



**NEW RIVER VALLEY
PLANNING DISTRICT
COMMISSION**

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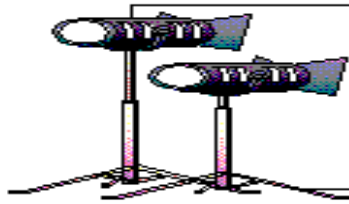
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New River Valley News & Views



“2010 NRV Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan” in the Spotlight

The 2010 New River Valley Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan update is underway! This is the region's first plan update in ten years and will provide the groundwork for future alternative transportation planning. The purpose of updating the plan is to provide local governments and organizations with a long range regional plan that reflects the infrastructure built since the last plan and also identifies new policies and corridors to pursue in the coming years. This plan update will incorporate transit; park and ride areas; employment and high growth centers;

connections for schools with residences, social, commercial and historical points of interest; and promote recreation and tourism through the development of a viable multimodal transportation system. Developing a plan that creates safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian options will lead to a reduction in vehicle miles travelled. The result is less traffic on local corridors and numerous benefits for the environment, personal health and the region's economy.

A recent study performed by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy “Active Transportation for America” shows that over half of the trips in America can be completed within a twenty minute bike ride and a quarter can be completed within a twenty minute walk. Currently, just 9.6% of these short trips are taken by bicycling or walking. Automobiles account for approximately 20% of the total

U.S. carbon emissions. If pedestrian traffic frequency increased slightly over three percent to nearly thirteen percent, the total mileage of automobiles would be reduced by 69 billion miles. This reduction in vehicle miles equates to a reduction of 33 million tons of carbon per year.

In addition to environmental and personal health improvements, there are significant economic benefits for families and communities. Trails consistently increase property values along their corridors and are among the top amenities sought out by homebuyers. Further, trails also provide safe places for children to play that are free of motorized traffic. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure also provides an active transportation option for the elderly, disabled populations, and low income groups. Lastly, local businesses located along trail corridors experience a tremendous benefit from bicycle tourists visiting their community. For example, along the Virginia Creeper Trail in southwest Virginia, visitors spend an average of 1.6 million dollars annually, providing nearly thirty (30) full time jobs.

Recently, PDC staff has focused on developing quality mapping products which illustrate existing bicycle and pedestrian assets across the region. Some new mapping features include full color regional and jurisdictional maps, access labels designating each facilities use, NED topographical base maps to illustrate changes in elevation, legends depicting existing and proposed alignment names, detailed local aerial maps, and color coded permitted uses for each alignment. PDC staff is currently scheduling meetings with local governments in the region to update the existing database of facilities and incorporate future projects as identified by each jurisdiction.

Once complete, the maps will be an important tool for communities in their efforts to secure grant funding and garner public support for their projects.

In an effort to make the updated plan as accessible as possible, the PDC is developing an interactive web-based application that will contain policy statements supporting new projects and maps illustrating the initiatives. These policies and maps will be in a downloadable format that can be utilized by local governments and other organizations in grant applications or planning documents. The plan update is scheduled to be completed by July of 2010.

If you have transportation related improvement ideas for the region or have questions about transportation planning initiatives please contact: *Elijah Sharp* at 540-639-9313 ext. 210 or esharp@nrvdc.org.



NRVPDC Updates

Town of Floyd Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Floyd recently began the process of creating a Comprehensive Plan. Previously the Town's Plan was incorporated into the Floyd County Comprehensive Plan. To best support the community, it was decided by Town leaders to create a separate plan that would remain a chapter of the Floyd County's Comprehensive Plan but can be a standalone document.

Since this is the first Comprehensive Plan that the Town has compiled, specific elements are still being researched to provide the community with a vision that will be of maximum benefit. Specific elements being reviewed currently involve the demographics and economy of the Town. The Plan is scheduled to be completed in late 2010. For further information, please contact Jack Whitmore, at (540) 639-9313, ext. 259.

Town of Pearisburg Local Planning Assistance

The Town of Pearisburg is updating its Zoning Ordinance to better comply with the Code of Virginia and provide an updated approach to the zoning districts and uses in the Town. Reviews of the zoning districts have been formalized and additional Use determinations will be made at future Planning Commission meetings. In addition, a preliminary GIS based zoning map has been drafted and will be edited to better correspond with current zoning and any proposed changes to parcels in Town. It is estimated the update to the Ordinance will be completed in early 2010, with corrections to the zoning map being the final step prior to public hearings. For further information, please contact Jack Whitmore at (540) 639-9313, ext. 259.

