



June 2024 Update

2024 Annual NRVRC Awards Nominations Are 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 **August 13th**. Award recipients will be honored at our annual dinner event in the fall. 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](#)

[Citizen of the Valley](#)

[Friend of the Valley](#)

NRVRC Staff Retreat

In May, the Regional Commission team held a staff retreat at Mountain Lake Lodge which was a day full of getting to know each other better, the communities we serve, and concluded with a service project in Pembroke. Shelley Fortier served as our facilitator as we focused on decision making styles and working in teams. We concluded the day with a service project at the Ruritan Park in Pembroke helping to paint an indoor space and performing outside clean-up getting it ready for the busy warmer months. Significant thanks to Mountain Lake Lodge for being an excellent host and Shelley for being a facilitator extraordinaire!



Regional Economic Strategy Update & Economic Insights

The Regional Commission maintains the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) report, annually updating economic data and aligning strategies with current goals and initiatives of the region. The RES document qualifies the region for funding assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration (EDA). A stakeholder committee of public and private sector representatives appointed by the Regional Commission actively participates in the planning process.

The RES process reviews economic conditions for NRVRC jurisdictions as the committee prioritizes economic development projects the region can undertake to address community needs. For example, recent data and economic trends in the New River Valley reveals the following:

- Nearly four years since the pandemic began in the U.S., its repercussions remain a significant source of uncertainty in understanding what demographic trends will look like for what remains of the 2020s.
- Inflation continues to impact both residential and commercial projects, with costs now well above the original estimates. This upward trend in expenses not only affects budget planning and financial forecasting, but also extends project timelines and challenges the feasibility of future developments.
- Entrepreneurship is booming with total U.S. business applications doubling in 2020 compared to recent years. Since 2016, the NRV shows a 48.9% increase in new business applications, highlighting the need for a robust support system including access to financial resources, comprehensive business education and mentorship programs, and an ecosystem that encourages innovation and provides networking opportunities.

For an in depth review of our region's economic insights, we encourage you to read the [New River Valley Economic Strategy](#). In July, a fully updated report will be released.

Should you have any questions or wish to review information related to the RES, please contact me at lprippy@nrvc.org.



Trauma and Resiliency Basics Training

Understanding trauma and building resilience are crucial skills in various fields in every community. NRV Recovery Ecosystem staff Julie Fox and Ryan Stanley joined NRV CARES Director Andi Golusky to provide Trauma and Resiliency Basics training for Giles County Administration staff. “We had our maintenance supervisor, county attorney, grant writers, emergency services director, safety coordinator, and some admin staff. It is our hope that regardless of who our staff is interacting with, that we would consider the potential trauma that causes people to act the way they do, and extend a little more grace and empathy” said Giles County Administrator Chris McKlarney.

This was one of many scheduled trainings the NRV Resiliency Network is providing to organizations across the New River Valley. Offering free trauma training for everyone can help raise awareness and equip people with essential skills to support individuals who have experienced trauma. Anyone or any organization interested in participating in Trauma and Resiliency Basics training through our local Trauma Informed Community Network, the NRV Resiliency Network, can contact Julie Fox jfox@nrvc.org.

Giles County Celebrates Grand Opening of New Trail Center

May 10, 2024, Giles County invited regional partners to herald the grand opening of the Giles County Trail Center. The new trail hub is located on the historic grounds of Mountain Lake Lodge and connects visitors to outdoor recreation opportunities and local community businesses. The 3,000 square foot Trail Center is specifically designed to help users shape a unique itinerary that allows visitors to discover all that Giles County and the greater New River Valley offer. In addition to trail maps, brochures, and local videos, the center also provides changing rooms and restroom facilities that are open daily from 9 a.m. to dusk.

The Giles County Trail Center is a \$1.2 million project that was funded through the Appalachian Regional Commission, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division and Virginia Department of Transportation, Giles County, and Giles County Industrial Development Authority. Federal funding was secured and administered by Friends of Southwest Virginia and the Regional Commission was pleased to support the project with pre-contract activities and wage compliance.

For more information about the Trail Center visit Giles County’s website: <https://virginiasmtnplayground.com/new-giles-county-trail-center-at-mountain-lake-lodge/>

For more information, please contact Elijah Sharp, esharp@nrvc.org.



Tech Hubs Update

The AM2 Tech Hub Consortium's April "All-Hands" meeting highlighted regional advancements in additive manufacturing with a Zoom panel discussion featuring experts from Virginia Tech's DREAMS Lab, MELD Manufacturing, and FasTech, LLC, followed by a tour of MELD Manufacturing. Updates from Virginia Tech's Center for Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) included progress on the consortium's strategic plan and upcoming work group sessions focused on business scale-up, talent development, and lab-to-market commercialization. Industry partners emphasized the need for skilled workers, and proposed initiatives such as apprenticeship programs and expanded educational opportunities. The consortium is planning its next "All-Hands" meeting in a similar format of a Zoom panel discussion followed by a tour in Danville to learn more about their resources and industry. This meeting will be held on August 13th, 10am-2pm. In the coming weeks, the program will be focused on building and strengthening consortium relations as well as finalizing the website and branding.



For more information or to be added to the invitation for our next All-Hands meeting, contact Kyle Knight at kknight@nrvc.org.



Narrows Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

Narrows Parks and Recreation Department is kicking off their Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan with the help of the Regional Commission. The team is excited to engage with the community to envision the future of

recreation in the Town of Narrows! Follow along at engageNRV.org.

For more information, please contact Kathleen Armstrong, karmstrong@nrvc.org.

[Visit our website](#)

