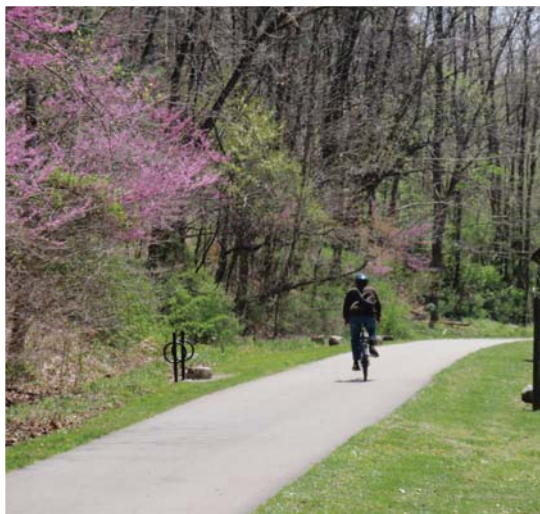


New River Valley Planning District Commission



FY 2011-2012 Annual Report



The NRVPCDC has been serving its member governments and universities for over 40 years. Every day we work toward making a better tomorrow in the New River Valley.



CHAIR'S MESSAGE



As my term as chair of the commission ends, it is an opportunity to take stock of the past two years of my time in that role. I believe most folks are aware of the local supports provided by the commission staff to each of our New River Valley communities over the years and that list continued to be long and important during my time as chair. However, what I am most proud of is the significant role the staff and commissioners have played in the regional strides made through collaborations and supports during my tenure. Regional work is not new to the commission and these accomplishments join a laundry list of historic measures supported and promoted by the commission, but I believe these pieces are often the unsung heroes of our work and I believe a bit of crowing is necessary to strengthen our resolve to continue the important, long term work of **regional collaboration and action**.

I'd like to highlight just a couple of the accomplishments that all New River Valley citizens can feel pride in and continue to engage around that are underway in part due to the leadership of the commission: The commission won and is driving the **Transportation Equipment Manufacturing Competitiveness Initiative** that provides grants to manufacturers to improve process, create new product or deploy green technologies that create or retain jobs. The **NRV Hazard Mitigation Plan** is being updated to support appropriate understanding and supports for our communities in time of natural and man-made disasters. The **NRV HOME Consortium**, a regionally developed group that sought and manages federal affordable housing dollars strategically, has funded housing development or rehabilitation of over \$2,959,000 within every locality in the NRV. The commission was a key partner in securing foundation funding to assess **community health** across the region and develop local youth digital storytellers to build videos sharing community assets and addressing community issues in the realm of health to encourage personal and community change to improve health. Over **\$1 million dollars** in competitive federal funding was secured in a regional collaborative to support strategic assessment of the region in nine key areas driven by local voices and developed to better understand how investment and desired outcomes can be effectively linked and supported locally and regionally in areas such as transportation, housing, health, the arts, and workforce development. And the commission has continued to bring our unique regional NRV perspective and understanding of planning and resources to local, state and national organizations such as **'Round the Mountain Board, State Water Supply Plan Advisory Committee, the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions, Development District Association of Appalachia and the National Association of Development Organizations**.

The above list is impressive and the executive director and staff of the commission have earned our thanks for these efforts. And, as we all know, the work is not finished. We face challenges in our region in these trying economic times and natural and man-made challenges continue to impact our citizens across the region. However, the New River Valley has a strong history of cooperation among local governments and agencies and our citizens are tenacious when challenges arise. I know the commission will continue to be a key player in the future protection and development of our region and I am proud to play my part in that effort.

