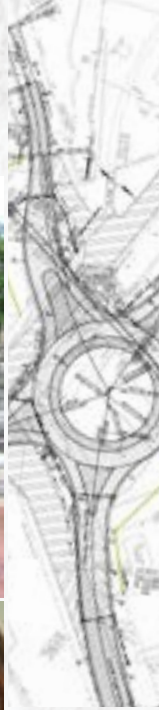




NRVRC
new river valley regional commission



**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2022-2023





Chair's Message

This year has been another great one for the Regional Commission. The Regional Commission continues to work hard on new and existing programs, projects, and collaborations in our region, which are essential for our continued growth and wellbeing. The Regional Commission has worked to help all of our members, including local governments and higher education institutions.

We have had several key accomplishments this past year with the launch of a new regional organization, the NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority; a successful regional application to the first round of opioid abatement funds; getting under contract for \$68M in broadband expansion projects; facilitation of a regional Tech Hub proposal to the U.S. Economic Development Administration; and perhaps most importantly, numerous technical assistance projects for our members all across the valley.

During the fiscal year, the agency expanded to the largest staffing level ever to keep up with all this activity and to ensure that we continue to provide an outstanding level of service to our region. We added exceptional personnel in key areas and reorganized the organization so that we can be more efficient and responsive to all of our members' needs while growing professional capacity.

As board chair, I would like to thank our board members for the time, energy, and enthusiasm with which they approach their service to this organization. I would also like to acknowledge Michael Harvey, a citizen representative from Montgomery County, as he just wrapped up two non-consecutive terms totaling 11 years of dedicated service, during which he also led the board as Chair for two years. His consistent, positive contributions to the board and executive committee, and participation with regional collaboratives will be greatly missed.

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 who calls this area home.

HIL JOHNSON

Chair

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

FY22-23 Commissioners

Floyd County

Mr. Michael Maslaney
Ms. Linda DeVito Kuchenbuch

Giles County

Mr. Richard McCoy
Mr. Leon Law, Treasurer

Montgomery County

Mr. Steve Fijalkowski, Vice-Chair
Mr. Michael Harvey

Pulaski County

Mr. Jeffery Reeves
Dr. Doug Warren

City of Radford

Mr. David Horton
Mr. Jeff Martin

Town of Blacksburg

Dr. Daniel Breslau
Ms. Susan Anderson

Town of Christiansburg

Mr. Tim Wilson
Mr. Hil Johnson, Chair

Town of Floyd

Mr. Will Griffin
Mr. Michael Patton

Town of Narrows

Mr. Tom Spangler

Town of Pearisburg

Ms. Cathy Clark

Town of Pembroke

Mr. Robert Lawson

Town of Pulaski

Mr. Larry Clevinger
Mr. Michael Reis

Town of Rich Creek

Mr. Roger Jones

Radford University

Dr. Angela Joyner

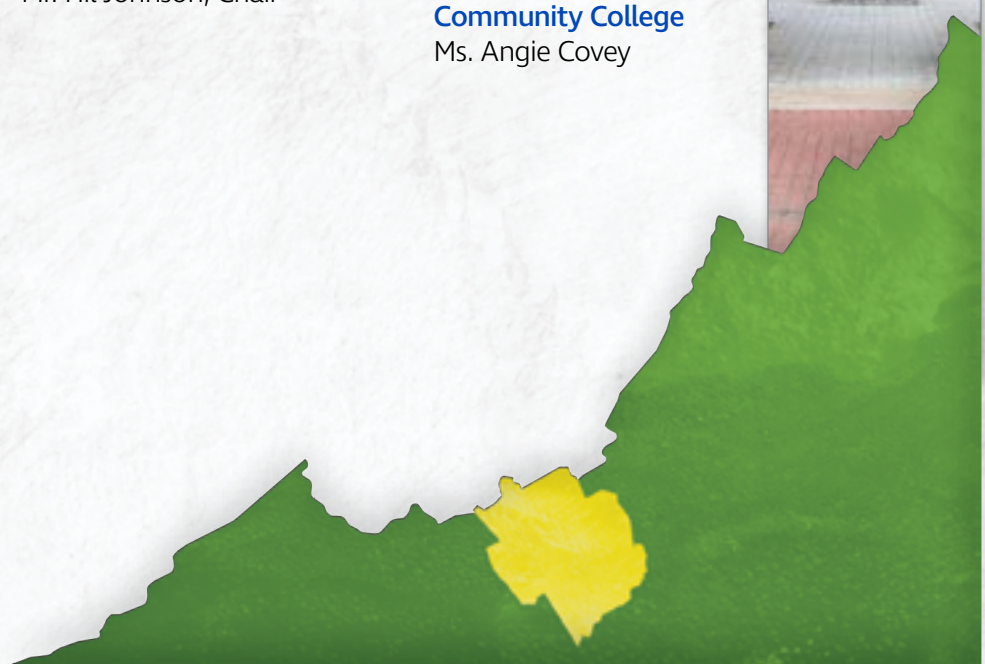
Virginia Tech

Ms. Mary Trigiani
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 their award recipients at the annual dinner held in October 2022 at Brick House Pizza in Radford. Penny Franklin, Montgomery County School Board, received the Champion of the Valley award (elected/appointed official). Janaka Casper, Community Housing Partners, received the Citizen of the Valley award. New River Conservancy received the Friend of the Valley award.



NRV Recovery Ecosystem

OPIOID ABATEMENT AUTHORITY

The Regional Commission supported a successful cooperative regional proposal to the Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) in spring 2023. This funding will provide financial, oversight, and collaboration tools and staffing that support the impact of the opioid crisis in the region from prevention to recovery. The Regional Commission will provide grant administration, evaluation, and partnership bridging to ensure this work is adaptive and innovative to address local and regional needs and goals.

- \$3.4M award (including \$1.2M in local matching funds) for opioid abatement work in FY24

Be committed. Be well.

Business Continuity Team

The Business Continuity Team (BCT) wrapped up the Community Development Block Grant funded program in the region this fiscal year. The program supported COVID-19 impacts through mitigation strategies, training, infection response, and health policy guidance for all businesses in the region. The work wrapped up with booster vaccine clinics and the distribution of rapid tests throughout the NRV. The Regional Commission continued to support individuals and organizations in developing their infection control protocols as the nation transitioned from the COVID health emergency. This work also supported schools with vaccines and infection control as well as much-needed focus and engagement around the underlying health and wellness concerns the pandemic exacerbated. A continued and necessary piece of the BCT work was coordination with partners in healthcare, government, and business to ensure seamless access to information and resources for citizens of the region and beyond. Below are a few highlights and statistics from our year.

- Supported more than **15,000 employees** through vaccines, testing, education, and infection control guidance
- Delivered **1,400 COVID antigen test kits** to 40-plus businesses and organizations
- Conducted **17 naloxone trainings** for businesses and organizations
- Hosted onsite vaccination clinics at **12 businesses, 10 schools, and six festivals and events**
- Organized quarterly virtual meetings with **21 school districts** to ensure schools had adequate and up-to-date health information and support



Community Health

NEW RIVER HEALTH DISTRICT

The Regional Commission expanded the strong partnership with the New River Health District in spring 2023 through American Rescue Plan Act funding. This project will enhance community wellbeing programming and build on partnerships in this area. The initial focus has been on finalizing the Healthy Roots governance structure underway with the Community Foundation of the New River Valley. A reorganization of The Road to Wellness, a regional community health-focused website, was also launched with an anticipated completion date in fall 2023. This funding has enhanced the incorporation of Community Health within the Regional Commission enabling the establishment of a new program area and the promotion of Holly Lesko to lead this work.

