

# Your Regional Commission



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N R V R C . O R G

## NRVRC Name Change Unveiling and Annual Award Recipients

On May 13, 2015 the New River Valley Regional Commission board of directors hosted a dinner event modeled after a food truck rodeo at the Hotel Floyd to honor their annual award recipients. During the awards ceremony the New River Valley Planning District Commission formally announced the agency name change to the New River Valley Regional Commission. The new tagline is, "Strengthening the Region through Collaboration." Approximately 100 local government elected officials, state and federal representatives, and planning commission chairs were in attendance.

Mr. Ken Anderson, founder and CEO of Anderson and Associates in Blacksburg, VA, received the Citizen of the Valley award. This award is given to a citizen within the New River Valley who has made significant contributions to the betterment of the region. He established the engineering firm Anderson and Associates in 1968 from his home in Blacksburg while working on his Master's degree at Virginia Tech. Mr. Anderson has been a driving force in economic development and progress for Southwest Virginia over the past four decades. Countless engineering projects for infrastructure such as public water and sewer, industrial parks, roads, and railways conducted by Anderson and Associates have directly shaped economic opportunities for the region. He has also served the region in numerous economic development leadership roles as Chair for the New River Valley Economic Development Alliance, Co-Vice Chair for the New Century Council, Vice-President of Economic Development for the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, and Chair of the Montgomery County Industrial Development Authority.



Mr. Rick Boucher, 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Representative from 1983-2011, received the Champion of the Valley award. This award is given to an elected official within, or representing, the New River Valley who has greatly assisted communities and

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- Transportation Program
- Project Updates
- NRVPC Meeting Summary
- The Competitive Edge

### UPCOMING MEETINGS:

**Transportation Technical Advisory Committee**  
Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1:30 p.m.  
NRVBC - Conference Room

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

**Commission Board Meeting**  
Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m.  
NRVBC - New River Room

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## Transportation

The Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) is currently in the process of updating VTrans 2040. In May 2015, New River Valley partners attended a regional forum in Wytheville to learn about the plan update. During the forum, meeting participants were informed that all projects screened under House Bill 2 (HB2) criteria must be related to an identified need under VTrans 2040. This means that for the first time Virginia's multimodal transportation plan will be directly linked to the programming of statewide funds. As a result, projects that do not align with legislative requirements will not be scored under HB2 criteria and will be excluded from the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP).

Virginia's statewide transportation needs are currently categorized into three areas: state of good repair, safety, and capacity/operations. According to HB2, capacity/operation projects must be located along a Corridor of Statewide Significance, a Regional Network, or within an Urban Development Area (UDA). UDAs and UDA-like areas are currently an integral component for the identification and justification regional networks.

Contrary to initial assumptions, regional networks will not necessarily consist of all Virginia primary roadways. Only corridors that interconnect employment centers will be incorporated into the VTrans 2040 Plan. Interstate 81 and US Route 460 are the only Corridors of Statewide Significance in the NRV – making the identification of UDAs and UDA-like areas extremely important. Otherwise, important regional corridors such as: Routes 8, 100, 114 and 221 may not be incorporated in the plan. Furthermore, these corridors will be exempt from future capacity/operation improvements.

While the future scoring process for HB2 projects is still unknown, the Commission is encouraging NRV communities to reference Section 15.2-2223.1 in appropriate sections of their comprehensive plans. To determine which areas of your community might be classified as UDA or UDA-like, please

visit: [http://www.vtrans.org/urban\\_development\\_area\\_technical\\_assistance\\_grant\\_program.asp](http://www.vtrans.org/urban_development_area_technical_assistance_grant_program.asp).

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

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## Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Plan Update

The Commission continues to assist Montgomery County with its Parks and Recreation Plan update. NRVRC staff completed inventorying Montgomery County's recreational programs and facilities, and developed a working website for the project. Staff is also compiling a community survey that will gauge how Montgomery County Parks and Recreation is doing including what is going well, what is not going well, and what can be improved. Staff will administer the survey, which will be available in hard copy and electronic form in July. The survey will be found on the project's working website at [www.nrvpdc.org/montcoparksrec](http://www.nrvpdc.org/montcoparksrec).

For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie ([jwilsie@nrvc.org](mailto:jwilsie@nrvc.org)), 540-639-9313, ext. 204 or Michael Gottfredson ([michaelg@nrvc.org](mailto:michaelg@nrvc.org)), 540-639-9313, ext. 205.



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## Baskerville Neighborhood rehab project

The Baskerville Neighborhood Rehab project is in the final year of its grant contract. To date, the grant has rehabilitated or rebuilt 14 homes and improved the water and sewer lines within the neighborhood. The project's most recent applicant had been interested in the program since the grant was submitted, but did not own the parcel of land her home was on. Through a generous donation of land from her mother, who also lives in the neighborhood, this resident will be a homeowner and landowner for the first time. The home was custom designed for the family of six and will include a fully handicap accessible bathroom, open living and dining, and ample storage all within less than 1250 square feet. Construction on this home will be complete in early fall. The Baskerville project will conclude at the end of this year.

