

2015
2016

ANNUAL
REPORT



NRVRC

N R V R C O R G



re·dis·cov·er /rēdə'skəvər/

To find
something again

after losing or forgetting about it
for a long time

I am in the process of moving from one home to another. As many of you know, moving can take an inordinate amount of time because you open closets and dig through drawers that have not seen daylight in many a day. The upside of going through these dark places is that you find things that had been put away and then once out of view they quickly fell out of use. However, now rediscovered, these found treasures are restored to their rightful place in everyday use.

As you may know, the New River Valley is in the process of **rediscovering and restoring** some of our amazing resources. You can see that the New River is in the process of rediscovery by looking at the number of kayaks sticking out of the backs of trucks traveling down our roads. **ReNew the New**, a Giles County focused river clean-up program is taking the 15th year of this incredible event upriver. The ReNew initiative will have a new look as it becomes a regional effort with Giles County generously involving their New River neighbors in an expanded event — focusing on 11 miles between Claytor Lake and the Rt. 114 (Pepper's Ferry Blvd) bridge. ReNew is at capacity in participation with over 300 volunteers already signed up. Your Regional Commission has played a key role in assisting in the planning, coordination and implementation of this exciting and expanded regional event. Sign up early next year!



For much of the history of the New River Valley, the railroad played a vital role in bringing both people and things to and from our valley. Over the last 50 years the railroad seemed to be edging towards obscurity. Recently, it has been rediscovered by those of us who drive up and down Interstate I-81, wanting instead to ride the train. In association with the Blacksburg Partnership, our localities, and our universities, your Regional Commission has been on the forefront of working with state and federal officials to bring **passenger rail back to the NRV by 2020**. Something old is new again!

Cooperation seems to be a word lost in translation in many places. Over the last few years however, the term and concept has been rediscovered in the New River Valley. Two great examples include the regional tourism initiative, and the bi-annual Mayors & Chairs summits. The regional tourism initiative brings all of the NRV tourism representatives together to pool resources and talents to discuss strategies, initiatives, and to maximize the resources available to attract visitors to our little slice of heaven. The Mayors & Chairs summits give the leaders in the NRV an opportunity to meet and discuss similar issues and solve regional problems together, but most importantly, to develop informal working relationships that are essential to fostering cooperation. Your Regional Commission organizes and hosts these meetings and provides the opportunities for our leaders to collaborate. **Together is better!**

Let us know how we can help you.



Kevin G. Sullivan,
Chair

FY2015-2016 Commissioners

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Mr. Jason Soileau

Regional Cooperation

Regional Convening

NRVRC Annual Dinner

The New River Valley Regional Commission board of directors hosted a dinner event at the Draper Mercantile to honor their annual award recipients. Over 100 local government elected officials, state and federal representatives, and planning commission chairs were in attendance.

Penelope W. Kyle, J.D., President, Radford University, 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. As Radford University's sixth president, and first woman to serve as president, President Kyle has committed her leadership, drive and vision to transforming the university and its role in educating and inspiring future contributors to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the New River Valley and our local communities. Under President Kyle's leadership from 2005-2016, Radford University has secured funding or completed more than \$330 million in capital projects, including new construction and renovations.

Mr. Bill Brown, recently retired Montgomery County Board of Supervisors Chair, and Mr. Joseph Yost, 12th District, Virginia House of Delegates, both 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 residents during their service to the public. Mr. Brown served as a member of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors from 2007 until 2015. He served as Vice Chair from 2011 until 2013, and as Chair in 2014 and 2015. Mr.

Brown's tenure as an elected official was marked with pivotal decisions and major projects, many of which he helped guide and shape through his calm demeanor and consensus building skills. Delegate Yost was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 2011 representing the 12th District made up of Giles County, the city of Radford, and parts of Montgomery and Pulaski counties. During his time in the House, Delegate Yost has become a leader on issues relating to education and mental health and has received numerous accolades from local, state, and national organizations for his legislative engagement. Aside from his service in the General Assembly, Yost is highly involved with several non-profits and community-based organizations in the 12th District ranging from early childhood education to historical associations.



Mary Moody Northen Endowment received the Friend of the Valley award. This award is given to an individual or organization outside of the New River Valley that has made significant contributions to the betterment of the region. The Endowment and the Moody Family have been stewards of Mountain Lake since the 1930s. In the fall of 2012, the Endowment commenced a renewal of Mountain Lake Lodge, upgrading its facilities, expanding outdoor recreation programs, and investing millions of dollars into the facility.

Regional Cooperation (cont'd)

New River Valley Agriculture & Agritourism Strategic Plan



Agriculture is Virginia's largest and oldest industry, generating over \$52 billion annually and providing more than 350,000 jobs. Almost 90% of Virginia's farms are family owned and operated. In the New River Valley, beef and forestry are the largest agriculture sectors. In addition to traditional agribusiness operations, agritourism activities are thriving in Virginia. In fact, agritourism activities increased 42% from 2007 to 2012, and income increased \$2.3 million over the same time period.

The Regional Commission facilitated the development of a regional action plan for agribusiness and agritourism. Additional project deliverables included: a market brief that evaluated trends, forecasts, problems, and opportunities in agritourism; a regional assessment of traditional agribusiness; a unique brand that can be used to promote agritourism activities or local agribusiness products; an interactive local foods guide map; and a statewide conference that featured Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Todd Haymore.

The plan was a collaborative effort, funded by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Giles County, Montgomery County, and Pulaski County. The process was led by a steering committee consisting of local farmers, agribusiness owners, agritourism operators, Virginia Cooperative Extension staff, and local government planning, tourism, and administrative staff. The complete plan, deliverables, and supporting documentation are available on the Economic Development page of the Regional Commission's website.



