



VAPDC News

A publication of the [Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions](#)

Issue 2, Summer 2021



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message from the president

I trust that everyone is having an enjoyable summer. The VAPDC has been pleased to offer up a second edition of the “Summer Series” (dubbed “Hot Topics and Cool Conversations”) over the course of June, July and August. We have had three very enlightening sessions focused on affordable housing, the 2021 elections and federal partnerships. The final session on August 24 will explore a topic garnering much attention this past year....broadband! Details and registration information are available on our [website](#).

Virginia Housing kicked off the Summer Series with an overview of a new PDC Housing Development program, to which it has awarded a total of \$40 million in grants to Virginia’s PDCs for the creation of new housing initiatives. Each of the 21 PDCs/Regional Commissions in Virginia applied for and will be receiving funding over a three-year period to support regional housing opportunities and solutions. We are excited to partner with Virginia Housing in this endeavor.

Earlier today, the VAPDC held its annual business meeting (virtually). The Board of Directors is excited to welcome two new members, Jennifer Bowles (West Piedmont PDC) and Jordan Miles (Commonwealth Regional Council). We also appreciate the service of outgoing Board member Donald Hart (Accomack-Norhampton PDC). The Board will meet in early August, and hopes to have its annual Leadership Retreat in the Fall.

Best wishes for a safe and enjoyable rest of the summer.

Kim Callis
VAPDC President

get to know...

The Mount Rogers PDC and the New River Valley Regional Commission

The [Mount Rogers Planning District Commission](#) (MRPDC) serves the Counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington and Wythe, and the Cities of Bristol and Galax. The Commission is recognized by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) as a Local Development District, and by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an Economic Development District. The MRPDC (Planning District 3) has been involved in many planning efforts over the years, including analysis of regional recreational resources and water quality management planning.



The work of the Commission today is centered chiefly on providing technical assistance to area jurisdictions in economic and community development, public management and administration, and cartography. The Commission has for several years provided circuit-riding town management assistance to member jurisdictions who cannot afford full-time managers. The Commission considers itself an “arm” of their local governments – providing them with both expertise and cost savings.

The MRPDC region is composed of about 2,750 square miles and is home to 187,185 people (Weldon Cooper Center estimate, July 1, 2020). The Chair of the MRPDC Commission is Willie Greene (Galax City) and the Executive Director is Aaron Sizemore.



The [New River Valley Regional Commission](#) (NRVRC) is composed of 13 local governments and three higher education institutions encompassing the Counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski, and the City of Radford, an area of more than 1,450 square miles. The NRVRC (Planning District 4) prides itself on its work to convene community leaders to build relationships and capacity across the region; to provide technical assistance to members; to serve as a liaison between local, state and federal governments; and to implement services requested by its members.

The Commission delivers regionally-significant programs with a collaborative approach involving multiple local governments and community partners. An example is a recently-completed housing study that incorporated regional and local data, input from 10 focus groups, and over 1,100 online survey responses to develop seven regional housing strategies, as well as tailored strategies for each locality.

The NRVRC area has a population of 185,098 (Weldon Cooper Center estimate, July 1, 2020). The Chair of the NRVRC Board of Directors is Michael Maslaney (Floyd County) and the Executive Director is Kevin Byrd.

upcoming events/calendar



July 30—Annual VAPDC Business meeting
August 4—VAPDC Board of Directors meeting
August 24—Summer Series session: “Broadband Solutions”
October—VAPDC Leadership Retreat

in the news

VAPDC’s “Summer Series” program offerings have been highly successful. As noted earlier, we highlighted the new PDC Housing Development Program, as well as land banks, at the first session. An analysis of the upcoming 2021 elections followed in late June, and just this past week, we focused on federal partnerships, to include updates from the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission Coalition, the Economic Development Administration and the National Association of Development Organizations. Materials from all of these sessions are available on the VAPDC [website](#).

Speaking of broadband, the VAPDC co-sponsored, along with the Commonwealth Connect Coalition, the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League, a Local Fiscal Recovery Fund and broadband webinar in early June. With the likelihood of hundreds of millions of federal stimulus dollars to be targeted to expanding broadband access in Virginia, this certainly was a timely event.

about vapdc

The **Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC)** is an organization comprised of the 21 Planning District Commissions/Regional Councils in Virginia. The PDCs joined together to create the VAPDC to share best practices and further regionalism across the State. VAPDC works to bring diverse resources together at the regional level in partnership with local, state, and federal entities to strengthen regions and the Commonwealth.



The purpose of the Association is to promote coordination and cooperation among the Commonwealth's Planning District Commissions/Regional Councils to heighten their effectiveness and efficiency; provide mutual assistance and the exchange of ideas; and otherwise promote understanding for how PDCs/RCs can help save their regions and the Commonwealth time and money.

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