



Roanoke Valley-Alleghany REGIONAL commission

Connect

Collaborate

Cooperate

COVID-19 Dashboard

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission staff has prepared a COVID-19 dashboard to track regional cases and also includes demographics and mapping of vulnerable populations.

Included in the dashboard are unemployment claims, nursing home locations, and zip code COVID-19 data. COVID-19 cases and deaths are updated hourly from Johns Hopkins. To access the dashboard, click [HERE](#).



Regional Commission and Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization Board Member Transitions

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission and the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (RVTPO) would like to thank the Honorable Joseph L. Cobb and the Honorable Djuna L. Osborne for their service to the Commission and the RVTPO. The RVTPO would also like to thank the Honorable William D. Bestpitch for his valuable contributions during his time on the board.

The Commission and the RVTPO board welcomes two new members, the Honorable Robert Jeffrey Jr. and the Honorable Stephanie Moon Reynolds, both representatives of the City of Roanoke.



Roanoke Valley-Alleghany
REGIONAL
commission



Roanoke Valley Transportation
PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Staffed by the
REGIONALcommission

Jeremy Holmes Named as Regional Commission's Associate Executive Director

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission is pleased to announce that Jeremy Holmes has accepted the position of Associate Executive Director. Reporting directly to Executive Director Wayne Strickland, Jeremy will take on additional administrative duties at the Commission, including managing the development of the annual work program along with a number of other special projects and management duties. As Associate Executive Director he will retain his position as Director of RIDE Solutions, the regional Commuter Assistance Program he has led since he started at the Commission in 2006.



"I'm thrilled to take on this new leadership role at the Commission," Jeremy says. "And I'm particularly honored to step into a role that has been newly created to expand the Commission's ability to take on projects to better support our local government partners."

2021 represents Jeremy's 15th year at the Commission. During that time, in addition to leading the RIDE Solutions program, Jeremy has worked on air quality and sustainability programs, including managing the Air Quality Action List and the Volunteers for Energy Program, working with the Livable Roanoke Valley partnership, and other projects. Jeremy holds and has held leadership roles in the Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition, the Greater Roanoke Valley Asthma and Air Quality Coalition, and Healthy Roanoke Valley. Previous to the Commission, Jeremy worked at The Roanoke Times as the Data Analysis Manager in the Circulation department.

Commission Staff Member Chosen as Part of The Roanoker Magazine's 40 Under 40



Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Staff Member, Tim Pohlad-Thomas, was named to the 40, future leaders, under 40 class of 2021 by readers of The Roanoker Magazine.

From the Nomination: "As part of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, Tim Pohlad-Thomas serves the citizens of the Roanoke region from 9-5 everyday. However, he does not stop there. His commitment to improve the livability of the Roanoke region propels him to serve and volunteer in a number of other ways. He is everywhere! Leading volunteers at GO fest, putting on Experience conferences with Get2KnowNoke,

managing festival events with Clean Valley Council and 5 Points Sanctuary, coordinating outdoor activities at Floyd Fest, and this is by no means an exhaustive list. Pohlad-Thomas is a tireless advocate for Roanoke. I asked him once, how are you connected to

so many great things happening in Roanoke, his reply was, 'I get asked to help, and I just say keep saying yes.' When I think of young people in Roanoke that are truly making an impact, 'TPT' as he is sometimes called, is at the top of the list. Among 'citizen leader' circles, it is hard to find someone who does not already know or know of Tim, and have a positive impression. This year's 40 under 40 class would simply be incomplete without him."