New River Valley HOME Consortium



The HOME Consortium recently completed its first project in Floyd. Partnering with NRV Habitat for Humanity, a new single family home was built within the Town of Floyd for a household who lives and works in the community. The three bedroom, two bath home is highly energy efficient, constructed using ductless mini-split heat pumps, structural insulated panels, R-40 blown cellulose insulation in the attic, a sealed crawl space, and Energy-star appliances. As part of Habitat's business model, the homeowners contributed 750 hours of sweat equity towards the construction of the home. The home will be affordable to subsequent households for 99 years.

Virginia's First and New River Valley Commerce Park

The Authority completed a reorganization of the NRV Commerce Park administration allowing for elimination of administrative redundancies and encouraging organizational efficiencies that save the authority money. Numerous other administrative and planning activities initiated during the year will position the Commerce Park for more effective marketing. Prospects continue to show interest in the park with staff fielding requests for information and site visits in 2015 and early 2016.

New River Regional River Clean-up Event



In FY 2016, the Regional Commission continued to further regional cooperation between governments and citizens through

the expansion of community service opportunities, such as the ReNew the New river clean-up event. Working with the Leaders in Economic Alliance Development (LEAD) organization, the Commission facilitated meetings with Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties, and the City of Radford, to develop a regional clean-up event on the New River. Using the ReNew the New framework established in Giles County, the clean-up event was organized and planned for August 2016. Stakeholders and supporters of the event include local governments, local civic and advocacy groups, businesses, university student organizations, local school districts, and the public.

Regional Cooperation (cont'd)

New River Watershed Roundtable

Working along with the ReNew the New river clean-up event, the Regional Commission continues to promote dialogue and action on regional issues, such as water quality within the New River Watershed. To this end, the Regional Commission submitted and received a support grant from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to reestablish a watershed roundtable in the New River Valley. A watershed roundtable provides a forum for conversation and action to improve local water quality, and funding from this grant enables the Regional Commission to help establish a New River Watershed Roundtable through gathering stakeholders and supporting water quality projects. The grant will extend through FY 2017.

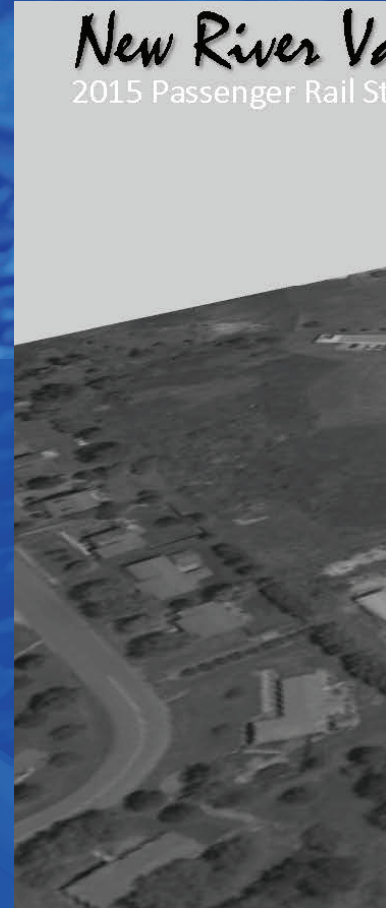
New River Valley Passenger Rail Study

In December 2015, the Passenger Rail Study was complete. The role of the Regional Commission was to facilitate discussions with local stakeholders to develop a robust scoring criteria for site selection. In addition, the Commission was charged with evaluating potential demand for a future passenger rail service in the region.

Nearly thirty locations were originally identified by regional partners. The sites were located throughout Pulaski and Montgomery counties, and the City of Radford. Each of the sites were evaluated against multiple criteria, including: site capacity and flexibility, environmental impacts, land use, accessibility, proximity to population and employment centers, ridership, and supporting infrastructure. The scoring criteria revealed each site's strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately the site(s) with the highest overall suitability.

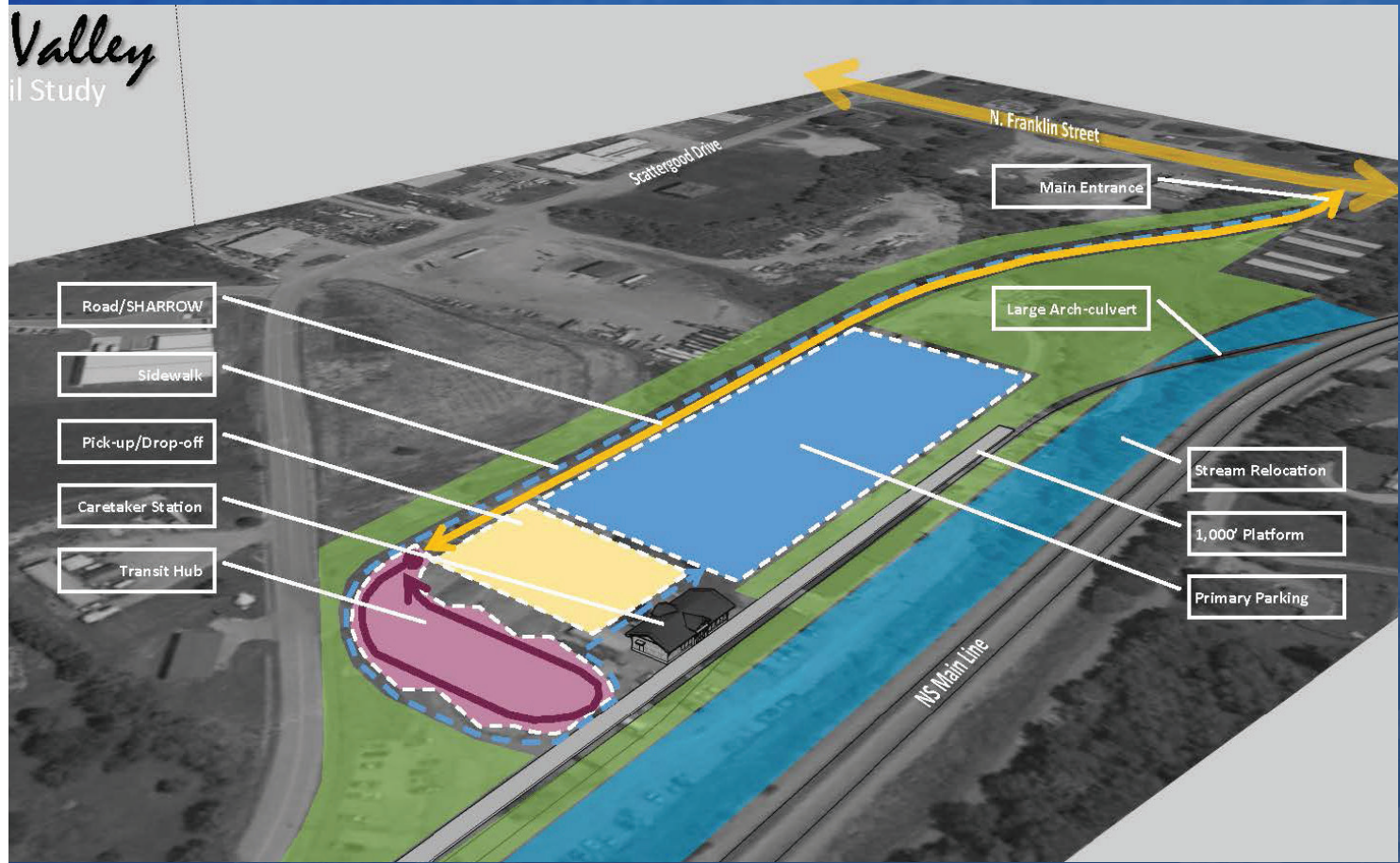
The Regional Commission engaged the public through a survey that received nearly 6,200 responses. The survey responses were incorporated into a custom GIS database that enabled stakeholders to determine a site's proximity to the potential demand. In addition, the survey provided information about the types of amenities, price points for service, and travel time preferences of potential users.

