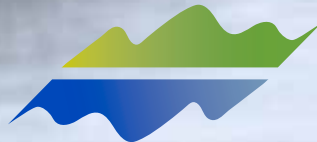


2021 - 2022  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**



**NRVRC**  
new river valley regional commission

CHAIR'S  
**MESSAGE**



This year has been another great year for the Regional Commission. We have successfully navigated ourselves out of the COVID-19 pandemic and made the transition back to a somewhat “normal” state of affairs, or at least as normal as we can. During this transition period, the Regional Commission has worked hard to reassemble the programs, projects and collaborations in our region which are essential for its continued growth and wellbeing. We have been there to help all our local governments and businesses and have played a significant role to ensure that our region’s recovery is as smooth and efficient as possible.

We had several key accomplishments this past year. Two of the most important ones are the establishment of the NRV Passenger Rail Authority and securing the Tri-County Broadband Grant Award. All of us are thrilled with the availability of passenger rail for the New River Valley and the economic impact it will have. Assembling the Passenger Rail Authority is a key step toward making that dream a reality. The same can be said for the Tri-County Broadband Grant. This \$68 million award was the largest in our history and is targeted at bringing full internet access to all the rural areas in our region. Throughout the pandemic we learned that broadband internet communication is essential in keeping our economy alive and functioning.

To keep up with all this activity and to ensure that we can continue to provide an outstanding level of service to our region, our Regional Commission has grown to its largest staffing level ever. We have added exceptional personnel in key areas and reorganized our whole organization so that we can be more efficient and responsive to all of our member clients.

As we look to the future, I believe that the Regional Commission is poised to continue to be the outstanding partner that it has always been for all our members, helping to bring continued growth and development to the New River Valley and working hard for everyone in it.



**Michael Maslaney**, Chair  
Fiscal Year 2021-2022



F Y 2 0 2 1 - 2 0 2 2  
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Mr. Levi Cox  
Ms. Linda DeVito Kuchenbuch

**GILES COUNTY**

Mr. Richard McCoy  
Mr. Leon Law, Treasurer

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Mr. Steve Fijalkowski  
Mr. Michael Harvey

**PULASKI COUNTY**

Mr. Jeffery Reeves  
Dr. Doug Warren

**CITY OF RADFORD**

Mr. David Horton  
Mr. Jeff Martin

**TOWN OF BLACKSBURG**

Mr. Daniel Breslau  
Ms. Susan Anderson

**TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG**

Mr. Tim Wilson  
Mr. Hil Johnson, Vice-Chair

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**TOWN OF RICH CREEK**

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**RADFORD UNIVERSITY**

Mr. Tim Franklin

**VIRGINIA TECH**

Ms. Catherine Potter  
Ms. Liza Morris

**NEW RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Ms. Angie Covey





# REGIONAL COOPERATION



## NRVRC Annual Awards



The New River Valley Regional Commission board of directors celebrated its annual award recipients at the annual dinner held in October 2021 at Moon Hollow Brewing in Montgomery County. Craig Meadows, Montgomery County Administrator and Lydeana Martin, Floyd County Community and Economic Development Director, received the Champion of the Valley award. Shelley Fortier, Habitat for Humanity of the NRV-retired and John Dooley, Virginia Tech Foundation-retired, received the Citizen of the Valley award. Dr. Noelle Bissell, Director of the New River Health District, and Chief Anthony Wilson, Chief of the Blacksburg Police Department, received the Hero of the Valley award. This award was added as a sign of appreciation for leadership provided to the region during the pandemic.

**Business  
Continuity  
Team**



The Business Continuity Team (BCT) continued to support the region impacted by COVID-19 through mitigation strategies, training, infection response and health policy guidance. On-site testing, vaccination and educational sessions were offered to local businesses, schools and government agencies. Workshops to support businesses as they continue to transition workflow through the pandemic provided guidance in areas such as cybersecurity and COVID response messaging. The BCT supported regional schools to provide in-person education across the New River Valley throughout the school year. The BCT fitted and supplied staff throughout the region with N95 masks as needed. A key piece of the BCT's work was to coordinate with partners in healthcare, government and business to ensure seamless access to information, care and resources for citizens of the region and beyond.

