will drive our region's economy
- And workers can earn a sustainable, self-sufficient wage

### Sector Partnerships.....

- Are partnerships of companies
- Are from the same industry sector
- Include education, workforce development, economic development and community organizations
- Partnerships focus on key issues related to the target industry in their natural labor market region
- Are employer-driven
- Are regional
- Are convened by a credible third-party
- Act as a coordinating body across multiple education, workforce development, economic development and other programs
- They create highly customized responses to a target industry's needs, and therefore are highly accurate in meeting needs

### Why do Sector Partnerships Matter?

- Meeting businesses' needs for a skilled workforce and supporting industry growth and competitiveness requires new kinds of cross-sector collaboration:
  - In a sector partnership, employers are not just advisors, but full partners, actively invested and engaged in implementing the solutions they have developed collaboratively
  - For educators, sector partnerships provide a venue for faster understanding of changing industry needs; a vehicle to identify, build and refine curriculum, programs and credentials; the only way to truly create industry-driven career pathway systems

For further information please contact Marty Holliday ([marty.holliday@nrwib.org](mailto:marty.holliday@nrwib.org)), 540-633-6764.

## NRVRC Meeting Summary

### March 24, 2016 Meeting

#### Economic Development:

- The Commission is in the process of updating the regional CEDS.
- Federal funds for the POWER Initiative were announced to assist coal-impacted communities in developing new strategies for economic growth and worker advancement. \$65.8 Million will be available through the Appalachian Regional Commission and the US Economic Development Administration.

#### Transportation:

- Staff completed a regional transit study that primarily evaluates overlapping transit routes and connecting points between existing service providers in the region.
- The Rural Transportation Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed FY17 Work Program and recommended approval to the Commission.

#### Regional:

- The Commission hosted sub-committee meetings to advance Renew the New Expansion. The 2016 clean-up will take place August 27 in Radford covering 11 miles of river.
- The Livability in Action regional convening took place on 2/29 and by many accounts was a success to hear how many positive projects are taking place across the region! Registration reached nearly 140 which demonstrates interest in the region for collaboration and learning best practices from neighboring communities.

### April 28, 2016 Meeting

#### Economic Development:

- In partnership with Beans and Rice, Inc. the Commission will evaluate the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem to support entrepreneurial activity.
- On behalf a project team, the Commission was recently awarded \$500,000 from the ARC for a portion of the Prices Fork School Reuse project.
- The 2016 General Assembly approved legislation for GO Virginia to establish Regional Councils.

#### Transportation:

- NADO selected the NRV Passenger Rail Study for an Excellence in Rural Transportation Award.

#### Regional:

- The annual Local Government Planning Commissioner Training was held and had over 40 people attend representing Planning Commissions, Board of Supervisors, Town Councils and staff.
- ReNew the New Expansion effort hosted a luncheon meeting with key stakeholders to broadly inform the change in the coming year.

#### Commission:

- Mark your calendars, the Commission Annual Dinner will be on May 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm at the Draper Merc!

AGENDAS AND MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
[WWW.NRVRC.ORG](http://WWW.NRVRC.ORG)



## Hotel Floyd hosts 'Mingle in the Mountains' event for regional tourism stakeholders

The quarterly 'Mingle in the Mountains' event was held on April 20 at the Hotel Floyd, attracting over 30 participants to share information about regional tourist attractions and upcoming events, and learn more about new tourism promotion efforts and resources for tourism businesses. Attendees included staff from local tourism departments, the NRVRC, the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), and owners of tourism-related businesses such as hotels, wineries, and shops.

Becky Nave from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) facilitated the event, and gave an overview of VTC resources to support tourism and tourist-focused businesses. Tourism department staff from Giles, Floyd, Montgomery, Patrick, and Pulaski counties each gave a 10-minute update on their tourism initiatives and upcoming events, and everyone had an opportunity to share information about their business, make connections with their peers, and distribute fliers and other promotional materials. Many participants remarked that they had no idea there is so much to do in the NRV- which is why the NRV tourism staff host these events to help spread the word!

