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UPCOMING MEETINGS:



- Bikeway/Walkway Committee**
Tuesday, January 20th, 11:30 a.m.
NRVBC - Conference Room
- Transportation Technical Advisory Committee**
Tuesday, January 20th, 1:30 p.m.
NRVBC - Conference Room
- PDC Commission Meeting**
Thursday, January 22nd, 6:00 p.m.
NRVBC - New River Room

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

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Aging in Place Workshop

On October 22nd, 2014, the Aging in Place Leadership Team of the New River Valley hosted a follow-up workshop, *Home Matters: Lifespan Friendly Homes, Neighborhoods and Communities that Support Aging in Place — Moving from Vision to Action*. The purpose of this workshop was to explore the financial, policy, and decision-making obstacles that traditionally interfere with making homes and communities truly lifespan friendly—great places to grow up and grow old.



This workshop is in response to the overwhelming response received from the first aging workshop, held in August of 2013. From that workshop, a 46 page community guidebook, *Home Matters*, was produced, and can be found on the Planning District Commission’s website under the Publications tab.

The workshop began with an overview of aging demographics, issues in housing, health, and quality of life in the NRV. Concepts discussed in the previous workshop regarding aging in place were reviewed, and emergent consumer demands and service delivery models were introduced. Participants self-selected to attend one of three concurrent sessions:

- **Policy Drivers:** this group addressed zoning and community development issues relevant to the work of local government staff and elected officials. The group explored examples of best practices both locally and nationally as well as focusing on planning and zoning tools that could facilitate better community design for aging.
- **Developing & Building Lifespan Friendly Homes and Communities:** this group focused on community issues relevant to developers, builders, realtors and appraisers; and
- **Deciding for Ourselves:** focused on decision-making challenges faced by older adults, their families, and how this strains the resources available to the eldercare workforce.

The workshop concluded with a “Call to Action,” where participants shared recommendations and implementation strategies to overcoming obstacles to aging in place in the NRV identified in concurrent sessions.

For further information about the Aging in Place Leadership Team, please contact Jennifer Wilsie (jwilsie@nrvpcd.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 204.

Transportation

The Commission was recently invited to present at the 2014 National Association of Development Organization's Rural Transportation Conference. The presentation topic was Technology Tools for Transportation. The opportunity allowed the Commission to share how recent investments in GIS, apps, and image enhancing software have benefited local planning.

The presentation highlighted many of the Commission's latest transportation related projects, including: the Bike Route 76 Report, NRVMPD Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, and VDEM Flood Mapping project. In 2014, the Commission was selected for an Innovation Award and an Excellence in Regional Transportation Planning Award. Both recognitions were attainable largely due to technology enhancing the final products. The presentation was well received and representatives from Ohio, North Carolina, and California followed up for more information – hoping to utilize similar tools and techniques in their region.



The Flipbook Effect

This year the event was held in Cincinnati, Ohio. The national conference began on Wednesday December 3rd and concluded on Friday December 5th. The annual event provides peer-to-peer learning for regional planners, state DOT representatives, and their partners. In addition, the conference provided training and networking opportunities on a variety of rural and small metropolitan transportation topics. Over 120 participants, from across the nation, attended the event this year.

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

NRVPDC Reconvenes CEDS Committee for 2015 Update

The PDC is beginning the process to update the New River Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document for 2015. The CEDS provides a review of economic data and conditions for NRVPCD jurisdictions, identifies goals and strategies that help to address these regional issues, and prioritizes regional economic development projects that the region can undertake to achieve these goals. The CEDS documents from previous years are available on the Planning District Commission's website: <http://nrvpdc.org/cedsinformation.html>.

The first step to updating the CEDS each year is to reconvene the CEDS committee, a group of 25 volunteers who represent organizations around the New River Valley that have a broad understanding of the regional economy, and a deep knowledge of specific issues that contribute to the region's economic health. This year's committee contains representatives with a variety of expertise, including finance, international trade, small business development and entrepreneurship, educational institutions (both K-12 and higher ed), manufacturing, workforce development, and local government, among others. Over half of the committee members represent private sector organizations.

The CEDS committee met at the NRV Business Center on December 16th for the first of several meetings in the 2015 update process. The committee reviewed economic development trends and events over the last year, with an eye towards identifying the issues that the CEDS should focus on this year.

