



Your Regional Commission

5 4 0 - 6 3 9 - 9 3 1 3 |

N R V R C . O R G

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

NRVRC staff, and town staff and residents from Pembroke and Narrows in Giles County are currently working on a project to encourage redevelopment of downtown 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 conducted two public input sessions for both Pembroke and Narrows on August 9th and 10th, providing an opportunity to help guide the redevelopment designs. The concepts for Narrows include a walking trail along Wolf Creek, improvements to buildings near the farmers market and along Monroe Street, and improved signage along US 460 to direct visitors downtown. The

concepts for Pembroke include improvements to the streets and buildings in the area around Cascades Drive and Snidow Street, a walking trail along Little Stony Creek to the New River, and improvements to US 460 to increase pedestrian access and safety. NRVRC staff have drafted an economic restructuring plan that includes information on current retail sales and spending habits by outdoor recreation tourists, and recommendations for activities to encourage small business development and attraction of visitor spending to the towns.



Continued on page 5

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Pembroke and Narrows Downtown Revitalization
- Project Updates
- NRVRC Meeting Summary
- The Competitive Edge

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Transit Coordinating Council
Tuesday, November 15th, 3:30 p.m.
NRVBC - Conference Room

Commission Board Meeting
Thursday, November 17th, 6:00 p.m.
NRVBC - New River Room

Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facilities Authority
Wednesday, December 14th 12:00 p.m.
NRVBC - New River Room

HOME Consortium Board Meeting
Thursday, December 15th, 2:30 p.m.
NRVBC - Conference Room

CONNECT WITH US:

 facebook.com/nrvrc

 twitter.com/NRVRCtweets

 youtube.com/nrvrc

 instagram.com/nrv_rc

Multi-Regions Alternative Transportation Social

Transportation planners, engineers, program managers, and local cyclists met on September 16, 2016 for a Multi-Regions Alternative Transportation Social. The purpose of the event was to share best practices in planning, highlight local success stories, and provide networking opportunities for those interested in alternative transportation.

Presenters from the New River Valley shared key insights and lessons learned for Christiansburg's Renva Knowles Bridge Project, Virginia Tech's Alternative Transportation Programs, Blacksburg's Bicycle Master Plan, and the Regional Commission's NRV Cycling Guide. Roanoke Valley presenters shared their work with National bike/ped documentation, envisioning a multimodal future in the Roanoke Valley, and bicycling in Virginia and Missouri. The Virginia Department of Transportation also shared an overview of funding programs that enable communities to invest in alternative transportation (trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit, rail, etc.).



Since 2011, the New River Valley Regional Commission has partnered with the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission to coordinate and facilitate this social learning event. Many of those who attended the social are pictured above, in front of Christiansburg's Renva Knowles Bridge. The Regional Commission would like to extend a special thank you to all those who participated this year!

For further information please contact Elijah Sharp (esharp@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 210.

Technical Assistance: Town of Rich Creek Comprehensive Plan Update 2016

The Regional Commission continues to assist the Town of Rich Creek with their Comprehensive Plan update. Under the direction of the Town Council, Regional Commission staff have met with the Rich Creek Planning Commission several times to review data trends and the past comprehensive plan. Over the next few months, Regional Commission staff will continue to work with the Rich Creek Planning Commission to update the plan, and to host public outreach meetings. Funding for this project comes from the Town of Rich Creek and is matched by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

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

Technical Assistance: Giles County Comprehensive Plan Update

Regional Commission staff are assisting the County Planning Commission and staff in drafting an updated comprehensive plan. A community survey was distributed during October and is available online. At the October meeting of the County Planning Commission, an initial round of updated Census demographic data was shared and the group did some brainstorming of update needs related to plan goals and objectives.

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

Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

We recently shared that the 2016 update to the regional hazard mitigation plan is underway. To follow our progress and participate through the public comment process be sure to check in at our website: <http://nrvc.org/hazardmitigation/>

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

The NRVC would like to introduce James Jones



James was born and raised in Suffolk, Virginia located in Hampton Roads. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a minor in Business Leadership from Virginia Tech. James began as an intern for the Regional Commission in January 2016 and was brought on as a full-time employee in July 2016. In his role as Regional Planner James will be planning and coordinating the 2017 Virginia's Outdoor Lovers Expo, working on the Building Collaborative Communities grant project, as well as maintaining the NRV Data Dashboard. James can be reached at (540)639-9313 ext. 203 or jjones@nrvc.org.

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board Receives the 2016 Trailblazer Award in Financial Stability!

At the Unite SWVA Leadership Summit on Tuesday, October 18, 2016 the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, along with the Southwest Virginia Workforce and the Western Virginia Workforce Development Boards, received the 2016 Trailblazer Award in Financial Stability for their partnership building and collective impact work around the Regional Rapid Response Initiative. The award was presented by the Honorable Todd Haymore, Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade.

