

# COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2018 - 2022



**MOUNT  
ROGERS**  
SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

Prepared by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission for the Counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe, the Cities of Bristol and Galax, and the Towns of Abingdon, Chilhowie, Damascus, Fries, Glade Spring, Hillsville, Independence, Marion, Rural Retreat, Saltville, Troutdale, and Wytheville.

*Funded through the Economic Development Administration.*



*A different side of Virginia*

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# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 General Description

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The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC), also known as the Mount Rogers Economic Development District, is comprised of the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe and the independent cities of Bristol and Galax. While each jurisdiction in the district retains its individual character, they do share many common features. All of the jurisdictions are similar in that the region is mountainous. The region is divided into two physiographic provinces: the Blue Ridge Province and the Ridge and Valley Province. The jurisdictions share many major transportation routes and are interdependent with regard to labor exchange (i.e. commuting patterns), retail trade, shared problems, and shared opportunities.

In all, the Planning District totals approximately 2,800 square miles and the 2016 estimated population is 188,993 (Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service). Population density is approximately 67.5 persons per square mile or 9.48 acres per person. In 1990, density was 64.2 persons per square mile or 9.97 acres per person. Although these figures continue to be relatively stable, they are also slightly misleading. Over 50 percent of all land in the district has slopes in excess of 15 percent. If lands with slope limitations were excluded from the equation, the density would rise above 138.7 persons per square mile. This is still a relatively low density, and it indicates the existence of developable land. The physical environment is largely unspoiled, and may be a key factor in stimulation of regional economic vitality. The natural barriers that the region has coped with have, historically, resulted in long-lasting infrastructure, income and employment effects. Thus, the region is concerned with the availability of jobs, finding profitable new and alternative agricultural products and markets, the development of cultural and recreational tourism, and developing cross-sector economic linkages, especially those that can take advantage of the region's natural resources in sustainable, non-consumptive ways. Even though the district has struggled with economic and infrastructure problems (such as water, sewer, roads, industrial sites, high development cost of land due to topography), significant opportunities for economic development do exist.

Today, advanced telecommunications networks, such as the Wired Road in Carroll and Grayson counties and the city of Galax, are opening the region's small communities to high-tech business that would be attracted by the region's low costs of living, scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and relative absence of crime, pollution, traffic congestion, and other problems that characterize urban metro areas. The most important asset in the Mount Rogers region is the workforce. To be competitive, the region must remain focused on education and training levels to meet technological and information advances. Additionally, the district must continue to push for transportation access improvements and maintain a competitive cost of doing business.

## 1.2 History

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Officially established July 1, 1969, the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission is authorized under the Virginia Regional Cooperation Act as one of twenty-one planning district commissions in the state. The Commission is established for the purpose of promoting orderly and efficient development of

physical, social, and economic elements of the region. This purpose of the planning district commissions is set forth in the Code of Virginia, Section 15.2-4207. The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission serves the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, Wythe and the independent cities of Bristol and Galax.

The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission is made up entirely of local citizens appointed to their office by the governing bodies of participating jurisdictions. These jurisdictions include 6 counties, 2 independent cities, and 12 towns. In accordance with state law, slightly over half of the commissioners are locally elected officials -- mayors, members of the town and city councils, and members of boards of supervisors. The rest are a representative of local planning commissions and the citizens-at-large in their communities, appointed by the county board of supervisors or city council.

The selection process to choose commissioners is as follows: each of the six counties and two cities selects one member of its governing body, one member of its local planning commission, and one citizen representative to serve on the Commission. Each incorporated town with a population of more than 3,500 nominates one member of its town council as a representative. In addition, each county nominates a member of the town council from the towns in its jurisdiction with less than 3,500 persons. According to the 2010 Census, the non-white population of the Mount Rogers Planning District is extremely small, approximately 4.6 percent of the total population. This represents a 0.03 percent growth in non-white population between 2000 and 2010. To ensure a minority voice on the Commission, the Commission amended its Charter and By-Laws, effective July 1, 1977. The amendment to Article II, Section 2 of the Charter established a system of appointing minority members. Minority members are appointed by the member jurisdictions on a revolving basis to serve a four-year term. Should a jurisdiction choose not to appoint a minority member representative, the alphabetical rotation will be advanced until an appointment is made. The full 38-member Commission meets every April. An Executive Committee chosen by the following method conducts the month-to-month business of the Commission.

At the April meeting of the full Commission, county and city delegates caucus and select one member each to serve as their representative on the Executive Committee. There are 13 members in all: one representative from each of the six counties and two cities, plus the chairman, the vice-chairman, the treasurer, the immediate past chairman, and the minority representative. The Executive Committee is authorized by the Commission to conduct all business that the Commission ordinarily would conduct. All actions of the Executive Committee are subject to approval by the full Commission.

## 1.3 Partnerships

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The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and its 38-member Board of Directors, since the founding of planning district commissions in 1969, has been a catalyst for building regional partnerships among the eight governmental jurisdictions plus towns in the district. As an intermediary and liaison to Federal Agencies such as the Economic Development Administration, Appalachian Regional Commission, and United States Department of Agriculture, the MRPDC has been successful in securing hundreds of millions of dollars in public investment via grants for economic development, infrastructure, operation and equipment, facilities, etc., creating thousands of jobs and stimulating private and local investment. The MRPDC's Loan Funds Program has provided over \$6.5 million in low interest financing

for 68 manufacturing and service-oriented startups and expansions to assist in the creation of 708 new jobs and the retention of 1,161 existing jobs. There are many organizations that are integral to the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission's success.

The following are some of the most notable organizations:

**The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board** is supported by federal and state funds and works with local service agencies to train workers and place them in available positions. The NRMRWIB serves the people of Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Wythe, and Washington counties and the cities of Bristol, Galax, and Radford.

**Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance (VIAA)/Mount Rogers Development Partnership** and its Board of Directors has been a central resource for recruitment efforts in attracting new and expanding industries to the region. Serving the five counties and one city, the economic organization has provided the link to the state's Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and the marketing representatives and a broad array of services available to local areas for economic development. All the localities in the Mount Rogers Planning District participate in the VIAA partnership except for Washington County and the City of Bristol. Those localities recently decided to conduct their own efforts to attract new and expanding industry.