New River Valley
2015 Passenger Rail Study





Valley
Rail Study



The Regional Commission completed the study under contract by the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization. Next steps involve continued work with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and Norfolk Southern to determine specific infrastructure needs, between the NRV and the proposed Roanoke stop. For more information, visit: nrvc.org/nrvpassengerrailstudy

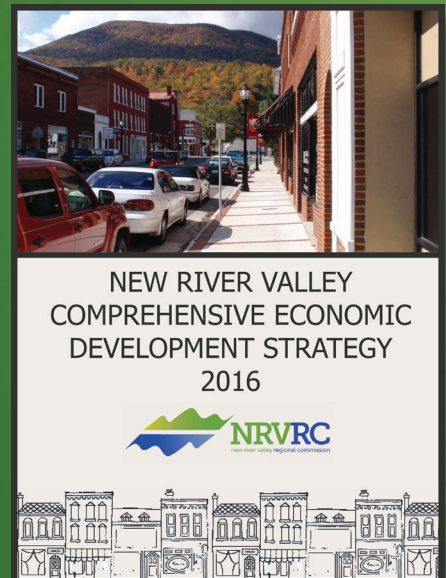
Economic Development & Human Services

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Update

Every five years, Economic Development Districts are tasked with making a major update to the CEDS, followed by four annual updates. The 2016 New River Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is the second annual update since the last five-year overhaul. The major changes in this year's update include revisions to the SWOT analysis for the New River Valley, identifying the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as updates to the 'project package' list of economic development projects. The changes work to align these components of the CEDS more closely with regional economic development goals and objectives, and to reflect changing regional conditions this year.

As part of this year's CEDS process, NRVRC staff solicited new or updated economic development projects for inclusion in the CEDS, requesting projects from the counties, cities, and towns in the New River Valley. In addition, the Regional Commission convenes the CEDS Committee several times each year during the update process, which includes public and private sector representatives of businesses and government organizations involved in economic development in the New River Valley. The committee proposes new projects for the CEDS project list, reviews CEDS report content like the SWOT analysis, and provides input and updates on developments over the past year, and future economic trends that may have implications for the CEDS economic development goals and strategies.

A summary 'consumer version' of the CEDS and a copy of the full document of the 2016 update is online at: nrvrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CEDS2016Report.pdf





Pulaski County Adult Day Service & Fall Prevention Center



The Pulaski County Adult Day Service & Fall Prevention Center has nearly finished construction. The 4,200 square foot facility began construction in December of 2015, and Pulaski County anticipates it will be open to clients in early fall of 2016. The project, funded in part through a \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant, will provide up to 43 elderly or disabled participants with a safe and engaging environment that currently does not exist in the County. Additional funding was provided by the Pulaski Adult Day Service & Fall Prevention Center Inc. Board of Directors and Pulaski County. The facility will also be home to a fall prevention clinic, which will provide comprehensive fall risk assessments and intervention plans for seniors. A standalone fall prevention clinic of this kind will be a first within southwest Virginia.

The operating agency, the Pulaski County Adult Day Service & Fall Prevention Center Inc., successfully completed its Capital Campaign at the end of 2015, raising over \$500,000 for the facility. They have received a great deal of support from the community as well as interest from potential clients. With the anticipated population increase for citizens 65 and older over the next 20 years, many supporters believe the service is well-timed and much needed. Once construction is complete, the facility will be receiving enrollment applications with an anticipated grant closeout date of early 2017.

Economic Development & Human Services (cont'd)

Old Prices Fork School Comprehensive Community Revitalization Project

The Old Prices Fork School Community Revitalization Project has been awarded \$2.5 million from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Vibrant Communities Initiative (VCI). The project's first phase, which is already underway, converts the former classrooms of the Old Prices Fork Elementary School into 16 two-bedroom apartments, with 10 affordable, and six market-rate units for people 55 and older. Phase I is funded in part with state and local HOME funds.