**Below are a few highlights and statistics from the year:**

- 172 individual businesses supported in pandemic response and mitigation
- Six workshops hosted virtually providing services to over 300 individuals and businesses
- On-site vaccination clinics hosted at 23 businesses, 21 schools and nine festivals and fairs
- Over 30,000 employees supported through vaccines, testing, education and infection control guidance
- 2,500 public and private school students vaccinated
- 10,000+ masks distributed
- Hosted weekly virtual meetings with 21 school districts and the New River Health District to ensure schools could safely operate throughout the school year

**New River  
Valley HOME  
Consortium**



The New River Valley HOME Consortium was created in 2007 and utilizes an annual funding allocation from HUD to construct or rehabilitate affordable housing for low-to-moderate income households in the New River Valley.

- Habitat for Humanity completed construction on seven townhomes in the Town of Blacksburg, located on land donated by Blacksburg Presbyterian Church.
- Taylor Hollow Construction was awarded \$700,000 in State HOME and \$275,000 in Housing Innovations in Energy Efficiency (HIEE) funding for the mixed-use redevelopment of the former Leggett building in downtown Radford. Seven of the 11 units will be reserved for low-to-moderate income residents.
- Habitat for Humanity began construction on seven townhomes just outside the Town of Floyd.
- Community Housing Partners will be constructing an estimated 46 single-family homes for income-eligible households on Merrimac Road.
- Giles Technology Center will be partnering with Habitat for Humanity to support a homeownership housing development in Giles.





**NRV  
Passenger  
Rail**



The train whistles have not yet sounded for passenger rail service in the region, but a lot of progress has been made toward service starting in 2026. Over the past 12 months the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), the entity leading the project for the Commonwealth, launched an environmental review for a station location. The study narrowed five sites down to two, both of which are in close proximity to Uptown Christiansburg, formerly the NRV Mall. As VPRA is handling the environmental analysis, the Regional Commission worked to establish the New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority that was enabled by the General Assembly to own and operate the station. By the end of the fiscal year nine members passed resolutions or ordinances to create the authority which includes the counties of Montgomery, Pulaski and Giles, the towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg and Pulaski, the City of Radford, along with Radford University, and Virginia Tech. The first authority meeting will take place in the first quarter of FY23. Over the next 12 months a final station site should be selected, and the station authority will begin the process of site planning.

**New River  
Watershed  
Roundtable**



The New River Watershed Roundtable continued to serve as an avenue of collaboration across the region. At quarterly meetings, partners gathered to learn about regional watershed projects, discuss the watershed and elevate ideas for collaboration. The annual ReNew the New cleanup returned to in-person and was once again a great success, boasting almost 600 participants and 10,000 lbs. of trash collected.

**ReNew the New**  
THANK YOU!!

FLOYD  
MONTGOMERY  
RADFORD  
GILES  
PULASKI

114 TIRES      589 PEOPLE      9,815 LBS

# ECONOMIC & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



## Regional Economic Strategy Annual Update



Each year the Regional Commission reviews and updates the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), also known as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The purpose of the RES is to maintain federal and local partnerships to address economic development initiatives in the region. The RES also serves to document planning efforts to identify economic development needs in the region, which is required for grant applications to the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and the Appalachian Regional Commission. The RES's major sections include an overview of regional economic conditions through summary data and a SWOT analysis, prioritized goals and strategies, and a listing of prioritized regional and local economic development projects.

As part of this year's RES process, Regional Commission staff met with town, city and county economic development staff to identify new or updated economic development projects for inclusion in the RES. In addition, the Regional Commission convened the RES Committee, which serves as a "think tank" of engaged representatives of businesses, government and non-profit organizations involved in economic development in the New River Valley. The committee reviewed the RES project list, reviewed the project ranking criteria, provided input and updated the RES's economic development priority goals and strategies, discussed future and emerging regional trends, and identified opportunities for regional collaboration.

### The Regional Economic Strategy Outcomes/Metrics:

- At least **115 projects** were identified and listed as actively being planned, seeking funding or currently underway.
- At least **\$200 million** in public and private investment was devoted just to the "Top 10 + 4" RES projects.
- At least **616 businesses** were supported, and **1,540 jobs** created or retained, by RES projects, primarily through Broadband Infrastructure expansion.
- Approximately **1,583 housing** units (multi- and single-family; market rate and affordable), are currently planned or under construction by the identified RES projects.



EDA-CARES Act Grant



The Regional Commission utilized the US Economic Development Administration's CARES Act Funding to expand capacity to address COVID-19-related economic impacts and increase community engagement and data sharing at a time when gathering in-person was not possible.