The three **Small Business Development Centers**, located at Virginia Highlands Community College, Wytheville Community College, and the Crossroads Institute in Galax, serve in an advisory and technical resource capacity to assist new and expanding businesses and entrepreneurs with business plans, financial analysis, and training in operating business. In addition to these centers, there are several small business challenges/small business pop up classes happening across the region. The Town of Marion, located in Smyth County, has received national recognition for its Pop-Up Marion small business program, assisting entrepreneurs interested in starting their own business. This program has transformed the Downtown Marion over the last decade, bringing the store front vacancy rate from over

17 percent down to less than 5 percent. Other localities offer similar programs offered by the Chamber of Commerce or other entities in that locality.

**Virginia's Department of Business Assistance** through its regional office in Abingdon provides a broad array of services and state assistance to existing business in the region. Plus, the Industrial Training Division provides on-site training services to new and expanding manufacturers.

**The Southwest Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence** was established in 2015 to offer advanced training in machining, welding, and industrial maintenance. The program is specialized to meet the needs of existing manufacturers in the region and to enhance the skills of the existing and upcoming workforce to ensure the region has an advantage when attracting new and expanding industries. The regional Virginia Employment Commission offices and the Vocational Technical Skill Centers in each locality play a vital role in the supply of skilled and trained labor. The Planning District's regional airports provide gateways for commerce and enhance the marketability of the region for new plant locations: Virginia Highlands Regional Airport (Abingdon); Smyth-Wythe Regional Airport (Marion-

Groseclose); and the Twin Counties Airport (Carroll County), and the larger Tri-Cities Regional Airport (Bristol).

The **Blue Ridge Tourism Association** provides a regional partnership for marketing and promotion of tourism and serves as a resource for enhancing the marketability of the region. The District Three Governmental Cooperative provides vital services for improving the quality of life across the region and vital public transit services. The Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program provides vital educational resources to the adult population, age 18 and older, to address adult illiteracy and low educational attainment and foster a more educated workforce.

**People Incorporated**, a designated Community Action Agency, provides micro-business assistance to small entrepreneurs and start-up businesses via its Business Start Program. Additionally, the organization provides extensive community development assistance to localities and citizens.

## 1.4 Purpose & Methodology

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The purpose of the Mount Rogers Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is to guide the economic development of the region. The CEDS includes four primary components: an analysis of current economic conditions, identification of threats and opportunities, a regional vision, and a strategy for evaluating the plan's effectiveness. A successful CEDS program will diversify the regional economy and improve the region's quality of life through the creation of new jobs, increased income, improved access to education, and development of physical infrastructure.

The Mount Rogers CEDS program was implemented in 1999 with the first CEDS approved in 2000. Since that time, the CEDS has been updated annually through an annual report sent to the Economic Development Administration. The regional vision outlined in the CEDS has been updated through the Vision 2025 planning process; a series of visioning sessions held across the Mount Rogers Planning District in 2007. The Vision 2025 process included a series of nine visioning sessions held throughout the Mount Rogers Planning District between January and April 2002. The visioning project consisted of collaboration among regional organizations in northeast Tennessee and southwest Virginia; the project resulted in part from the 1999 designation of essentially the same region as an All-America City, a program of the National Civic League. Some of the key players in Vision 2025 included the Tri-Cities TN/VA Regional Partnership, the First Tennessee Development District, and the planning district commissions for the Lenowisco, Mount Rogers, and Cumberland Plateau in Virginia. As a whole the Vision 2025 project covered 17 counties in Tennessee and Virginia, with 39 public input meetings and 1,000 participants. The input generated 7,355 ideas.

In 2016, the Mount Rogers Planning District was selected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to participate in the Stronger Economies Together (SET) program. After a series of strategic planning sessions throughout 2016, a SET plan was established for the region. Upon completion of SET, it was determined by the CEDS committee to incorporate the SET plan as part of the 2018 MRPDC CEDS update. In October and November of 2017, two more strategic planning sessions were conducted with the CEDS Committee to incorporate the SET plan into CEDS, and add additional goals to CEDS. Members of the CEDS Committee included government officials, economic development professionals, educators, non-profit organizations, tourism agencies, and small business

and industry leaders. The committee will continue to meet annually to evaluate the progress of goals and prepare for the next CEDS update.

## 1.5 CEDS Committee and Staff Support

As required by the Economic Development Administration, the MRPDC has organized a CEDS Strategy Committee to assist in development of the CEDS. As required, the CEDS Strategy Committee is made up of more than 50 percent of private sector representatives. The CEDS Strategy Committee includes representatives from government officials, economic development professionals, educators, non-profit organizations, tourism agencies, and small business and industry leaders. Below is a complete list of the CEDS Strategy Committee Members.

Name	Primary Organization	Secondary Organization	Career Field	Locality
Sarah Gillespie (Chair)	Salt of the Earth Farm	Smyth County Chamber of Commerce	Small Business	Smyth
Brian Tibbs (Vice Chair)	The Lincoln Theatre		Arts	Regional
Lennie Gail Mitcham	Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing	Southwest Virginia Manufacturing Center of Excellence	Manufacturing	Regional
Katherine Asbury	Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority	Wired Road	Economic Development	Carroll-Grayson-Galax
Marty Holliday	New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area		Workforce	Regional
Olivia McDonald	Marion Downtown	Town of Marion	Small Business/Economic Development	Smyth
Jim Swartz	Powell Valley National Bank	Washington County Chamber of Commerce	Finance	Smyth/Washington
Jane Mitchell	Wytheville Community College		Education	Wythe/Smyth
David Manley	Westwind Farm	Wythe Joint Industrial Development Authority	Small Business/Economic Development	Wythe
Becky Nave	Virginia Tourism Corporation		Tourism	Regional
Dirk Moore	Blue Hills Market	Town of Glade Spring, Emory & Henry College	Small Business	Washington
Josh Lewis	Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance		Economic Development	Regional