The Unite SWVA Leadership Summit focuses on cradle to career initiatives in education, financial stability and health that will benefit every citizen of Southwest Virginia. The Summit footprint is planning districts 1, 2, 3 & 4 (or WDAs 1 & 2). After three years of gathering input through the Southwest 2020 Summits, this Leadership Summit was no longer about just casting a vision; but about laying the groundwork for action to advance the local economy through collective impact.



At each Summit, Trailblazer Awards in Education, Financial Stability, and Health are given to organizations that have successfully created and/or supported community partnerships that improve Southwest Virginia. In other words, instead of just talking about improving the community, these organizations are actually improving the community using creative and exciting approaches to engage people.

Past Trailblazer winners include Dickenson County Schools, The Southwest Virginia Advance Manufacturing Center of Excellence, Mr. Jack Kennedy, Mountain Youth Drama and Pulaski County Drug Court.

More information about the Regional Rapid Response Initiative can be found at: <http://nrmrwib.org/business-solutions/strategic-plan/regional-rapid-response/>

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

NRVRC Meeting Summary

September 22, 2016 Meeting

Economic Development:

- The GO Virginia statewide workgroup met and discussed how to decide the convening entity to help establish the Regional Councils.
- The Town of Pulaski recently selected the Commission to serve as grant administrator for their downtown revitalization planning grant.
- Giles County kicked-off their planning grant project that will support Pearisburg, Rich Creek and Glen Lyn to conduct similar visioning exercises to Pembroke and Narrows.

Transportation:

- The NRVMO Policy Board accepted Task Orders for the Commission to conduct three studies in the coming year. These will include bus stop studies for both Radford Transit and Pulaski Area Transit along with a Freight Mobility Study update. The Commission will use a portion of VDOT Rural Transportation Planning Funds to support the Pulaski Area Transit study since most of their service area is outside of the NRVMO geography.

Regional:

- ReNew the New committee met for a debrief meeting to review 2016 event logistics and discuss the approach for 2017.
- The annual Virginia Outdoors Plan update regional meeting was held on 9/27.
- A Census Data Training workshop was hosted by the Commission on 10/28 at the NRV Business Center.

Commission:

- An all-day staff retreat was held at Mountain Lake to review and update progress on the internal strategic efforts of the agency.

October 27, 2016 Meeting

Economic Development:

- The GO Virginia Statewide board held their first meeting in early October. The board voted to send the proposed map (developed by VAPDC) out for a 30-day public comment period opening October 17th. The board will meet again on December 5th and will take action on the map at that time.
- The Commission recently purchased a license for JobsEQ, an economic data tool, that will help provide great insight for a variety of purposes such as our communities working on downtown projects and our economic development partners that need data for prospects.
- In partnership with the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, the Commission launched a broadband user survey. The survey will be open into December with the intent to collect as much user demand information possible. The data will be shared with internet service providers with the hope of increasing service and/or bandwidth in areas of need.

Transportation:

- Staff is coordinating transit provider meetings between workforce development and Virginia Employment Commission due to a potential office relocation for VEC services in Radford.

Regional:

- A ReNew the New debrief meeting in September yielded a positive discussion about the approach to a regional event for 2017. The concept will be centralized registration, then decentralized clean-up activities so all four counties and the city can host activities.
- The SWVA Outdoor Expo will be held April 22nd in Bisset Park. Commission staff is the lead coordinating entity as a joint tourism project. Focus is currently on soliciting sponsorships and vendors.

Commission:

- Staff held an annual retreat at the end of September. The retreat started by reviewing successes of our internal committees (communications, technology, capacity building) over the past year. Hats off to staff for making great strides! We spent the majority of our time developing focus areas for FY17.
- Kevin Byrd was elected to serve as Treasurer of NADO, the national association representing over 300 regional development organizations in the US. It is a five-year cycle leading up to serve as President in 2020.

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

Broadband Survey

A survey has been issued to find out what residents and businesses in Blacksburg, Christiansburg and Montgomery County think of their current internet service and what improvements would benefit the community. A partnership between these localities, the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, and the New River Valley Regional Commission developed the online survey.

The survey for each town and the county is available at the following links:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BlacksburgBroadband>

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MontCoBroadband>

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ChristiansburgBroadband>

Local businesses and residents have been seeking access to high-speed broadband in the area with mixed success. Based on work done by Blacksburg's broadband steering committee over the last few years, it has become clear that local governments have a role to play in facilitating improved broadband access. The local governments promoting the survey are considering how they can create efficiencies and reduce costs for providers as well as determining local broadband need. This survey will collect data to better establish how well existing service matches up to local needs. The data will inform the ways the towns and county may proceed to encourage internet service providers to offer services residents and businesses need.

While this information is being shared by the participating localities and the chamber, the Roanoke Times has also provided some coverage of the survey with context of the broader region - <http://bit.ly/2eBEK4E>.