**New Regional Commission Website**

A new and improved Regional Commission website was launched in May 2022. The website was redesigned in order to more effectively communicate to the public and to partners about the progress on projects and programs.

**Updated Data Dashboard**

The Data Dashboard was updated and integrated into the new website from a previously established standalone site. It now offers an interactive and current regional data set for use by partners and the public. Data is still available upon request.

**Launched an Online Engagement Platform**

To continue public engagement with communities safely during the pandemic, the Regional Commission launched an online tool. The online platform, [engagenrv.org](http://engagenrv.org), was so helpful during the pandemic the Commission decided to keep the tool available post-pandemic to ensure high levels of information sharing with planning projects.

**Community Technical Assistance**

The economic development program allowed Regional Commission staff to assist communities with grant writing, data requests and supporting participation in community meetings and events. Many of the initial regional pandemic response activities, such as participating with the New River Valley Public Health Task Force, writing Community Development Block Grants, or writing GO Virginia grants for implementation funds to assist the regional response, were supported by the community technical assistance program.



Floyd County Housing Rehabilitation Project



- One of the first "scatter-site" rehab projects funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development.
- The goal of rehabilitating homes for 15 income-eligible households.
- Began construction, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, on two substantial reconstructions; slated for completion in fall 2022.
- Approved applications from seven additional households to receive rehab assistance.
- Other community and financial partners include: Floyd Initiative for Safe Housing, Renovation Alliance, New River Community Action, Community Housing Partners' Weatherization Program, Rural Development, SERCAP, Citizens Co-op, and Sustain Floyd as well as waived building permit fees.

## Old Prices Fork School Comprehensive Community Revitalization Project



The Prices Fork Revitalization project, funded in part by a \$2.5 million Vibrant Communities Initiative grant and a \$500,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant, was completed.

- Millstone Kitchen served households in need of meals with the Neighbors in Need program.
- All businesses open: Millstone Kitchen, Moon Hollow Brewery and El Rancho Mexican restaurant.
- All mixed-income residential units fully leased: 16 units in the renovated school building; **16 new construction units**.
- A total of **26.5 jobs** were created by the project.
- Live, Work, Eat, Grow, the nonprofit that oversees the project, hired a full-time Garden Coordinator to manage several community gardens in the Town of Blacksburg.
- US Sen. Tim Kaine toured the project in fall 2021 to hear about the work and meet with project partners.



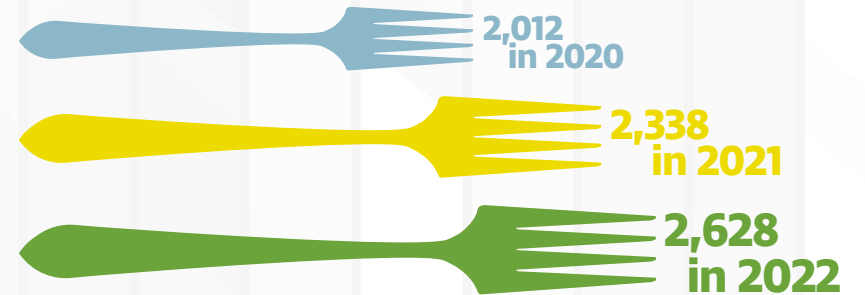
## Neighbors in Need



The Neighbors in Need program, administered by Millstone Kitchen, came about in response to the pandemic as a way of feeding food-insecure families, supporting local farmers and providing critical income for local caterers. The Regional Commission has provided grant administration assistance for this project.

- Since July 2020, the program has received three rounds of grant funding from DHCD, totaling nearly **\$675,000**.
- **Made-from-scratch meals** were prepared at Millstone Kitchen by two local caterers.
- The program partnered with **eight local food distribution agencies** to deliver meals to existing clients, including VT YMCA, Agency on Aging, Future Economy Collective, Newbern Community Center, Plenty!, Melinda's Melody, Christiansburg Parks & Rec and Warm Hearth Village.
- Millstone Kitchen will continue to run the program in a modified format in the future.

## Monthly Meals Prepared





Regional Housing Trust Fund (PDC Housing Development Grant)



- Regional Commission awarded \$2 million from Virginia Housing to pursue a regional housing trust fund and develop at least 20 new affordable units in the region.
- Regional housing trust fund identified as one of seven regional strategies in the housing study.
- Assembled a Technical Team representing regional partners to provide project support.
- Partnered with non-profit, Housing Forward Virginia, to identify best practices for organizational structure and programmatic guidelines for the fund.



