

Virginia's New River Valley

The New River Valley has a strong heritage and pride embedded in its roots. It is a dynamic area of industry and trade, in part due to its location within a day's drive to approximately three-quarters of the nation's major markets. The scenic vistas, historical and cultural attractions, and qualities inherent to the area are drawing tourists and businesses to this rapidly growing Valley. Business and industry searching for new locations will appreciate the excellent natural resources found here. A critical component of success in this region is the pride and work ethic exhibited by the residents. These are the people that drive the Valley toward accomplishing its goals, success, and sustained growth.

Committed to educational excellence, the people in the New River Valley have developed an exceptional educational system. The region's commitment to excellence in education benefits everyone; students, parents, and employers. The area is home to Virginia's largest university, Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech ranked 28th among national public universities and the College of Engineering ranked 15th in the nation (tied with Northwestern University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison) [Virginia Tech Annual Report 2011-12]. Radford University provides strong programs in business, nursing, communications, and education. Additionally, New River Community College is dedicated to training and retraining the region's labor force. In fact, our education institutions comprise our largest employers in the region. These higher educational centerpieces also have strong ties with the local school divisions and local business and industry.

The New River Valley also offers many facilities to help businesses grow. The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center provides the opportunity for innovative high-tech companies to bring their ideas to market. In September 2010, it was named the 2010 Outstanding Research Park by the Association of University Research Parks (Roanoke Times, 2010). The New River Valley Business Center is an industrial development incubator in the Pulaski Business Technology Park. The Jacksonville Center, a community arts center in Floyd County, adds substantial support to the entire entrepreneurial community. Additionally, the region is home to the Radford University Business Assistance Center that promotes and supports emerging businesses.



Tourism is also an expanding economic force in the New River Valley. The New River Valley is situated between the Blue Ridge Mountains to the south and the Appalachian Mountains to the north, and is home to the nation's oldest river, the New River. In 1998, the river was designated an American Heritage River, further advancing its status. The New River Valley is part of 'Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network and The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail. 'Round the Mountain assures a future for craft and

agritourism in Southwest Virginia. Artisan trail brochures (maps) are available which highlight the work of 'Round the Mountain members and encourages people to visit artisan studios, craft venues, farms, restaurants, lodging and other points of interest. The Crooked Road focuses on the Appalachian region of Southwestern Virginia's unique musical heritage. Additionally, www.explorenewrivervalley.com, is a website clearinghouse of regional assets that promotes outdoor recreation along with the natural and cultural assets of the region.

Recreational opportunities abound in the area offering residents great places to spend a day relaxing or working. Claytor Lake State Park in Pulaski County, located on the 4,500 acre, 21-mile long Claytor Lake, offers a wide variety of activities for water and land enthusiasts. Easily accessible from Interstate 81, the park features the only full service marina in the state park system. In addition, there are miles of hiking trails, swimming, camping facilities, cabins and a visitor center. The New River Trail State Park, designated an official National Recreation Trail by the U. S. Department of the Interior, parallels 39 miles of the New River. This is a 57 mile long state park that follows an abandoned railroad right-of-way. There are several entrances into this park which meanders through Grayson, Carroll, Wythe and Pulaski counties in southwestern Virginia. The New River Trail is just minutes from Claytor Lake State Park. Gatewood Reservoir Recreation Area is located just to the west of the Town of Pulaski and provides facilities for picnicking, camping, fishing, boating, volleyball, and horseshoes. The Appalachian Trail and the Cascades are located in Giles County, and the Blue Ridge Parkway in Floyd County offers scenic views, hiking, picnicking, camping, swimming, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities.

Numerous historical societies promote an appreciation of the region's heritage. There are many culturally significant sites in the area including the Smithfield Plantation, Ingles Ferry, Glencoe Museum, Olde Newberne, Snowville, and Downtown Pulaski Historical Districts.

The people in the area are proud of the quality of life in the New River Valley. Here, surrounded by natural beauty, is a spirit of cooperation to get things done. The priorities are clear: develop and maintain a growing economy and provide jobs and personal enrichment opportunities for everyone. The following data provides the reader with an in-depth look at the New River Valley and its resources. It is intended to describe the living environment and activities which offer

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