Sincerely,

Holly Larson Lesko, Chair

FY 2011-2012 Commissioners

FLOYD COUNTY

Mr. Fred Gerald
Ms. Evelyn Janney

GILES COUNTY

Mr. Leon Law
Mr. Richard McCoy

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Ms. Annette Perkins
Mr. Ray Chambers

PULASKI COUNTY

Dr. Doug Warren
Mr. Joseph Sheffey
Mr. Charles Bopp

CITY OF RADFORD

Dr. Helen Harvey
Mr. Tim Cox

TOWN OF BLACKSBURG

Ms. Cecile Newcomb
Ms. Holly Lesko, Chair

TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG

Mr. Scott Weaver, Treasurer
Mr. Henry Showalter

TOWN OF FLOYD

Mr. Mike Patton, Vice Chair

TOWN OF NARROWS

Mr. Thomas Garrett

TOWN OF PEARISBURG

Mr. Charles Via

TOWN OF PULASKI

Mr. Morgan Welker
Mr. Larry Clevinger

TOWN OF RICH CREEK

Mr. Gary Eaton

RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Mr. Richard Alvarez

VIRGINIA TECH

Ms. Leigh LaClair
Mr. Kevin Sullivan

Over the past year we have engaged over 1,200 citizens in the New River Valley Livability Initiative through a regional kick-off summit at Claytor Lake, an on-line survey, spanish language survey, lower literacy survey, small group meetings & more.



REGIONAL COOPERATION

- The goal of the initial engagement effort of the **New River Valley Livability Initiative** has been to better understand regional strengths, challenges, priority issues of concern, and future vision for the region. The Livability Initiative has engaged citizens throughout the Valley using traditional methods such as surveys and small group meetings but also through Building Home and NRV BUILT.
 - » **Building Home** (a team of actors and musicians from Virginia Tech's Performing Arts Department) are conducting interactive theatre and music events with communities throughout the New River Valley. These gatherings use art as a medium for community visioning and dialogue on life in the NRV.
 - » **NRV BUILT** is a planning game for community conversations that was developed for the NRV. This game enables people to come together and talk about the things that are most important to them when it comes to their neighborhoods and communities. Through a series of hands-on exercises, participants identify their personal priorities and preferences and work with others to create the best community possible.

In addition, the Livability Initiative also has seven on-going working groups meeting monthly on the following topics: **Natural and Water Resources, Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Community Health, Energy, Transportation, and Housing**. Working groups have identified priority issues, collected and analyzed baseline conditions and trends, developed draft indicators and goals, and are currently brainstorming strategies for addressing priority issues identified. For further information on the Livability Initiative visit www.nrvlivability.org.

- **Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facilities Authority** received funding to boost its strategic planning and marketing efforts thanks to the Department of Housing and Community Development through its Building Collaborative Communities grant. The strategic plan has been completed with recommended action items in progress. The marketing efforts include creating an interactive website for the New River Valley Commerce Park (www.nrvcommercepark.com).

- The **New River Valley HOME Consortium** completed its fifth year as a Consortium:
 - » **Radford's** mixed-use project on Main Street, which includes eight HOME units on the second floor, was completed.
 - » The **Town of Pulaski** completed the rehabilitation of two homes, began the rehabilitation of two homes, and sold one home constructed by Community Housing Partners (CHP) to a first time homebuyer.
 - » CHP completed the rehabilitation of an 88 unit HUD subsidized apartment complex in **Christiansburg**.
 - » **Pulaski County** identified several homes needing HOME assistance in its Baskerville Neighborhood Rehabilitation project.
 - » The **Town of Narrows** began construction on a mixed-use residential project in its downtown.
 - » The **Town of Rich Creek** initiated an assisted living facility project adjacent to the Riverview Nursing Home.
- Since the launch on May 31, 2011, www.explorenewrivervalley.com serves as a site that markets the region as a travel destination and serves as a resource for residents. To date, nearly 7,600 people visited the site for an average of 19 visitors per day, or almost 570 per month. The total number of pages viewed is more than 25,350.



After several years of planning, a committed partnership comprised of the New River Valley Network Wireless Authority (Giles County, Pulaski County and City of Radford) along with Citizens Telephone Cooperative is approximately 50% complete with middle

mile fiber deployment in the region. A ribbon cutting was held on April 25th to celebrate the construction phase of the project. This is an \$11.5 million dollar project with 186 miles of fiber extending from Wytheville to Botetourt County. The middle mile fiber is the equivalent of the interstate road system. Once fully deployed in early 2013, Citizens Cooperative will broker the open access fiber to private providers in the region. As this project comes to a close, the Wireless Authority is beginning to discuss future projects to continue the momentum with broadband deployment in the region.