Livability Information Exchange



The Livability Leadership team hosted its first in-person gathering since 2020. The 2022 event featured 10 lightning rounds highlighting impactful work across the region and a thought-provoking panel discussion facilitated by Lisa Garcia about advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the NRV.

New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund



Regional Commission staff continue to administer the NRV Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). Since the program was revamped in early 2022, the loan fund has received several inquiries and subsequent applications from businesses in the counties of Pulaski, Floyd and Montgomery. Currently, staff is servicing loans to businesses located in Floyd County and the City of Radford. The fund has \$27,000 loaned out to clients, with approximately \$73,000 available to lend. Staff continue to market the program through local economic development offices and in partnership with the active NRV Revolving Loan Fund Committee.

Calfee Community and Cultural Center:  
Nature Playspace and Sankofa Walk



The Regional Commission facilitated a design charrette and created conceptual designs for two nature play spaces at the future Calfee Community & Cultural Center (CCCC). The intention of the project was to reflect on the past and plan for the future of the outdoor spaces. The future CCCC will be the home of the Chauncey and Lucy Harmon Learning Center, which will offer high-quality early childhood education across income levels. The children served by the center will have two natural outdoor play spaces geared towards two age groups and designed to foster creativity and an appreciation of nature.

New River  
Water Trail



With support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Regional Commission continued work with local governments and stakeholders to plan the New River Water Trail Expansion Project. As a result of the planning process, the Commission made a \$1.5 million grant request for implementation projects, which would include the installation and/or improvement of four boat launches, one in each riverfront locality.





New River Valley/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board



NEW RIVER | MOUNT ROGERS REGION

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board consists of the chief elected official or the chief administrative officer from each of the local governments comprising the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area (NR/MR WDA), which is a 13-jurisdiction area including the counties of Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington and Wythe and the cities of Bristol, Galax and Radford. The Consortium Board serves as the policy board for the Area which includes making appointments to the Workforce Development Board.

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (WDB) is made up of representatives from regional businesses (51%) and federally required members (e.g., Economic Development, Education, Labor, Community Organizations and more). The WDB oversees the programs and initiatives as specified in the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (which includes programs for Adults, Youth and Dislocated Workers), and other special grants and programs as available.

**Supporting Regional Economic Growth and Vitality**

The NR/MR WDB continues to lead the region in developing a workforce system that is agile and flexible, enabling the system to adjust and/or respond to economic disturbances and shifts by leveraging and braiding the various Federal, State and Local funds that come to the region to serve both businesses and job seekers. During FY20, the NR/MR WDB used the following projects to support this systemic change, even through the unusual conditions that were created by the pandemic:

**Business Services**

As the region’s designated Workforce System Convener, the NR/MR WDB provides businesses easy access to solutions to meet workforce needs without having to navigate the bureaucracy of dozens of program providers.

In addition to acting as a central point of contact for businesses seeking specific assistance, the NR/MR WDB oversees and staffs four regional Business Solution Units (BSU) that are made up of workforce, economic development and business membership organizations. The NR/MR WDB believes that services to the region’s businesses should serve the widest possible range of businesses by being individualized and efficient with a single point of contact wherever possible (or a “no wrong door” approach). It is also the intent to share information about what services the NR/MR WDB is currently providing to businesses with partner agencies to avoid unnecessary duplication, including initial assessment and discovery, service plans, service coordination, outcome and follow-up information. In order to deliver this collaborative effort, the BSU members offer cross-training in one another’s services so that we are able to provide more seamless referrals for needed services as well as being able to speak to the many services available, regardless of which agency may “own” these services. During the pandemic, the NR/MR WDB served the region’s businesses through:

**Job Fairs:**

- Planned and co-hosted four multi-company job fairs representing **127 companies**
- Planned and co-hosted **30 single-company** recruiting events

**Business Workshops:**

- Co-hosted two “Employer Legal Update” workshops
- Co-hosted four “Recruitment & Retention” business workshops
- Co-hosted four “5G@Work: The Multi-Generational Workplace” workshops
- Co-hosted three “Second Chance Employment” information session for businesses
- Hosted five Workforce Exchange events

**Existing/Incumbent Worker Training Contracts:**

- **13 projects** supporting **56 workers** with over **\$29,000** of reimbursements

**Business Services Provided:**

- **959** business services
- Services to **311** businesses
- Multiple services to **137** businesses

Pathways to a Strong and Healthy Region

**Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER)**

January 2021 through December 2023

**What:** A three-year program to do two things: improve coordination between the economic and workforce development sectors, and the healthcare and human service sectors to tackle substance use disorder; and to create continuity among support services, sustaining long-term recovery for individuals and scale efforts to benefit the individual and family, business and industry, and the region as a whole.

