



April 2024 Update

10-Year Anniversary of the Livability Information Exchange

Nearly 150 people attended the 2024 Livability Information Exchange event on Thursday, March 21st. The event celebrated its 10th anniversary, providing engaging lightning round presentations on diverse projects from throughout the region such as parks and recreation, housing, downtown revitalization, food security, and Veterans services. Participants were also tested on their regional knowledge during a spirited game of the quiz game, Kahoot! This year's event was sponsored by Virginia Housing, and Chris Thompson, Director of Strategic Housing, provided closing remarks. He congratulated the New River Valley for leading the state in consistently working together to create long-lasting, meaningful projects. The event concluded with a lunch provided by HazelBea Catering.



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

2024 RAMP'S 'N' ROADS



**THANK YOU 2024 VOLUNTEERS
FOR MAKING THIS YEAR'S
CLEAN-UP A SUCCESS!**

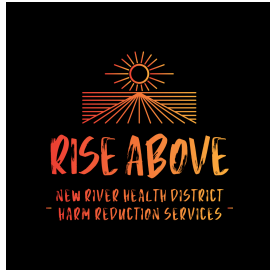
217 PARTICIPANTS

296 #OF BAGS OF TRASH

6032 #OF TIRES COLLECTED



FOR MORE INFO: RENEWTHENEW.ORG



Rise Above Mobile Outreach Services

Rise Above has hit the ground running! The new collaborative mobile outreach program through the New River Health District, launched on Monday, March 11, 2024. Their mission statement is to "create a non-judgmental and supportive environment, offering harm reduction strategies, education, and resources that empower individuals to make informed choices about their well-being".

Rise Above services include overdose prevention training, Naloxone kits, safe use supplies, Fentanyl testing strips, safe sex kits, hygiene kits, wound care kits, feminine hygiene products, peer support, referrals and linkages to care, resource navigation, communicable disease testing, as well as providing food and clothing. Rise Above collaborates with the Regional Commission, Community Health Center of the NRV, Instill Mindfulness, Pyramid Healthcare, NRVCS, Virginia Poverty Law, and NRV Thrive. Throughout the spring, partners and services will continue to expand.

To see where Rise Above is going to be next, or for more information, follow them on Facebook [here](#), or check out their landing page on NRV Road to Wellness [here](#).

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

Explore Your Commute Options through the Connecting Commuters Campaign

RIDE Solutions is partnering with DRPT for the Connecting Commuters campaign that runs now through May 10, 2024.

Commuters in Virginia can take advantage of the new level of convenience and efficiency with the [ConnectingVA app](#) and [Virginia Trip Planner](#) provided by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). These tools are designed to transform travel planning by offering comprehensive information and seamless journeys for car/vanpoolers, bicyclists, and public transit passengers.

ConnectingVA helps you find carpool matches for work, the right bus at the right time to get to your destination, and even cycling routes and travel times. The app is available as an interactive website or in the Google Play and Apple app stores. Once you start recording your trips to earn points, you can redeem them for coupons, discounts, and more. You'll even get 1,000 points just for signing up.

The Virginia Trip Planner is a web-based tool designed to cater to a wide range of travel preferences and needs. Whether you're planning your daily commute, a group outing, or a doctor's visit, the Virginia Trip Planner has you covered for multi-modal options and includes integrated accessibility features, ensuring inclusivity for all passengers.

For more information about RIDE Solutions, contact Christy Straight at cstraight@nrvc.org or Kim Bonner at kbonner@nrvc.org. To learn more about how RIDE Solutions can help commuters find transportation alternatives to driving alone, visit: <https://ridesolutions.org/>

NRV Recovery Ecosystem Renewal

The Regional Commission supported the NRV Recovery Ecosystem program to gather input and build the proposal and budget for submission of the Year 2 Renewal for the regional opioid abatement response. The renewal proposal was submitted to the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) on April 1st with year 2 funding expected by July 1, 2024. This work builds on the initial year of the 5-year program of funding awarded last spring and funded in January. The initial funding and renewal proposals support project elements ranging from supportive housing, transportation and education for expanded treatment, innovations in recovery, as well as integration of evidence-based harm reduction. In the year 2 renewal package, the local governments and service partners will continue to collaborate, educate and integrate access to services to build a sustainable ecosystem of recovery in the localities across the New River Valley.



For more information about this program or specific programs underway and proposed, contact Holly Lesko, hlesko@nrvc.org.

NRVRC Welcomes Kyle Knight!

Kyle Knight joined the New River Valley Regional Commission to fill the recently created Regional Innovation Officer position that is focused on the AM2 Tech Hub initiative in Additive Manufacturing and Applied Materials. Kyle comes to the Regional Commission from a diverse background in technology entrepreneurship, small business advising, go-to-market strategy and partnership development. Last year, he began his entrepreneurship journey by founding a technology startup focused on innovative solutions to democratize insurance advisership.



Kyle holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biblical Literature from Taylor University in Upland, IN. Recently, Kyle has begun exploring data science and AI development as he continues to hone his advisory and business mentorship skills. He currently serves as a business mentor for The Gauntlet accelerator and competition, hosted by The Advancement Foundation. Kyle and his wife have a young son and a dog. In their free time, they enjoy exploring the Appalachian Trail, reading, and going on adventures exploring communities in the greater region. Kyle is eager to apply his experience in technology commercialization and partnership development to the Regional Commission's efforts to establish the region as a designated "Tech Hub"; by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. His commitment to promoting collaboration over competition aligns with the Regional Commission's goals of driving regional prosperity through innovation. Kyle can be contacted at kknight@nrvc.org.

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New River Valley Regional Commission | nrvc.org



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