Floyd County Comprehensive Plan Update

Floyd County is currently in the process of a Comprehensive Plan Update. This Update is being completed to reflect changes that have occurred in the County since the last adopted Comprehensive Plan (2002). Citizen groups and stakeholders are currently being identified and meetings with these groups to determine the strategies of the Comprehensive Plan are being formulated. These meetings will provide input to better shape future development in

the County, and also provide additional information in all areas of the Comprehensive Plan. For further information, please contact Jack Whitmore at (540) 639-9313, ext. 259.

Green Infrastructure

In October a small group of volunteers met to discuss a communications plan for the New River Valley Green Infrastructure Initiative. With limited resources, it is necessary to examine how best to engage community members and leaders in the green infrastructure process. Once the assessment is complete, the NRVPDC will be working to distribute and promote this as a resource for communities.

In November, the NRVPDC received the final report and data from the Conservation Management Institute at Virginia Tech. This report and data outline the base network for regional green infrastructure and contributing working lands. There is still more work to finalize the mapping, including finishing some data updates, as well as developing thematic overlays for water resources, cultural resources, recreation, natural hazards, and habitat diversity. When completed, these maps and overlays will form the foundation of a Green Infrastructure Assessment. For further information, please contact Regina Elsner at (540) 639-9313, ext. 205.

Pulaski County Housing Rehab

Pulaski County is hard at work, pulling together all the necessary components for its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) due at the end of March 2010. The selected project area, the Baskerville neighborhood outside of Dublin, will be a candidate for housing rehabilitation, substantial reconstruction of nonhabitable homes, demolition of blighted structures, and water and sewer line improvements. Currently being conducted are housing estimates, applications for income eligibility, and a preliminary engineering report. This project will also be leveraged with funds from the HOME Consortium. For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie at (540) 639-9313, ext. 204.

HOME Consortium

The HOME Consortium has continued to move forward on its ongoing projects. In the City of Radford, the downtown mixed-use rental project is nearly ready for the lease of its eight one-bedroom apartments. The Town of Pulaski is under contract with DHCD on its Comprehensive Community project to provide homeowner rehab, infill

new construction and infrastructure.

Construction is slated to begin in January of 2010. Pulaski County is currently drafting its grant application, due March 31 of 2010, to DHCD for the Baskerville Neighborhood near Dublin. In Blacksburg, construction is nearly complete on 10 new construction infill homes in the Cedar Hill neighborhood, while Montgomery County is working on a rental rehabilitation project of 84 units in the Old Farm Village complex. Finally, Giles County has begun work on a Planning Grant in the Town of Rich Creek. For information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie at (540) 639-9313, ext. 204.

Disability Services Board

The New River Valley Disability Services Board (NRVDSB) met on Wednesday, November 18, 2009. The Board assessed its progress on several advocacy issues and discussed updates to its current website. The Board hopes to bring the NRVDSB website into more prominence, including updated contact information, accessibility to an ongoing Needs Assessment Survey, and highlighting relevant seminars, events, and conferences. The DSB's next quarterly meeting will take place on February 10, 2010. For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie at (540) 639-9313, ext. 204.

'Round the Mountain

'Round the Mountain (RTM), southwest Virginia's regional artisan network, is hard at work in the New River Valley. The nonprofit organization represents 19 counties and 4 cities, with the New River Valley serving as its northernmost boundary. Each county (or partner counties) is tasked with identifying their local artisans and farms to compile in an informational brochure. Floyd County has already completed its brochure, with Montgomery County's and Radford/Pulaski's scheduled for production in April of 2010. More information on 'Round the Mountain and RTM membership can be found at its website: www.roundthemountain.org. For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie at (540) 639-9313, ext. 204.

Mobility Management

Data collection is currently underway on the Mobility Management Grant, awarded by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation. During this 12-month grant, the PDC will gather extensive data on transportation providers in the New River Valley for the purpose of creating a working "resource manual." This manual will serve as the basis for a future "hub" of transit

information, connecting those looking for transportation, to the correct provider for their needs. For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie at (540) 639-9313, ext. 204.



