

Partnership for a LIVABLE ROANOKE VALLEY

Newsletter February 2016



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I am very excited to officially be on board as Director of the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley. We have a solid community-based plan and some excellent champions to help us move forward, including Jake Gilmer, the new Executive Director of the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board. Jake did an outstanding job as the Regional Commission's go-to person for Livable Roanoke Valley the last four years. Now with his move to head-up Workforce, Jake is an essential partner in many of the critical pieces of our success. Inside, Jake details practical strategies to improve our region's workforce and economic development investments.

Last month, the Roanoke Times published an article highlighting a VCU poll that found, "A majority of Virginians would support restructuring high school to align coursework for juniors and seniors with the needs of employers." In addition respondents see "community colleges as a key catalyst for workforce readiness." This poll matches Action D.4 of the plan, "Create relevant career pathways." This focus is more important than ever if our region is to meet the demands of employers.

We're also encouraged about potential developments around Strategy E, "Prepare students for careers in high-demand fields." We called for the formation of a regional task force to explore the feasibility of a regional career and technical education program (CTE). Delegate Chris Head of Roanoke submitted a budget amendment to the House of Delegates this session that provides a one-time allocation of \$100,000 in the first year from the general fund to develop a regional Career and Technical Governor's School Center in the Roanoke Valley area. We are hopeful this funding will be approved so our area can provide good career paths for our children and meet the workforce needs of the region.

In the weeks ahead, I will be reaching out to our champions and partners, eager to hear what is working and how we can help. As we do our part to push the PLRV plan forward, we hope you'll get re-engaged with the plan and re-energized by the momentum we're gaining for positive change in our region.

Lisa Garst

Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Director



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Protect the beauty and ecology of the Roanoke Valley.
- Provide a healthy and equitable quality of life for all of our citizens.
- Celebrate the diversity of our region and its contribution to our culture.
- Embrace both our traditions and new innovations to create economic vitality.
- Anticipate and adapt to change with responsible leadership.
- Build on the assets of our local communities to strengthen our regional collaboration.
- Invest in regional infrastructure improvements that meet the communities' needs of the 21st century.
- Promote excellence in education, job training, and a culture of lifelong learning.

REGION'S GUIDING GOALS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create jobs, increase incomes and grow businesses to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Roanoke Region.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Provide access to job training and educational advancement by fostering a culture of lifelong learning for people of all ages and abilities.

HEALTHY ROANOKE VALLEY

Mobilize community resources to improve access to care, coordination of services, and promote a culture of wellness.

NATURAL ASSETS

Work collaboratively to preserve the historic, cultural, and natural assets of the region.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - Provide access to job training and educational advancement by fostering a culture of lifelong learning for people of all ages and abilities.

Under New Leadership, The WVWDB Implements Strategies To Align Regional Workforce And Economic Development Investments



The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board (WVWDB) recently entered in an agreement with the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development to provide quarterly workforce indicator data for the region, as well as customized workforce analytics to support workforce and economic development. The first report will be released in March 2016.



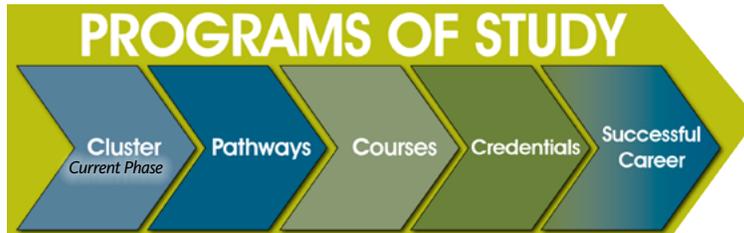
training investments. The Committee will reach out to these key industry sectors to better understand their current and future workforce needs and coordinate their findings with its workforce training providers and other economic development partners.

ACTION D.2
Develop and maintain a data exchange

ACTION D.3
Create industry sector partners

The WVWDB has also formed a Target Sector Committee that will be using the workforce data to recommend in demand industry sectors and occupations to be supported through the Board's

For more information about the WVWDB, visit: <http://westernvaworkforce.com>



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - Create jobs, increase incomes and grow business to improve the quality of life for all residents in the Roanoke Region

STRATEGY C
Cultivate and market outdoor and cultural amenities

Virginia's Blue Ridge Shines in the 2016 Best of the Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine Awards

Local businesses, events, and experiences from Virginia's Blue Ridge were well represented in the 2016 Best of the Blue Ridge Awards by Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine. The publication recently announced its winners after seeking the opinions of its readers about the best destinations, personalities, events, and outdoor businesses in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The award-winners from Virginia's Blue Ridge beat out competition from the 10 states that are covered in Blue Ridge Outdoors and it highlights the dynamic outdoor culture that continues to thrive and expand in our region.