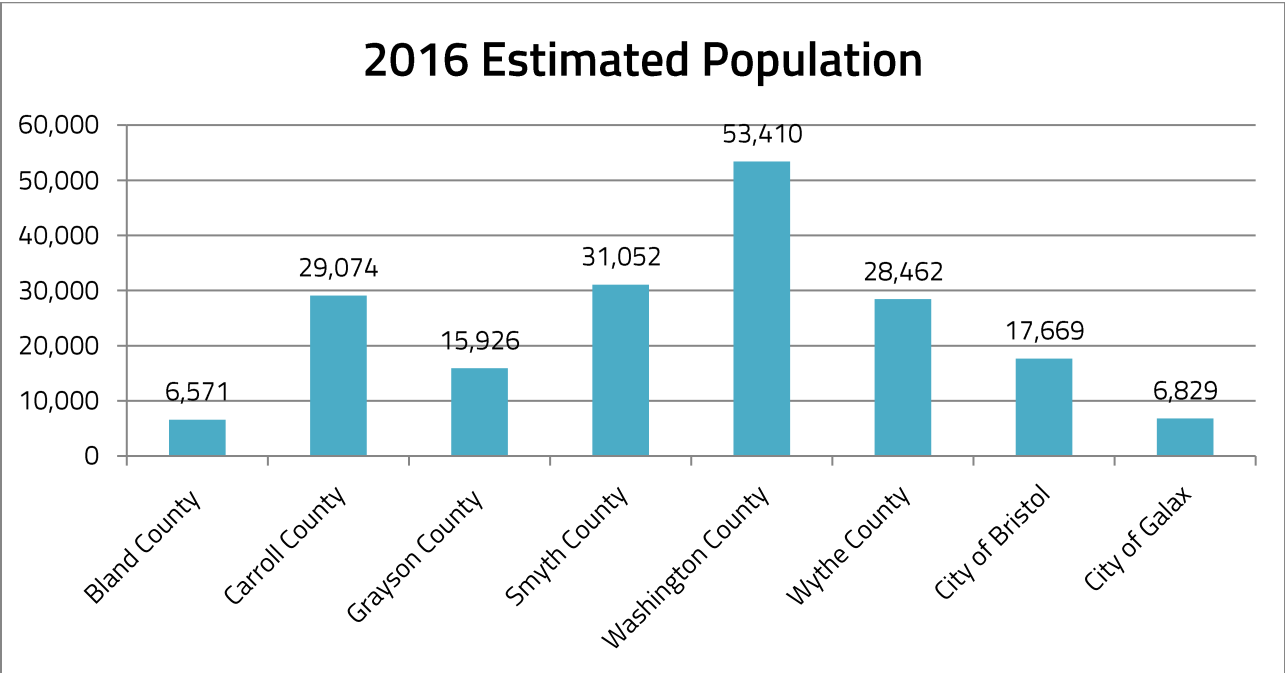
To carry out its programs, the Commission has a professional staff headed by an Executive Director. The Executive Director is hired directly by the Commission. The Executive Director is then responsible for hiring and administering the staff. Currently, the staff is made up of 10 full-time persons and one part-time person trained in a variety of fields. Below is a list of the MRPDC staff.

Aaron Sizemore – Executive Director .....Brian J. Reed – Deputy Director  
Brenda Hooper – Finance Director .....Stephanie Patton – Administrative Assistant  
Rocky Warren – Regional Planner .....James Dillion – GIS Director  
Gavin Blevins – Regional Planner .....Angela Wolfe – Regional Planner  
Josh Smith – Regional Planner..... Mack Owens – Economic Recovery Project Manager  
Jordan Blevins – Regional Planner ..... Lori Deel – Economic Development Specialist

# CHAPTER 2 - REGIONAL PROFILE

## 2.1 Population

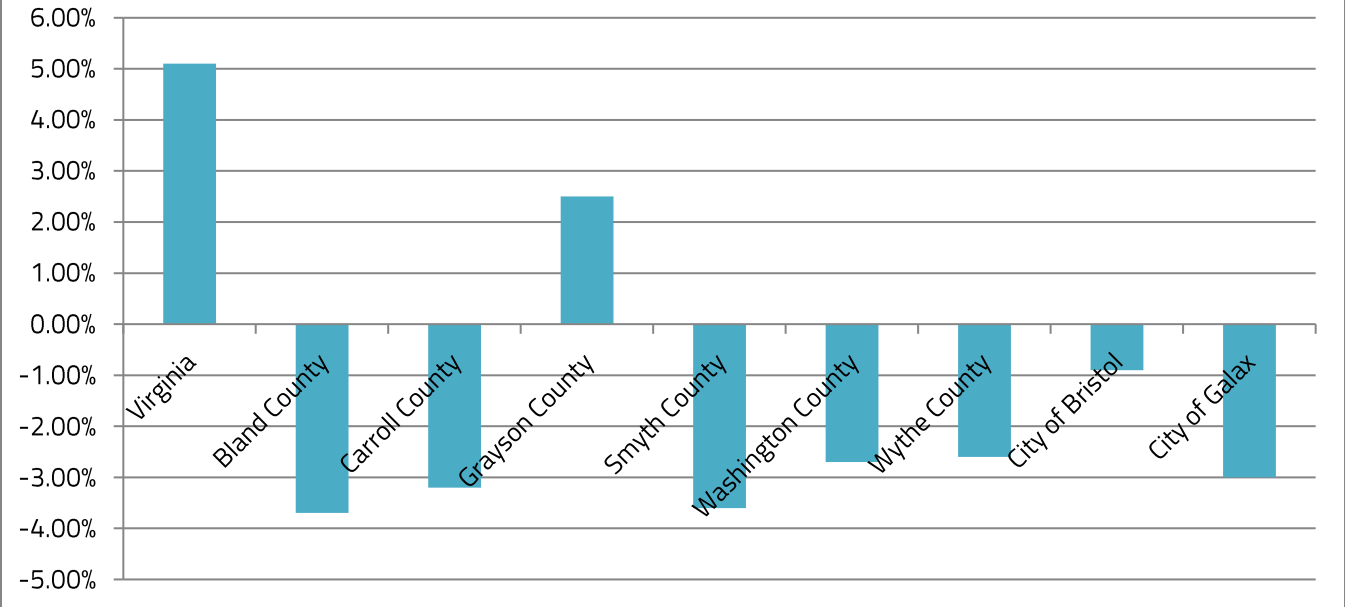
Total population for the Mount Rogers Planning District, as of 2016, is estimated at 188,993, according to estimates by the Weldon Cooper Center. The population is split up by locality as follows:



Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

The population for the Mount Rogers Planning District has decreased by 2.4 percent since 2010, although the population for Virginia, overall, has shown an increase of 5.1 percent. Grayson County has experienced the most growth at a 2.5 percent increase, while Bland, Carroll, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe have all experienced a decline in population. Population projections from the Virginia State Data Center predict a continuing trend of relatively stable population in the Mount Rogers district. The greatest increase in population is predicted to occur in Washington and Wythe Counties, while Grayson and Smyth Counties are predicted to experience the greatest population decline. With some localities gaining and some losing, the overall population remains basically level.