Highlights from this program area from March-June 2023:

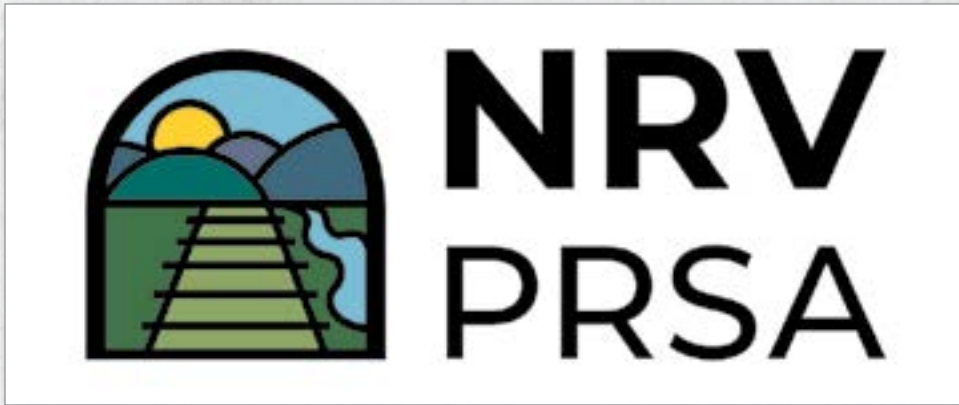
- Creation of Community Health Director position and programmatic focus
- Nine topic-specific engagement events to gather information and ideas for addressing opioid abatement in the region
- Successful application for cooperative program proposal to Opioid Abatement Authority
- Survey creation and delivery to understand community member views on opioid use and treatment in the region



New River Valley HOME Consortium

The New River Valley HOME Consortium was created in 2007 and utilizes an annual funding allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to construct or rehabilitate affordable housing for low-to-moderate-income households in the New River Valley.

- Habitat for Humanity is nearly complete with the construction of seven townhomes near the Town of Floyd. Potential homeowners are currently being mortgage-qualified.
- Taylor Hollow Construction has completed construction on the mixed-use redevelopment of the former Leggett building in downtown Radford. Ten of the 11 units are already leased.
- Community Housing Partners will construct an estimated 46 single-family homes for income-eligible households on Merrimac Road in Blacksburg.
- The Consortium began data collection and planning work to expend \$2.1M in HOME American Rescue Plan Act funding for supportive housing in the region. Expansion of partnerships with New River Community Action and other support service agencies within the region is being explored.



NRV Passenger Rail

Efforts to bring passenger rail service back into the New River Valley are making great progress.

The New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority (NRVPRSA), the entity responsible for owning and operating the station, was certified by the Commonwealth of Virginia and held its first official meeting in September. Soon thereafter, the board of directors adopted bylaws and went through a process to select the initial officers to lead the board. The board also selected its logo, which will begin appearing more frequently in the next fiscal year as the role of the authority increases. The Authority comprises Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski counties, the City of Radford, the towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Pulaski, along with Radford University and Virginia Tech.

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VRPA), the entity leading the project for the Commonwealth, has continued to evaluate the final two potential sites, both of which are in close proximity to Uptown Christiansburg Mall. A final site selection will take place in the near future.

In anticipation of the final site selection, the NRVPRSA issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to procure architecture and engineering services to develop the design and specifications for the station facility. The procurement process was completed in June, and the top-ranking firm was selected. Once the final site is identified, everything is in line to move forward.

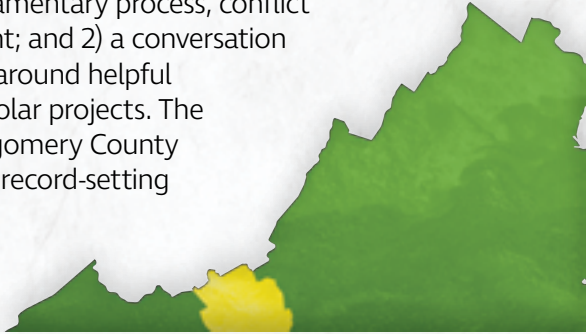


New River Watershed Roundtable

The New River Watershed Roundtable continued to serve as a convener of water quality interests across the region. At quarterly meetings, partners gathered to learn about regional watershed projects, discuss water quality, and elevate ideas for collaboration. The region participated in the annual ReNew the New cleanup with 500 volunteers who helped pick up 150 tires and 20-plus tons of trash from the New River this year.

Planning Commissioners Training 2023

In April, the Regional Commission facilitated the first Planning Commissioners Training since 2019. The training offered two sessions: 1) an interactive panel discussion on common tricky procedural topics such as parliamentary process, conflict of interest, and public comment; and 2) a conversation hosted by Louisa County staff around helpful considerations for large-scale solar projects. The event was hosted at the Montgomery County Government Center and had a record-setting number of attendees.



Planning/Technical Assistance

Town of Pulaski Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Pulaski adopted its updated comprehensive plan in May 2023. More than 500 community members participated in the update process through community surveys, focus group meetings, working group meetings, and open houses. The plan consists of elements such as future land use, economic development, housing, and infrastructure, including policies and strategies to address issues and opportunities identified during the process and to meet the community's current and future needs that help achieve the community's collective vision.



Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Christiansburg kicked off community engagement activities at their Food Truck Rodeo and Rockin' Main Street events for its efforts to update its comprehensive plan. The Town is gathering ideas from the community to define the vision for the future, guide growth, and direct efforts to meet the current and future needs of the community. The comprehensive plan is a policy document that guides decision-making in land use, economic development, infrastructure investments, and government services.

Planning Process



Town of Pembroke Comprehensive Plan

The Regional Commission is preparing a robust update to the Town of Pembroke's Comprehensive Plan. The work includes preparing the plan, engaging with the public, working with the local planning commission, and developing a program to measure the Town's progress over the coming years.

Town of Pembroke ARPA

The Town of Pembroke received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to implement local projects such as upgrading the water system within Town limits. ARPA funds are allocated to support local governments in responding to the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19.



City of Radford East Main Downtown Plan

The City of Radford continues implementing improvements identified during the East Main Downtown Plan (2022). The team at the Regional Commission is working closely with City staff, Halcyon Landscape Architecture and Planning, Hurt and Proffitt, and local stakeholders to develop plans designed to enhance the downtown area and make it a more vibrant destination. Design features include the adaptive reuse of a surface parking lot into a downtown gathering space, a bike/ped trail connecting Radford University at Tyler Avenue that weaves through Downtown to Bisset Park, enhanced lighting, and wayfinding signage.

Floyd County Grant Administration

- Floyd Industrial Access: The Regional Commission continues to support Floyd County's road extension in the Floyd County Commerce Center to support new pad sites with transportation access and utility extensions. The Tobacco Commission and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) are providing grant funding.
- Floyd Growth Center Building 1: The Regional Commission supported Floyd County's newest facility in the Floyd County Commerce Center for lease to small businesses. Construction will be complete in the summer of 2023, and a tenant has moved into the 13,500-square-foot, resilient, multi-tenant, expandable, light industrial building. While Floyd County has invested a considerable sum of its own funds in the project, they have leveraged that investment for nearly \$3M in grants from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Virginia Tobacco Commission.