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

# New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board



The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board is going through some changes. President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform in 15 years of the public workforce system.

WIOA goes into effect July 1, 2015 and as can be expected, there are regional changes that will happen at that time. The Workforce Area that includes Planning Districts 3 & 4 known as the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area will be changed to the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area; the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board will be changed to the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board; and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board (the regional chief local elected officials) will be changed to the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board.

Some activity changes from WIA (Workforce Investment Act) to WIOA will be, providing career services (instead of core and intensive services); workplace training activities (OJTs, internships, apprenticeships); "disenfranchised" older youth (18 to 24 year olds); career pathway development; developing and establishing relationships with employers; new business services performance indicators; develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships and strategies; regional collaboration; enhanced One-Stop certification requirements; increased local board functions; core program partners (Adult Ed/Literacy and Vocational Rehab programs); and require evidence-based practices and state assessments of operations.

Another change is the WIBs new website! Please check out: [www.nrmrwib.org](http://www.nrmrwib.org) for more information about our programs and activities. For further information, please contact Marty Holliday ([marty.holliday@nrmrwib.org](mailto:marty.holliday@nrmrwib.org)), 540-633-6764.

## Local Technical Assistance

**Town of Narrows Comprehensive Plan Update:** Regional Commission staff continue to draft sections of the plan document. Narrows Planning Commission members and staff will be reviewing and providing comments on the draft.

**Pulaski County Development Ordinances:** As part of Pulaski County's ordinance review process, Regional Commission staff is providing facilitation assistance for public meetings held by the County. Two additional meetings were held in May to focus on specific land uses within zoning districts.

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

## NRVPDC Meeting Summary

### May 28, 2015 Meeting

#### Economic Development::

- Senator Warner hosted a Southwest Virginia Craft Beer Summit in Abingdon discuss this growing industry, its tourism potential and economic impact. Several communities in the NRV attended to learn more since a few micro-breweries are scheduled to open soon.
- The Commission submitted a letter of interest to the Strengthening Economies Together (SET) program to build economic opportunities based on the New River.

#### Transportation:

- The statewide Virginia Transportation Plan (VTRANS 2040) held a Regional Forum in Wytheville on May 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### Regional:

- The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) announced a new round of grant funds for Building Collaborative Communities and Community Business Launch. These programs are designed to establish new partnerships and economic opportunity.

#### PDC:

- The Commission hosted the annual Planning Commissioner Training on May 21<sup>st</sup>. The topic was Agriculture, Food Vending/Sales and Farmer's Markets as Event Spaces.
- The Commission formally introduced the name change to New River Valley Regional Commission at the annual dinner on May 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions is hosting the summer conference in Virginia Beach August 5-7.

### June 25, 2015 Meeting

#### Economic Development::

- The Commission hosted a field visit for the SET program in early June so the SET project evaluation team could determine whether the New River Initiative project was a good fit for the program. The New River Initiative project through the SET program would work to engage multiple sectors across the region to build economic opportunities based on the New River as an asset.
- The New River Valley Trail Guide for hiking and biking trails should be complete in early July.

#### Transportation:

- The Commonwealth Transportation Board adopted policy at their June meeting to implement House Bill 2 (HB2). The program is designed to prioritize transportation projects based on data-driven scoring criteria. HB2 will be used to shape the Six-Year Improvement Program and is a considerable shift in project selection in Virginia. Commission staff will coordinate a presentation from VDOT representatives to inform the Commission on HB2.
- VDOT held a public input meeting on the 2016-2021 Six Year Improvement Program at Northside High School.

#### Regional:

- The Commission convened a regional discussion regarding tourism marketing geography. Last year the region was invited to join the Roanoke region in establishing a mountain region in the Virginia Tourism guidebook. Local government decisions regarding tourism geography will be needed by December 1, 2015.

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

## Prices Fork Food Project

The Commission is assisting Montgomery County with a Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development to secure funding for the redevelopment of the former Prices Fork Elementary School to provide for much needed infrastructure and opportunities for the region's local food businesses. A grass-roots Food Steering Committee began to meet a year ago in order to explore viable options for a local/regional food-oriented initiative within the school, and local developer, Taylor Hollow Construction, recently purchased the building. As the project development team began to meet regularly, the concept of a local-foods related business continued to surface. The Prices Fork Food Steering Committee was eventually founded out of these discussions with representation from both the private and public sectors, local food representatives, and the Commission.