Courtesy Roanoke Convention and Visitor's Bureau

The awards span 87 different topics, ranging from hole-in-the-wall restaurants to best outdoor personalities and trails. Here are our winners from Virginia's Blue Ridge:

DESTINATIONS CATEGORY

- Best A.T. Section:
McAfee Knob - Winner
- Best Paddling River:
James River - Honorable Mention
- Best Biking Trail:
Carvins Cove Trails - Winner
- Best Flatwater:
Smith Mountain Lake - Runner Up
- Best Place for Outdoor Singles:
Roanoke - Winner
- Best Place to Raise An Outdoor Family:
Roanoke - Winner
- Best State in Southeast/Mid-Atlantic for Adventure: Virginia - Winner

PERSONALITIES CATEGORY

- Most Inspiring Outdoor Person:
Pete Eshelman - Winner
- Bike Mechanic:
Chris Heslin - Runner Up
- Best Physical Therapist:
Tyler Bowersock - Honorable Mention

BUSINESSES CATEGORY

- Best Yoga Studio:
Uttara Yoga - Winner
- Best Climbing Gym:
River Rock Climbing - Winner
- Best Outdoor Hangout:
Parkway Brewing - Winner

- Best Riverside Pub:
Wasena City Taproom - Winner
- Best Running Store:
Fleet Feet Sports - Runner Up
- Best Outdoor Shop:
Walkabout Outfitters - Winner

EVENTS CATEGORY

- Toughest Race:
Blue Ridge Marathon - Winner
- Rowdiest Fest:
Go Fest - Honorable Mention
- Best Blue Ridge Festival:
Go Fest - Winner
- Best Adventure Race:
Wild Gear Chase - Winner

- Best Triathlon:
On the Trails Triathlon - Runner Up
- Best Running Event:
Blue Ridge Marathon - Winner

FOOD & DRINK CATEGORY

- Best Food & Drink:
Texas Tavern - Runner Up
- Best Coffee Shop:
Sweet Donkey - Runner Up
- Best Vineyard:
Chateau Morrisette - Winner
- Best Burger:
Jack Brown's - Honorable Mention

The Town Of Clifton Forge to Receive \$50,000 to Plan for Improving Broadband in Alleghany, Botetourt and Craig Counties, the City Of Covington.

In late October, Governor Terry McAuliffe announced \$50,000 in grants through the Virginia Telecommunication Planning Initiative (VATPI) for Alleghany, Botetourt and Craig counties, the city of Covington and the town of Clifton Forge. The VATPI program provides funding for communities to develop a comprehensive community-based telecommunications plan.

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission assisted the Town of Clifton Forge with drafting the grant and will provide ongoing technical support in managing the grant.

“Access to high-quality Internet connectivity is one of the most critical tools for communities to grow, diversify and build a new Virginia economy,” said Governor McAuliffe. “Providing adequate telecommunications in a community is essential for preparing our students and workforce, attracting businesses, improving medical services and providing a better quality of life for all Virginians.”

“Quick, reliable and affordable access to the Internet is a prerequisite for community and economic development efforts throughout the Commonwealth,” said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Mau-

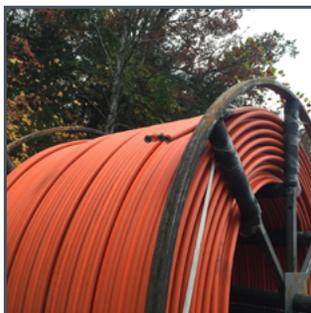
rice Jones. “The Virginia Telecommunication Planning Initiative will help localities develop the telecommunications plan necessary to prosper in the 21st century economy.”

Projects were selected through a two-phased process. Phase one was a letter of interest, and phase two was a detailed response. Twenty-two letters of interest were received, representing 43 communities. Of those 22 letters of interest, 13 applicants were selected to participate in phase II.

The Governor awarded a total of \$500,000 in grants through the Virginia Telecommunication Planning Initiative (VATPI). Funding for the grants was allocated in a three-tier system. Tier one included grants up to \$75,000, tier two had grants for up to \$50,000, and tier three has grants up to \$35,000.

The level of funding awarded was based on the telecommunication planning needs of the communities. Thirteen applications totaling more than \$800,000 in funding were received.

For more information about this grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development: visit: <http://goo.gl/JuYXrj>



Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority Publishes Proposed Rates For Its Fiber Network

The Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority's first proposed rates have been released and a public hearing for comments will take place on Friday March 18, 2016 at 8:30am.



The authority is currently building out a 47-mile fiber broadband network that will run throughout Roanoke, Salem and parts of Roanoke and Botetourt counties.

Initially, the authority will exclusively target large, major customers such as schools, government bodies, health care entities and Internet service carriers. The presence of a new network is expected to boost the economy by attracting businesses that rely heavily on high-speed broadband.

While the broadband authority has already received several letters of intent from organizations in education and government to use the fiber broadband, it is anticipating demand for its services to more fully develop as the fiber network is completed.