James Hardie Direct Injection Sewer Improvement

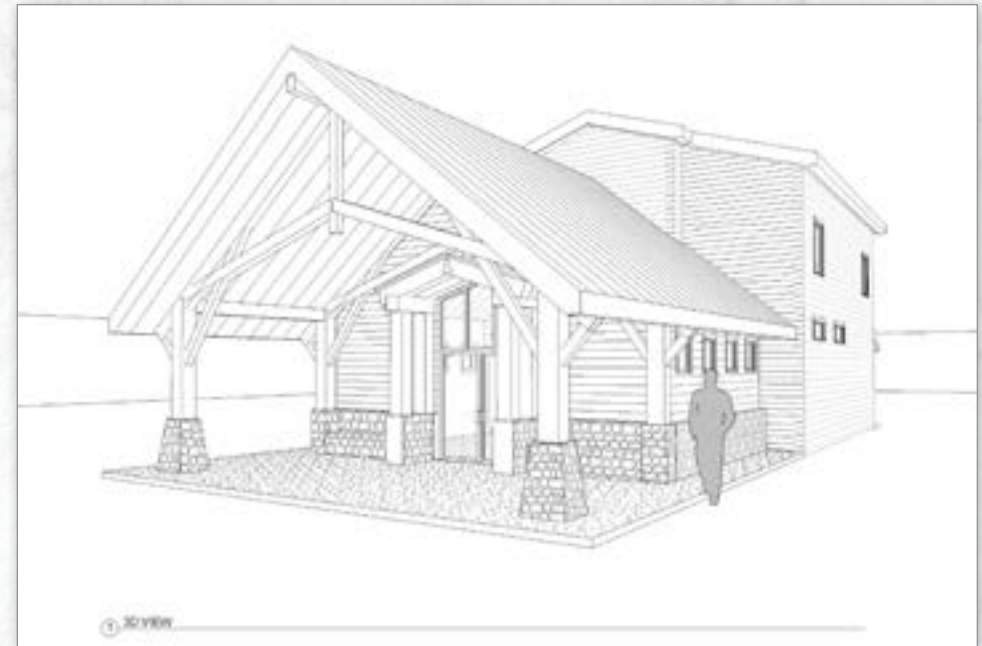
In 2017, a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) explored several public sewer improvements in downtown Pulaski. Among the priorities was improving the infrastructure for one of the Town's largest employers and public utility customers, James Hardie Industries. The Town partnered with the local employer and the Regional Commission to pursue competitive grant funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Combined grant funding was nearly \$2.5M which is being matched by almost \$850K of local and private funds.

The project involves re-routing discharge through the Town's gravity collection system. The improvements include the installation of a one-million-gallon storage tank and necessary appurtenances to shorten the existing flow path, currently about 5 miles, while also increasing the facility's reliability and capacity. James Hardie Industries currently employs more than 300 people at the Pulaski facility.

Narrows Downtown Business District Revitalization

The Town of Narrows is achieving its River Center Action Plan goals originally set in 2017. The Town participated in additional outdoor recreational economies planning, and successfully received competitive grant funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and the Appalachian Regional Commission in 2019. Combined grant funding was nearly \$1.1M which was matched with more than \$1.4M in local cash and in-kind contributions.

The project involved the renovation of four building facades, transformation of a local abandoned property into a local outfitter space, a new trail along Wolf Creek, and enhanced parking and pedestrian infrastructure downtown. The project is anticipated to be complete by Fall 2023. The Regional Commission provided support throughout the project's planning and implementation phases.

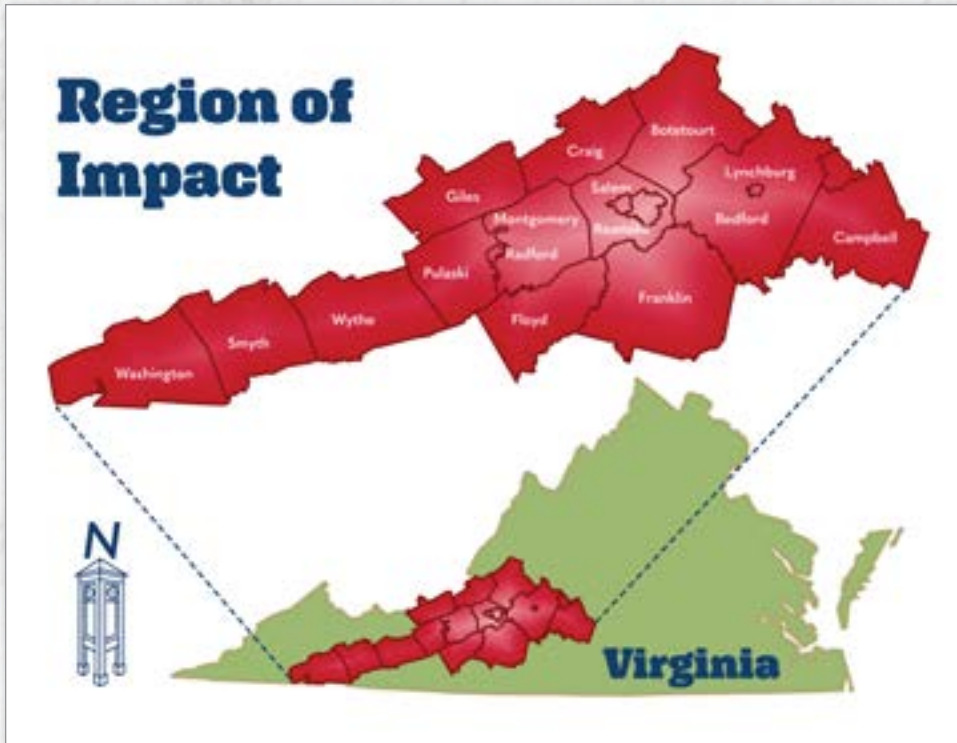


Giles County New River/Trail Center

Giles County broke ground in April on its New River/Trail Center. The Center will serve as a nucleus for information on the many outdoor recreation opportunities and services in Giles County. Shuttle services will connect visitors to hiking trails, mountain biking systems, and paddling launch locations throughout the County. The project is funded through a partnership with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and Friends of Southwest Virginia.

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 is pleased to support this project by assisting with environmental coordination and other regulatory compliance requirements. This fantastic outdoor recreation asset will be available in the New River Valley within the next year or two.





Radford University Economic Impact Study

Analysis of the economic model for Radford University’s defined region of impact included the amount of direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts over the last five years. Model outputs resulted from five key areas: 1) operations and employment, 2) capital investments, 3) student spending and volunteerism, 4) special events and visitors, and 5) alumni and philanthropy. The University has a significant impact where faculty and students predominantly live, work, and contribute to local economies. In FY22, the total University economic impact in-region is estimated at nearly \$387M.

In addition to the overwhelming economic impacts Radford University contributes to the region, more graduates are also choosing to stay local after graduation. Based on a 2023 alumni survey, 51% of those graduating after 2019 also choose to live in the region of impact. With average reported salaries of \$76,500 - \$98,500, the economic impacts are resoundingly greater in the New River Valley and broader Radford University footprint.



Plant SWVA Natives Campaign

The Plant Southwest Virginia Natives Campaign raises awareness, appreciation, and application of plants native to Southwest Virginia. The project is funded by a grant from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation with additional funds contributed by the Virginia Native Plant Society, New River Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Blue Ridge Wildflower Society, and New River Valley Master Gardeners. Over the last year, the project has distributed almost 5,000 native plants to community groups, nonprofits, individuals, and local governments across the New River Valley, along with over 150 native plant label placards. The project recently completed production of “A Guide to Gardening with Southwest Virginia Native Plants.” The guide is available for free at locations around Southwest Virginia and can be downloaded from the project’s website at plantvirginiannatives.org/plantswvanatives. Construction of a Native Plant Propagation Center, in partnership with Live, Work, Eat, Grow at the Hale Community Garden in Blacksburg, was also completed.