Specifically, the goal is to become a Recovery Ready Region and provide training and supportive services to assist individuals with Substance Use Disorder in obtaining quality employment.

**Partners:** One Care of Southwest Virginia, Virginia Rural Health Association, Ballad Health and Eagles Nest Regeneration.

**Outcomes to Date:**

- **72 individuals** in recovery receiving training and support services toward quality employment
- **62 individuals** in recovery provided support services and job placement assistance
- **84 individuals** in recovery earned foundational credentials toward the development of personal effectiveness (soft and employability) skills
- **84 individuals** in recovery trained and certified as Peer Recovery Specialists
- **98 individuals** in recovery completed training
- **62 individuals** in recovery earned credentials for employment
- **87 individuals** in recovery employed as a result of services
- **10 health/human practitioners** earned specialized credentials to support individuals with substance use disorder

MEET  
POWER  
PARTICIPANT **Mark**

After a successful 20-year career in Emergency Services and business, Mark's life took an unexpected turn when he was introduced to crystal methamphetamine, and everything changed. He spent six years lost in addiction. His family, friends and career no longer mattered to him. His addiction took everything he had worked for and loved, and it almost took his life.

Then Mark began treatment at Eagles Nest Regeneration in Floyd County. During treatment Mark became surrounded by recovery peers who helped him walk through recovery, teaching him ways to overcome addiction. Through the experience Mark also learned how to help others. With the help of Eagles Nest and the Peer Recovery classes, Mark has overcome addiction and better understands it, which has prepared him for success in the field of substance abuse recovery. Mark appreciates the support. "Thank you for making it possible and changing my life," he said.





## Road to Success in Virginia Program (RSVP)

**What:** A one-year program to help eligible individuals prepare for employment leading to self-sufficiency and independence from temporary social benefits.

**Partners:** New River, Wytheville and Virginia Highlands community colleges have formed a consortium led by the NR/MR WDB.

### Outcomes to Date:

- **102 participants** enrolled in training
- **76 participants** earned Professional Soft Skills Credentials
- **70 participants** earned Digital Literacy Credentials
- **76 participants** earned Financial Literacy Credentials
- **69 participants** earned a National Career Readiness Certificate
- **42 participants** created an employment e-portfolio
- **37 participants** completed team-building activities
- **34 participants** completed Leadership Development
- **83 participants** participated in occupational training
  - New River Community College: **41**
  - Wytheville Community College: **30**
  - Virginia Highlands Community College: **12**
- **74 participants** completed occupational training
- **74 participants** earned occupational credentials
- **61 participants** obtained training-related employment

## US Department of Labor

July 2021 through October 2024

**What:** YouthBuild is a workforce development program that provides employment, education, leadership development and training opportunities to disadvantaged and low-income youth between the ages of 16 and 24. Most of the participants are secondary school dropouts and are either a member of a low-income family, a foster care youth, a youth who is homeless, an offender, a youth with a disability, a child of an incarcerated parent or a migrant youth.



**Partners:** Habitat for Humanity, People Incorporated, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program, Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley, Trades Training Initiative, Healthcare Academy of SWVA and the Center for Manufacturing Excellence in Southwest Virginia.

### Outcomes to Date:

- **22 participants** actively enrolled
- **12 participants** have earned 40 foundational (soft skill and employability) credentials
- **2 completed** construction training but are not yet certified
- **1 participant** is in a Registered Apprenticeship



MEET POWER PARTICIPANT

# Kierston

After the birth of her two children, Kierston knew she wanted to be a nurse. While in college, Kierston immersed herself in training. Kierston graduated from New River Community College and passed the NCLEX. She is now a nurse with Carilion on the Labor and Delivery Unit – her “dream job.”

Kierston is thankful that she enrolled in RSVP because it enabled her to gain valuable skills and have the financial resources to accomplish her goal. She appreciated having a Navigator, someone who was helpful to her. “Being able to participate in the grant project was beyond rewarding,” Kierston said. “It felt good to have someone cheering you on and supporting you from the sidelines.”