A Planning Grant request was initially submitted to DHCD in March of this year and the steering committee is diligently working to research the viable options for the space, solicit input from the local Prices Fork community, incorporate the best practices learned from similar endeavors within the state, and build the capacity of the committee through the procurement of a local foods business consultant and architectural services. Montgomery County anticipates a response from DHCD on the status of the Planning Grant in early summer.

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

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## Planning Commissioner Training Event

A training event for local government planning commissioners was held at the New River Valley Business Center on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Approximately 35 local planning commissioners and staff attended the session which focused on issues around agriculture and food trucks – topics chosen by a group of planners from the region. Fred Wydner, Agricultural Development Director for Pittsylvania County, spoke about his County's experience promoting agriculture, creating a forum for discussion of agricultural land use issues, exploring ways to further develop agriculture, and undertaking these activities under the direction of an agriculture development board. Mike Chandler, Director of Education for the Land Use Education Program at Virginia Tech, spoke on the approaches used most often by Virginia localities that regulate/allow food truck uses. The session concluded with a question and answer discussion. Thanks to all who participated!



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

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## The Economic Impact of Virginia Tech Football in the NRV

The Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development has completed a project to assess the economic impact of Hokies football in the New River Valley and Roanoke Valley region. The study found an overall economic impact on the region of nearly \$70 million annually, supporting nearly 300 jobs in the region. The impact is the result of nearly \$26 million in spending by the Department of Athletics, and \$21 million in spending by fans who come to the region for games, which in turn creates \$22 million in additional economic activity as the windfall from football games generates additional spending by local businesses and workers. The report estimates that visiting fans spend nearly \$5 million at local restaurants over the course of the football season, nearly \$3 million at gas stations, as well as \$2.6 million at retail stores.

Estimates of visitor spending came from an online and in-person survey that Virginia Tech and Commission staff administered during the fall 2014 football season. Over 5,000 fans responded to the survey, who volunteered information on their spending habits during the trip, as well as other information about their visit to the region, including how long they stayed, favorite activities, and their experiences at the game and around the region. Similarly, the researchers surveyed businesses in targeted fields (restaurants, hotels, shops, etc.) in order to verify the scale of the impact that these businesses experience as a result of football games. For instance, restaurants estimated a 15-20% increase in sales is typical for a home-game weekend, while hotels experienced an even larger jump.

Although the economic impact study is complete, Commission staff are working with regional tourism offices, Chambers of Commerce, and other interested parties to harvest additional information from these survey responses, and provide custom information for their projects. This rich dataset can help regional businesses to understand how best to serve football fans when they come to the region, and help regional marketing organizations to understand how the region can showcase the attractions to football fans. Through these and other visitors survey data, the NRVRC can learn what football fans might be interested in seeing while they are in the region- besides a Hokie victory!

For further information, please contact Patrick O'Brien ([pobrien@nrvc.org](mailto:pobrien@nrvc.org)) or 540-639-9313, ext. 206.

# THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

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

Doug Hudson  
Incubator Manager

July - August 2015

## New River Valley Business Center Meeting Spaces for Rent

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 local neighborhood associations hosting their regular meetings, regional manufacturing firms conducting strategic planning sessions, and local health care networks providing staff training sessions.

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

Tenants of the New River Valley Business Center are allotted monthly use of meeting rooms included with their rent, while other businesses can reserve the rooms for a small fee. Fees 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>. Contact information is listed in the form.

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

**For Business Center information contact:**

Doug Hudson, Incubator Manager  
6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 302, Radford, VA 24141  
Phone: 540.633.6730 Fax: 540.633.6768  
[incubatormanager@nrvc.org](mailto:incubatormanager@nrvc.org) or [www.nrvdc.org/nrvbc.html](http://www.nrvdc.org/nrvbc.html)



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Kevin R. Byrd, AICP Executive Director <a href="mailto:kbyrd@nrpdc.org">kbyrd@nrpdc.org</a>	
Julie Phillips, Newsletter Editor	

*Continued from page one:*

residents during their service to the public. During Mr. Boucher’s 28 years of service to the 9<sup>th</sup> District the region benefitted significantly from his representation in Washington, DC. He actively shaped legislation and programs which established the internet and greatly assisted communities in Southwest Virginia in gaining access to the critical infrastructure. In the New River Valley, his office helped the region obtain approximately \$11 million in grant funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to deploy world-class broadband fiber. He was a tireless champion of the region when meeting with business prospects and encouraging their location in the region. Dish Networks located in Christiansburg at Montgomery County’s Falling Branch Industrial Park is a prime example. He consistently encouraged the establishment of high quality communities not only for the benefit of tourism attraction, but to create places where people would want to call home.

For further information, please contact Kevin Byrd ([kbyrd@nrvc.org](mailto:kbyrd@nrvc.org)), 540-639-9313, ext. 212.

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](http://www.nrvc.org)  
[nrvc@nrvc.org](mailto:nrvc@nrvc.org)



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