The CEDS committee will meet several more times in early 2015 in order to provide input on the CEDS update process, such as reviewing and updating last year's CEDS goals, and providing input on the ranking and prioritization of economic development projects.

For further information, please contact Patrick O'Brien (pobrien@nrvpdc.org), 540-639-9313, ext. 206.

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board



The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) received notification that a recent grant application submitted was approved. The WIB was awarded \$50,000 of Incentive Funds for a Local Coordination Grant to create Small Learning Communities utilizing four roving computer labs (RCL) that will be established in small towns throughout the region. Each RCL will be made up of five laptop computers, five tablets, a portable printer and a wireless hotspot. The NR/MR WIA is made up of 4,234 square miles which covers ten counties and three independent cities. Each of the RCLs will cover a smaller regional area and can be moved throughout that area to offer programs in many out-lying small towns and create Learning Communities there. The RCLs will begin as a remote One-Stop resource room. Once the Learning Community is established, then the programs offered can be flexible enough to meet the needs of those that participate. The focus may be on digital life skills and literacy, basic adult literacy, elements of work readiness, financial literacy, or other programs that may be desired by the local/regional businesses.

Additionally, implementing regulations for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are scheduled to be released by the Department of Labor no later than January 18, 2015. Implementing regulations will be utilized to develop processes and procedures necessary to begin program operations under WIOA effective July 1, 2015. All current contracts for service delivery under WIA have been approved for a one (1) year extension for PY'15 to allow for a smooth transition from WIA to WIOA.

For further information, please contact Ronnie Martin (rmartin@nrvc.org), 540-633-6764.

HOME Consortium

The Grissom Lane project was recently completed in the Town of Blacksburg. Designed and constructed by Community Housing Partners, Grissom Lane is a four duplex rental community reserved for residents 55 years and older. Inspired by the aging data from the Livability Initiative, the units were designed with universal design features, meaning anyone of any mobility level could easily access and live in the units. The units were also designed to meet EarthCraft Net-Zero standards, which means the units generate as much power as they consume, drastically reducing utility costs for tenants.

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

NRVPDC Meeting Summary

November 20, 2014 Meeting

Economic Development:

- FY15 CEDS update commenced in December. The updated committee list was in the November Commission packet for review.
- The Blacksburg Broadband Committee is working to increase internet bandwidth in the community and is contracting with the Commission for staff support for the project. The committee held an internet providers meeting and released a Request for Information. The Committee effort is a public/private partnership consisting of representatives from the Town of Blacksburg, Virginia Tech, the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council, the Blacksburg Partnership and the NRVPDC. The RFI process is intended to identify potential solutions in Blacksburg and hopefully transferrable to other communities in the region.
- The Commission is providing staff support for the Prices Fork Elementary School re-use project to evaluate the viability of a local food operation such as a commercial kitchen, café, food hub, and business development services among many other ideas being generated currently. A community meeting will be held in early 2015 to identify the most suitable uses and people to lead the implementation. Site visits to other operations will be conducted in the spring.

Transportation:

- The US Bike Route 76 New River Valley Report received an Excellence in Rural Transportation Award from NADO. The report, which was informed by field inspections conducted by local cyclist volunteering their time, can be found at <http://www.nrvc.org/InteractivePubs/BR76Report2014/>. The report has letter grades for existing conditions pertaining to signage, roadway surface and sight distance. The report also cites the locations for the needed improvements and illustrates the roadway elevation for cyclist's purposes.
- The NRV Passenger Rail committee met November 12th at RU COBE Building with approximately 30 people in attendance. Representatives from the City of Bristol provided a presentation to overview their efforts in securing a passenger rail stop. The NRV study will commence in January and is scheduled to be complete within 12 months. The focus will be on demonstrating demand in the NRV and conducting an analysis of station locations.

Regional:

- Red Sun Farms, the first tenant at the NRV Commerce Park, held a Grand Opening event on 11/17
- The next NRV Mayors/Chairs meeting was held 12/16 at the Commission office at Noon.
- The Commission submitted a grant in coordination with the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council to the US Economic Development Administration for seed capital to support small and mid-size business development.