Crab Creek Beautification Project

The Crab Creek Beautification Project launched in January 2023. Funded by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and in partnership with the Town of Christiansburg, Downtown Christiansburg, Inc., Balzer and Associates, and the Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture Department, it is an effort to connect the Christiansburg community with their Crab Creek Watershed through watershed friendly landscaping practices on private property. The program is currently providing both cost-share and technical assistance to nine private property owners, representing both individuals and community groups, as they install stormwater best management practices. These include impermeable pavement removal, conservation landscaping, rainwater harvesting, and pet waste disposal stations.

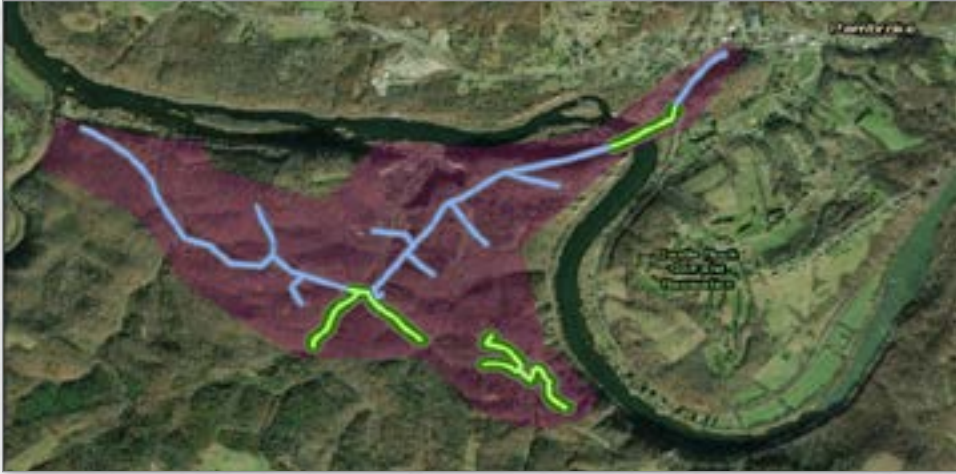


Tri-County Broadband Initiative

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 has been ongoing and has significantly progressed in the past year.

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR:

- Montgomery County, partnering with GigaBeam Networks, received a \$919,569 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The County and GigaBeam together are providing an additional \$488,068 in matching funds. The goal of this project is to provide broadband services to 1,248 households and 44 businesses in the communities of Allegheny Springs, Elliston, Lafayette, and Shawsville. This project is scheduled to be built out by December 2023.
- The Regional Commission, partnering with Montgomery County, Bland County, and GigaBeam Networks, received a \$39,233,355 VATI grant from DHCD. The County and GigaBeam together are providing an additional \$38,247,340 in matching funds. The goal of this project is to install approximately 619 miles of fiber to provide access to broadband services to 11,587 households and 507 businesses throughout the remaining unserved and underserved areas of Montgomery County and Bland County.
- The Regional Commission, partnering with Pulaski County and All Points Broadband (APB), received a \$29,122,000 VATI grant from DHCD. The County and APB together are providing an additional \$26,103,057 in matching funds. The goal of this project is to install approximately 419 miles of fiber to provide access to broadband services to 7,073 households and 799 businesses throughout the remaining unserved and underserved areas of Pulaski County.



Painters School Broadband Project

The Painters School Road Broadband Project is nearing completion. The Regional Commission received a grant of \$124,600 from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to provide broadband services to underserved and unserved areas in Giles County.

This project will close the digital divide for local businesses and residents alike. It will increase opportunities for both economic development and job growth and will give residents the ability to not only work from home but also will allow for virtual learning and telehealth experiences.

To date, the contractor has installed more than 22,530 linear feet of fiber that will allow connectivity to pass more than 70 households. It is anticipated that construction will be completed by the end of September 2023.



NRV Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

The New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan update provides a comprehensive reassessment of natural and man-made hazards and establishes mitigation strategies that better prepare local communities to meet and recover from natural disasters. The plan update includes the identification of additional hazards that could impact the region, performing a risk assessment and capability assessment, and updating mitigation objectives and strategies.

The Regional Commission has formed a steering committee to guide the planning process and convened working groups to develop analysis and strategies for hazards. The committee includes representation from all participating governments of the Regional Commission, including various local government departments, state and federal agencies, citizens, and private businesses. The work to date has included these meetings, data collection and analysis, community outreach, and coordination with partners and other stakeholders across the region.

The project will continue into FY24. Opportunities to participate and progress updates on the project will be posted at engagenrv.org/hazard-mitigation-plan.



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 continue federal and local partnerships to address economic development initiatives in the region. The RES also documents the planning efforts to identify economic development needs in the region, which is required for grant applications to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Economic Development Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. The RES's major sections include an overview of regional economic conditions through summary data, a SWOT analysis, priority goals and strategies, and a list of prioritized regional and local economic development projects.

[CHART ON NEXT PAGE](#)

**Economic
Development &
Human Services**



Regional Economic Strategy Annual Update Chart



Floyd County Housing Rehabilitation Project

- Established as one of the first “scatter-site” rehab projects funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.
- Completed construction, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, on two substantial reconstructions.
- Construction underway on three additional homes.
- Financial and in-kind leverage of more than \$214,000 from the project’s many partners.





Regional Housing Trust Fund

(PDC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT GRANT)

- Regional Commission awarded \$2M from Virginia Housing to pursue a regional housing trust fund and the development of at least 20 new affordable units in the region.
- Met monthly with the Housing Trust Fund Oversight Board, composed of stakeholders from throughout the region, to build the guidelines and funding parameters of the Fund.
- Structured the Fund to complement the NRV HOME program, rotating funds around the region for greater impact.
- Released a Request for Proposals to fund \$1.8M for an affordable housing project in both Montgomery and Pulaski counties.

Old Prices Fork School

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROJECT

The final grant deliverables for the Prices Fork Revitalization project were completed, and the nonprofit, Live, Work, Eat, Grow, Inc., has continued to grow.

- Millstone Kitchen completed the third round of COVID grant funding from DHCD to administer the Neighbors in Need program for food-insecure households. These grant funds made it possible to serve more than 58,000 meals to 930 individuals.
- The project reached its goal of 29 jobs being created.
- Live, Work, Eat, Grow, Inc., the nonprofit that operates Millstone Kitchen, hired a third staff member to help with kitchen operations.



New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund

Regional Commission staff continue administering the NRV Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The loan fund has received several inquiries this year and is currently servicing loans to Floyd County, Montgomery County, and Christiansburg businesses. The fund has approximately \$48,000 loaned out to clients, with approximately \$55,000 available to lend.

New River Water Trail

In early 2023, the Regional Commission formed The New River Water Trail Project Management team, which includes representatives from local government, staff, and state and local stakeholders to help execute the implementation of the ARC POWER project. The New River Water Trail Expansion project aims to increase river access, develop improved user experiences, including user safety and accessibility, and galvanize the river community through river stewardship and directed marketing of local river-based recreation opportunities and regional tourism. Additionally, it seeks to supplement regional job growth by further developing talent attraction, retention, and placemaking through the cultivation of our proudest regional asset, the New River.

The team at the Regional Commission is responsible for the execution of the Environmental Review Record. It will work with local stakeholders to implement an enhanced regional wayfinding and signage package, update maps and digital tools, and construct or improve four boat launches.





New River Valley/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board

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 include programs for Adults, Youth, and Dislocated Workers) and other special grants and programs as available.

