



March 2021 Update

Annual NRVRC Award Nominations Open!

Help us recognize the people who make an impact in the New River Valley! We need you to nominate worthy candidates for this year's awards program. The Commission is accepting nominations for our regional awards until March 15th. Award recipients will be honored in the spring of 2021. Please click on the links below to nominate candidates for Champion of the Valley (elected/appointed official), Citizen of the Valley, and Friend of the Valley (outside the region).



[Champion of the Valley-Elected/Appointed Official \(nominate here\)](#)

[Citizen of the Valley \(nominate here\)](#)

[Friend of the Valley \(nominate here\)](#)



Downtown Christiansburg Inc. Study

The Regional Commission recently partnered with Christiansburg nonprofit, Downtown Christiansburg Inc. (DCI), to develop an annual action plan. DCI was founded in 2012 and incorporated as a nonprofit in 2018. After participating in several planning and visioning processes over the years, DCI wanted to identify specific action items over the coming year in order to grow as an organization and further its mission of promoting downtown Christiansburg.

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For further information, please contact Jennifer Wilsie (wilsie@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313.



Regional Commission continues to add capacity during pandemic response

As the New River Health District approached Phase 1b of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in early January, the Commission convened the local government managers and members of the NRV Public Health Task Force to discuss logistics associated with the increased vaccination efforts. In order to assist with the large volume of questions and scheduling of vaccines, the Commission offered to coordinate a dedicated call center for vaccinations. Within two business days a New River Valley call center was launched with 10 phone lines staffed by volunteers seven days a week from 9:00am to 6:00pm. It was the first vaccine call center in the state and as a result, calls came in rapidly from Virginia Beach to Lee County seeking information about vaccines. The in-bound call volume was so high the system was adjusted to allow an increase from 50 calls per minute to 100. The call center hours have been modified recently with the state call center launch and now operates Monday-Friday 9:00-6:00 and Saturdays 9:00-3:00 with a focus on scheduling residents vaccination appointments.

The Business Continuity Team has performed oversight of the call center and the team recently expanded by adding a fourth member, Anna Champion. Anna was hired in February as Volunteer Coordinator to provide day-to-day management of the call center and assist with coordination of volunteers not only at the call center, but also for the regional vaccination clinic and smaller clinics to be held in communities once vaccine supply increases. This is a great example of the Commission members using the organization for its intended purpose of providing capacity to the region when it is needed. The Commission and partners are learning a lot as we collectively navigate the pandemic. One aspect we continue to appreciate is we can rely on each other while working toward a common goal.

For further information, please contact Kevin Byrd (kbyrd@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313.

Online Public Engagement Now Live

The New River Valley Regional Commission is excited to announce a new virtual community engagement platform, Engage NRV!

Each year, the Commission works with communities to create projects that aid and advance the region. Traditional means of engagement and applying community voice will always be important; however, current times call for innovative strategies. With social and physical distancing in mind, the Commission has developed an accelerated online collaboration tool allowing communities to interact with projects that mean the most to them.

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For further information, please contact Christy Straight (cstraight@nrvc.org), 540-639-9313.