The NRV Development Corporation changed the name of the NRV Competitiveness Center to the NRV Business Center, continuing the work of business incubation. Seven businesses entered the Center this past year.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

- Staff provided technical assistance through Virginia Tech to nine companies from Botetourt County to Bristol. The funding was provided by the Economic Development Administration's Trade Adjustment Assistance and is locally known as the **Transportation Equipment Manufacturing Competitiveness Initiative (TEMCI)**.
- An annual update of the New River Valley **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** was completed with the help of local businesses, local governments, and participants through the NRV Livability Initiative. This year a consumer version was produced for the annual report. CEDS reports can be found online: www.nrvpdc.org/cedsinformation.html.
- The **New River Valley Development Corporation (NRVDC)** loaned \$50,000 to four companies within the New River Valley. The loan program and two of the companies, Three Birds Berry Farm of Montgomery County and Bootleg BBQ of Floyd County were featured on the WLS10 evening news.
- The NRVPCD engaged **social media** this year by creating a blog (www.nrvpdc.wordpress.com), facebook page (www.facebook.com/nrvpdc), and twitter account (www.twitter.com/nrvpdc). Like us and follow us to find out the latest information in the Planning District.
- Prospective industries continue to consider the **New River Valley Commerce Park** for their projects. As project support for the Park, PDC staff assisted with four proposals to inquiring site selection professionals.
- NRVPCD collaborated with Partnership for Access To Healthcare (PATH), Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG), and the New River Health District (NRHD) toward improving health in the New River Valley through a grant awarded by the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**. Through this project, **Healthy NRV**:
 - » PDC staff assembled data from recent regional community health assessments and national county health rankings to help identify themes of greatest health concern. Case studies and a summary of existing efforts across the region were also assembled to help prioritize action strategies.
 - » A **digital storytelling** consultant held two workshops for youth participants to provide storytelling and video production training. Youth participants then produced **health videos** focusing on a particular health issue of concern in their local community to help inform regional and local government decision makers about decisions and issues affecting health locally.
- The **Housing Partnership of the New River Valley** is comprised of housing and service providers in the New River Valley and meets monthly to discuss methods of collaboration and information sharing. An annual Point in Time Count to document the region's homeless population is performed by the Partnership.
- This past year the **New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board (WIB)** conducted a Regional Workforce Center feasibility study using Tobacco Commission Funding in Washington County/Smyth County/Bristol City. Also, the WIB were partners in three Job Fairs where over 130 employers and 450 job seekers were served. Grant Initiatives of the WIB include: CREATES (Construction, Retrofitting, Energy Efficiency Assessment Training and Employment Systems); HITE (Health Information Technology Education) and Statewide On-the-Job Training. The WIB served 783 Adult/DLW with a placement rate of 78% and 318 youth with a placement rate of 76%. For further information on the WIB visit www.nrmrwib.org.



The **NRV Commerce Park Participation Committee** marked the expansion of the park's water and sewer capacity with a Tank Bolting Ceremony. The park now offers 1 million gallons a day for both water and sewer service. Park owners, local elected officials, and supporters of the park were on hand to celebrate.

“The panel presentation with time for Q & A worked well. The session provided quality information and interaction opportunity. Very well planned and executed.”

(training session attendee)