NRVPDC Commission Meeting Summary

October 22, 2009

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program

The deadline for this grant program passed on November 6, 2009. Several localities in the New River Region took advantage of this program to apply for funds to improve their own energy efficiency. All PDC reviews have been completed as of November 13th and have been forwarded to the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy for grant award determination. Award decisions are expected sometime in December or shortly after January 1st. For further information, please contact Regina Elsner at (540) 639-9313, ext. 205.

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board, utilizing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding has achieved the following positive program outcomes through September 30, 2009:

Funds Expended:	\$900,000
Customers Served:	733
DLW	350
Customers	55
Youth	328
Active Customers:	439
Participating in Occupational	
Skills Training:	338
Work Experience:	345
Work Readiness Instruction:	328
New Jobs Created:	62

It is projected that an additional 38 new jobs will be created before December 31, 2009 making the total new jobs created 100.

The ARRA program has been very successful in stimulating the local economy and positive results are projected for all currently active customers. ARRA funding will be available through the end of 2010. For further information, please contact Ronnie Martin at (540) 633-6764.

RIDE Solutions welcomes two new partners to their Workplace program — Draper Aden Associates and Baker Hughes. Their leadership in recognizing the benefits of commute options available in the region contributes to cost-savings for their staff, improved air quality, and reduced energy consumption. The benefit to the employer is reduced parking demand, free employee benefits, and a smaller carbon footprint.

Through its Workplace Partner program, RIDE Solutions assists area businesses and organizations with implementing employer-based alternative transportation programs. Working directly with businesses has two impacts on traffic in the region: 1) RIDE Solutions can more easily educate employees about the cost-savings and environmental benefits of commuting options other than the single-occupant vehicle (SOV) even as little as one day a week and 2) RIDE Solutions reaches an audience with a common destination or employment center, improving their opportunity to find matches for carpooling.

RIDE Solutions also supports its employer partners with promotional materials, contests, communication plans, even bike racks and signage, all free of charge. A complete list of RIDE Solutions Workplaces and more information about the Workplace program can be found at www.ridesolutions.org/workplace. For more information, please contact Christy Straight, at (540) 639-9313, ext. 209 or cstraight@nrfdc.org.

- **Regional Tourism:** Started last spring with a Pulaski Chamber branding effort; however it was realized a regional approach was the way to go due to location of attractions and accommodations. There was a meeting held in June with chambers and some in local government to discuss a Tourism website. Giles County prepared framework for a website and was revealed at an October meeting at the Shelor Motor Mile Speedway. Representatives from all counties are participating. There is a need to consider how tourism may or may not fit within one of the existing regional organizations.
- **Energy Grants:** Stimulus funds are available from the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) for local energy projects. The PDC is serving as grant program coordinator in the region. The PDC hosted a "How to Apply" workshop on Friday, October 16, and expect several applications to be submitted. The PDC is applying for funds for a Regional Energy Plan and will potentially partner with VT.
- **Proposed PDC Staff Support to Pulaski County:** Pulaski County has contracted with the PDC for staff support to the New River Valley Competitiveness Center. Services include bookkeeping, room reservations, opening/closing of doors, receiving packages for tenants, telecommunications support, notary services, and limited facility maintenance support.

The next Commission meeting will be held December 10, 2009, 6:00 p.m. at the New River Valley Competitiveness Center in Fairlawn with a holiday reception beginning at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public.



NRV Economic Indicators

Labor Force and Unemployment

All NRV jurisdictions experienced increases in their labor force between the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2009. In addition, four NRV jurisdictions experienced increases in their unemployment rate with Floyd County remaining steady at 8.2%.

AGGREGATE LABOR FORCE

Jurisdiction	1st Qtr 2009	2nd Qtr 2009
Floyd County	21,801	22,058
Giles County	25,645	25,745
Montgomery County	137,428	138,108
Pulaski County	56,106	56,849
Radford City	24,196	24,590
New River Valley	265,176	267,350

Source: Virginia Employment Commission.

AVERAGE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Jurisdiction	1st Qtr 2009	2nd Qtr 2009
Floyd County	8.2%	8.2%
Giles County	9.6%	9.7%
Montgomery County	7.0%	7.2%
Pulaski County	11.1%	12.0%
Radford City	8.3%	9.5%
New River Valley	8.4%	8.8%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission.