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

Virginia 2015 Tourism Figures Released



Spending by tourists in Virginia reached \$23 billion in 2015, an increase of 2.3% over 2014. All jurisdictions in the New River Valley (NRV) saw an increase in domestic traveler spending in 2015 vs. 2014. The NRV region saw an increase of 1.9%. Changes in spending by locality/region:

- Floyd County: 2.0%
- Giles County: 0.5%
- Montgomery County: 2.3%
- Pulaski County: 2.0%
- City of Radford: 0.1%
- NRV Region: 1.9%

For more information on the economic impact of tourism in Virginia, please use the following link: www.vatc.org/research/economicimpact/.

Virginia Tourism Marketing Leverage Program

The Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Marketing Leverage Program is designed to stimulate new tourism marketing programs through the creation of tourism partnerships and to extend the "Virginia is for Lovers" campaign. The objective of this program is to leverage limited marketing dollars, resulting in increased visitor spending, revenue, and jobs.

The next round of Marketing Leverage Program funding has an application deadline of 5:00 p.m. on November 30, 2016. For applicants who are interested in receiving a review of their draft application, the draft must be submitted to VTC by November 9 at 5:00 p.m. More information on this program can be found at <http://www.vatc.org/pam/leverageprog/>.



Virginia's Outdoor Lovers Expo

Planning for the third annual Southwest Virginia Outdoor Expo is currently underway, with this year's location being at Bisset Park in Radford. The expo is presented by Friends of Southwest Virginia and will take place April 22nd, 2017. This event is dedicated towards raising awareness of the diverse outdoor recreation in Southwest Virginia and will serve as a platform to connect local business, organizations and clubs to one another and event visitors. The expo is a free event with live music, craft beer, demonstrations, activities and giveaways.

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

November - December 2016

New River Valley Business Center Tenant Receives Award

The NRV Development Corporation is pleased to congratulate Katrina Watson on her receipt of the "Women Taking Care of Business" award from the Southwest Times, which celebrates professional women in Pulaski County who own or run small businesses. In addition to running a small business, Katrina is a licensed registered nurse with over 25 years of healthcare experience, and teaches clinical simulation to Radford University nursing students. The award is a testament to her entrepreneurial spirit and the success of her business, Manicures on the Move.

Manicures on the Move provides on-site manicure and pedicure services for home or office, bridal events, company events, church conferences or spa parties in the New River Valley. The mobile service brings all the equipment and expertise needed for manicure and pedicures to clients, wherever they happen to be. The service is great for events, or for those with limited time or mobility. In 2015, Katrina Watson decided to expand the mobile service with a physical location, which offers eco-friendly manicure and pedicure options. This soak-free technique uses Bodipure's disposable keratin gloves and socks, saving 2-5 gallons of water per service. Since 2015, Manicures on the Move has been located in Suite 318, in the west wing of the New River Valley Business Center. For more information, visit their website: www.manionthemove.wix.com/nails.

The New River Valley Business Center still has suites available for businesses looking for a flexible option for production or office space. There are a variety of spaces available, with lease rates including utilities, and access to meetings spaces and other shared amenities. More information at: <http://www.nrvdc.org/nrvbc.html>.

NRVDC Revolving Loan Fund

The NRVDC Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) has nearly \$40,000 in 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 (current loans range from 2% to 5% interest rate for a five year term). In addition, NRVRC 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 the NRV Development Corporation's website (<http://www.nrvdc.org/dcfinance.html>), or contact Patrick O'Brien, pobrien@nrvrc.org or 540-639-9313 x 206.

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

For Business Center information contact:

Michael Solomon, Incubator Manager
6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 302, Radford, VA 24141
Phone: 540.633.6730 Fax: 540.633.6768
msolemon@pulaskicounty.org or www.nrvdc.org/nrvbc.html



Print Edition Subscriber:
*The New River Valley News & Views is available electronically.
 Please contact Julie Phillips, jphillips@nrvc.org to be added to the
 distribution list.*

NRVRC Commissioners	
Floyd County · Fred Gerald · Michael Maslaney	Town of Floyd · Mike Patton
Giles County · Richard McCoy · Leon Law, Treasurer	Town of Narrows · Tom Garrett
Montgomery County · Annette Perkins · Michael Harvey, Vice-Chair	Town of Pearisburg · Susie Journell
Pulaski County · Charles Bopp · Doug Warren	Town of Pulaski · Greg East · Larry Clevinger
City of Radford · Keith Marshall · Helen Harvey	Town of Rich Creek · William Kantsios
Town of Blacksburg · Cecile Newcomb · Holly Lesko	Radford University · Joe Carpenter, Chair
Town of Christiansburg · Hil Johnson · Henry Showalter · Harry Collins	Virginia Tech · Jason Soileau · Kevin Sullivan, Past-Chair
Elected Officials in Bold	
Kevin R. Byrd, AICP Executive Director kbyrd@nrvc.org	
Julie Phillips, Newsletter Editor	

Continued from page 1

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 (CIG), 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, ext. 206.

New River Valley
 Regional Commission
 6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 124
 Radford, VA 24141
 P: 540-639-9313
 F: 540-831-6093
www.nrvc.org
nrvc@nrvc.org

