

New River Valley News & Views



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New River Valley Draft Bikeway, Walkway, Blueway Plan

Some may recall an article written slightly over a year ago with a similar title...what seemed to be a few steps away in January 2010 turned into a broader opportunity. The 2011 Bikeway, Walkway, Blueway Plan was developed from the ground up; starting in early 2009. As opposed to a simple plan update, the PDC's Bikeway-Walkway Committee felt that the plan could be a better resource if each jurisdiction provided their input – turns out it was worth the wait after all!

After meeting with four counties, one city, and eight out of ten towns in the region – PDC staff found that each community was in a different stage of development. Based on these meetings, the document needed to become more flexible so that a range of solutions could be explored. Ultimately, the 2011 plan is a resource that identifies multi-jurisdictional connections, establishes common goals and priorities, serves as a resource for local or statewide planning, and provides materials that can be used to pursue funding.

A new web page is being created for the draft plan and public comment is welcomed. The plan is currently under review by each jurisdiction and is scheduled to be on the Commission's agenda in late Fall 2011. The website will also feature access to an interactive Google map that showcases existing facilities and access points in the region.

Both elements are a work in progress – so your input will be valuable in helping us make them a better resource. Everyone will be able to stay up to date by visiting the webpage regularly at www.nrvpdc.org/Transportation/transportation.html. For further information on transportation related issues, please contact [Elijah Sharp \(esharp@nrvpdc.org\)](mailto:esharp@nrvpdc.org) at (540) 639-9313, ext. 210.



New River Valley Livability Initiative

The New River Valley Livability Initiative is a three year regional planning process to help citizens build a collective vision for our future. This involves getting together and discussing not only what makes the NRV a great place to live, work and play, but also how we might better understand and plan for the challenges and opportunities that may confront us now and in the future. Each community in the NRV is unique, so the ideas that are generated will not be "one-size-fits-all." The focus will be on the unique character and needs of each community within the region, while also looking at the big picture - how communities in the region can work together.

Examples of issues that might be discussed during the planning process include:

- What options are there for people having transportation problems getting to work?
- What choices do seniors have who need assisted living, but want to stay close to family, friends, and the community they live in?
- What can we do to expand market opportunities for local farmers?
- How can families reduce their home energy costs?
- Can the small business that needs high speed internet get it?
- How can we use public resources more effectively to support infrastructure upgrades and repairs to public water, sewer and roads?
- What are the options for keeping our streams, rivers, and forests healthy and beautiful?
- What can we do to expand job opportunities and support small businesses?
- How can heritage music, crafts and arts made by people locally be supported and grow?
- How can we maintain our current quality of life?



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ExploreNewRiverValley.com



For further information, please contact **Brad Mecham** (bmecham@nrvpdc.org) at (540) 639-9313, ext. 206.

The New River Valley's regional tourism website, www.explorenewrivervalley.com, was completed in May of this year with a partnership between local governments, chambers of commerce, visitors centers, and a grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

- Nearly 18,000 pages have been viewed by 3,400 people, averaging just over 5 pages per visit to the site
- Top 5 Pages: Events, Home Page, Trails, Parks, Lodging
- Top 10 Countries visiting www.explorenewrivervalley.com: United States, Germany, Russia, France, Portugal, Canada, Sweden, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Italy
- 75% of visits are from people who have not previously visited the site
- There is an equal split between direct traffic, referring sites, and search engines
- Top 5 sites that referred people to www.explorenewrivervalley.com:
 - ✓ www.nrvpdc.org - New River Valley Planning District Commission
 - ✓ www.christiansburg.org - Town of Christiansburg
 - ✓ www.search-results.com - Search Engine
 - ✓ www.citizens.coop - Citizens Telephone
 - ✓ www.cpe.vt.edu/macro2012/attractions.html - Virginia Tech

Virginia ARC Workshop

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) held a How-to-Apply Workshop for the Appalachian Regional Commission Program in Abingdon on July 21. As always, funding is very competitive. Some key points covered during the session for the 2012 application cycle include:

- No longer separate funding pools for Area Development and Regional Initiatives projects. Both types of projects are still eligible for funding, all out of this ARC funding round. One RFP package this year.
- ARC Grant funding cut approximately 14% in program year 2011.
- DHCD can now function as the Basic Agency for ARC-funded construction projects.
- Among other items, common elements of project proposals must address leveraged private investment, capacity, sustainability, and a work plan with milestones and performance targets.
- ARC Economic Status designation: The four counties in the New River Valley are classified as "Transitional". For projects in Transitional localities, the maximum ARC funding participation is 50%. The City of Radford is classified as "Competitive" (maximum ARC funding participation: 30%).
- Applicants are urged to coordinate with the Planning District Commission (PDC). A draft application should be submitted to the PDC.

