



March 2024 Update

NRVRC Board Member Transitions

The Regional Commission would like to welcome the following elected officials to the Board, Chris Bond, representing the Town of Floyd; Amanda Davis, representing the Town of Pearisburg; Anthony Graftsky, representing Montgomery County and Tanya Hockett, representing the Town of Christiansburg.

The Regional Commission would like to thank the following elected officials for their service to the Board, Cathy Clark, representing the Town of Pearisburg; Steve Fijalkowski, representing Montgomery County; Mike Patton, representing the Town of Floyd and Tim Wilson, representing the Town of Christiansburg. We appreciate the time, energy, and commitment each put in during their time serving the region.

10-Year Anniversary of the Livability Information Exchange



This year's Livability Information Exchange will be held on Thursday, March 21 from 8:30am-1:00pm at the German Club Manor in Blacksburg. In addition to the annual lightning round presentations, we will look back to celebrate 10 years of progress on initiatives across the region. A light breakfast and lunch will be served. There may even be the return of everyone's favorite regional trivia game, Kahoot. Special thanks to Virginia Housing for sponsoring this event. Register [HERE](#).

ACE and Resilience Presenter Training

Many organizations and agencies across Virginia are beginning to understand the importance of the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Study and the implications it has for policies and practices, especially as it relates to work with youth and families. The ACE and Resilience Presenter Training will be offered through DBHDS (Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services) at the Pulaski County Innovation Center in March to expand the network of trainers in the area. Members of the training will gain an understanding of the key concepts of the ACE Interface and Resilience curriculum and be prepared to facilitate community conversations and model community change through dialogue with community members. The ACEs and Resiliency training is just one component of the comprehensive trauma-informed approach to building community capacity in addressing challenging social and health issues through trauma-informed practices.

For more information, please contact Julie Fox (jfox@nrvc.org).

2024 PLANNING COMMISSIONERS TRAINING

Facilitated conversations &
fun to keep you up to date on
relevant planning topics and
meeting scenarios



**APRIL
17TH
6-8:30**

**MINGLE
HOUR
5-6PM**

**MONT CO
GOVT CENTER**

755 Roanoke Street
Christiansburg, VA

2024 Planning Commissioners Training

This year's annual Planning Commissioners Training will be held on Wednesday, April 17th at the Montgomery County Government Center. A mingle hour will start at 5:00pm with dinner and program to follow starting at 6:00pm. This year's program will focus on an interactive review of relevant meeting scenarios and a deep dive on housing, both challenges and opportunities. Planning Commissioners, reach out to your locality staff to sign up.

New Recovery Court Graduation

If you are unfamiliar with Recovery Court in Virginia, a quick Google search provides a basic understanding of the process. The Virginia Judicial System website provides a description, mentioning terms such as "intensive treatment" and "strict supervision." While these elements are indeed present, they do not fully encapsulate why Recovery Court is successful. To truly understand its effectiveness, attending a graduation ceremony drives home the impact. These proceedings are open to the public and offer insight into the program's core principle: connections.

During a recent graduation, Pulaski County Circuit Court Judge Bradley Finch highlighted the power of connection in his remarks. He praised Dorothy Warden, a graduate, by detailing five pages of her accomplishments within the program, evoking nods of agreement from attendees who had witnessed her impact firsthand.

In Giles County, connections were exemplified in a different manner. Commonwealth Attorney Bobby Lilly introduced the guest speaker with magic tricks that captivated the audience. Speakers at the ceremony, including County Administrator Chris McKlarney and Giles County Circuit Judge Lee Harrell, emphasized how graduates Steve Melvin and John Neary had left lasting impressions on their lives. Even after graduation, both Steve and John continue to support the program by attending recovery court fitness classes.

What motivates Circuit Court Judges, Commonwealth Attorneys, County Administrators, and others to invest significant time and energy into this program? It is the power of connections.

Broadband Update

The Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) extends broadband service to currently unserved areas. The goal of VATI is to create strong, competitive communities through the installation of telecommunications infrastructure. The Regional Commission, in conjunction with several localities and multiple Internet Service Providers (ISPs), has been working diligently to get fiber broadband services installed throughout the New River Valley.

Montgomery County has two VATI grants that will benefit over 12,000 residents. Construction has been initiated in the eastern portion of the county. It is anticipated that connections will become available as the project progresses throughout the spring of 2024. Engineering for the remaining portions of the county is in the final stages. Construction contracts are anticipated to go out to bid in the spring of 2024. For additional information and to sign up for services, please contact GigaBeam at gigabeam.net.

Pulaski County also has a VATI grant that will benefit over 7,800 residents. Engineering is in progress and field crews are verifying pole attachments. It is anticipated that construction will begin in the late summer of 2024. For additional information please contact All Points Broadband at allpointsbroadband.com.

Giles County, in conjunction with Pembroke Telephone Cooperative (PemTel), have applied for a \$4,199,596 grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) funds. These funds will allow the county to provide 103 miles of high speed (100/20 mbps) fiber broadband services to 611 residents and 18 businesses.

For more information, contact Chris Owens, cowens@nrvc.org.

While Recovery Court is indeed intensive and strict, its magic lies in relationships. This program is not solely about enforcement; it offers support and care. Participants often express gratitude for having a community that genuinely cares about their recovery journey. This care motivates them to persist through the challenges. They know someone is invested in their well-being, and they are eager to reciprocate that support.

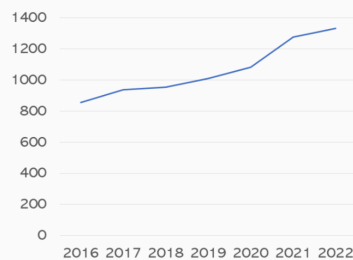
For more information, please contact Walter Midkiff (wmidkiff@nrvc.org).



Business Applications Climb in New River Valley

Did you know that since 2016 the New River Valley had an approximately 55.49% increase in new business applications?

NRV Business Applications 2016-2022



Year	NRV Business Applications
2016	856
2017	938
2018	952
2019	1010
2020	1081
2021	1275
2022	1331

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics

Entrepreneurship is booming with total U.S. business applications doubling in 2020 compared to recent years. In 2021 alone, a record breaking 5.4 million new business applications were filed, and nearly 5.1 million were filed in 2022.

The surge in new businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic is attributed to entrepreneurs addressing emerging economic needs and shifts in consumer preferences. Many individuals transformed their hobbies into home-based businesses, notably increasing non-store retailing. Plus, the demand for professional and consulting services also grew, with 2023 witnessing a rise in business applications in retail trade and professional services sectors.

This entrepreneurial wave not only brings innovation but also fosters community employment and economic growth. Both new and existing businesses can continue this growth by considering our New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund, which helps small businesses to buy equipment, upgrade facilities, or secure working capital to expand their operations.

If you have any questions about the NRV RLF, please contact Leo Priddy at lpriddy@nrvc.org or check out <https://www.nrvc.org/economy> and click on the Revolving Loan Fund section.

[Visit our website](#)

New River Valley Regional Commission | nrvc.org



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