The WDB is the designated convener for the region's workforce system (in order to have a seamless interface with the business community and economic development entities). The Workforce System includes (but is not limited to):

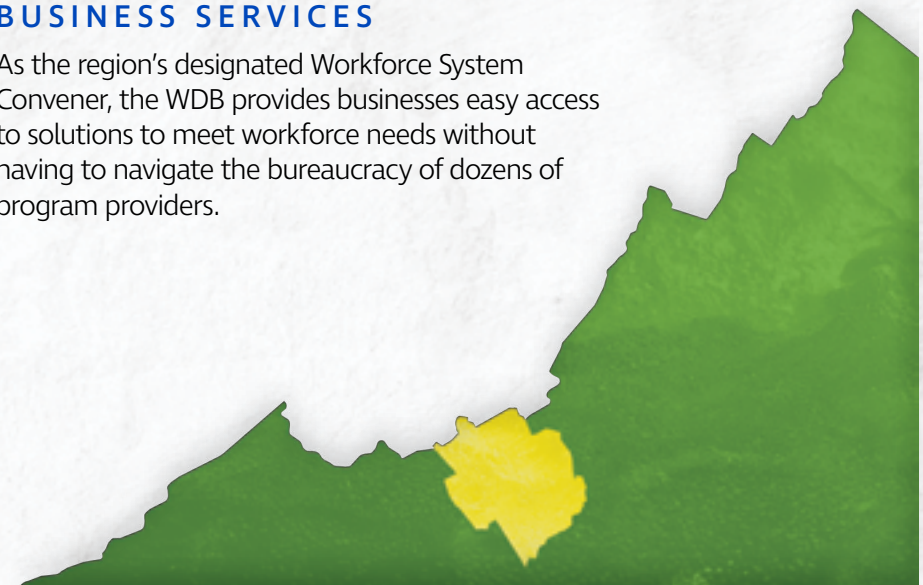
- K-12 Education systems
- Post-Secondary Education/Training providers
- Adult Education
- Training/Employment Programs offered for special populations
 - Veterans
 - Unemployed and/or underemployed
 - Older workers
 - Workers with disabilities
 - Economically disadvantaged
 - Youth (ages 14-24)

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 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 PY22, 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 WDB provides businesses easy access to solutions to meet workforce needs without having to navigate the bureaucracy of dozens of program providers.



Besides 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 WDB believes services to the region's businesses should serve the broadest possible range of companies and be individualized and efficient with a single point of contact (or a "no wrong door" approach) wherever possible. It is also our intent to share information about what services we are 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. To mount this collaborative effort, the BSU members offer cross-training in one another's services to provide seamless referrals for needed services and speak to the many services available, regardless of what agency may "own" these services. Even during the pandemic, the WDB served the region's businesses through:

JOB FAIRS/RECRUITING EVENTS:

- Four Multi-company events with **135 companies** participating and over **500 jobseekers** attending.
- Assisted **11 companies** to host company-specific events: most were on-site and several companies held more than one event.

WORKSHOPS:

- Hosted two "Work Opportunity Tax Credits" Workshops for Businesses
- Hosted four "Stand Up and Stand Out" workshops on Using Business Culture for Recruiting and Retention for businesses
- Hosted two "Business Engagement" Workshops for Partners
- Hosted two "Burnout Recovery" Workshops for Partners
- Hosted two Workforce Exchange Events
- Hosted one Facility Tour for Partners

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING CONTRACTS:

- **11 Projects** supporting **62 workers** with **\$37,000** in reimbursements to nine companies

BUSINESS SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Provided **684** services
- Provided services to **270** companies
- Provided multiple services to **96** companies

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs (WIOA)

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

DISLOCATED WORKERS

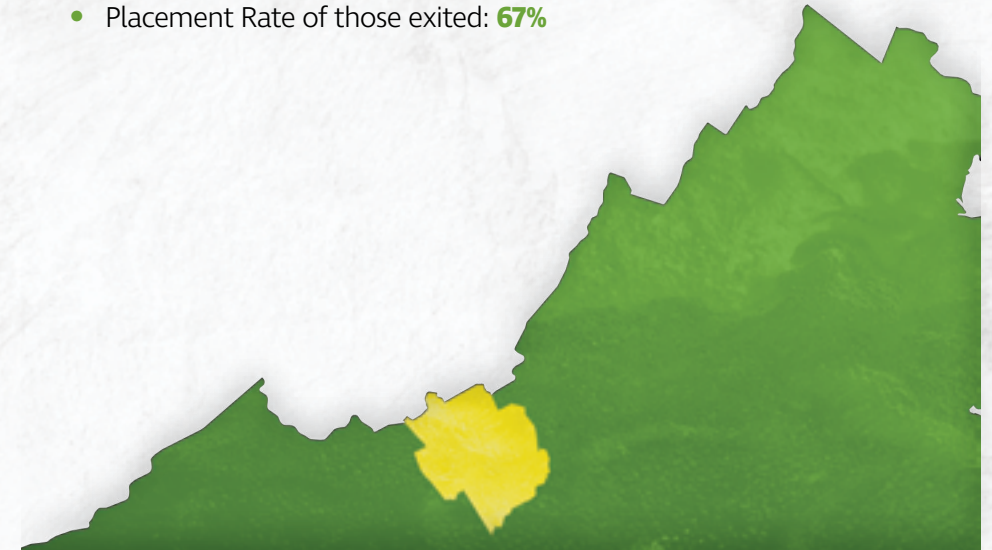
- Individuals that Received Individualized Career Services: **154**
- Number in Training: **99**
- Placement Rate of those exited: **84% Avg.**
- Wage at Placement: **\$20.70**

ADULT PROGRAM

- Individuals that Received Individualized Career Services: **261**
- Number in Training: **79**
- Placement Rate of those exited: **71% Avg.**
- Wage at Placement: **\$17.60**

YOUTH PROGRAM

- Individuals that received Individualized Career Services: **164**
- Attained a credential: **15**
- Received Training: **22**
- Placement Rate of those exited: **67%**



Pathways to a Strong and Healthy Region

PARTNERSHIPS FOR OPPORTUNITY AND WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION (POWER)

January 2021 - December 2024

What: A four-year program to (1) improve coordination between the economic and workforce development sectors and healthcare and human service sectors to tackle substance use disorder, and (2) 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, 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:

- **128 individuals** in recovery completed training to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist. 86 earned certifications and gained employment.
- **108 individuals** in recovery completed training in an in-demand occupational sector. 76 earned certifications and gained employment.
- **62 individuals** in recovery seeking employment services were connected to employment.
- **29 health/human practitioners** earned specialized credentials to support individuals with substance use disorder.
- **13 businesses** have become Second Chance Employers.

Build Your Career - YouthBuild

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

July 2021 - October 2025

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 whom are secondary school dropouts and are either a member of a low-income family, a foster care youth, a homeless youth, 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

PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO DATE:

- **52 participants** enrolled. 35 dropouts (lack secondary credentials); 17 low-skilled youth with barriers to employment.
- **35 participants** accomplished a measurable skills gain.
- **25 participants** completed occupational training.
- **18 participants** earned an industry-recognized credential.
- **22 participants** obtained employment.



Pathways to New Beginnings

WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (WORC)

U.S. Department of Labor and the Appalachian Regional Commission
September 2022-September 2025

What: To provide education, training, and supportive services in regions that have suffered significant job losses in the energy extraction industry.

- Address systemic and programmatic barriers for 180 recovering and justice-involved citizens
- Coordinate innovative training and business services
- Provide access to employment opportunities
- Align workforce and economic development strategies and activities in our region

Provide training to recovering and justice-involved citizens to prepare them for in-demand occupations in the targeted industries of construction, manufacturing, and healthcare resulting in the expressed competencies and credentials needed and valued by businesses.