For information on tourism and upcoming events in the region, visit [www.explorenewrivervalley.com](http://www.explorenewrivervalley.com) or each county's website, listed below.

Floyd: <http://visitfloydva.com/>

Giles: <http://www.virginiasmtnplayground.com/>

Montgomery: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitMontVA/>

Pulaski: <http://www.pulaskichamber.info/page-18088>

Radford: [www.visitradford.com](http://www.visitradford.com)

Mingle in the Mountains occurs quarterly, with each NRV county taking a turn hosting the event. For further information, please contact Patrick O'Brien ([pobrien@nrvc.org](mailto:pobrien@nrvc.org)), 540-639-9313 x206

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## Planning Commissioner Training Event

A training event for local planning commissioners was held on the evening of April 21, 2016, at the New River Valley Business Center in Fairlawn. More than 40 local planning commissioners and staff attended the session which featured engaging presentations by staff from three New River Valley localities. Topics and speakers included:

- *Pulaski County's Approach to Creating a Unified Development Ordinance*  
Danny Wilson, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Pulaski County
- *What Are the Limits of Residential Zoning?*  
Anne McClung, Director, Planning and Building Department, Town of Blacksburg
- *General Assembly Update*  
Emily Gibson, Planning Director, Montgomery County; Vice-President of Legislative and Policy Affairs, APA Virginia



The event concluded with a Q & A session involving all three speakers. Thanks to all who participated!

For further information, please contact Patrick Burton ([pburton@nrvc.org](mailto: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

May - June 2016

The New River Valley Business Center has been a popular location to host meetings and training sessions lately, with a variety of businesses and organizations making use of the Center's several meeting rooms. Tenants of the facility make use of the rooms frequently, but external businesses and organizations can reserve the rooms as well. Recent meetings include staff training events and local health care networks providing CPR certification sessions.

The Business Center has three meeting rooms available, with the largest room able to accommodate up to 100 guests. Portable tables, chairs, and partition walls allow for flexible room configurations for a variety of uses. Guests have access to the meeting rooms Wi-Fi network, and connections for AV equipment are available. Kitchen facilities adjacent to each meeting room are available for meetings that plan to serve refreshments. More information on the available rooms on the New River Valley Development Corporation website: <http://www.nrvdc.org/meetingspaces.html> .

Fees for use vary by room, from \$25-\$75 for a half day (up to four hours), or \$50-\$150 for a full day. The form to reserve the rooms is available at: <http://www.nrvdc.org/RoomRequestRevFeb2014.pdf>.

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

**For Business Center information contact:**

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Julie Phillips, Newsletter Editor	

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The regional clean-up event, called "Fall into the New", scheduled for August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, at Bisset Park in Radford, will serve as "training" event for localities involved. The event will cover 11 miles of river, with volunteer teams putting in at separate locations. These volunteers will be guided along pre-selected sections of the river to retrieve and return trash to disposal sites along the river. A lunch with an awards ceremony will be hosted for volunteers at the conclusion of the event. This year, Giles County will act as the trainers to the other localities in the preparation and operation of the event, with the intention for the separate localities to hold their own events in the future.

For further information regarding the regional expansion of the New River clean-up efforts, please contact Michael Gottfredson ([michaelg@nrvc.org](mailto:michaelg@nrvc.org)), 540-639-9313, ext. 205. ReNew the New Website: <http://www.renewthenew.org/>

For media coverage regarding this effort please see the following links:  
[http://www.roanoke.com/nrv/community/van-noy-renew-the-new/article\\_2636e288-0594-5c38-abb7-fdf29f37636e.html](http://www.roanoke.com/nrv/community/van-noy-renew-the-new/article_2636e288-0594-5c38-abb7-fdf29f37636e.html)  
<http://www.wdbj7.com/content/news/Communities-to-join-Giles-County-in-New-River-clean-up-377362961.html>

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