The second phase, which includes VCI funding as well as \$500,000 in Appalachian Regional Commission funding, includes two components: (1) the Old School Food Center, which will provide innovative economic development opportunities for new or expanding local food-based entrepreneurs through the creation of a commercial incubator kitchen, farm-to-table restaurant, retail market, craft brewery and business competition with support services, and, (2) 16 new apartments with a mix of affordable and market rate units.

The project is a unique and unprecedented collaboration of 21 public and private organizations including the Regional Commission, Montgomery County, Town of Blacksburg, Virginia Community Capital, the Community Foundation, Taylor Hollow Companies, the New River Valley HOME Consortium, Beans and Rice, and Old School Food Company.

Project planning and design will continue through 2016, with construction slated to begin in early 2017.



Southwest Virginia Local Foods Guide

The Regional Commission continues to partner with Southwest Virginia Fresh (SO Fresh) to maintain an interactive local food directory for southwest Virginia. SO Fresh serves as the primary contact and repository for the collection and distribution of local food information contained in the directory. The Commission maintains the online local food directory map utilizing ESRI's ArcGIS Online software. To learn more about the 19-county project, visit SO Fresh's website: swvafresh.org/food-producers

Baskerville Neighborhood Rehabilitation Project

The Baskerville Neighborhood Rehab Project is complete. Funded by a \$1,000,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through the Department of Housing and Community Development, local HOME funds, the Weatherization program, and local investment, the project rehabilitated 15 homes for low-to-moderate income households and completed nearly \$200,000 in water and sewer improvements. The project was largely initiated by several residents of the neighborhood. Since that time, the County has completed a housing study within the County to identify and prioritize additional neighborhoods in need of housing repair in anticipation of applying for future grants through the CDBG program.



Before



After

Economic Development & Human Services (cont'd)



New River Valley Development Corporation Revolving Loan Fund

This year, Regional Commission staff continued to provide staff support for the NRV Development Corporation Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). In collaboration with the Economic Development Authority of Floyd County, the RLF provided a \$40,000 loan to Riverstone Farm in Floyd County to

construct a commercial kitchen and commissary facility on the farm, allowing Riverstone to process their agricultural produce for sale to restaurants and groceries, increasing the profitability of the farm. Riverstone Farm also gives tours of the farm to visitors interested in the operations of an organic farm. Bootleg BBQ has nearly paid off their original loan, and continues to grow their business by drawing on their line of credit with the Development Corporation to purchase equipment to increase their smoking and slow cooking capacity. Currently, the Development Corporation is servicing loans to businesses located within the Town of Blacksburg, Floyd County, Montgomery County, and Pulaski County.

Virginia Tech CAPE II Project

The Regional Commission worked with a team of Virginia Tech researchers to analyze health care records and other data sources related to substance abuse among women of child-bearing age, as part of an effort to reverse recent increases in cases of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) in the New River Valley. VT and NRVRC partnered with the New River Health District and the New River Valley Community Services Board to identify populations that may be at risk for substance abuse, and develop early interventions to ensure that mothers do not use substances during pregnancy. Once the data collection systems are in place, the data can be easily updated each year, helping to track whether regional partners are making progress in addressing this important aspect of healthy child and family development.



POWER Grant

A recent study completed by the Appalachian Regional Commission identified that coal production peaked in the Appalachia region in 1990 and has been declining ever since. The changes in America’s energy production have placed significant economic challenges on coal reliant communities. As a result, the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) initiative was launched.

Giles County, home to a recently closed coal-fired power plant in Glen Lyn, partnered with the Friends of Southwest Virginia to build on initiatives to develop its tourism and recreation clusters, while also providing training for entrepreneurship and emerging in-demand occupations. The

Regional Commission is working with Giles area partners to develop an action oriented plan to establish destination centers that connect river users to communities.

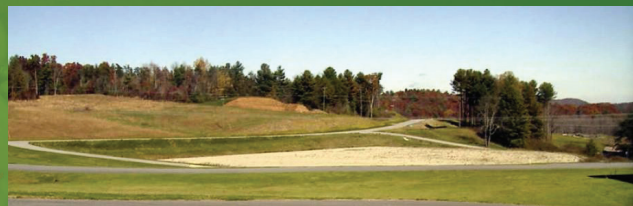
The POWER funding will also be utilized to prepare preliminary engineering reports suitable for future construction funding requests, engagement opportunities with external experts on river-based community development and investments, and open source marketing packages that highlight potential investment opportunities. The planning phase of the project is anticipated to be complete by December 2016.



Floyd Industrial Access Study



Regional Commission staff worked with the Economic Development Authority of Floyd County to provide research and planning assistance in support of future development at the Floyd County Regional Commerce Center. The project included identification of transportation improvements and site design to accommodate future development of industrial sites in the Commerce Center, as well as analysis of economic data to identify



potential industry sector targets that may be appropriate tenants for industrial properties at the Commerce Center.

Economic Development & Human Services (cont'd)

Pembroke & Narrows Downtown Revitalization Project

The Regional Commission is assisting the towns of Narrows and Pembroke in Giles County to conduct a downtown revitalization planning project aimed at encouraging downtown redevelopment of commercial properties, and attracting new businesses to serve visitors and local shoppers. The project focuses on connecting the towns' businesses to people who visit the many outdoor recreation assets in Giles County, including the New River, hiking trails, sports and camping. Giles County has several ongoing efforts to increase tourism, and ensure Giles County businesses capture more spending by visitors at stores, restaurants and hotels while they are in the area. The project in Pembroke and Narrows also works toward identifying investments in town infrastructure, upgrades to key retail properties, and support services for local entrepreneurs in the towns, with the goal of helping local businesses to maximize the economic benefits they receive from visitors to the natural beauty in the region.

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, 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 towns have contracted with Hill Studio of Roanoke to develop design concepts, and a master plan that prioritizes downtown redevelopment projects. The project is scheduled for completion at the end of 2016, with the towns applying for Community Improvement Grant funding in spring 2017.