MEET POWER PARTICIPANT **Jayden**

In collaboration with the Center for Manufacturing Excellence in Southwest Virginia and Somic America, the YouthBuild program is pleased to offer an Advanced Manufacturing Technician Program, of which Jayden is a trailblazer. Interested in robotics, Jayden is excited about the opportunity to participate in this unique program that will prepare him for employment in the manufacturing industry. Using a combination of classroom and work-based learning, Jayden is thrilled to be able to learn in an environment where he gets to use his hands from day-one. To help Jayden make his decision about his career path, Somic America provided him with a detailed tour and real-world experience of the manufacturing industry.

YouthBuild participants also learn how to give back to their community. Another aspect of YouthBuild is for the participants to engage in community service events to learn to give back to their community. It is an important part of the program, helping participants develop leadership and teamwork skills in addition to providing opportunities for them to develop new friendships and feel a greater sense of social responsibility. Recently, a group of students in the New River Valley visited the T.J. Howard Community Center in Pulaski and assisted with various tasks to help restore the building.



**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. These programs did not have the normal participation rate during the pandemic. Case managers worked diligently via mostly remote services.

**Dislocated Workers**

- Individuals that Received Individualized Career Services: **145**
- Number in Training: **82**
- Placement Rate Upon Exit: **91%**
- Avg. Wage at Placement: **\$22.93 hourly**

**Adult Program**

- Individuals that Received Individualized Career Services: **236**
- Number in Training: **78**
- Placement Rate Upon Exit: **87%**
- Avg. Wage at Placement: **\$15.56 hourly**

**Youth Program**

- Individuals that Received Individualized Career Services: **116**
- Received Work Experience: **24**
- Received Training: **18**
- Placement Rate Upon Exit: **85%**


**Return on Investment (ROI)**

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board believes public investments should add value to regional stakeholders and demonstrate a return on investment. Annually, an ROI evaluation is commissioned and shared with the boards and stakeholders.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The overall benefit (ROI) is **4.8** times the cost of these public workforce programs.

In conclusion, In PY 2020, the New River/Mount Rogers WDB made a significant contribution to the economy of its service area.





## Town of Narrows Comprehensive Plan



The Town of Narrows Planning Commission and town staff are continuing their efforts in updating the comprehensive plan. The team has conducted community surveys and focus group meetings and are analyzing existing conditions and trends. These activities will aid in recognizing issues, developing ideas and identifying future needs so that policies can be developed to guide the town over the next decade with a focus on making it a desirable place to live, work and visit.



## City of Radford East Main Downtown Plan

The City of Radford completed the East Main Downtown plan in 2021, which will help guide the capital improvements plan over the next three to five years. The Regional Commission and City are continuing the partnership through project implementation, pursuing funding opportunities, administering grant funding and facilitating project management team meetings. Some of the plan recommendations are enhancing building facades, landscaping, public art and identifying areas that can be turned into outdoor dining areas to turn the East Main Downtown into a more vibrant destination. The plan also recommends a pedestrian link between the East Main Downtown and the New River. The City was recently awarded around \$700,000 in grant funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission to implement this part of the project through a multipurpose trail connecting the area to the river.



Grant Administration Support



**Floyd Industrial Access**

The Regional Commission is supporting Floyd County's project to extend the road system in the Floyd County Commerce Center to support new pad sites with transportation access and utility extensions. Grant funding is being provided by the Tobacco Commission and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

**Floyd Growth Center Building 1**

The Regional Commission is supporting Floyd County's newest facility in the Floyd County Commerce Center for leases to small businesses. Construction is to be completed in fall 2022. Grant funding is being provided by the Tobacco Commission and the US Economic Development Administration.



Huckleberry Trail Plan



The Huckleberry Trail has a long history of serving the Montgomery County area as a primary alternative transportation route. During the first half of the 20th Century, a passenger train transported cadets to and from Virginia Tech four times each day. While the last steam engine ran in 1958, the Huckleberry namesake carries on today. The first mile of track was converted to a nature trail in 1966 and the next 3.5 miles of Huckleberry North was completed nearly 30 years later in 1990. By 1995 the trail stretched 6 miles, from the public library in Blacksburg to the NRV Mall in Christiansburg.

Today, the Huckleberry Trail is nearly 15 miles long. It runs from Jefferson National Forest through downtown Blacksburg, along the outskirts of the Virginia Tech campus, creek-side in Montgomery County, and continues into downtown Christiansburg. It has been nearly 60 years since the first mile of trail was completed and its reputation has grown as an invaluable community asset. The purpose of the plan is to capture ideas about the future of the trail and begin to identify areas that are mutually beneficial for collaboration.

