



November 2025 Update



Regional Commission Annual Award Recipients

On October 23rd, the New River Valley Regional Commission board of directors, comprised of elected officials and citizen appointees across the region, hosted a dinner event at The Highlander Hotel in Radford, VA to honor the 2025 award

recipients. Approximately 100 local government elected officials, state and federal representatives, and local government planning commission chairs were in attendance.

Ms. Angie Covey, New River Community College, was the recipient of the Citizen of the Valley award. This award is given to a citizen within the New River Valley who has made significant contributions to the betterment of the region. Ms. Covey was recognized for her role in helping to establish the Access to Community College Education (ACCE) program that provides two years of tuition at New River Community

College at no cost to high school graduates in the region. Since 2015, the program has grown to serve over 500 students each year.

Judge Lee Harrell, 27th Judicial Circuit of Virginia, was the recipient of the Champion of the Valley award. This award is given to an appointed or elected official within, or representing, the New River Valley who has greatly assisted communities and residents during their service to the public. Through his leadership in the development and implementation of the Recovery Court program, he has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to justice, rehabilitation, and community transformation. The Recovery Court program has become a beacon of hope for individuals trapped in the cycle of addiction and criminal behavior. Rather than being treated solely as offenders, participants in Recovery Court are seen as individuals—people with potential, with stories, and with the capacity to recover and thrive.

Dr. Tamarah Holmes, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, was the recipient of the Friend of the Valley award. This award is given to an individual or organization outside the New River Valley who has made significant contributions to the betterment of the region. Dr. Holmes serves as the Director of the Virginia Office of Broadband and State Program Manager for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). In these roles, she has overseen approximately 25,000 houses and businesses receiving broadband service in the region, and several million dollars of ARC investment for transformative projects such as the Old Prices Fork School Redevelopment, industrial park expansions, New River Water Trail Extension, and planning for the reintroduction of passenger rail service to the New River Valley.

Each award recipient was provided a custom stained-glass piece of art by the local artist Sandy Davenport, a member of 'Round the Mountain, Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network.

Regional Commission FY24-25 Annual Report

The Regional Commission FY24-25 Annual Report can be viewed [here](#)! The report highlights programs, projects, and collaborations from last fiscal year. There are also several key accomplishments from the year identified.

Printed copies of the report will be sent to every elected official in the New River Valley, Regional Commission partners, and Regional Commission Board members.



Annual Report

2024-2025



Regional Commission Mobile Workshop tour of Radford University

Thank you, Radford University, for hosting and providing this year's Mobile Workshop! The workshop offered attendees valuable insights into local economic development initiatives and the arts. Radford University's Angela Joyner, Ph.D., Vice President for Economic Development and Corporate Education, and Nichole Hair, Director of Economic Development and Community Engagement, led a tour of The HUB, which serves as a gathering place for small businesses and individuals to work, learn, and grow. The HUB offers workspaces, amenities, and business support in a prime location in downtown Radford.



Claremont Apartment Project

The Claremont Apartments project, located in the Town of Pulaski, was one of the inaugural recipients of \$850,000 in NRV Housing Fund investment. This project is redeveloping the former Claremont Elementary School into apartments and constructing new units on the same parcel, for a total of 50 new rental units. All units will serve households earning below 80% of

Although not yet constructed, the tour and overview of a future amphitheater site offered a glimpse into plans for an outdoor multi-use venue situated beautifully on the New River.

A highlight of the workshop was the guided tour of the Artis Center for the Visual and Performing Arts, presented by Dean Rachel Williams. Attendees explored state-of-the-art theaters, studios, and exhibition spaces, including a bird's-eye view of the Main Stage Theater from the catwalk.

area median income (\$54,850 for a household of two). Construction will be completed soon, with lease-up anticipated for early spring 2026.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie, jwilsie@nrvc.org.



The Regional Commission Welcomes Will Shelburne

The Regional Commission is excited to share that Will Shelburne has joined the agency as the Community Designer and Facilitation Specialist. Will enjoys bringing ideas to life through thoughtful design and collaboration. He holds degrees in Horticulture and Landscape Architecture from Virginia Tech, where he focused on Agricultural & Applied

Economics and Gerontology. His background in living systems, economics, and design, combined with a passion for strengthening communities, enables him to apply both creative vision and technical expertise to his work.

Will's professional experience includes local architecture, engineering, and landscape firms, where he guided projects from concept planning and permitting through construction. These roles helped him develop a strong understanding of stakeholder involvement and the full design-to-construction process.

Outside of work, Will is rooted in the local regenerative agriculture community. He spends much of his free time on his family's riverfront farm, exploring holistic farming practices and enjoying life outdoors. A lover of bluegrass and old country music, he plays guitar and banjo, and when he's not making music, he can often be found tinkering in his shop with antique furniture, vehicles, and farm equipment.

Will can be reached at wshelburne@nrvc.org.

The Regional Commission Welcomes Patrick Ford

Patrick has joined the Regional Commission as the Community Resiliency Coordinator. He will be administering disaster recovery funding through the Virginia Disaster Assistance Fund (VDAF). Created in response to damage from Tropical Storm Helene and the February 2025 Winter Storms, VDAF is state funding aimed at closing the gap between recovery needs and federal, state and insurance coverage.



Patrick has a B.A. in Political Science and Theatre from Hampden-Sydney College, where he focused on economic development and foreign affairs. Previously, he was in the private sector with a Department of Defense contractor, Pyrotechnique by Grucci. Before that, he was the Managing Editor of the Southwest Times and had served as Program Director for Pulaski on Main.

Originally from Marion Virginia, Patrick transplanted to Pulaski County 5 years ago. In his free time, he enjoys Dungeons and Dragons with his friends and travels to rural areas across Appalachia and the country with his wife, Scotia.

Patrick can be reached at pford@nrvc.org.

ReNew the New

On September 6th, 2025 multiple groups of volunteers gathered in Giles County, Montgomery County and the City of Radford to participate in the annual ReNew the New Fall Cleanup. Working from both the shoreline and within boats on the river, over 421 volunteers led by devoted community members, business owners and local government staff were able to remove a great deal of tires and debris that had made its way into the New River. So far reported, this year's event removed 160 bags of debris, (1,340 pounds) and over 92 tires from the water!



For more information, please contact Will Shelburne at wshelburne@nrvc.org.

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New River Valley Regional Commission | 6580 Valley Center Drive Suite 124 | Radford, VA
24141 US