To read more about the designation, visit: <https://theroanoker.com/magazine/features/40-under-40-tim-pohlad-thomas/>

2020 Regional Paycheck Protection Program Data



U.S. Small Business
Administration

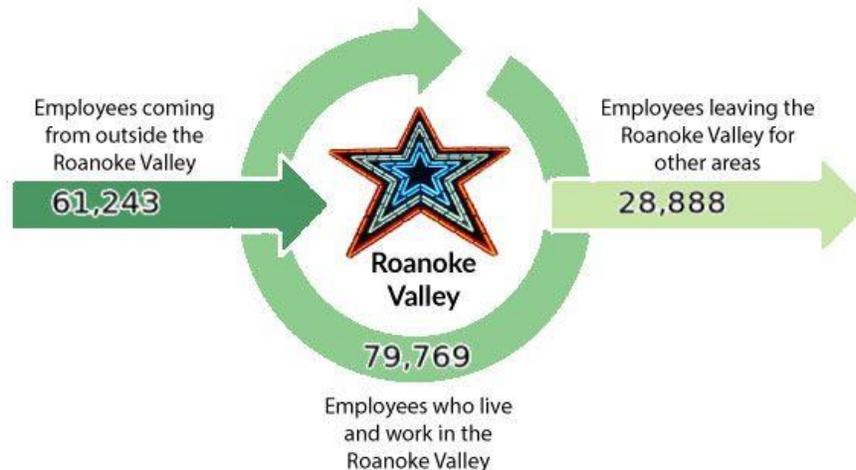
Under the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#), started as a result of COVID, guarantees loans made by private sector financial institutions. Loans can be forgiven (becoming a grant) provided 60% of the funds are used for payroll to help retain workers. Applicants had to self-certify that they were eligible for PPP loans. All loans over \$2 million will be reviewed by the SBA. Based on data released in December, these are highlights from the RVARC region:

- Loans under \$150,000 were given to 3,287 businesses in the RVARC region.
- These smaller loans total \$113.4 million and potentially benefited 10,920 jobs as reported by the small businesses
- 544 additional businesses received loans between \$150,000 and \$10 million, which helped support 23,622 jobs as self-reported by these businesses.
- Two businesses received over \$5 million in loans. Twenty-nine businesses received between \$2-5 million, and 40 businesses received between \$1-2 million.
- In total about 38% of the region's businesses received assistance from the PPP.
- Using self-reported data, 24% of the region's jobs were identified as potential beneficiaries.

Transparency rules allow businesses that received more than \$150,000 to be identified by name in the [database](#).

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) has been reopened and will accept second applications from businesses that received first round PPP loans. Visit the SBA website to learn more. <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program>

Census Data Reveals Deep Ties Between Roanoke Valley and Lynchburg, Henry County Labor Sheds



New census data shows the Roanoke Valley's surprisingly deep employment ties to Bedford and Lynchburg to the east, and Franklin and Henry Counties to the south, with 10,000 and 9,000 daily commuters, respectively. In contrast, daily commute traffic from the New River Valley is 6,500 daily commuters. Of the approximately 141,000 people employed in the Roanoke Valley, over 90,000 of them are moving back and forth between the Roanoke Valley and surrounding areas.

For the purposes of this study, the Roanoke Valley was defined as the cities of Roanoke and Salem, and the urbanized portions of Botetourt and Roanoke counties.

Census data shows that 55 percent of workers in the Roanoke Valley commute less than 10 miles to work. Out of the remaining 45 percent of workers (63,343 people), who commute more than 10 miles to work, it is estimated that over 24,000 people (17%) are commuting more than 50 miles for work within the Roanoke Valley.

While some companies are talking about how jobs can be shifted to telework, this data highlights that 17% of workers in the Roanoke Valley commute over 50 miles to the kind of work that can be impossible to shift to telework. The RIDE Solutions Commuter Assistance Program and its free employer support services are one of the programs offered by the region that can assist these commuters in saving money and help employers build mobility solutions for a reliable workforce.

For more information, please contact Tim Pohlad-Thomas at timpohladthomas@rvarc.org.

Roanoke River Nominated for Best Urban Kayaking Spot by USA Today

The Roanoke River has been nominated for the 2021 10Best Readers' Choice travel awards! The expert panel selected Roanoke River as a contender for Best Urban Kayaking Spot, which just launched.