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization partnered with the Regional Commission to develop the first edition of the Huckleberry Trail Plan. The planning process was guided by trail owners in Montgomery County, the Town of Blacksburg, the Town of Christiansburg and trail partners Virginia Tech and Friends of the Huckleberry. During the planning process, Amy Camp with Cycle Forward visited the region to facilitate a group discussion about the future of the trail. The team also met one-on-one with managers of the Washington and Old Dominion Trail and the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation to learn about trail maintenance and volunteer engagement.

The next steps involve maintaining the existing asset and continuing to expand connections to other alternative transportation assets, developing gateway trail access locations, and developing more ways for the community and volunteers to contribute.



**Downtown Pulaski  
Business District  
Revitalization**



The Town of Pulaski completed a downtown revitalization project that included the rehabilitation of 11 building facades, streetscape and public space improvements, street furnishings and other enhancements along West Main Street. For this particular project, the town established a partnership with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in October 2018. Nearly \$700,000 in grant funding was matched with \$900,000 in private investments, local cash and documented in-kind match. The work attracted new local businesses and has helped to restore several historically significant downtown properties.

While the initial scope of work included other property improvements, town staff was able to exceed expectations by tripling the local match commitment and investing more in downtown aesthetics and furnishings. The Regional Commission was pleased to support the Town of Pulaski with grant administration and regulatory compliance associated with the West Main Street improvements.

**Giles County  
New River/  
Trail Center**



Friends of Southwest Virginia and Giles County are developing a New River/ Trail Center. The project is located on the grounds of the historic Mountain Lake property. Once complete, the Center is anticipated to serve as a nucleus for information on the many outdoor recreation opportunities and services in the County. Shuttle services will connect visitors to hiking trails, mountain biking systems and paddling launch locations throughout the County.

A second phase of the project will create a new trail that connects the center to Mountain Lake Lodge and the peak of Bald Knob. The Regional Commission supported this project by assisting with environmental coordination and other regulatory compliance requirements.



Floyd Grown 2



Floyd Grown is a collaborative initiative to support the local agriculture business community and increase business resiliency. Floyd County is partnering with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Tourism Corporation and several other local, regional and statewide partners to increase agriculture and forestry sales. The County is home to many independent and creative people that have a connection to the land. Creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit have helped Floyd County become a visitor destination with a natural brand for farming, food and forestry related products.

Local farmers are seeing significant growth of value-added enterprises that target local consumers and visitors from outside of the community. Outcomes will include cold storage facilities, an online sales platform, direct technical assistance to 10-12 local agriculture businesses, and a business toolkit. The Regional Commission has provided grant administrative assistance to Floyd County to support this initiative.



Tri-County Broadband Initiative



The Tri-County Broadband initiative's objective is to bring broadband internet connectivity to unserved and underserved households in Montgomery, Bland, and Pulaski Counties. This work is funded by a \$68 million grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and local government match funds as well. The project is scheduled to largely be built-out December 2023. Currently, the Regional Commission, county governments and the Internet Service Providers (ISP) are going through the necessary steps to get the grant funds under contract which will allow for construction to begin. The project has two ISPs involved, GigaBeam is working with Montgomery and Bland counties while All Points Broadband is working with Pulaski County. In total, there will be 14,883 new fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) connections in Montgomery and Bland Counties and 8,527 new FTTH connections in Pulaski. This represents a total of 23,410 new broadband internet connections brought to our rural communities!

Pulaski Parks



The Regional Commission continues to work with Pulaski County and stakeholders to either create or update park plans across the county. Many of the spaces include walking trails, playgrounds, ball courts, fields and newly planted trees. To date, the Commission has prepared designs for O'dell, Draper Elementary, Old Riverlawn Elementary, Fairview Home Park, Smith Farm Park and Sheffey Park.