## Change in Population from 2010 to 2016

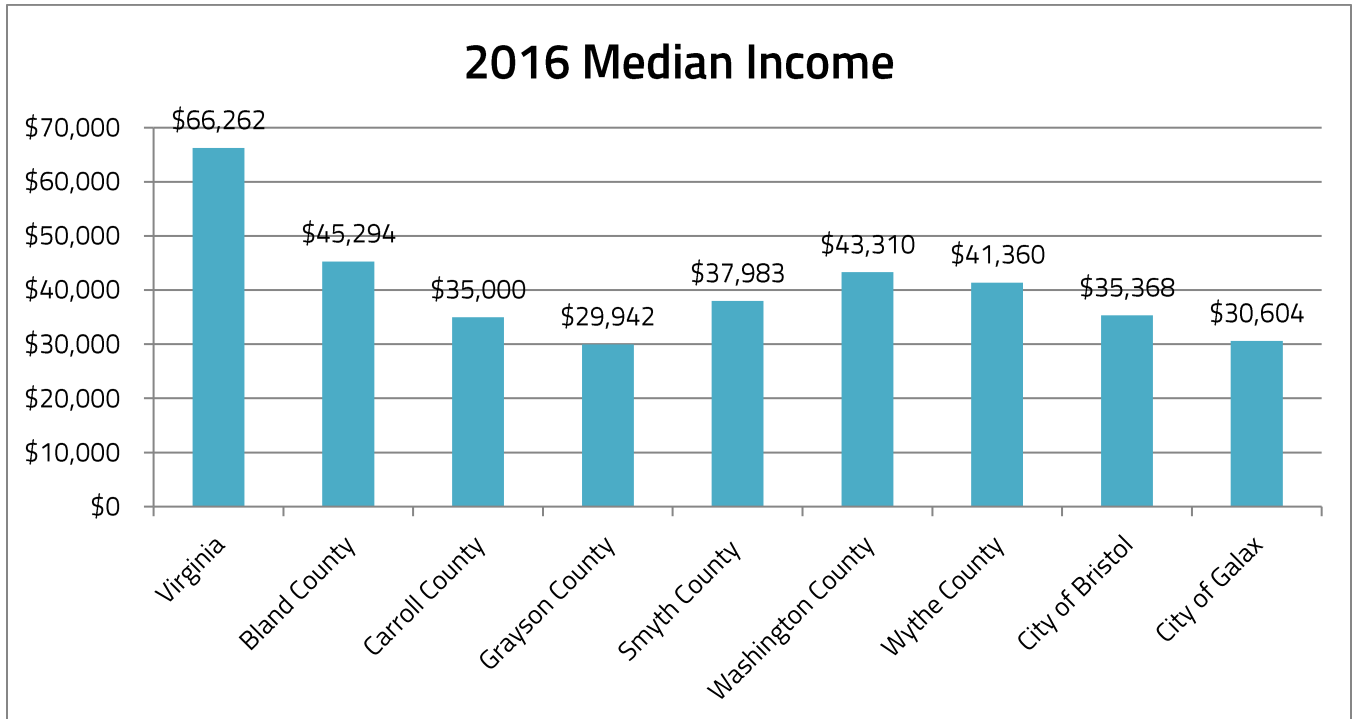


Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

The median age of the population in the Mount Rogers Region was 40.3 years in 2000, which is three years older than the median age in 1990. In 2011, it increased to 43.6, indicating an aging population. That trend is continuing, as the median age in 2016 was 44.9. Overall, the population of the region is significantly older than the Commonwealth. According to the American Community Survey, 17.52 percent of the region’s population were age 65 and over compared to 11.85 percent for Virginia, and 20.73 percent were age 50 to 64 in the region compared to 18.77 percent for Virginia. In contrast, the region was under-represented relative to the state in all age groups below age 50.

## 2.2 Income

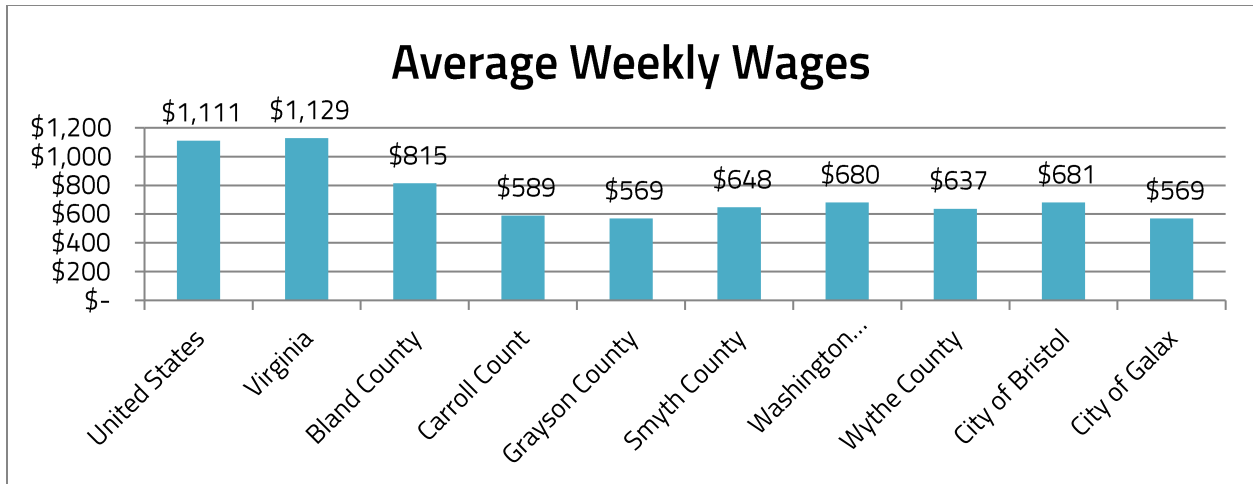
As of 2016, median household income for the MRPD was \$38,519 or 58.1 percent of the state figure of \$66,262. Bland, Washington and Wythe counties were the only localities to be above \$40,000.



Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

## 2.3 Wage Characteristics

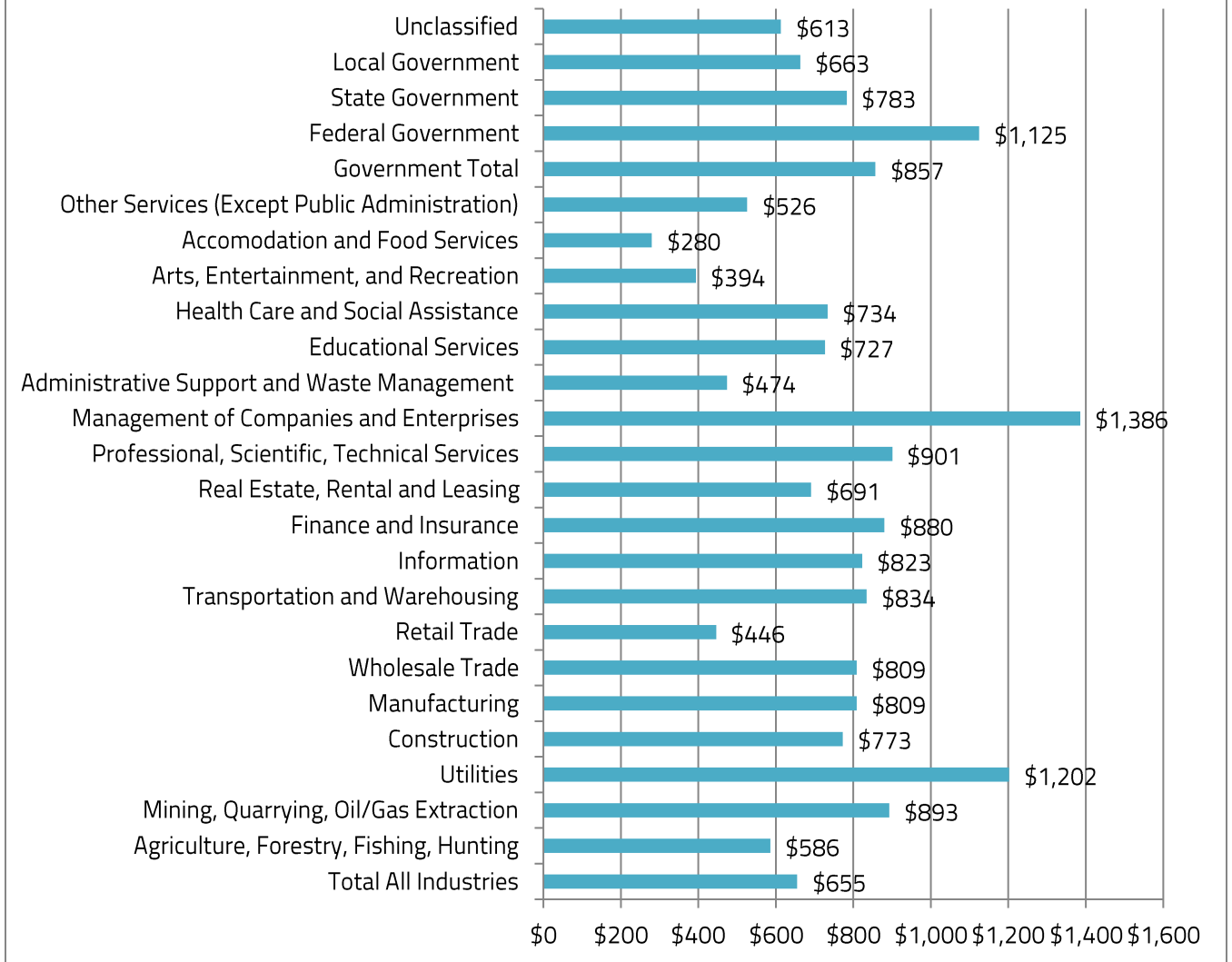
The average weekly wage in the Mount Rogers Planning District increased consistently over the past fifteen years; however, the 2016 regional average weekly wage of \$655 is only 58 percent of the state average and 59 percent of the national average. Carroll and Grayson counties showed especially low average weekly wages, while Bland and Washington counties have traditionally had the highest average weekly wages. The traditionally high weekly wage in Bland County is due primarily to low numbers of establishments and employment combined with high paying industries.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Mount Rogers Planning District has a strong manufacturing base, and the average weekly wage in manufacturing is \$809. Grayson and Carroll counties and the City of Galax had the three lowest weekly manufacturing wages. Recently, The Mount Rogers Planning District has experienced growth in the retail sector, with the majority of the growth being in the Bristol and Washington County areas. The average weekly wage is \$446, with Grayson County having a significantly lower weekly average wage in the retail sector. Wythe and Washington counties and the City of Galax had the highest scores. The following graph identifies the average weekly wage by industry sector.

## Average Weekly Wage by Industry



Source: Virginia Employment Commission

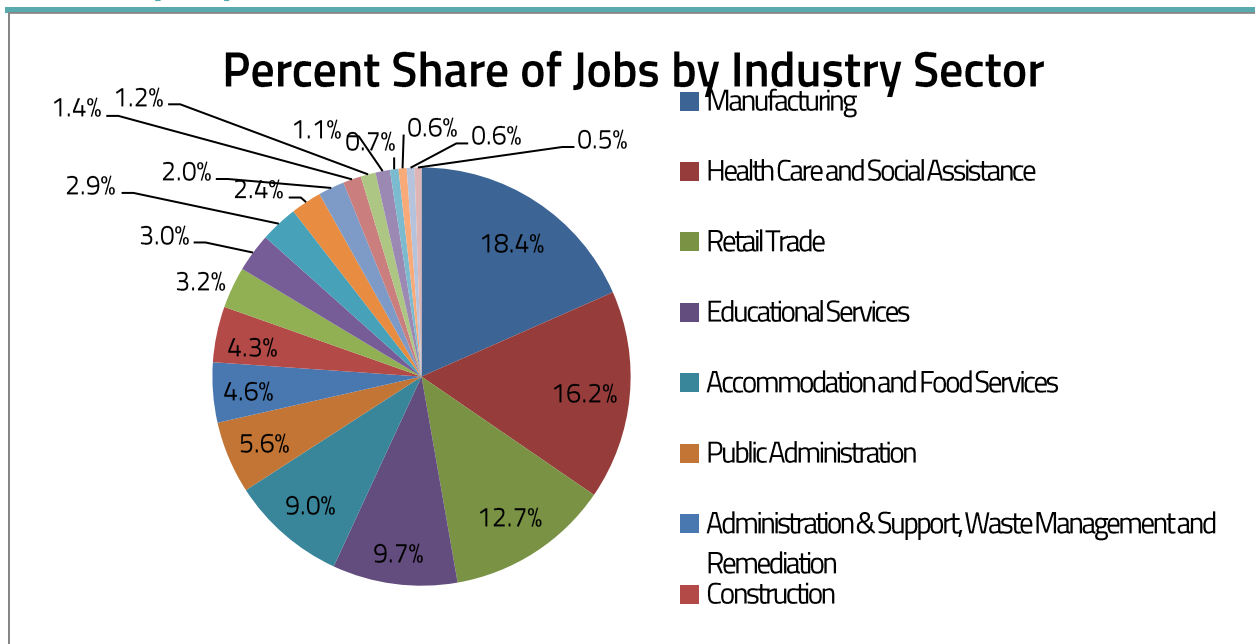
## 2.4 Poverty

According to data from the Census Bureau, the poverty level as of 2016 in the region is 16.6 percent, slightly above the national average of 14.7 percent. The poverty level rate in the Mount Rogers region has consistently remained around the 16 percent range for the last few decades. The largest demographic living in poverty is females between the ages of 35 and 44, followed by females between the ages of 25 and 34. Poverty among children less than 18 years of age is also high. These figures indicate a strong need for affordable daycare facilities and services for working families, especially female householder families. Smyth County, and the Cities of Bristol and Galax have the highest poverty levels in the region.