For further information, please contact **Patrick Burton** (pburton@nrvpdc.org) at (540) 639-9313, ext. 217.

Planners' Meeting

Local planners from around the region and PDC staff got together for lunch and networking discussion on July 14 at Anna's Restaurant in Narrows. Among items discussed were the following:

- A summary of evaluation form responses from the April 27 Planning Commissioner Training Session was shared with the group. The training session included dinner followed by a panel discussion of *Water and Wastewater Alternatives for Cluster and Conservation Developments*. The discussion featured Jesse Richardson of Virginia Tech, Mike Heatwole of May Supply in Harrisonburg and the Virginia Water Well Association, and Eric Rorrer of Rorrer Well Drilling in Christiansburg.
- Central States Tower sold a portion of its communication tower inventory to American Tower Corporation earlier this year.
- Several inaccuracies in the latest FEMA flood maps have been identified by Giles County staff. A contact with the Army Corps of Engineers has been helpful in resolving mapping issues on a parcel-by-parcel basis.
- The Virginia Rural Planning Caucus will hold its 2011 Annual Conference at Mountain Lake Resort in Giles County, October 19-21. The Conference will feature a mobile workshop on the 'Round the Mountain Artisan Network and a visit to two artisan sites in Giles County. Keynote speaker Ed McMahon of the Urban Land Institute will focus on preserving community character. For more information or to register for the conference, please visit the Rural Planning Caucus website at www.rpcva.org.

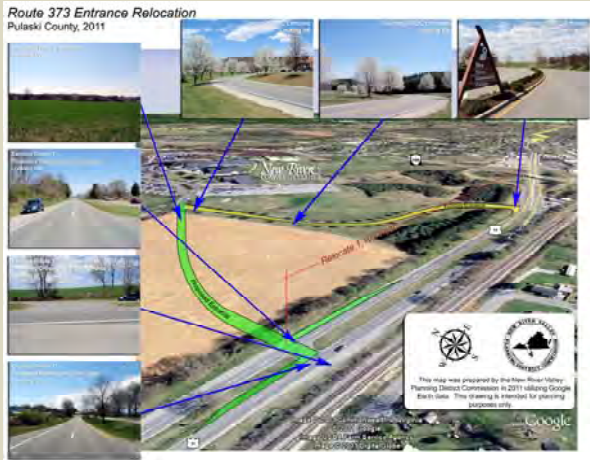
The planners' lunch is a periodic informal gathering for planners in the New River Valley to share information and discuss issues of common interest. The meetings are facilitated by local planners and PDC staff. For further information, please contact **Patrick Burton** (pburton@nrvpdc.org) at (540) 639-9313, ext. 217.

Transportation News

The PDC is working with Pulaski County, New River Community College (NRCC), and VDOT on NRCC's Route 11 entrance relocation.

- The PDC's role in the project is to coordinate environmental reviews with state and federal agencies.
- The new entrance will improve sight distance along Route 11 by moving it away from the Route 100 interchange.
- The entrance relocation is a Revenue Sharing Project.
- Preliminary Engineering is expected to begin later in the year.

For further information on transportation related issues, please contact [Elijah Sharp](mailto:esharp@nrpdc.org) (esharp@nrpdc.org) at (540) 639-9313, ext. 210.



New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board

- The Workforce Investment Board received notification of their PY'11 WIA Formula Funding effective July 1, 2011. For PY'11 their Adult/DLW funding was less than PY'10 but their Youth funding increased resulting in an overall \$6,000 gain in funding for PY'11 over PY'10. Program Operators have increased service levels and activities for all WIA programs.
- All stimulus funding (ARRA) received in May 2009 has been expended and that program terminated effective June 30, 2011.
- Grants currently being operated under CREATES (Green Initiative), HITE (Health Information Technology Education) and NEG-OJT for prolonged unemployed dislocated workers are very active with over 600 customers served to date.
- Currently, the Board is partnering with Washington County, Smyth County, Bristol City, Virginia Highlands Community College, Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Virginia Department of Business Assistance as well as numerous private business and industry partners in a Tobacco Commission Grant application to provide funding for planning and feasibility study for a Southwest Virginia Regional Workforce Training Center. If funded this would be an excellent concept to meet workforce training needs in the western part of the WIB service area.