December 2014 Meeting - cancelled

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

Economic Indicators

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Year	Period	Average Establishments	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
2014	1st Qtr.	3,898	66,898	\$740
2013	4th Qtr.	3,883	67,374	\$751
2013	3rd Qtr.	3,883	66,865	\$754
2013	2nd Qtr.	3,932	67,747	\$691
2013	1st Qtr.	3,914	66,203	\$708
Growth/Change		-16	695	\$32

Source: Virginia Workforce Connection: Labor Market Statistics, Covered Employment and Wages Program.

Pulaski Adult Daycare

After discovering renovation work at the former Newbern Elementary School would exceed the available budget, the project spent the summer and early fall reevaluating site options. During this search, the site of the former Dublin Primary School site became a strong candidate.

By October 2014, the Management Team overseeing the project had evaluated each of the site location options in the County, held a community meeting to receive feedback on the proposed site change, and received confirmation from the Dublin Town Council that the adult day facility would meet existing zoning requirements. On October 6, 2014 the Management Team made a motion to pursue new construction of an adult day services facility and fall prevention clinic at the former Dublin Primary School site. The County is currently procuring a design firm to assist with design and construction management and hopes to begin construction in the spring of 2015.

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

Local Technical Assistance

- **Town of Narrows Comprehensive Plan Update:** Citizen input received through a community survey and community meetings was reviewed by the Narrows Planning Commission. The group also had some initial discussion about development of goals and objectives.
- **Town of Pulaski Comprehensive Plan Update:** PDC staff assisted the Town's Planning Commission and staff in facilitating citizen input meetings related to the plan update effort. Next steps involve reviewing input about needs/concerns (from survey and meetings) with the Planning Commission and beginning development of goals and objectives.

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

THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

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

Doug Hudson
Incubator Manager

January – February 2015

OTH Consulting moving to Pulaski facility in 2015

We are pleased to announce that an NRV Business Center incubator client, OTH Consulting, has finalized plans to share a facility in Pulaski with their partner INTER Materials, LLC. OTH will move out of their current facilities in the NRV Business Center at the end of December.

Founded in 2009, OTH Consulting provides a variety of technical services to regional manufacturers, including custom CAD design and fabrication services, as well as building and installing OEM and custom-built machines and automation systems for a wide variety of manufacturing processes. These include testing/quality control machines, automated welding fixtures, conveyor systems and robotic machine tool stations. OTH Consulting's services include the installation and troubleshooting of these automated systems in their clients manufacturing facilities, as well as providing maintenance and process improvement services to existing assembly and automation equipment. More information about OTH Consulting on their website at: <http://oth247.com/>.

OTH Consulting will join forces with another NRV Business Center alumni, INTER Materials LLC, a materials-based product development company that has developed several unique manufacturing processes using plasma coating and multiple layer film technologies. Applications include advanced ballistic helmets for US Army soldiers, and scratch resistant plasma coating for a variety of applications, including helicopter windscreens and other optical grade polymer products, such as goggles, headlight covers, etc. INTER Materials offers contract plasma coating, as well as ballistics testing services. More information about INTER Materials on their website: <http://intermaterials-usa.com/>.

Although we never like to say goodbye to such good neighbors, we are happy that OTH Consulting and INTER Materials have had so much success, and that two former alumni of the NRV Business Center have developed a good partnership! We wish them the best.

Of course, this also means we have another opening for a growing company that needs a flexible option for production or office space. The NRV Business Center has 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>.

For further information on the New River Valley Business Center, please contact Doug Hudson (incubatormanager@nrvdc.org), 540-633-6730.

For Business Center information contact:

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Elected Officials in Bold

Kevin R. Byrd, AICP
 Executive Director
kbyrd@nrvpdc.org

Julie Phillips, Newsletter Editor

Pulaski County and Town of Pulaski Receive Housing Award

At the Governor’s Housing Conference held in Norfolk in late October, Pulaski County and the Town of Pulaski were presented with a 2014 Virginia Housing Award, recognizing the localities’ achievements in the category of “Best Housing Program or Service” for the Pulaski Tornado Recovery Project. The Virginia Housing Awards recognize outstanding and innovative efforts in crafting effective solutions to housing needs.



Before and after of a neighborhood affected by the tornado

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