Locality	Percent of Population in Poverty
Bland County	13.8%
Carroll County	16.3%
Grayson County	17.4%
Smyth County	18.1%
Washington County	14.7%
Wythe County	14.4%
City of Bristol	23.6%
City of Galax	20.5%

Source: United States Census Bureau

## 2.5 Employment Characteristics



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The chart above identifies the top three sectors in the Mount Rogers region as Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Retail Trade. The history of the region is closely tied to its agricultural economy. The communities in the area emerged and evolved around agricultural settlements and agriculture related endeavors that have remained important across time and development. Although it remains an important part of the region’s heritage and economy, employment in agriculture and agricultural services has declined over the decades; however, agriculture continues to be a dominant land use. The distribution of non-agricultural employment in the region continues to be dominated by the manufacturing sector with 18.4 percent of total employment. The next highest employment sector has historically been retail trade, which employs 12.4 percent of the labor force; however, the services sector continues to expand more rapidly than most sectors, with healthcare and social services comprising over 16.2 percent of employment.

Between 1990 and 2000, the manufacturing sector experienced a 12.6 percent decline in employment. That trend worsened between 2000 and 2010, when the sector suffered a 40.68 percent employment decline. The heaviest manufacturing job losses between 1990 and 2008 were in the Food, Textile Products, Apparel, and Furniture subsectors with declines of 73.63 percent, 98.15 percent, 93.06 percent, and 73.30 percent respectively. Plastics & Rubber and Beverage & Tobacco Product manufacturing were two subsectors that experienced job growth over the same period with increases of 78.53 percent and 286.14 percent respectively.

Between 1990 and 2013, the region experienced a significant loss in overall manufacturing employment (40.68 percent) with job growth predominantly in plastics and beverage production. It is clear from the statistics that there has been a steady shift away from traditional manufacturing toward more tech-intensive, high-skilled jobs. Therefore, economic development efforts to diversify the economy and raise the standard wage level must continue. Since 2014, there has been a focus on enhancing current training programs and developing new programs to specifically address the need for training for more high-tech manufacturing jobs. As manufacturing becomes more advanced and requires highly skilled workers, it is imperative for the current and upcoming workforce to be trained for the positions.

The region is fortunate to have added the Southwest Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence (SVAMCOE) in 2015 to help address the need for more advanced training. The SVAMCOE focuses on three specific areas for advanced training in welding, machining, and industrial maintenance. This specialized training, in addition to training programs that already existed in the region has increased the skills of the workforce in the region. This helps the region be more competitive when it comes to attracting new industry and serving the needs of existing industry.

## 2.6 Labor Force and Unemployment

According to 2016 statistics from the Virginia Employment Commission, the labor force participation rate in the Mount Rogers region is 56 percent. The rate is up from 46.8 percent in 2011. The region’s participation rate is below the state average of 67.9 percent. The labor force participation is a good measure of labor availability and untapped workforce. All localities in the region had overall participation rates lower than the regional average, except Grayson, Washington, and Wythe Counties. In 2011, Grayson County had the lowest overall rate at 45.10 percent, however, in 2016 the rate has climbed to over 58.7 percent. At 61 percent, Wythe County had the region’s highest overall participation rate. These statistics indicate that labor supply will be more than adequate in the region as development proceeds in the next five years.

Locality	Labor Participation Rate
Bland County	54.8%
Carroll County	53%
Grayson County	58.7%
Smyth County	54.3%
Washington County	61.1%
Wythe County	57.6%

City of Bristol	53.3%
City of Galax	55.6%
Mount Rogers Region	56%
Virginia	67.9%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Over the past six years, the unemployment rate in the Mount Rogers Planning District has fluctuated from as high as 10.2 percent in 2010 to as low as 5.1 percent in 2016. The unemployment rates for the Mount Rogers region have steadily remained below the state average, and the state average continues to be slightly below the national average. In 2016, the state average was 4 percent and the national average was 4.9 percent. In 2016, Washington County had the lowest rate at 4.5% and Smyth County had the highest rate at 5.8% in the region.

Locality	2016 Unemployment Rate
Bland County	5.2%
Carroll County	5.1%
Grayson County	5.2%
Smyth County	5.8%
Washington County	4.5%
Wythe County	5.7%
City of Bristol	5.1%
City of Galax	5.0%
Mount Rogers Region	5.1%
Virginia	4.0%
United States	4.9%

## 2.7 Educational Attainment

Based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 83 percent of the region’s population over the age of 18 had a high-school diploma, compared with a statewide average of 89 percent. While educational attainment statistics for adults give an indication of previous educational efforts, other statistics better reflect present schooling conditions. High-school dropout rates have remained relatively steady since 2000. Bland and Wythe counties have the highest percentage of students enrolling in any institution of Higher Education within 16 months of earning a high school diploma. The following table shows the breakdown of educational attainment compared to Virginia and the U.S.