Partners: People Incorporated, Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program, Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley, and Virginia CARES

PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO DATE:

- **74 participants** enrolled.
- **45 participants** completed occupational training.
- **45 participants** earned an industry-recognized credential.
- **32 participants** obtained employment.

Filling the Trades Gap

WIOA INNOVATIONS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

November 2022 - March 2024

What: To offer an innovative solution and activities to address our worker shortage and provide businesses with the skilled workers they need, ultimately helping people with barriers obtain employment in a career pathway that offers competitive wages with opportunities for growth and advancement.

Partners: People Incorporated, Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program, and Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley

PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO DATE:

- **25 participants** enrolled.
- **19 participants** completed occupational training.
- **13 participants** earned an industry-recognized credential.
- **13 participants** obtained employment.

Public Health Professionals Program

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (HRSA)

July 2022 - July 2025 (Subrecipient of VRHA)

What: To address the ongoing critical need in healthcare facilities for trained public health professionals serving rural communities in Virginia

To establish a system of recruiting rural community members for job development, training, and placement

To provide job development, training, and placement in community health fields for rural community members

PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO DATE:

- **31 participants** enrolled.
- **17 participants** completed occupational training.
- **17 participants** earned an industry-recognized credential.
- **17 participants** obtained employment.

Ready SWVA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

October 2022 - September 2024

What: The Multi-WDA Ready SWVA project is a pilot project for Childcare accessibility and Early Childhood Education Career Pathway capacity building. This project covers the 21 localities of Southwest Virginia.

- More than 250 individuals will be provided training 100 will be incumbent workers
- 100 new early education teachers will be placed in the region
- Childcare Centers receive “back-office” support and/or other services

Partners: United Way Southwest Virginia and Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board

PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO DATE:

- **12 Centers** receiving services.
- **7 incumbent workers** completed occupational training.
- **13 participants** earned an industry recognized credential.
- **8 new childcare teachers** were recruited and hired.

Programming has Expanded into Bland Correctional Center

A partnership with Bland Correctional Center (and the Virginia Department of Justice) has been established, and provides Home Builders Institute Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate Training (HBI PACT) to 24 inmates due to be released in the near future.

These participants are currently in training. They are also receiving a re-entry training course provided by Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program.

Training will expand this year to include an entrepreneurial course and HBI certifications in Carpentry, Building Construction Technology, Brick Masonry, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, Weatherization, Solar Installation, Landscaping, and Painting.

Return on Investment

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board believes the Workforce system 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. The PY22 ROI report will be completed in late fall.

REGIONAL IMPACT OF THE NEW RIVER/MOUNT ROGERS WDB JOB PLACEMENT AND CAREER TRAINING SERVICES

An annual Return on Investment (ROI) Study conducted by Mangum Economics, of Richmond, VA, compares public workforce costs with the economic benefits from employment outcomes attained in order to determine the impact of programs administered by the NR/MR WDB. The study conducted for PY 21 (July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022) reflects positive ROI results. Highlights of the findings are below.

The full report can be found at: https://bit.ly/NRMR_Docs_Interest

FOUND EMPLOYMENT

606 Adults found employment through New River/Mount Rogers WDB's Workforce Programs which generated **\$17.1+** million in additional estimated household income in the region.



INCREASE IN SPENDING

Newly employed adults purchased housing, food, healthcare, and other goods and services. The expenditures supported an additional **418** full-time equivalent regional jobs, which resulted in an additional **\$20.4** million in estimated labor income.



TOTAL REGIONAL IMPACT

Total regional impact of these programs includes an additional **\$12.5** million in regional labor income.



INCREASE IN TAX BASE

Impact of these programs generated **\$1.7 million** in additional Federal, State and Local tax revenue.



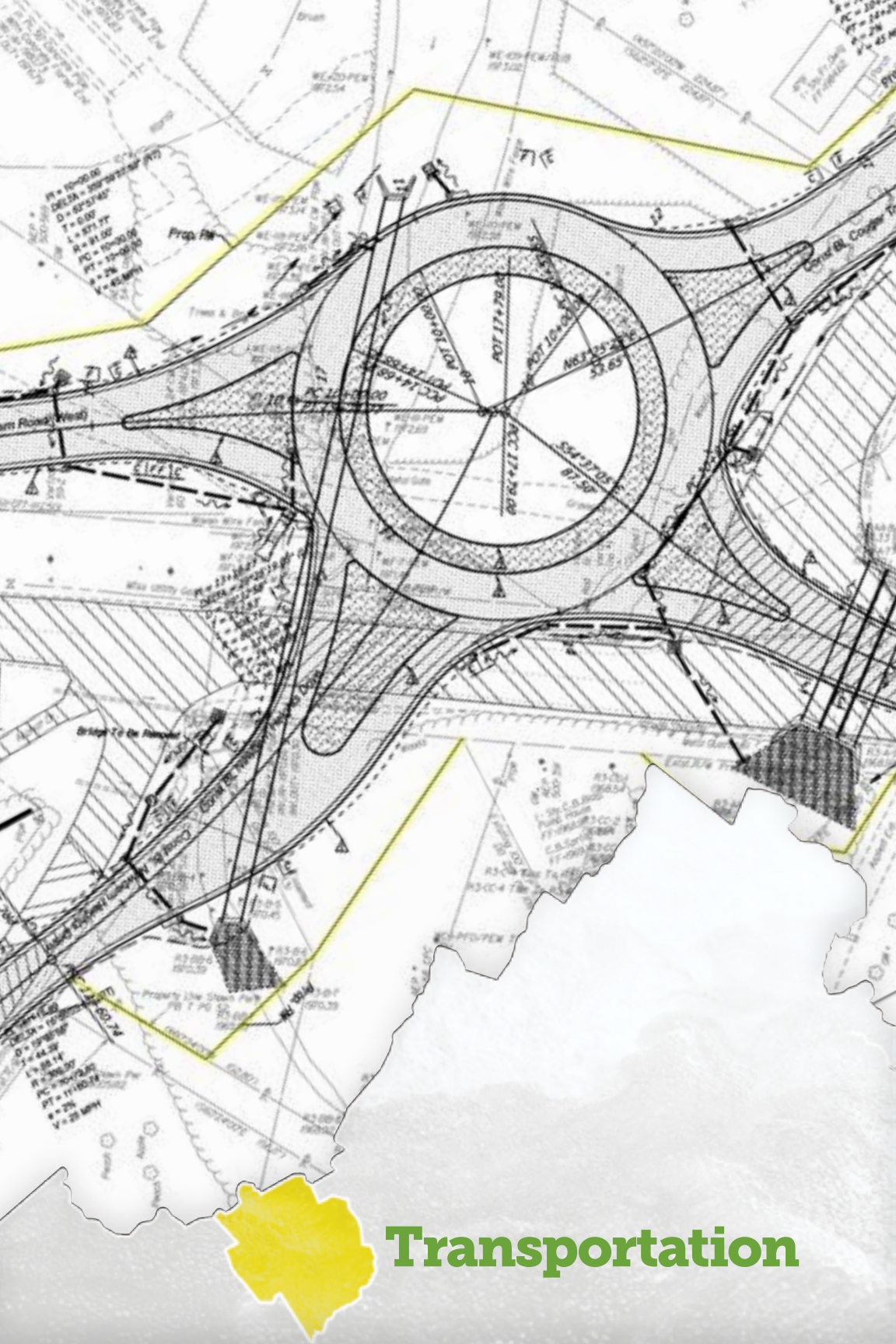
RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The overall benefit (ROI) is **18.9** times the cost of these public workforce programs.