New River Valley/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board



The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board exists to facilitate and coordinate regional workforce initiatives that enable economic growth and increase the standard of living in the region. To that end, the WDB is involved in the following initiatives:

Sector Partnership Development

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area laid the groundwork to begin implementation of regional Sector Partnerships in order to effectively and efficiently address the needs of critical business and industry throughout the region.

The WDB contracted with Community Workforce Advancements, LLC, (CWA) to guide the region towards the implementation of Sector Partnerships through a sequential series of one-day Implementation Work Sessions, follow up coaching, and support sessions to help ensure the success of this strategy as the way of doing business in the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area.

More information can be found here:

nrnrwib.org/business-solutions/sector-partnerships

Disability Employment Initiative

In the summer of 2014 the NR/MR WIB partnered with the Commonwealth of Virginia Community College System and the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation (who is overseeing a grant from Social Security Administration and Department of Labor) to implement the Ticket to Work program in our area, with funds from the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). The intent of the project is to eliminate employment barriers for Social Security beneficiaries by utilizing two Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) in the WIB's thirteen jurisdiction area. The program is completely voluntary for Social Security Beneficiaries that want to return to work full time. Other goals of the DEI Project are to educate and inform businesses about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities and increase the Workforce System's ability to serve individuals with disabilities.

Some milestones of this project this year:

- **One-on-One Intensive services** to jobseekers with disabilities - **62 served**
- **Partnered in bringing Mental Health First training** to staff of regional organizations **50+ trained**
- **Hosted an Asset Summit** bringing together Financial Experts and staff from the "services" industries to discuss ways to help clients become financially self-sufficient
- **Provided AT @ Work Training** for Partners and Businesses
- **Purchased accessibility tools** for the Roving Computer labs

Economic Development & Human Services (cont'd)

Roving Computer Lab

The NR/MR WDB was awarded \$50,000 to support this project from November 2014 through April 2016 from WIA set-aside State funds, through a competitive grant process.

The Roving Computer Labs' (RCLs) main purpose was to establish "remote resource rooms" in small towns throughout our rural region (offering job search assistance and computer literacy). A secondary purpose of the RCLs was to provide a "value added" service to businesses.

This year the Roving Computer Labs have been used in the following ways:

- Digital Literacy - **123 individuals served**
- Core Services - **1,811 individuals served**
- Businesses served (through customized job fairs, labs used for training, etc.) - **115**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs (WIOA)

The Adult and Dislocated Worker Program, under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, is designed to provide quality employment and training services to assist eligible individuals in finding and qualifying for meaningful employment, and to help businesses find the skilled workers they need to compete and succeed in the marketplace.

WIOA youth funds are targeted at young people who are both in and out-of-school, to assist them in their career and educational development, though the new law moves the focus from "in-school" to "out-of-school" youth.

What are the eligibility criteria for out-of school youth services?

- Age 16 to 24 and not attending school
- Fall within one or more of the following categories:
 - Individual with a disability
 - School dropout
 - Not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter.
 - A high school graduate who is: basic skills deficient; or an English language learner.
 - Offender
 - Homeless, runaway, or foster child
 - Pregnant or parenting
- A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment

Thru June 30, 2016 WDB Program Operators have served the following:
DLW – **306** • Adults – **229** • Youth – **119**



Planning/Technical Assistance

Local Planning Commissioner Training

The Regional Commission supports communication and information exchange between local government planning departments by coordinating a Regional Planning Forum for local planning staff. The Forum meets quarterly at a rotating host community to discuss planning issues of common concern in the region.

The Planning Forum organizes an annual training session which is open to all local government planning commission members in the region. The Commission hosted the ninth such training session on April 21, 2016. More than 40 local planning commissioners and staff attended the session which featured engaging presentations by planning directors from three New River Valley localities.



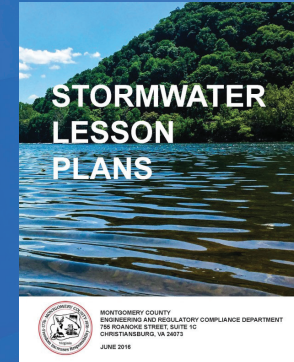
Topics and speakers included:

- **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

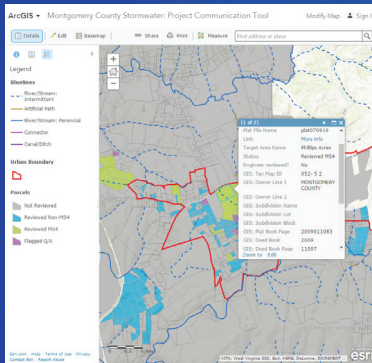
Planning/Technical Assistance (cont'd)

Stormwater Education

As an outgrowth of ongoing stormwater program development assistance to Montgomery County, Regional Commission staff compiled a resource book of stormwater-related lesson plans for elementary school students from multiple sources around Virginia and the U.S. The goal of the resource book is to provide teachers with examples of lesson plans/activities that help build awareness of stormwater issues for school-age residents. The document also provides links to outreach materials targeting the general population that are used by other Virginia localities to increase awareness of stormwater-related pollution issues and ways to reduce that pollution.



Montgomery County Stormwater Outfall Mapping



In 2016, the Regional Commission was tasked by Montgomery County with creating and maintaining a database of county-owned stormwater outfalls; a collaborative project between the County, the Regional Commission, and a local engineering firm. The role of the Regional Commission was to utilize the County's land records system to retrieve plats and develop an interactive GIS storm sewer database.