Education Level	Mount Rogers Planning District	Virginia	United States
8th Grade or Less	7%	4%	5%
Some High School	11%	7%	8%
High School or GED	36%	26%	28%
Some College	21%	23%	24%
Associate’s Degree	9%	7%	8%
Bachelor’s Degree	11%	20%	17%
Graduate or Professional Degree	6%	13%	10%

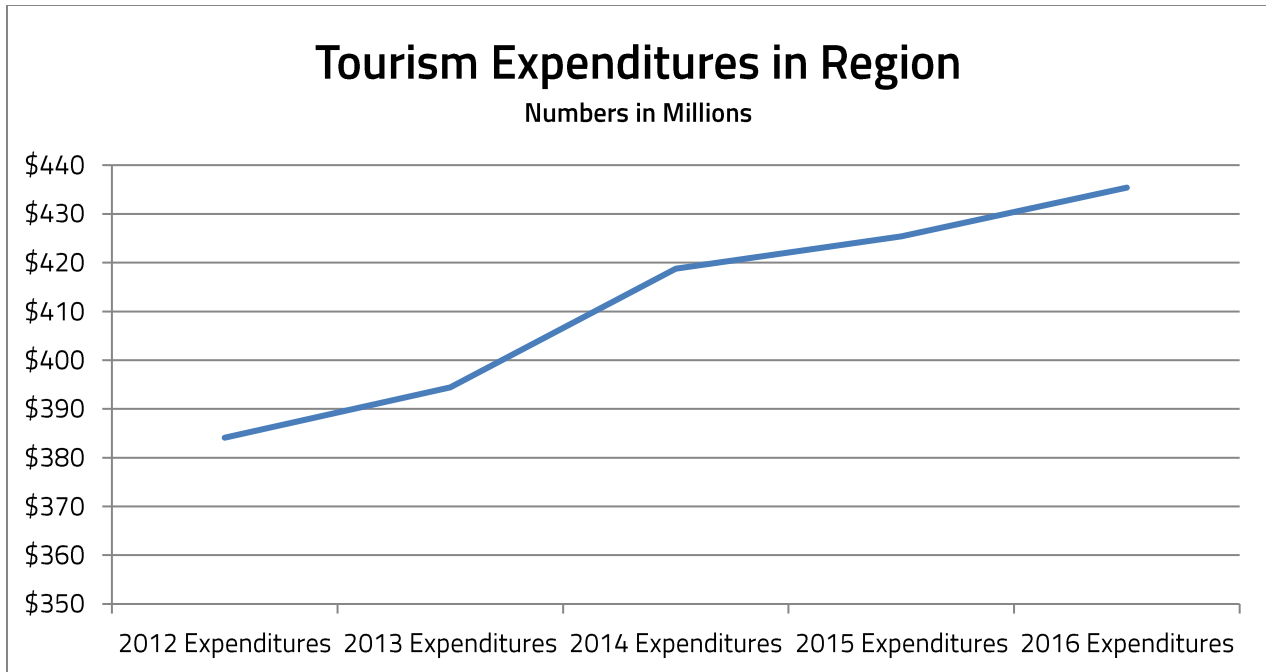
## 2.8 Commuting Patterns

Commuting patterns measure the daily travel between place of residence and place of work. Based on American Community Survey data for 2016, commuting patterns reflect the number and percentage of persons required to travel outside their county of residence to find work. One commuting area is influenced by Interstate 81, which traverses the region from the Wythe County line to Sullivan County, Tennessee. Smyth County had the highest resident retention rate, at 80 percent of its resident workforce, making Smyth County almost industrially self-contained, a core of manufacturing facilities that attracts workers from outside the county as well as providing jobs for county residents. Bland and Grayson counties and Galax City had the highest number of residents working outside of their represented counties, all above 35 percent. Approximately 13 percent of the region’s workforce travels outside the Commonwealth of Virginia for employment. These dynamic statistics reinforce the need for economic development cooperation instead of competition within the Mount Rogers region and adjacent communities, including communities in Tennessee, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

Area	Work Inside County of Residence	Work Outside County of Residence	Work outside of the State of Virginia
Bland County	1,191 (45%)	998 (38%)	441 (17%)
Carroll County	6,806 (51%)	4,083 (31%)	2,558 (19%)
Grayson County	2,547 (44%)	1,961 (35%)	1,173 (21%)
Smyth County	11,703 (80%)	2,426 (16%)	552 (4%)
Washington County	13,844 (59%)	6,289 (27%)	3,362 (14%)
Wythe County	9,084 (69%)	3,562 (27%)	392 (3%)
City of Bristol	3,230 (46%)	1,350 (20%)	2,382 (34%)
City of Galax	3,013 (66%)	1,371 (30%)	156 (4%)

## 2.9 Tourism

The Mount Rogers region has realized significant economic benefits from travel-related expenditures. The establishment of major tourism attractions, such as The Crooked Road: Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail and ‘Round the Mountain’s Artisan Trails, has allowed Southwest Virginia to be marketed as a prime destination for national and international tourists. Due to these developments in addition to other tourist attractions across the region, total traveler expenditures in the Mount Rogers Planning District doubled between 1995 and 2012. In 2012, the Virginia Tourism Corporation estimated \$384.1 million in total traveler expenditures in the Mount Rogers district. In 2016, the estimated total traveler expenditures increased by 12 percent to over \$435.4 million. Tourism has been embraced as a key component of the region’s economy. The Mount Rogers Planning District has the right ingredients - outdoor recreation, historic sites, and a unique heritage - to support its budding tourism industry. With continued infrastructure improvements, and increased travel-related services, tourism will continue to become a vital part of the district’s economy. The City of Bristol had the highest increase in tourism related expenditures, with a 10 percent increase between 2012 and 2016. In 2015, the Southwest Virginia region launched a new branding campaign to drive tourism and brand the Southwest Virginia region as a tourist destination. The number of outdoor recreation opportunities has increased significantly, and the new brand has brought national attention to the region.



Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

Locality	2012 Expenditures	2013 Expenditures	2014 Expenditures	2015 Expenditures	2016 Expenditures
Bland County	\$12,765,911	\$13,069,911	\$13,390,823	\$13,399,006	\$13,629,763
Carroll County	\$64,521,478	\$64,998,474	\$64,808,990	\$66,971,874	\$69,033,010
Grayson County	\$13,473,137	\$13,953,845	\$14,403,303	\$14,787,869	\$15,140,692
Smyth County	\$23,242,829	\$22,756,945	\$23,42,1137	\$23,866,173	\$24,646,532
Washington County	\$96,200,200	\$96,470,068	\$101,495,433	\$103,331,039	\$103,863,123
Wythe County	\$127,040,473	\$133,429,861	\$137,654,721	\$137,733,526	\$137,495,253
City of Bristol	\$45,303,171	\$46,146,785	\$47,223,680	\$49,370,154	\$54,493,491
City of Galax	\$15,763,251	\$16,168,597	\$16,492,549	\$16,544,826	\$17,132,357

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

Overall, Virginia is experiencing a significant increase in travel expenditures, and the Mount Rogers region is benefiting from the same success. All the localities are experiencing an increase in tourism, with the City of Bristol seeing the highest increase at over 10 percent from 2012 to 2016.

