



News from the CSPDC Region

September 2023



Afton Express Turns Two

On September 1, 2021, the Afton Express took its maiden voyage across the mountain from Staunton, Fishersville, and Waynesboro to Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia. Now, two years later it is still growing strong! Ridership continues to grow steadily, improving each month as more commuters learn of the service. From September 2022 to August 2023, monthly ridership increased by 64%.

To celebrate this milestone, CSPDC staff will host pop-up events in Charlottesville and Staunton to engage with current and prospective riders.

[Complete Article](#)



Thompson Selected for Virginia Transit Leadership Institute

The CSPDC is pleased to announce that Devon Thompson, Transit Planner, has been selected to participate in [Virginia Transit Association's \(VTA\)](#) inaugural year for the Virginia Transit Leadership Institute (VTLI). VTLI is a groundbreaking program aimed at fostering the next generation of public transportation leaders in Virginia.

VTLI is a program initiated by the Commonwealth's transit systems and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DPRT), and is designed to engage, elevate, and cultivate emerging leaders in the public transportation sector.

[Complete Article](#)



Highland Inn Receives ARC Grant

The Blue Grass Resource Center will receive a \$700,000 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Construction Grant to support the completion of The Highland Inn Revitalization Project. On August 11, Governor Youngkin recommended the Inn as one of sixteen projects in Virginia for ARC funding.

The grant will fund Phase II of the effort to renovate the historic Highland Inn. Located on Main Street in Monterey, the Highland Inn is part of Highland County's economic development strategy to increase tourism through retreat conferences and cultural events.

[Complete Article](#)

Rideshare and BRITE Bus Participate in Discover Transit Month

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is engaged in the second "Discover Transit" campaign of the year. Between mid-August and mid-September, DRPT is inviting Virginians to discover how public transportation can help connect them to the places they need to go.

The CSPDC's Commuter Assistance Program, Rideshare, along with BRITE Bus will help promote the use of transit in our region. To encourage travelers to use transit, all BRITE Bus routes (including the Afton Express) will operate fare-free on September 20, 2023.

[Complete Article](#)



2023 SAW Walk-Bike Summit

Set for October 20

The 2023 Staunton, Augusta County, and Waynesboro Bike-Walk Summit will be held on Friday, October 20, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Russell Museum in Waynesboro. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The event will highlight the Virginia Capital Trail, Waynesboro's South River Greenway, and the positive impacts of regional bike and pedestrian projects on health and economic development.

[Complete Article](#)



MGCC Workforce Center Holds Ribbon Cutting

On August 15, 2023, Mountain Gateway Community College (MGCC) President Dr. John Rainone cut the grand opening ribbon for MGCC's interim Workforce Development Center in Buena Vista. The event marked the phase 1 milestone of constructing the Wilson Workforce Development Center in the former Courtesy Ford Dealership building. MGCC students began courses the following Monday (August 21) in the McCormick Building at 2045 Forest Avenue.

MGCC programs will encompass HVAC, building, electrical, plumbing, industrial technology, precision machining, welding, diesel mechanics, and CDL training for these in-demand career fields.

[Complete Article](#)

Registration for SAW Housing Summit Open

Registration for the SAW Housing Summit is open through September 28. In partnership with the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge, Augusta Health, Valley Community Services Board, and Valley Homeless Connection, the CSPDC will be presenting the Summit on October 11 and 12 at the Holiday Inn & Conference Center in Staunton.

[Complete Article](#)



TAP Application Period Open

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is accepting applications to the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) this year. TAP is a subset of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Every two years, localities can submit project applications to TAP, which provides 80% federal funding for non-motorized transportation improvements.

Eligible projects include sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, and all activities previously eligible under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).

[Complete Article](#)



DHCD Hosts Development Ready Workshop Series

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development is hosting a Virginia for Development-Ready Communities Workshop with Joe Borgstrom of Place & Main Advisors on October 24 from 10:00AM - 3:30PM at the Church of the Incarnation, 75 N Mason St, Harrisonburg, VA. Attendees will be engaged in activities and learn how to determine their community's readiness, evaluate market opportunities, and the right incentives to attract quality investments and investors. This half-day workshop includes modules on Property Marketing, Proforma 101, and Incentives. Join community leaders from across the state in this important learning opportunity - and get your community Development Ready!

[Learn More & Register](#)

CSPDC Welcomes New Program Specialist

Allyson Finchum joins the CSPDC as their Program Support Specialist with the CSPDC team on September 5, 2023. A native Virginian, born and raised in Arlington, Allyson earned her undergraduate degree at American University and received her Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has extensive planning, code administration and management experience in counties, towns and cities throughout Virginia, most recently serving as Town Manager for the towns of Bowling Green and Port Royal. Allyson and her husband Mike currently live in Wintergreen. She uniquely understands the issues facing communities and looks forward to assisting the localities in the CSPDC region.

CSPDC Resources:

[COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard](#)
[Virtual Engagement Resource](#)
[Regional Facts & Figures](#)
[Regional Plans](#)
[Regional Data Center](#)
[FY 2020 Year in Review](#)

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