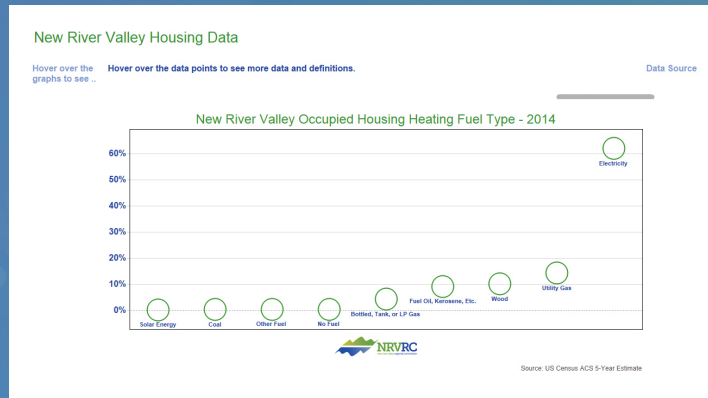
Parcel plats were reviewed for details regarding stormwater responsibility and best management practice (BMP) structures. The Regional Commission next developed a web app for the partners to track and communicate progress. The map included information such as parcels, subdivisions, incorporated and urbanized boundaries, watersheds, and target areas. This tool also allowed for the parcels to be directly linked to a digital copy of their official plat.

The GIS storm sewer database documents each outfall, the acreage served, and the name of the receiving surface water. The project will continue into FY2017 as the database and web map application are updated to reflect county-owned stormwater outfalls, drainage areas, and known BMPs.

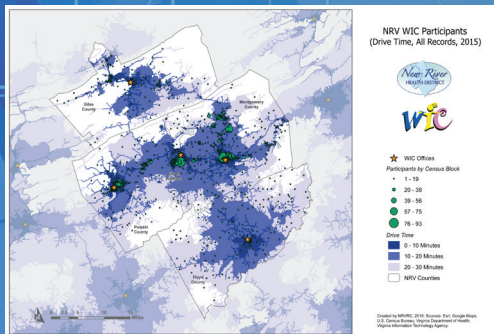


Data Dashboard

The data dashboard project is an initiative aimed at replacing the Regional Commission’s Regional Data Book, tracking various CEDS metrics, Livability measures, and numerous other initiatives within the New River Valley. The Regional Commission has been working on compiling data points in order to tabulate and then visualize the data utilizing Tableau. Tableau was identified as the data visualization program that could effectively show the metrics being tracked and could be made readily available to the public. The goal of using Tableau is to create a user-friendly, intuitive, interactive platform for users to visualize and access data regarding the Livability Initiative, among other initiatives within the region. Users will also be able to download the dashboards as well as share them via email and embed code.



GIS Partnership – New River Health District



The Regional Commission and the New River Health District (NRHD) continued their partnership for a second year. The collaboration revolves around the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and data analysis to improve public health outcomes in the region. This long-term and unique relationship allows for the partners to pool available information, financial resources, and technical expertise. Example projects from FY2016 include: developing a well web application; mapping Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) participants in the region; and modeling priority areas for Zika virus vulnerability.

Planning/Technical Assistance (cont'd)

Montgomery County Parks & Recreation Master Plan

In 2015, the Regional Commission partnered with Montgomery County to develop its Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Regional Commission engaged Montgomery County citizens through an online and hardcopy survey and received direct feedback from Montgomery County Parks and Recreation (MCPR) staff and Administrative staff to develop recommendations to guide MCPR over the next 20 years. With the County also being home to the Towns of Christiansburg and Blacksburg, each with robust parks and recreation departments, the role of the Master Plan was to focus recommendations on either 1) areas where Montgomery County Parks and Recreation already excel, such as youth athletics, the Frog Pond, and active adults, or 2) areas where the need is not currently being met by either of the town's parks and recreation departments. The Regional Commission also researched current trends in recreation planning and evaluated the Department's existing assets. Nearly 200 recommendations were identified in the areas of Parks and Facilities; Programs, Events and Partnerships; Equipment; and Structure and Operations. To create focus around a small number of one to five year goals, MCPR identified six high-priority recommendations: 1) acquire river park land for creation of an outdoor river park, 2) implement an equipment replacement plan, 3) implement ADA improvements to current parks, 4) acquire long-term lease for land to expand old Shawsville Elementary site, 5) expand athletics to include adult athletics, and 6) pursue the feasibility of a recreation center. The Master Plan also provides additional insight for each recommendation in terms of benchmarks, timing, partners needed for implementation, and relative cost. The Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Master Plan was presented to the Board of Supervisors in June 2016. For more information, please visit www.nrvrc.org/mcpr.





Blacksburg Broadband

The Blacksburg broadband pilot project has shifted into a different phase. Last year's report noted the results of the request for information process, wherein local providers were invited to discuss the state of broadband and paths for improving speeds and coverage in the town. IN FY16 the steering committee and staff began investigating how local government can facilitate broadband deployment – through availability of data critical for planning and decision-making, evaluating potential to make Town assets that could reduce barriers to entry in the market, and identifying

opportunities to improve policy and process. The committee continues to engage the community at large through presentations and discussions with neighboring localities' staff.



Gatewood Park Master Plan



Gatewood Park & Reservoir is nestled in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Southwest Virginia, and is owned and operated by the Town of Pulaski. The park stretches across more than 800 acres and is surrounded by Jefferson National Forest land. The property features a main office, primitive camp sites accessible only by water and larger RV sites with ample amenities, picnic areas, fishing, and boat rentals.

In March 2015, the town began working with the Regional Commission to facilitate the development of a plan. The process was led by frequent park users, town staff and residents, park managers, and local volunteers. The purpose of the plan was three-fold: 1) identify the existing characteristics of the property; 2) develop conceptual ideas to improve and preserve the park; and 3) create strategies for future development opportunities.

The Gatewood Advisory Committee collaboratively developed a 2035 vision, established planning areas, and created a plan of work that outlined short-term and long-term strategies for the park. The completed plan is available on the Community Development page of the Regional Commission's website.