The contest gives voters four weeks to vote for the candidate of their choice at <https://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-urban-kayaking-spot/>. A person can vote once a day for the run of the contest. Voting ends Monday, February 15th and the winners will be announced on 10Best on Friday, February 26th.

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Housing Market Study Analysis Adopted

REGIONAL HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS STUDY

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Region

December 2020

At the December 10th meeting, the Regional Commission adopted the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Housing Market Study Analysis.

This comprehensive study is composed of five individual studies: [Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Housing Study](#); [Franklin County Countywide Housing Study](#); [City of Roanoke Citywide Housing Study](#); [Roanoke County Countywide Housing Study](#); and [City of Salem Citywide Housing Study](#). To view the entire study, visit: <https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/RVA-Regional-Housing-Study-FINAL-121520.pdf>.

The goals and purpose of the Study are to:

1. Identify housing needs and provide both a region-wide and locality-specific housing market analysis.
2. Identify housing supply and demand issues and opportunities within the region and within each of the four localities.
3. Advance economic development opportunities by addressing housing concerns.
4. Develop regional and locality-specific recommendations to address housing needs.

5. Engage stakeholders to help understand housing needs/challenges and create a shared understanding of that need.

In the next several weeks, a polished and graphic-friendly version of the final study will be shared on rvarc.org.

RIDE Solutions Hosts Virginia Bicycling Federation Live Q&A

RIDE Solutions hosted a discussion about the Virginia Bicycling Federation's bicycle friendly legislation, coming before the General Assembly later this month. Panelists discussed potential impacts of the bill, how you can best show your support, and other items of interest to folks wanting to make bicycling safer and encourage more people to bicycle in southwest Virginia.

For more information on cycling in Virginia, visit the Virginia Bicycling Federation's website at vabike.org.



Chesapeake Bay Foundation Releases the 2020 State of the Bay Report



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

This year, the State of the Bay Report indicated that the Chesapeake Bay scored an overall grade of 32 (D+); one point lower than the previous score in 2018. The biennial report is based on the best available information about the Chesapeake Bay for indicators representing three major categories: pollution, habitat, and fisheries. The report shows that there have been some improvements and declines across the indicators. Click the link [here](#) to find out more about the indicators and to download the full report.

City of Roanoke Earns Bicycle Friendly Community Designation

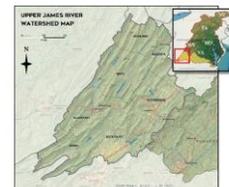


The League of American Bicyclists honored the efforts of the City of Roanoke to build better places for people to bike with a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) award. The City of Roanoke joined 485 communities across the country in the movement for safer streets and better bicycling for everyone. The award recognizes the City of Roanoke for its commitment to creating transportation and recreational resources that benefit its residents of all ages and abilities while encouraging healthier and more sustainable transportation choices.

To celebrate the award, the City of Roanoke, along with the RIDE Solutions commuter assistance program, has designed a self-guided [Bicycle Friendly Roanoke tour](#), highlighting many of the City's most recent accomplishments in making the community a safer place for people to cycle.

A New Year Brings a New James River Buffer Program

Starting in January, property owners in the Upper James River Watershed are eligible to apply to the [James River Buffer Program](#). The program provides the opportunity for residents to plant riparian buffers along streams on their property, free of cost. Property owners can fill out the [Upper James Interest Form](#) to get in contact with program managers.



Ongoing Projects

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission is always working with localities on projects that benefit the region. Some of these projects are listed below.

- Alleghany Highlands Economic Impact of the Arts
- Alleghany Highlands Gap Analysis
- Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan
- City of Covington Downtown Revitalization Planning Grant Assistance
- City of Roanoke Neighborhood Walk Project
- City of Roanoke Pedestrian Safety Campaign
- Promotion and access improvements for the Roanoke River Blueway

For more information on ongoing projects contact [Tim Pohlad-Thomas](#) or visit [RVARC.org](#).

[Visit our website](#)

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