



September 2025 Update

NRVRC Board Member Transition

The Regional Commission welcomes a new member, Dr. Robert Brandon, a citizen representing the New River Community College. Dr. Brandon became the 7th president of the college on January 1, 2025. The Regional Commission would like to thank Angie Covey for her service to the region representing New River Community College from 2018 until 2025.

Revolving Loan Fund: Helping Small Businesses Grow

The Regional Commission manages a Revolving Loan Fund designed to support small businesses across our region. Whether you are just getting started or ready to expand, the NRV RLF can help cover equipment, facility improvements, or working capital.

Loan amounts typically range from \$10,000 to \$25,000, with flexible repayment terms and low interest rates. This option is helpful for businesses that may not qualify for traditional financing or are piecing together different sources of funding to move forward.

Businesses interested in applying will first start with a quick pre-application, and if the proposed project meets basic eligibility and program guidelines, will be invited to submit a formal application for review. All loan decisions are made by a volunteer committee made up of public and private sector representatives who are committed to supporting small business development in the New River Valley.



The fund has supported a wide range of businesses, including retail shops updating their space, local food and beverage businesses opening new locations, service providers upgrading tools, and home-based makers growing into storefronts. The goal is to meet businesses where they are and provide flexible financing to help them grow.

If you know a small business that could benefit, please share this opportunity.

To learn more, visit www.nrvrc.org/economy and check out the Revolving Loan Fund section, or contact Leo Priddy at lpriddy@nrvrc.org with any questions.



NRVRC welcomes Erika Slagel-Perry

The Regional Commission is pleased to welcome Erika Slagel-Perry in her new role as Education and Training Coordinator on the Community Health Team. She'll be supporting work in the public school system to promote prevention and recovery education as well as trauma informed training with community organizations and local government agencies. Ms. Slagel-Perry comes to this work with skills and experience in both public/medical health and education. She most recently managed the School-Based Health Centers at Pulaski County High School and Giles County Public Schools with the Community Health Center of the NRV where she worked with participants and partners seeking care and providing services.

Originally from South Carolina, Erika spent 17 years visiting family in the NRV. After falling in love with the people and culture, she relocated to the region over 11 years ago. A lifelong Clemson football fan, she learned to embrace the Hokies and cheers them on every chance that she gets. In her spare time, Erika enjoys spending time with her spouse, two adult children, two dogs, cooking, admiring her absurd amount of houseplants, and playing guitar.

GO Virginia Funds Site Advancement Strategy for the New River Valley

GO Virginia Region 2 has approved funding for a new Site Advancement Strategy in Virginia's New River Valley. The project will invest \$94,400 in state funds and \$108,479 in regional contributions to strengthen the readiness of industrial sites across Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski counties, as well as the City of Radford.

Community Health Team Site Visit: Harrisonburg Navigation Center

On Friday, August 15, the Community Health Team led a group of 17 regional partners, including county administration, law enforcement, housing professionals, and service providers, on a site visit to the *Navigation Center* in Harrisonburg, VA.

The strategy, managed by the New River Valley Regional Commission in collaboration with Onward New River Valley, will build on the region's 2019 Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) assessment. Since that time, infrastructure upgrades, landownership changes, and evolving market conditions have made an updated evaluation necessary. Each locality will select one priority site for review, and a regional site will also be included to create a portfolio of sites at varying levels of readiness.

By addressing infrastructure gaps, evaluating environmental constraints, and providing a clear path through the VBRSP readiness tiers, the project will help the region overcome a shortage of shovel-ready sites. Preparing properties for future investment will expand the New River Valley's ability to attract employers in high-wage industries. By preparing sites for future investment, the New River Valley can expand its ability to attract employers and create long-term job growth.

For more information, contact Leo Priddy at lpriddy@nrvc.org.

Earlier this year, Open Doors, their housing support nonprofit, launched the Navigation Center, a year-round, 80-bed overnight shelter for adults experiencing homelessness. Beyond shelter, the Navigation Center serves as a community hub for resources. During the day, it is open to anyone seeking access to wrap-around services, programs, and supports designed to promote housing stability, health, employment, self-sufficiency, and personal growth. As part of the visit, the group met with Harrisonburg Mayor Deanna Reed and several stakeholders to learn more about their funding model, partner collaboration, community engagement strategies, successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

The Community Health Team hosted a larger scale follow-up Zoom debrief on Friday, August 22, with all interested partners and stakeholders, to reflect on takeaways from the trip.