In conclusion, in PY 2021, the New River/Mount Rogers WDB made a significant contribution to the economy of its service area.



VCWNEWRIVERMROGERS.COM



Transportation

Discover your commuting options!



RIDE Solutions
Connecting the Region's Commuters

www.ridesolutions.org

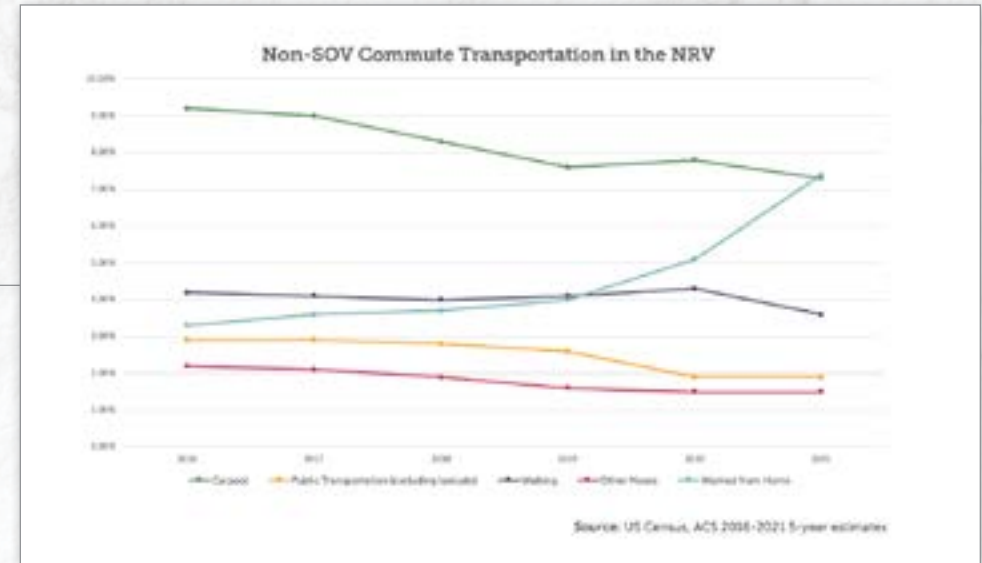
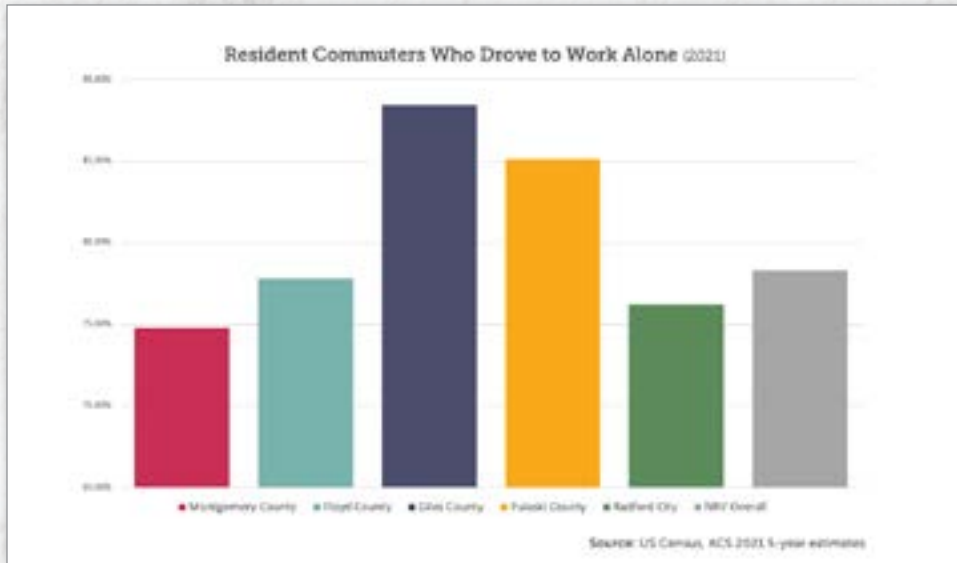
RIDE Solutions

RIDE Solutions outreach has expanded in the post-COVID environment with community outreach and employer events. Staff promoted Bike to Work Week in May and attended various community events throughout the year. The program experienced growth in its online app users and fielded requests for carpool matches. Participation in supporting partner efforts include:

- Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Expo
- Virginia Tech's Sustainable Transportation Fair
- New River Community College Student Resource + Wellness Fair
- Radford University New Hire Orientation

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: more than 1,000 commuters in the NRV – 67% of those commuting within the NRV; 142 employers represented.
- More than 1,700 carpool matches were requested and 60% found matches.
- This fiscal year RIDE Solutions' NRV members reduced 137,361 vehicle miles and 8,242 trips.
- Active users accumulated a savings of \$85,851.



Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan

In 2023, the Regional Commission began working on the Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan. Funded by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT) and the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (NRVMPO), this plan will help steer the course for the next five years for commuters in the New River Valley. The Regional Commission will create the plan by using census data, stakeholder input, and resident feedback. Some highlights from the data gathered:

- Work From Home rates in the NRV have been on the rise since 2016, and in 2021 became the most popular non-Single Occupancy Vehicle commute option.
- Floyd County residents have the longest commute, with an average time of 33.5 minutes. Montgomery County residents have the shortest commute, with an average of 18.1 minutes.
- 88.4% of Giles County residents drove to work in 2021, compared to Montgomery County residents with 74.8% – the lowest of all NRV localities.

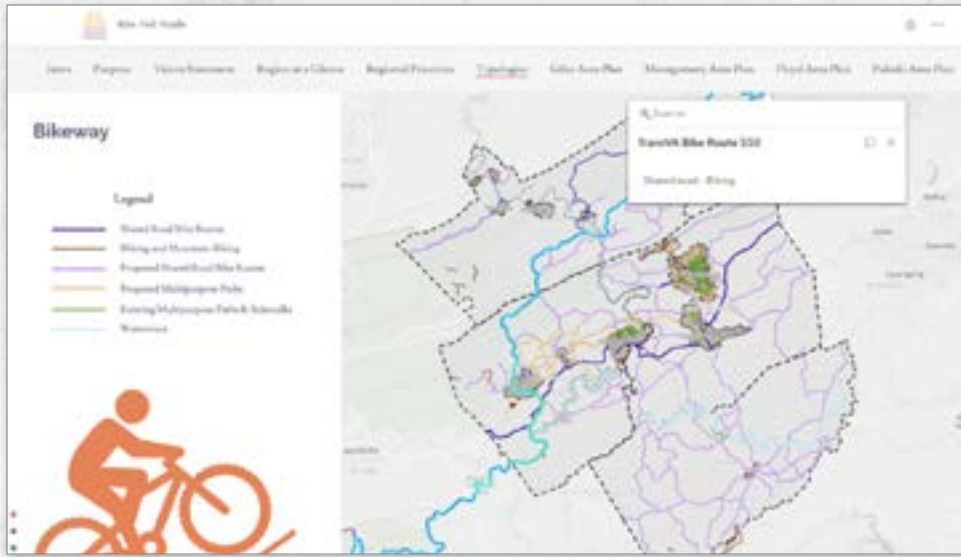
The next phase of the project will be inviting stakeholders from across the region to take part in the planning process. There will be meetings with people from the business, nonprofit, and transit sectors to gain additional insight into the needs of area commuters.