PLANNING/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- The Commission supports communication and training 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 provides at least one **training session** annually which is open to all local government Planning Commission members in the region. The Commission hosted the fifth training session on May 23rd of this year which was attended by more than 40 local planning commissioners and planning staff. It featured a panel discussion on **historic structure/district revitalization**. The panel included: Bob Adams, President, HD Advisors; Joe Fortier, Owner, Taylor Hollow Construction; and Michael Pulice, Architectural Historian, Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
- PDC staff continued to assist the **Town of Floyd Planning Commission** and staff in development of the Town’s first Comprehensive Plan document focusing solely on the Town. Plan adoption is likely in early FY 2013.
- Floyd County received funding for an **innovation center** and kicked off the project in May. Staff will be providing grant administration support for the three-year project. Grant administration services were also provided to Pulaski County for their **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant**. This grant is being used to make energy upgrades through insulation and window replacements in the Pulaski County Library and the Pulaski County Administration Building.
- PDC staff assisted the **Pulaski County Planning Commission** and staff in updating the County’s Subdivision Ordinance which was approved by the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors on December 19, 2011.
- Pulaski County is underway on the **\$1,000,000 Housing Rehabilitation Grant** awarded by the Department of Housing and Community Development to complete 12 rehabilitations, 6 substantial reconstructions, and upgrade the neighborhood’s water and sewer lines. Located on the outskirts of Dublin, the **Baskerville Neighborhood Rehabilitation Project** has completed rehab work on four homes, and construction is underway on an additional four homes.
- Staff performed contract administration to meet Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements for **Phoenix Packaging in Pulaski County**.
- PDC staff facilitated the Town of Blacksburg’s **Business Climate Taskforce**.
- Staff completed an Environmental Assessment for the **New River Community College** entrance relocation along US Route 11 and for sanitary sewer improvements along Hubbard Way in Pulaski County. In addition, staff prepared an environmental report in support of the Pulaski County PSA’s Rural Development application for funding sewer extensions within the **Fair Acres neighborhood**.
- The **NRV Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan** was approved by FEMA and VDEM and adopted by all participating localities. This plan provides guidance for mitigation activities in the region and maintains localities’ eligibility for FEMA hazard mitigation funding through March 30, 2017.
- The **New River Valley Commerce Park’s** water and sewer construction project is nearing completion. Staff provided grant administration assistance (including reporting and Davis-Bacon compliance) for the duration of the project.
- Staff provided assistance to **Blacksburg** for the 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- The PDC provided grant-writing assistance to Giles County for two funding applications during FY 2012: (1) **Giles County - Live, Work, and Play: Tourism Enhancement Program** (ARC); and (2) **Hotel Feasibility Study** (USDA-Rural Development). Both applications were selected to receive funding. Staff also provided technical assistance to the Giles County Planning Commission and staff in updating demographic, Census, and other background data for incorporation in the County’s Comprehensive Plan update.



There are nearly 250 miles of existing hiking/mountain biking trails in the New River Valley.



Courtesy of Ross Wilsie

TRANSPORTATION

- The NRVPCDC received an **Excellence in Regional Transportation Planning Award** for the Regional Bikeway, Walkway, Blueway Plan from the National Association of Development Organizations.
- Staff completed several plans including a **Regional Transit Organization Analysis**, the 2035 New River Valley Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan, and the Shawsville Area Route 11/460 Corridor Study.
- **Safe Routes to School Travel Plans** were created for Belview Elementary and Auburn Elementary and Middle School in Montgomery County.

- Staff coordinated **“Day-rides”** with local government and VDOT representatives in Floyd County and Pulaski County to inventory transportation related issues.



- A Special Report that examined **devolution of secondary roadways** in Virginia was prepared.

- Staff presented information on regional transportation planning at the **2012 Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Roundtable**, in Arlington, Virginia.

- Staff served as representative on the Department of Rail and Public Transportation’s Multimodal and Public Space Design Guidelines Steering Committee, **Virginia’s VTrans 2035 Plan Update**, Virginia’s Statewide Transit/Transportation Demand Management Plan Update, and on the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area MPO Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee.

- Staff continues to provide leadership for the **Regional Transportation Technical Advisory** and **Regional Bikeway/Walkway Committees**.

- Staff participated in **go green NRV** (a business organization promoting sustainability for businesses) including participation in planning activities, communications, executive committee, and board.
- To promote the **RIDE Solutions program**, staff participated in or attended a number of expos and community and networking events in the NRV including: Sustainable Blacksburg’s annual meeting, Montgomery County Chamber Expo, New River Valley Job Fair Expo (Spring and Fall), go green NRV annual membership meeting, Pulaski Business Expo, and the Pulaski and Montgomery Chamber events during the year.
- RIDE Solutions sponsored and/or co-sponsored events in the NRV to promote alternatives to single-occupant vehicle (SOV) transportation including the **Skip the Car Campaign and Fix Fest**.
- RIDE Solutions supported its **Workplace Partners** by providing support for employee outreach, incentive campaigns including a monthly e-mail bite to workplace partners and RIDE Solutions network with timely information about alternative transportation and related economic and sustainability issues.
- Staff took advantage of opportunities to receive ongoing **training** by attending the ACT 2011 National Conference, Chicago, IL; ACT Chesapeake/Mid Atlantic Chapter TDM Reception & Symposium; and ACT Chesapeake Chapter’s University TDM Summit in Harrisonburg, VA.