Planning/Technical Assistance (cont'd)

Floyd Regional Commerce Center – Market & Feasibility Study

The Floyd County Regional Commerce property has land available for development. While the remaining undeveloped portions were originally intended for larger facilities, the property is capable of siting several small and mid-sized facilities. The park has access to sufficient public infrastructure and adequate accessibility to accommodate most types of industrial or commercial users.

The purpose of the study was to identify top target sectors for firms who may be tenants of the park. A second component of the study was to evaluate methods for creating more roadway frontage for further subdivision of the park, and also improving accessibility to VA Primary Route 8 and US Route 221. The Regional Commerce Center is one of the largest employment centers in Floyd County. Route 8 and 221 are key regional networks that support the county's economy.

In May 2016, the Regional Commission shared the draft study with county stakeholders. Next steps involve pursuing funding options to improve on-site and off-site priorities. The complete study is available



Giles County Water Line Extension

The Regional Commission continues to support local governments extending safe and clean public services to their citizens. As an example, the Regional Commission assisted Giles County to submit a \$300,000 Community Services grant to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to extend water services to the Eggleston community. This first part of a multi-phase project would assist 54 people in 24 households with clean drinking water. The Regional Commission engaged local citizens through surveys and community meetings during the grant application process.



Pulaski County Sewer Improvements

The Regional Commission continues to assist local communities improve their quality of life through the extension of reliable public services. For example, during FY 2016, the Regional Commission concluded the second phase of the Skyview Sewer Extension project in Pulaski County. Working with county staff, the Regional Commission managed a \$575,405 Community Development Block Grant, awarded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, to extend sewer services to 103 people and 51 households. The third phase of this project is underway, with the Regional Commission contracted to assist the County in securing the sewer-line easements for 77 households in three neighborhoods within Pulaski County.

Rich Creek Downtown Enhancement

The Regional Commission assisted the Town of Rich Creek to continue revitalization of their downtown through enhanced public infrastructure. During FY 2016, the Regional Commission concluded the second phase of the Town's downtown enhancement project. Since 2011, the Regional Commission has assisted the Town in securing \$1.7 million in federal grants to improve Rich Creek's downtown through new stormwater infrastructure, accessible sidewalks, lighting, seating, landscaping, parking, and crosswalks. The third and final phase of the project began in January, with preliminary planning underway. As part of the third phase, the Regional Commission was contracted in fall 2015 by the Town to prepare and submit a \$225,000 grant application to the Virginia Department of Transportation, and the Town was awarded this grant in June 2016.



Before

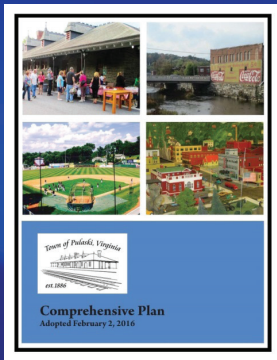


After

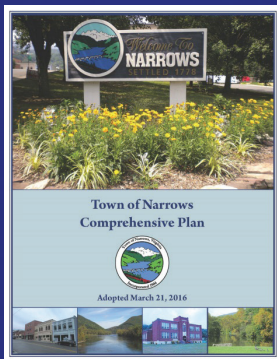
Planning/Technical Assistance (cont'd)

Comprehensive Planning

A locality's comprehensive plan serves as a guide for accommodating coordinated development in accordance with present and likely future needs and resources, in a manner that promotes the health, safety, and general welfare of residents. Plan documents usually identify existing conditions and trends, issues of concern, and local programs and initiatives. Key features of comprehensive plans include future land use maps and the identification of goals and objectives that help guide future land use and planning decisions. The Code of Virginia requires that local planning commissions review comprehensive plans at least once every five years.



- Town of Pulaski Comprehensive Plan:** The Pulaski Town Council adopted a new Comprehensive Plan on February 2, 2016. Drafting of the plan document was a collaborative effort involving the Town Planning Commission and Town staff with technical assistance from Regional Commission staff. A community survey was distributed with a Town water billing. Online completion of the survey was also available. Citizen input received through the community survey and community meetings helped shape the goals and objectives included in the plan.



- 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. A community survey was made available online and at the Town Office. In addition to general citizen input meetings, Town and Regional Commission staff facilitated input sessions involving students in two classes at Narrows High School. Citizen input received through the community survey and community meetings helped shape the goals and objectives included in the plan.



Transportation

RIDE Solutions



RIDESolutions

Connecting the Region's Commuters

RIDE Solutions continues to promote transportation options available in the New River Valley. During this year, Phoenix Packaging in Dublin joined the Workplace Program and employees have signed up to find carpool partners. RIDE Solutions continues to participate in our partner's events such as the NRV Job Fair Expo and chamber expos. This year's Bike Month and Clean Commute Challenge brought more visibility to the program than any other time of year. It was a very successful year in the New River Valley – the annual Extraordinary Bike Professional Award went to the Blacksburg team of Anne McClung and Kali Casper for their work on the town's Bicycle Master Plan; the Town of Blacksburg's Clean Commute team won in the Cleanest Team Competition; and Kali Casper won Cleanest Commuter of the Year.

New River Valley



Trail Counter Program

New River Valley Trail Counter Program

Since July 2014, the Regional Commission has been collecting trail use data along the most popular trail segments in the region. The program now features a website that provides access to each of the reports. The content is featured in a fun interactive Story Map, online at: nrvc.org/trailcounterprogram.

Simply choose a location and view the report. Each report includes daily totals and averages, and a report summary. The count data on the website is updated on a quarterly basis.

Transportation (cont'd)

NRV Cycling Guide



In the late 90s', a handful of local cyclists teamed up to create the original Cycling in the New River Valley Guidebook. Although the original document was completed nearly 20 years ago it is still used on a regular basis today. In 2015, the Regional Commission partnered with the New River Valley Bicycle Association to update the guide.