The 2010 Census questionnaire will be one of the shortest in history, consisting of 10 questions and taking about 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire asks only a few simple questions of each person—name, relationship, gender, age and date of birth, race, and whether the respondent owns or rents his or her home. It takes just a few minutes to complete and return by mail. The 2010 Census is different from previous census efforts as in the last census, one in six households received a long questionnaire asking for detailed socioeconomic information. In 2010, every residence will receive a short questionnaire. More detailed information will be collected annually from a small percentage of the population through the American Community Survey. In March 2010, Census forms will be mailed or delivered to households and April 1, 2010 is considered National Census day. This day is used as a reference for sending your completed forms back in the mail. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau: <http://2010.census.gov>.*

Transportation News

The Bikeway-Walkway and Technical Advisory Committees met on the 17th of November and discussed the Town of Blacksburg's improvements to bicycle accommodations, the progress of the Region's Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan, the City of Radford transit study currently underway, the Town of Christiansburg transit service creation, and Rural Long-Range Plan status.


On October 20th the PDC hosted Mr. Dana Martin, the Salem District Representative to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, for a series of meetings with applicants seeking Transportation Enhancement grant funding. This year's event marked the fourth consecutive year. With several Transportation Enhancement projects underway throughout the region and many more being proposed this year, hopefully positive funding news will be received in July of 2010. The New River Valley Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan Update is moving towards the forefront of the Bikeway-Walkway Committee and the PDC will begin soliciting input from local governments and organizations to include projects completed over the last 10 years along with those identified for the next 10-20 years. The ultimate goal is to promote active transportation throughout the region while providing the tools needed to secure funding and support for projects from conceptualization to construction.

VDOT's consultant has recently completed traffic counts for the Rural Long-Range Plan and is currently working on draft recommendations for problematic intersections. In December the plans will be submitted to VDOT for a 30 day review. Immediately following, the Planning District Commission's Rural Transportation Committee will have the opportunity to provide feedback within 30 days.

A public hearing was held on December 1st in Richmond to revise the FY 2010 – 2015 Six-Year-Improvement-Plan (SYIP). For further information on transportation issues, please contact Eli Sharp at (540) 639-9313, ext. 210.

*Season's Greetings
From the
New River Valley
Planning District Commission*

December 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Meetings

- Dec. 1-Blacksburg PC-7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 8-Pulaski PC-7 p.m.
- Dec. 9-Montgomery PC-7 p.m.;
- Dec. 10-NRVPDC Commission Mtg.-6 p.m.
- Dec. 14-Pulaski Town PC-6 p.m.; Pearisburg PC- 7 p.m.
- Dec. 15-Floyd PC-7p.m.
- Dec. 16-Montgomery PC-7 p.m.
- Dec. 17-MPO TAC-MC Gov't Center-10 a.m.
- Dec. 21-Radford PC-7 p.m.
- Dec. 22-Giles PC-6:30 p.m.

January 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

Meetings

- Jan. 5-Blacksburg PC-7:30 p.m.
- Jan. 7-MPO Policy Board-MC Gov't Center-2 p.m.
- Jan. 11-Pulaski Town PC-6 p.m.
- Jan. 12-Pulaski PC-7 p.m.
- Jan. 13-Montgomery PC- 7 p.m.; Virginia's First-4:30 p.m.
- Jan. 19-BWVWV Mtg.-NRVPDC- 11:30 a.m.; TAC Mtg.-NRVPDC- 1:30 p.m.; Floyd PC-7 p.m.
- Jan. 20-Montgomery PC- 7 p.m.
- Jan. 21-MPO TAC-MC Gov't Center-10 a.m.
- Jan. 26-Giles PC-6:30 p.m.; Hazard Mitigation Mtg.-NRVPDC -9 a.m.
- Jan. 28-NRVPDC Commission Mtg.-6 p.m.

THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

Official Publication of the New River Valley Competitiveness Center
A Small Business Incubator

*Shawn Utt/Doug Hudson,
Acting Incubator Managers*

December 2009 – January 2010

NRV Competitiveness Center Transitions to New Management

With the retirement of Dave Rundgren as Executive Director of the New River Valley Development Corporation (see the newsletter from October 2009 for the announcement), the Development Corporation's Board of Directors has partnered with the County of Pulaski and its staff to assist in the management of the Competitiveness Center. The transition has been underway for two months and the County staff along with the Development Corporation's Board look forward to a positive relationship as we all work to make the Center a first-class business incubator. There are some exciting programs on the horizon for small businesses (new or existing), so be on the lookout.