NRVRC SMART Project:

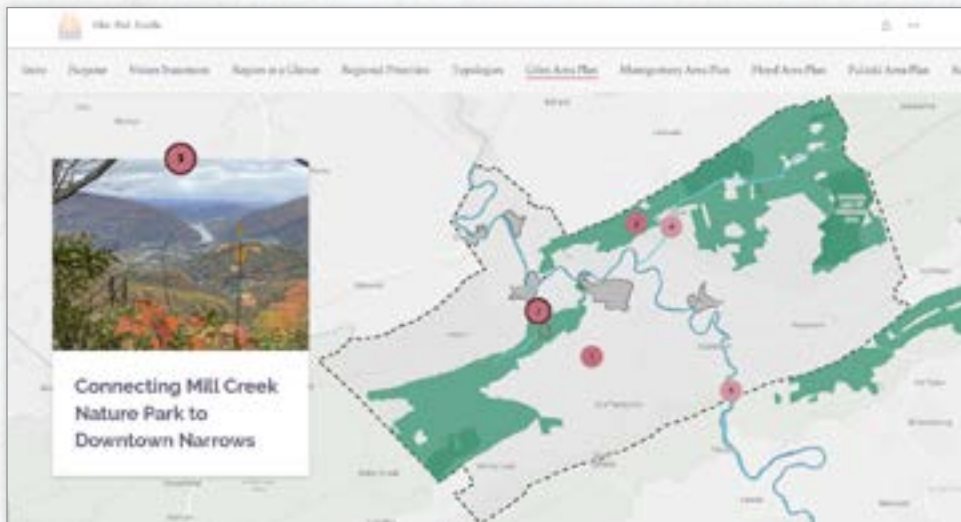
NEWBERN ROAD AND COUGAR TRAIL INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

The \$13M project selected for SMART Scale funding in 2021 was approaching the final design phase. The proposed improvements involve relocating the intersection of Newbern Road and Cougar Trail to create access to a Virginia Economic Development Partnership Tier 5 site. A four-leg roundabout will be installed to connect a new entrance to the recently completed Volvo expansion. The Regional Commission collaborated with Pulaski County partners and VDOT to receive state grant funds through SMART Scale. The project is estimated to serve over 700 newly created jobs. Construction is anticipated to begin in FY27.





to reflect ongoing local efforts. The plan will be referenced by VDOT while performing routine maintenance and as a tool for VDOT to find alignment with and implement bike/ped recommendations when conducting planned improvements. Localities can use the plan to integrate into their own comprehensive or area plans, as a stand-alone plan to leverage for funding, and as a guide when pursuing capital improvement/ transportation projects. In addition to the change in plan format (from a traditional static document to an interactive story map), one major update to the Bike-Ped-Paddle Plan was the focus on regional projects and priorities with several key network improvements that would make all our communities more well connected. This planning tool showcases the region's robust alternative transportation and trail network. The plan is a good baseline for future outdoor recreation planning, accessibility planning, and community health and wellness analysis.



New River Valley Cycling Guide

The Regional Commission received funding from VDOT to update the New River Valley Cycling Guide, previously made by the New River Valley Bicycle Association. The cycling guide update includes integrating an interactive interface with Ride with GPS, a third-party cycling navigation application. The work to date includes digitizing 89 routes into the Ride with GPS system, drafting an NRV Cycling Guide logo, and creating the framework for the interactive ArcGIS Online story map, where users can search for routes based on starting points, ending points, and route length. This work continues into FY24.

Bike-Ped-Paddle Plan

The 2023 Bike-Ped-Paddle Plan update is a product of a collaborative planning process – not only between local government staff and the Regional Commission team, but also outdoor recreation enthusiasts, alternative transportation, and tourism professionals. The engagement helped frame the plan by having stakeholders identify and determine the priority of trail-based transportation projects within each locality/area and envision collaborative regionally significant projects. The team at the Regional Commission analyzed the existing bike/ped network, identified where the resources exist for each unique area, updated GIS data and maps, and refreshed planning objectives





Finance And Personnel

Director's Message

Fiscal Year 2023 was a year focused on launching new organizations and programs in the region while continuing to deliver technical assistance and convening on key strategy areas for the New River Valley. Partnerships that were developed during the pandemic through the NRV Business Continuity Team were strengthened through a new program with the New River Health District. The Regional Commission will be supporting the work of Healthy Roots launched by the Community Foundation of the New River Valley, a regional network of organizations focused on improving community health outcomes. This multi-year partnership allowed the agency to establish a new program area in Community Health and create a director-level position to lead the program. In the waning weeks of the fiscal year, this new program area successfully secured a multi-million, multi-year grant award from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority to collaboratively address substance use disorder. The Regional Commission will serve as grant administrator, staffing lead, and coordinator of resources to execute the program.



The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority formally launched in the fall, with its first meeting in September and subsequently certified by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The organization has elected board leadership, established bylaws, and went through the procurement process to select an architecture/engineering firm to prepare construction documents. Once the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority identifies the final station location, the local authority is poised to execute on behalf of the region.

Another significant regional program, the NRV Regional Housing Trust Fund, took bold steps this year by establishing the framework for the first-of-its-kind multi-county organization in Virginia. The first round of affordable housing implementation grants opened in FY23, with awards slated for early FY24. In FY24, the Trust Fund will be soliciting public/private funding partners to help grow the amount of discretionary funds dedicated to affordable housing being built in the region.

To best support the continued growth of programs in the organization, at the start of FY23, the agency went through a reorganization by establishing director-level positions, each with a direct report structure. This has enabled continued leadership development, increased coaching of all employees, and a broader understanding of agency operations through a newly established management team. The benefits of this structure will serve the region well, as increased capacity is already evident.

All of the agency's organizational growth and increased capacity are possible because the region genuinely considers collaborative approaches first when the opportunities are present. As a result, citizens of the New River Valley are receiving more significant resources and have greater economic opportunities. Without a doubt, the Regional Commission thrives in an environment where the members challenge the organization in new ways, and collectively the team looks forward to continuing to deliver on behalf of the New River Valley in FY24 and beyond.

KEVIN BYRD *Executive Director*

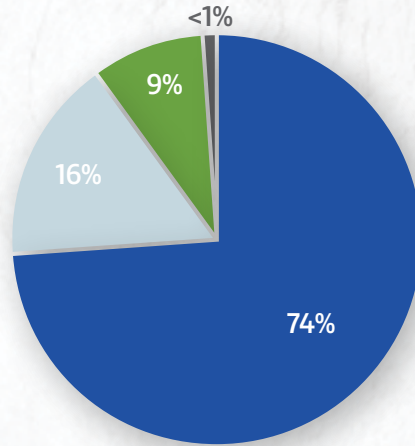
Finance Report

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Revenues

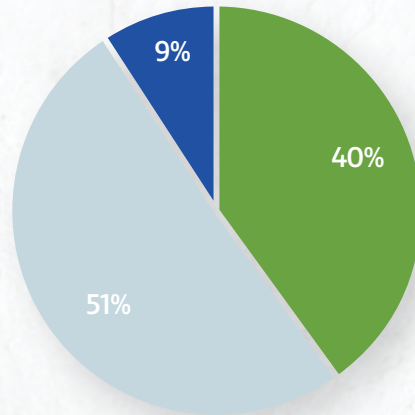
Grants and Appropriations

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Federal..... | 4,233,245 |
| State | 936,113 |
| Local | 515,908 |
| Other | 14,778 |
| Total..... | \$5,700,044 |



Expenditures

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Personnel | 2,297,752 |
| Contractual..... | 2,946,774 |
| Operations & Other | 496,749 |
| Total..... | \$5,741,275 |





NRVRC

new river valley regional commission

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