The latest version is housed on a website that features the most current route descriptions, turn-by-turn instructions, and overhead maps for more than 30 on-road rides, nearly 60 optional/alternate routes, and nearly a dozen off-road rides. Each of the original routes were ground-truthed and new routes were added by veteran local cyclists.

Road rides features a search tool that aims at allowing cyclists to choose routes based on entry points, distance, and one-way vs. round trip. Once a route is selected, a 3D interactive map allows users to visualize each ride from a unique perspective. Additionally, printable cue-sheets feature turn-by-turn instructions and an elevation profile on single sheet document.

The cycling guide is available online at: nrvc.org/cyclingguide/



Montgomery County's Auburn & Belview Schools Safe Routes Pedestrian Safety

Montgomery County is working with a local engineering firm to complete design on improving student access to school campuses at Belview and Auburn. The improvements will include highly visible crossing signals and walking paths to allow students to walk to school more safely than they currently do with new and upgraded infrastructure. The Regional Commission has been providing grant administration for the project. Construction is expected to occur in the next fiscal year.

New River Valley Regional Transit Study

The Regional Commission completed the Regional Transit Study in April 2016. The purpose of the work was to investigate potential enhancements at overlapping bus stop locations. In particular, enhancements that could improve the perception of public transportation in the region, ultimately increasing ridership.

Overlapping stops create opportunities to potentially expand the service area beyond a single community, served by Blacksburg Transit, Radford Transit, Pulaski Area Transit, or the Smart Way. The Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC) worked collaboratively to identify each overlapping service location. Surveys completed by current transit users and local employers helped local stakeholders to understand the perceived availability of service and current bus stop capital needs.

Regional stakeholders also participated in a Peer Review event with subject experts who shared their experiences, research, implementation strategies aimed at improving transit services and facilities. The final study identifies policy and capital investment strategies. A short-term (3-year) and long-term (6-year) action plan outlines recommendations to elevate public transit as a preferred transportation choice in the New River Valley region. For more information, visit: nrvpdc.org/regionaltransitstudy.



Finance & Personnel

Executive Director's Message

More often than not, regional collaboration projects take longer to complete than the typical project. However, there are exceptions to most rules and ReNew the New is one of those regional exceptions we found this year. For 14 years running, the community in Giles County and several partners coordinated a clean-up of the New River, rotating through 10 mile sections each fall, and aptly named the event 'Fall into the New'. In the winter of 2015 the Regional Commission reached out to Giles County and asked whether they would be interested in expanding their highly successful river clean up to other communities in the watershed. Without hesitation, the county government and community leaders were on board. It only took a few months to ensure all four counties and the city were in support, key partners were up to speed, and necessary resources were aligned. By May of 2016 all volunteer slots available were full for the August clean up activity (approx. 300) and there was never a public solicitation of volunteers!

So, what made this collaboration move from concept to impact so fast? Relationships, mutual interests and selflessness. The Regional Commission takes pride in fostering relationships across the region so when opportunities such as

ReNew the New appear on the horizon, we are in a position to pull the partners together and realize impact in communities. The mutual interest aspect is fairly tangible. All the counties in the region share the New River whether it flows through/ along their borders, or their surface water flows into the watershed (Floyd County). Another key aspect of this success is the selflessness of government leadership. Giles County Board of Supervisors voted to move the 2016 clean up from their county to a section of river running from the I-81 bridge to Rt. 114 (Peppers Ferry Blvd) that includes Pulaski County, Montgomery County and the City of Radford. This centralized location will help Giles County staff train other local government staff so they can lead future clean up events in their communities.

Leaders across the region are learning a lot from the ReNew the New expansion process. Sometimes collaboration can be a sprint when the relationships are intact, the interests are aligned and communities are selfless in their participation. The Regional Commission is excited looking toward fiscal year 2017 as we wrap up several successful projects contained in this report. We wholeheartedly thank you for engaging with our organization and helping us implement our tagline, "Strengthening the Region through Collaboration."



Kevin R. Byrd, AICP
Executive Director

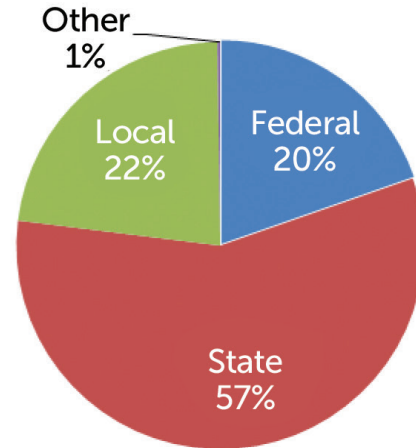


NRVRC
new river valley regional commission

Finance Report

Year Ended June 30, 2016

Grants and Appropriations



Revenues

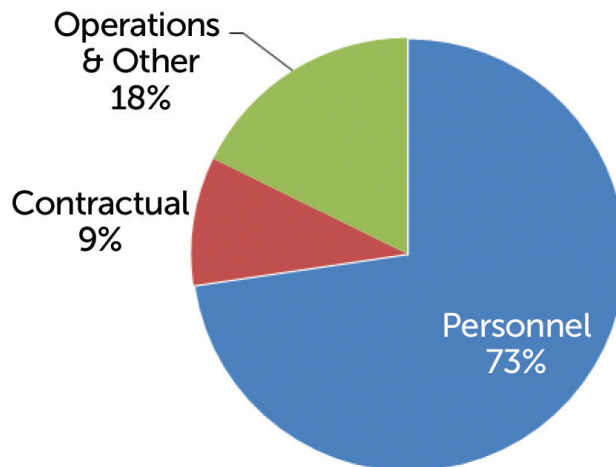
Grants and Appropriations

Federal	302,562
State.....	882,279
Local.....	351,328
Other	3,386
Total.....	1,539,555

Expenditures

Personnel.....	1,118,945
Contractual	147,909
Operations & Other	273,108
Total.....	1,539,961

Expenditures





NRVRC
new river valley regional commission

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nrvrc.org