We extend our sincere thanks to Open Doors and the Navigation Center team for hosting us and sharing their work.

For more information, please contact Kinsey Weaver at kweaver@nrvc.org.



Additive Manufacturing and Advanced Materials (AM²) Hub Conference

[Register](#) now for the AM² Hub Conference on September 15th at the Inn at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. Attendees will connect with industry leaders leveraging additive manufacturing technology and advanced materials to transform how they create and innovate.

Explore the challenges and opportunities facing manufacturers today, from technology adoption to workforce development, and go behind the scenes of innovation at cutting-edge labs. An evening reception at Maroon Door will follow.

Recovery Roots Growing Across the NRV

When the NRV Recovery Ecosystem launched over two years ago with funds from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority coming to the region there was only one peer center. The 401 Peer Center in Radford has been a trusted hub for peer support since 2018. Now, with funding from the regional opioid abatement project, that model is branching out across the region.

New Peer Centers are opening their doors:

Floyd – Rooted in Recovery launched on August 11

Giles – Day Won Center hosted ribbon cutting on August 15

Pulaski – Community Collaboration Center will open by mid-September

Instill Mindfulness in Pulaski began offering new respite programs this August

Peer Centers are more than resource hubs—they're welcoming spaces for connection, learning, fun, and healing. Whether it's building a resume, finding a recovery support group, or just taking a moment to rest, the focus is always the same: meeting people where they are in their recovery journey.

Research is clear—trust and relationships are the foundation of recovery. And with peers leading the way, the NRV Recovery Ecosystem is growing stronger every day.

For more information, please contact Holly Lesko, (hlesko@nrvc.org).



SEPTEMBER 6TH FALL INTO THE NEW 2025

ReNewing the New River One Bag at a Time

Volunteers of all ages who love the New River will gather at Whitt Riverbend Park in Giles County on Saturday, September 6th. Please be there by 8:30 am ready to go.

Registration for participation is required and available online. Lunch and t-shirt will be provided to all who volunteer. **Participants must sign a waiver before getting started.**

Please make sure you wear sunscreen and old tennis shoes or water shoes. Flip flops are not recommended as they can come off too easily.

If bringing your own boat, you **MUST** say so in the registration form so drop off and pick up can be arranged.



Giles
VIRGINIA'S MOUNTAIN
PLAYGROUND™
www.gilescounty.org

NEW RIVER
WATER TRAIL™
www.newriverwatertrail.com

NRVRC
NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION

REGISTER TODAY AT
www.ReNewTheNew.org

QUESTIONS? Contact Giles Administration at 540-921-2525

Expanding Access, Empowering Communities: Broadband Success in Montgomery County

The Regional Commission is excited to celebrate a major milestone in regional connectivity! Montgomery County, in conjunction with New River Valley Regional Commission (NRVRC) and GigaBeam, has successfully completed a broadband expansion project funded by a 2021 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Focused on the Alleghany Springs, Elliston, Lafayette, and Shawsville communities, this initiative has delivered high-speed,

reliable internet to 1,320 serviceable units—including 44 businesses and community anchors—exceeding its original service goals.

The project added 7.4 miles of strategically designed fiber optic infrastructure, deployed by internet service provider GigaBeam. With construction now complete, residents and businesses in these previously unserved and underserved areas can finally access the internet speeds necessary for remote work, virtual learning, telehealth, streaming, and e-commerce. This is a transformative leap forward in bridging the digital divide in our rural communities.

Beyond immediate access, the deployment of this robust fiber network lays the groundwork for long-term economic development and digital inclusion. It is a shining example of what strong partnerships, thoughtful planning, and persistent advocacy can achieve.

For more information, please contact Chris Owens, (cowens@nrvrc.org).

Partner News

First Steps

Each year First Steps works with Early Childhood Education Initiatives (ECEI) at Virginia Tech to sponsor the Igniting Connections Symposium, a free full-day conference for early educators from across the region held at the Inn at Virginia Tech. This year's

Symposium is Friday, September 26th. The agenda includes [the Early Childhood Champion Awards Luncheon](#) (12:15-1:30pm) where First Steps honors nominees and announces the 5 award recipients, each of whom receive a cash award from the CFNRV. It's a low-key, fun way to celebrate educators, health and human service providers, and advocates supporting young children and families.



Visit our website

New River Valley Regional Commission | nrvrc.org



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