NRV Competitiveness Center Welcomes New Tenants

Communicate Consulting

Communicate Consulting helps businesses and non-profits increase their profits and build long-term relationships through strategic marketing and precise communication. What that means is they help you find the right words and images to tailor your message, and combine them with the right places and times to get in front of your target audiences. If you're going to say something, say it right the first time. That's why they tailor each message to the people you're trying to reach, and then follow-up by measuring the results. That way you know exactly what you're getting for your money and time.

Their services include:

- Marketing strategy and planning
- Graphic design
- Advertising strategy in all media
- Web design and development
- Market research and survey design
- Event planning and strategy
- Public relations and media campaigns
- Staff training and presentations
- Public speaking training

Ready to start getting your message out? Visit their website at www.communicateconsulting.com or contact them at 540.267.3404.

MACO TOOL

MACO TOOL, INC. is a forward thinking company with small shop values.

Maco Tool is a precision machining and fabrication facility located in Christiansburg, VA and they have now added a second location at the Competitiveness Center. Their staff are trained professionals as evidenced by the precision workmanship and quality that go into each project. They also maintain a commitment to continually update their equipment, utilizing the latest computers, precision CNC machining technology, and a COORDINATE MEASURING MACHINE for inspection. MTI has become a major supplier for many well-known companies such as Federal Mogul, Bucyrus International and Volvo, with tooling and machines throughout the entire world. Please feel free to call 540.382.1871,

fax 540.382.1296, or e-mail fredcecil@macotool.com or edcampbell@macotool.com with your quote today. For further information, please visit <http://www.macotool.com>.

BAE Systems

BAE Systems is delighted to locate a Radford Field Office in the New River Valley Competitiveness Center. BAE Systems is a global, defense, security and aerospace company looking to further consolidate its activities in Virginia. The office will be open for business at the start of the New Year and provide an excellent base from which to develop new business opportunities. BAE Systems delivers a full range of products and services for air, land and naval forces, as well as advanced electronics, security, information technology solutions and customer support services.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VIRGINIA BIOSCIENCE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

Thursday, December 17, 2009, 1 - 5:15 p.m.

Free of Charge/Reception to Follow

Virginia BioTechnology Research Park
800 East Leigh Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Go to www.virginiabbr.org for more information and to RSVP.

4TH ANNUAL NEW RIVER VALLEY CAREER FAIR: (Sponsored by Cumulus Broadcasting)

January 28, 2010, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., at New River Valley Mall

To become an exhibitor or for further information, contact Judy Woodyard at Cumulus Media
(540) 731-6046 or (540) 577-5758.

Congratulations to the New River Valley Economic Development Alliance for being awarded "**Top 5 Website Design**" from Expansion Solutions Magazine, a national publication designed to inform key site selection consultants and corporate real estate brokers about progressive communities and the benefits that are offered by each community. See the Press Release at:
http://www.nrvalliance.org/news/documents/ESOL_Awards09PressRelease.pdf



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Counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery,
 Pulaski, and the City of Radford

Towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg,
 Floyd, Narrows, Pearisburg, Pulaski,
 and Rich Creek

Radford University and Virginia Tech

.....
 Kevin R. Byrd, Executive Director
 Jan R. Gilbertson, Newsletter Editor

**If you would like to
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 newsletter
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 nrpdc@nrpdc.org**

New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee has been meeting monthly since June 2009. The committee has heard from several speakers, including Brad Wright from the Virginia Department of Forestry and Chuck VanAllman, the City Engineer for the City of Salem, on various hazards and their mitigation. At their November meeting, committee members heard from Phil Hysell of the National Weather Service and David Clarke from the Virginia Department of Transportation. Mr. Hysell spoke about severe weather in the New River Valley and Mr. Clarke discussed VDOT's response to slope failures and karst topography.

After the first of the year, the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee will begin looking at the data gathered and prepared by Radford University for the project. At these meetings, steering committee members will be identifying mitigation goals and strategies across the region and in specific communities. A draft plan is expected in Spring 2010.

For further information on Hazard Mitigation, please contact Christy Straight at cstraight@nrpdc.org or Regina Elsner at relsner@nrpdc.org or by phone at (540) 639-9313.