The authority plans to provide a “dedicated” network to each of its customers, which enables broadband authority customers to buy specific bandwidth that they don't have to share. Customers who buy home or business plans with private carriers such as Cox Com-

munications and Comcast do not have a dedicated network and are sharing it with other customers. This dedicated network allows for the faster transmission of data.

The network is expected to be active in March, but actual broadband services may not be available until June.

The various rates for broadband services are within the range of other municipal broadband operators across the state and allows for the authority to maintain competitive pricing. Options for small non-profits to large multi-national organizations and everywhere in between will allow for clients to establish speeds and service features that best suit their needs.

While the broadband authority isn't directly targeting homes, there may be opportunities for providers like Cox and Verizon to use the network to provide last-mile service to residents.

A public hearing on the proposed rates is scheduled for the authority board's 8:30 a.m. March 18 meeting. The meeting will be held at the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission office on Luck Avenue in Roanoke.

For more information about the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority rates, visit: <http://highspeedroanoke.net>

HEALTHY ROANOKE VALLEY

Develop a centralized coordination of care system that connects residents to medical resources available in the community and helps these residents enter and navigate through the system.

Star City Smiles

Healthy Roanoke Valley, an initiative of the United Way of Roanoke Valley, has received a \$100,000 grant from the DentaQuest Foundation to integrate oral health into its outreach efforts. As part of the DentaQuest Foundation's inaugural campaign focusing exclusively on grassroots engagement, Healthy Roanoke Valley (HRV) was one of 20 grantees from six states receiving this funding. The aim of the initiative is to reinforce to our stakeholders and those we serve the importance of proper oral health care to overall health. Our current funding will be used to assess the oral health landscape in the City of Roanoke.

STRATEGY G
Improve Access to
Healthcare



The Grassroots Engagement initiative is a part of the DentaQuest Foundation's Oral Health 2020 goals which include:

1. Eradicate dental disease in children
2. Incorporate oral health into primary education system
3. Include an adult dental benefit in publicly funded health coverage
4. Build a comprehensive national oral health measurement system
5. Integrate oral health into person-centered healthcare
6. Improve the public perception of the value of oral health to overall health

To learn more about the national Oral Health 2020 movement, go to: <http://dentaquestfoundation.org/oh2020>

Partnership for a LIVABLE ROANOKE VALLEY

To schedule a group presentation about "Livable Roanoke Valley and Regional Cooperation" or to share updates about your organization's efforts, send info to:

PLRV Director, Lisa Garst
lisagarst@livableroanoke.org
540.343.4417
313 Luck Ave.
Roanoke, VA 24010

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create jobs, increase incomes and grow businesses to improve the quality of life for all residents in the Roanoke Region

Dates for 2016 eXperience Announced

The 2016 eXperience kicks off with an evening reception in Blacksburg on Thursday, April 7 for local young professionals and professionals who live in other cities and states, but who want to see what the New River and Roanoke Valleys have to offer professionally and socially.

Then, on Friday, April 8, we'll get together in Roanoke for workshops and panel discussions held by local entrepreneurs and community leaders from business, government and non-profits. The event will also showcase the quality of life of the Roanoke & New River Valleys to young professionals who may relocate here or those who already live here but are unaware of the many amenities in the region.

ACTION B.2
Bring Alumni Back to
the Region



THURSDAY, April 7
Kick-Off Reception in Blacksburg

FRIDAY, April 8

In addition to panel discussions, breakout sessions and a scavenger hunt, eXperience will feature plenty of opportunities to build connections with other young professionals and executives in the region. Representatives and leaders from Rack-space, Interactive Achievement, Floydfest, Aerotek, Big Lick Entertainment, Neathawk Dubuque & Packett, and others will offer attendees a unique look at the opportunities and organizations that help shape our region.

8:30A-9:15A Registration and Networking Breakfast	DEVELOPING YOU 11:00A-11:20A Keynote, TBD
9:15A - 9:30A Welcome and Kick-Off	11:30A-12:15P Breakout 1: Money, Money, Money- TBD Breakout 2: Social Responsibility- Kris Hodges, Floydfest Breakout 3: Entrepreneurial Mindset- TBD
DEVELOPING US 9:30A-10A Keynote- Secretary Maurice Jones, Virginia Department of Commerce and Trade	12:30P-1:45P Let's Do Lunch
10A-10:45 A Breakout 1- Landing that Gig: Liz Layman, Aerotek	DEVELOPING FUN 2P-2:45P Facilitator: JD Sutphin, Big Lick Entertainment
Breakout 2- Organizations + YPs: Better Together: Jonathan Hagmaier, Interactive Achievement	2:45P-3:30P eXperience Roanoke Scavenger Hunt
Breakout 3- Grassroots Economic Development: Carrie Cousins, Roanoke Regional Partnership, and Michael Galliher, Deschutes to Roanoke campaign	3:30P eXperience After Hours

For sponsorships and registration information visit:
<http://experienceyp.wix.com/roanokeblacksburg>