For further information, contact [Ronnie Martin](mailto:rmartin@nrpdc.org) (rmartin@nrpdc.org) at (540) 633-6474.

NRVPDC Commission Meeting Summary

June 23, 2011

Economic Development

- Full CEDS Report included in packet for Commission review and approval in June Meeting.
- Governor's Regional Economic Development Competitiveness Grant. \$200,000 total, up to \$100,000 may be requested. Seeking non-traditional partnership projects.
- Regional Tourism Website training for Montgomery, Floyd, Giles, Pulaski Counties, City of Radford and five chambers of commerce was held on 6/14; Website launch was well attended and positive feedback www.explorenewrivervalley.com.

Transportation

- Conducting interviews with transit stakeholders regarding Regional Transit Organizational Analysis study. Partnership between PDC and MPO to identify solutions for working together across the region for transit delivery.
- Demolition of Rt. 114 New River Bridge is underway. Contractor adjusted schedule to complete within one month. Allows for decreased closing of boat ramp.
- Community Transit, a division of New River Valley Community Services, was awarded contract to operate the new Radford Transit system. Coordination meeting between PDC, MPO, Blacksburg Transit and Pulaski Area Transit on 6/22.

Regional

- Water Supply Plan must be adopted locally by November 2011. Remaining to be adopted: Towns: Floyd, Narrows, Glen Lyn; Counties: Montgomery.
- Heartwood opening to public 6/15 and will be open 7 days a week from 7am-7pm. Ribbon cutting scheduled for July 23rd (to be announced).
- Summit for Livability Initiative scheduled for August 11 at Claytor Lake.

PDC

- Facilitating Town of Blacksburg Business Climate Task Force. Kick off 6/24 followed by 7 focus groups. Project scheduled to be complete in September.
- GMS financial accounting system installed and 1 day of webinar training was conducted on June 7. Two site visits scheduled with GMS staff, July 18-22 and August 1-5.
- Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions Summer Conference is scheduled for July 28-30 in Virginia Beach. Typically no July Commission meeting because of conflict with conference.

NRVPDC Commission meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of every month, 6:00 p.m., at the New River Valley Competitiveness Center in Fairlawn. All meetings are open to the public.



Economic Indicators

Employment and Wages

The NRV's 4th quarter employment and wage data for 2009 and 2010 shows a decrease in average employment of 99 (.15%) persons. The weekly wage increased (\$23) and the number of establishments increased (14 or .4%).

AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT

Jurisdiction	2009 4th Qtr	2010 4th Qtr
Floyd County	2,727	2,795
Giles County	4,664	4,744
Montgomery County	39,493	39,061
Pulaski County	11,496	11,672
Radford City	6,158	6,167
NRVPDC	64,538	64,439

Source: Virginia Employment Commission.

AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE

Jurisdiction	2009 4th Qtr	2010 4th Qtr
Floyd County	\$537	\$530
Giles County	703	707
Montgomery County	732	750
Pulaski County	634	692
Radford City	788	806
NRVPDC	709	732

Source: Virginia Employment Commission.

AVERAGE ESTABLISHMENTS

Jurisdiction	2009 4th Qtr	2010 4th Qtr
Floyd County	382	393
Giles County	361	360
Montgomery County	2,181	2,168
Pulaski County	731	745
Radford City	343	346
NRVPDC	3,998	4,012

Source: Virginia Employment Commission.

NRVPDC YEAR END ANALYSIS

Year	Period	Average Establishments	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
2010	4th Qtr	4,012	64,439	\$732
2010	3rd Qtr	3,974	63,643	\$703
2010	2nd Qtr	3,962	63,967	\$658
2010	1st Qtr	3,944	62,714	\$647
2009	4th Qtr	3,998	64,538	\$709
Growth/Change		14	-99	\$23

Source: Virginia Employment Commission.



new river valley
HOME
CONSORTIUM

The New River Valley HOME Consortium provides funding to build or rehabilitate housing for New River Valley residents earning 80% of the area median income or

less. All projects are completed with additional funding sources, such as Community Development Block Grant, Virginia Housing Development Authority, and State HOME, among others. The following summarizes the projects currently underway:

Montgomery County

- 84 rental units rehabbed at Linden Green (formerly known as Old Farm Village) for those earning less than 50% of the area median income. This project was completed through a partnership with Community Housing Partners.