This was the third year for the **Fix Fest** event in Blacksburg (partnering with Town of Blacksburg and the New River Valley Bicycling Association). It was the first year for the event in Radford as part of the City’s Environmental Awareness Day (partnering with Radford Transit) and in Christiansburg (partnering with NRVBA and the Bike Kitchen). In addition to fixing over 50 bikes, the events brought in bike donations for the Bike Kitchen.

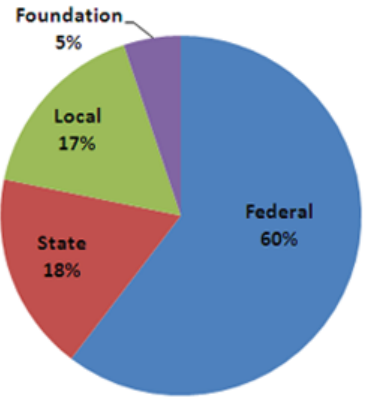


PDC staff volunteered 60 hours this past year to various NRV organizations including the Montgomery County Christmas Store, Boy Scouts, Town of Pembroke, VT Perspectives Art Gallery, NRV Trout Unlimited, Kipps Elementary, & the YMCA at VT.



FINANCE & PERSONNEL

Revenues



**Finance Report
Year Ended June 30, 2012**

Revenues	
Grants and Appropriations	
Federal	1,013,227
State	299,661
Local	279,077
Foundation	85,992
Total	1,677,957

Expenditures



Expenditures	
Personnel	792,566
Contractual	646,389
Operations & Other	228,457
Total	1,667,412
Excess (Deficit)	10,545

**New River Valley
Planning District
Commission
Staff**



Left to Right
(back row) **Kevin Byrd, AICP**, Executive Director; **Carol Davis**, Community Outreach Facilitator; **Elijah Sharp**, Regional Planner II; **Patrick Burton, AICP**, Senior Planner; **Phil Gilbertson**, Senior Cartographer; **Jan Gilbertson**, Communications Manager; **Brad Mecham**, Regional Planner; **Julie Phillips**, Office Manager (front row) **Tommi Godwin**, Regional Planner; **Christy Straight**, Regional Planner II, **Janet McNew**, Director of Finance and Personnel; **Kim Thurlow**, Project Coordinator; **Jennifer Wilsie**, Regional Planner II. Not pictured: Ken Hall, Part-time Regional Planner.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Reflecting on the previous year of Commission work in the region, a couple of significant themes resonate; **collaboration** and **innovation**. The region is benefitting substantially through these two themes and examples are abundant. As a direct result of collaboration, the Commission was able to secure upwards of \$800,000 in funding to address pressing economic issues in our region. This includes technical assistance to **local manufacturing companies**, working with youth on **community health** issues, and deployment of **middle mile fiber** to increase internet infrastructure. The list of collaborative approaches in the region continues to increase and the Commission is excited about the opportunities the future will hold. Innovative approaches were another major theme and this was most evident in public engagement strategies. The **NRV Livability Initiative** is gathering public input on the future vision of the region through **BUILT NRV**. This is a planning board game that allows people to come together and work through local issues and ideas. The NRV Livability Initiative also utilized digital storytelling techniques to create videos to share issues people are concerned about in the region. Lastly, the Commission is dedicated to community involvement in our work. To increase awareness of our programs the Commission began using social media this year. Look for us on **Facebook and Twitter**. The Commission redesigned its website, www.nrvpdc.org, which makes finding information about meetings and regional programs a lot easier. I encourage you to visit the website, connect with the Commission on social media, and join the regional dialogue as the Commission strives to ensure prosperous communities across the New River Valley!

Sincerely,

Kevin R. Byrd, AICP
Executive Director



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