# TRANSPORTATION



**RIDE  
Solutions**



RIDE Solutions continued to operate under limited conditions in the first half of FY22 due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Staff promoted Virginia's Telework!VA program and provided support by request to local organizations and their employees in regard to transportation. Twenty businesses were reached and over 250 requests for information from local commuters were fielded. Participation by partners included:

- Exhibiting at the Pulaski Chamber's Experience Pulaski Expo and Virginia Tech's Active Commute Celebration in August
- Providing Bike Corral at the NRVBA Bike Parade in September
- New River Community College Student Resource + Wellness Fair in October
- Working throughout the year to promote transportation choices for commuters with local employers



## RIDE SMART CHALLENGE

PRESENTED BY  
*RIDE SOLUTIONS*



THANKS FOR PARTICIPATING  
IN THE 2022 RIDE SMART  
CHALLENGE!

DOWNLOAD THE RIDE  
SOLUTIONS APP TO  
CONTINUE EARNING  
REWARDS



WINNERS OF  
THE CHALLENGE  
WILL BE NOTIFIED  
SOON!

LYNCHBURG • NEW RIVER VALLEY • ROANOKE VALLEY • WEST PIEDMONT

The RIDE Solutions app continues to be the primary online resource for individuals looking for carpool matches and transportation choices.

- Current NRV app user stats: **1,221** commuters in the NRV – an increase of 7% over last year's use; and 131 employers represented
- This fiscal year RIDE Solutions' NRV members reduced **129,867** vehicle miles and **6,128** trips
- Active users accumulated a savings of **\$74,372**

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Reflecting on FY22, it was a year of repositioning many regional projects and programs toward a more normal post-pandemic environment. During the previous two fiscal years, a good portion of the agency was responding to the pandemic and scaling programs to meet unprecedented needs. This past year programs were getting back into a regular cycle, and it's important to note, the agency's ability to navigate opportunities during the pandemic set up significant accomplishments coming out of the pandemic in FY22.

For instance, the agency's largest grant award to date, \$68 million for broadband deployment, was developed with several partners during the pandemic and announced this past December. That project will deliver fiber to 23,410 residences and businesses in Montgomery, Pulaski and Bland counties. Approximately 16 years ago, in 2006, the Regional Commission prepared the first telecommunications plan for the region, which reaffirms big regional projects take time to develop, but when they are successful, they impact a lot of people!

The New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority is another key regional objective that got started in earnest during the pandemic and is evolving toward implementation post-pandemic. By the close of the fiscal year nine members, composed of local governments and higher education institutions, passed ordinances or resolutions to create the authority. The work of the authority will align with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's efforts to bring passenger rail service to the region by 2026.

Looking to FY23, many programs built strong foundations in FY22 that will lead to success in the coming months. Programs such as a native plant propagation center in partnership with Live, Work, Eat, Grow at the Hale Garden in Blacksburg will be under construction soon. In response to housing challenges identified in the previously released Regional + Local Housing Study, a regional housing trust fund is being established with seed funds provided by Virginia Housing. The City of Radford invested planning funds for redevelopment of East Main Street in FY22 that will lead to construction in FY23. Be on the lookout for exciting progress on these projects and several others that took shape in FY22 and are well positioned for successful implementation in FY23.

The Regional Commission remains honored to be in the trusted space of developing and implementing projects that serve the entire region. If our team can ever be of assistance do not hesitate to reach out because we thrive on the opportunity to collaborate and serve.



 **Kevin Byrd**, Executive Director  
New River Valley Regional Commission



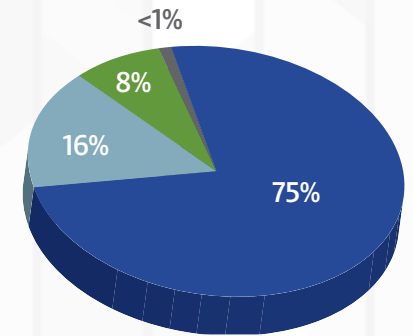
## FINANCIAL REPORT

Year Ended June 30, 2022

### REVENUES

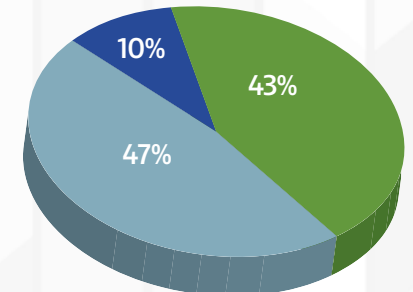
#### Grants and Appropriations

Federal.....	3,877,660
State .....	833,284
Local .....	435,587
Other .....	5,449
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$5,151,980</b>



### EXPENDITURES

Personnel .....	2,215,662
Contractual.....	2,417,886
Operations & Other .....	487,269
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$5,120,817</b>







**NRVRC**  
new river valley regional commission

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