Pulaski County

- 9 rehabs completed, 3 substantial reconstructions completed, as part of the Dora Highway Neighborhood Revitalization program located in the Town of Pulaski. The project is slated to complete 6 more rehabs, 3 more substantial reconstructions and build 6 new homes for new homeownership.
- 5 homes eligible for rehabilitation put out to bid as part of the Baskerville Rehabilitation project located in Dublin. In total, the project is slated to complete 12 rehabs, 6 substantial reconstructions and provide sewer upgrades to the entire neighborhood.

Giles County

- Funds committed to a mixed used project in downtown Narrows to create 8 two-bedroom apartments for low-income families
- Funds committed to an assisted living facility in Rich Creek benefitting up to 23 residents earning 60% of the area median income or less.

City of Radford

- Construction has begun on a mixed use project in downtown Radford to create 8 one-bedroom apartments for low-income families.

Floyd County's funding cycle is scheduled for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. The County is currently working with HOME staff to plan a project best suited for its housing needs. For further information, please contact [Jennifer Wilsie \(jwilsie@nrvpdc.org\)](mailto:jwilsie@nrvpdc.org) at (540) 639-9313, ext. 204.

THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

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

Shawn Utt/Doug Hudson,
Acting Incubator Managers

August – September 2011

How to Hire the Right Employees?

It all starts with a good job description. To craft an accurate, detailed job description, spell out what tasks are involved in the position, what tools and methods are used, the general responsibilities of the job, and any qualifications needed.

At the same time, the Small Business Administration recommends keeping job descriptions fairly flexible so that workers on your employee payroll software are able to grow and develop within their positions and expand their contributions to the company.

So, what constitutes a good job description?

- ***Job title and objective.*** This will tell prospective employees what the broad purpose and scope of the role is
- ***Tasks and duties.*** Spell out the regular tasks and responsibilities of the job, from most significant to least important. There is no need to be exhaustive, but make sure all typical duties are mentioned
- ***Roles and relationships.*** Discuss who the employee will report to, whom they will work with, and if they will have responsibility for any other staff members
- ***Qualifications.*** Spell out the educational level you are seeking, plus any other qualities necessary to perform the job that you have already determined
- ***Location and equipment.*** Mention where the job is located and what type of equipment will be used to perform it, including computer systems
- ***Salary.*** You may also choose to include a pay range in your job description, so people know what to expect after you add them to your employee payroll

NRV Competitiveness Center Welcomes New Tenant

Northview Media Group, publishers of *New River Parent*, a regional parenting magazine for the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski, and the City of Radford moved into the Center in July. Owned and operated by Mike Wade, Northview Media Group also offers services in the areas of graphic design, photography and writing, as well as marketing and public relations consultation. For more information, contact Mike Wade at 540-257-0678 or via e-mail at mwade@newriverparent.com. You may also visit the website for *New River Parent* by going to www.newriverparent.com.



For Competitiveness Center information contact:

Shawn Utt or Doug Hudson, Acting Incubator Managers
6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 302, Radford, VA 24141
Phone: 540.633.6730 Fax: 540.633.6768
incubatormanager@nrvc.org or www.nrvc.org/nrvcc.html



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NRVPC Commissioners	
FLOYD COUNTY • FRED GERALD • EVELYN JANNEY	TOWN OF FLOYD • MIKE PATTON, VICE CHAIR
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Kevin R. Byrd, AICP Executive Director kbyrd@nrvpc.org	
Jan R. Gilbertson, Newsletter Editor	

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There will be a Livability Initiative Kick-off Summit on August 11th at Claytor Lake State Park Marina Facility. At this event you can learn more about the Livability Initiative, how to get involved, and participate in a conversation about the strengths and challenges of the New River Valley Region. We will have a sequence of three facilitated discussions from 1- 5pm and an Open House from 5-8pm for those who cannot participate during the day. The Open House will feature the same content as earlier in the day but will have a more flexible “drop in” format. Please join us!

For more information on the Livability Initiative, how to get involved or to RSVP for the event visit www.nrvlivability.org. For additional questions, please contact **Kim Thurlow** (kthurlow@nrvpc.org), (540) 639-9313, ext. 202 or **Carol Davis** (cdavis@nrvpc.org), (540) 639-9313, ext. 222.

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Employment Opportunity
 The NRVPC is hiring a Natural Resource/Community Health Planner. For further information, please visit nrvpc.org