## 2.10 Appalachian Regional Commission County Economic Status

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development authority that partners with local, state and federal government and agencies. All the Mount Rogers Planning District localities are within the ARC's designated region. The ARC evaluates economic indicators to determine a county's overall economic condition and determines how much funding for projects the county may be entitled. Economic factors that the ARC uses to determine the economic condition of a county include:

Three-Year-Average Unemployment Rate, Per Capita Market Income, and Poverty Rate. The ARC has four categories of economic condition:

**Distressed** – Distressed counties are the most economically depressed counties. They rank in the worst 10 percent of the nation’s counties.

**At-Risk** – At-Risk counties are those at risk of becoming economically distressed. They rank between the worst 10 percent and 25 percent of the nation’s counties.

**Transitional** – Transitional counties are those transitioning between strong and weak economies. They make up the largest economic status designation. Transitional counties rank between the worst 25 percent and the best 25 percent of the nation’s counties.

**Competitive** – Competitive counties are those that are able to compete in the national economy but are not in the highest 10 percent of the nation’s counties. Counties ranking between the best 10 percent and 25 percent of the nation’s counties are classified competitive.

**Attainment** – Attainment counties are the economically strongest counties. Counties ranking in the best 10 percent of the nation’s counties are classified attainment. For the fiscal year 2014, the At-Risk localities include Carroll County (+ Galax City), Grayson County, and Smyth County.

According to recent statistics from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the following localities are at-risk – Carroll County, Grayson County, Smyth County, and the City of Galax; and the following counties are considered transitional – Bland County, Washington County, Wythe County, and the City of Bristol.

## CHAPTER 3 - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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There is a strong workforce presence in the Mount Rogers Planning District with a solid employment participation rate. Considering the loss of jobs in the region over the last couple of decades there are concerns that there are a growing number of residents who have been habitually out of work. However, increased efforts to bolster education from K-12 through higher education across the Mount Rogers district may be needed to increase the number of higher paying occupations. The fastest growing occupations in the United States require an occupational certificate or degree. Two key ways of increasing the overall education levels of the Mount Rogers district residents is making education more affordable and available to residents. Additional efforts to improve adult literacy and basic education for the youth and adults will be an important step to the workforce achieving more advanced skillsets. There are several organizations the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission can partner with to improve the education levels of the area's residents.

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area is a key partner in anticipating and preparing the regions workforce with the skills and avenues for job placement in the region. People Inc. is another organization that reaches out to the youth and adults to teach them work readiness skills. Another organization that is primed for educating Virginia's workforce is Plugged-in VA. Goodwill Industries of the Valleys specializes in educating dislocated workers and older adults. Of course, the two community colleges of Wytheville and Virginia Highlands are critical partners for all aspects of workforce education. In addition, the new Southwest Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence is focused on enhancing skills of the current and upcoming workforce in the following areas: Welding, Machining, and Industrial Maintenance.

The Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program will be a key partner in adult basic education for the region, including English as a second language classes and General Education Development testing. There is a widely reiterated opinion in the region that there may be specific skills lacking in the workforce and jobs that are unfilled in the region because of this skills gap. This is particularly true in the manufacturing industry. The region, as a whole, is working together with efforts to improve workforce development will be focused on facilitating the communication between regional industry leaders and the vocational and technical administrators across the Mount Rogers district. The United Way of Southwest Virginia is also a key player in workforce pipeline, with their newly launched Ignite program. Targeting students in middle school, this program introduces students to jobs in the region across a variety of sectors, and it helps the students be more focused on their career of choice once they complete high school. This program is important as students make decisions about college and trainings needed to obtain a position in the career field of their choice.

Another strategy to increase the number of high paying jobs will be targeting specific industries that are growing faster in the Mount Rogers district than at the national level and establishing career pathways for the workforce into careers in relation to these industries. Industry cluster analysis designed to target industries that are growing and improving the skills gap of the regions workforce to match these target industries will be a dual process and the ultimate goal of further workforce development efforts.

## CHAPTER 4 – ASSET BASED DEVELOPMENT

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Asset based development targets the unique cultural and natural asset that define a region. The Mount Rogers Planning District is blessed with an abundance of assets. Many of the cultural assets the MRPD is famous for are fixed to traditional music and art. Art and music destinations in the MRPD include local theaters, jams, festivals and galleries. Other cultural assets associated with history are historical buildings and museums. Natural assets are abundant throughout the MRPD and they include state parks, national forest, mountain peaks, trails, parkways, lakes, and scenic rivers or streams. To maximize asset based development at a regional level, a comprehensive list of natural and cultural assets across the Mount Rogers Planning District should be compiled. Projects related to asset based development in the MRPD should be prioritized in future planning efforts. Emphasis on the branding and marketing of these assets should be considered a comprehensive and regional effort by all localities represented by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. Below is a preliminary compilation of natural and culture assets and asset based projects in the Mount Rogers Planning District:

- The Crooked Road - Virginia's Heritage Music Trail
  - 'Round the Mountain - Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network
  - The Virginia Creeper Trail - A 34-mile bike and pedestrian trail from Whitetop to Abingdon.
  - Paramount Center for the Arts – Bristol
  - William King Museum – Abingdon
  - Birthplace of Country Music – Bristol
  - Barter Theatre – Abingdon
  - Heartwood-Abingdon
  - Chestnut Creek School of the Arts - Galax
  - Blue Ridge Backroads at the Rex - Galax
  - The Lincoln Theatre – Marion
  - The Wayne C. Henderson School of Appalachian Arts – Marion
  - Farmers Markets – Wytheville, Marion, Independence, Abingdon, Chilhowie, & Glade Spring
  - Various wineries and breweries across the region
- 
- **Historical Assets** – Nyumba Ya Tausi-Peacock Museum, Fields Penn 1860 House Museum, Overmountain Men Trail Site, White's Mill, Green Cove, Emory & Henry College Cemetery, King-Stuart House, Museum of the Middle Appalachians, Madam Russell Methodist Church, Historic, 1908 Grayson Courthouse, Matthews Farm Museum, Harmon's Museum, Hale-Wilkinson-Carter Home, Shot Tower, Edith Bolling Wilson Birthplace, Haller-Gibboney Rock House Museum, Thomas J. Boyd, Museum, and Wolf Creek Indian Village & Museum
- 
- **Music Related Assets** - Bristol State Street Historic District, County Music Marker & Mural, Smyth County Jam, Old Fiddlers Convention, Rex Theater, Stringbean Coffee Shop, and the Blue Ridge Music Center

- **Natural Assets** – Appalachian Trail, Grayson Highlands State Park, Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area, Hungry Mother State Park, South Holston Lake, New River Trail, New River Trail State Park, Collins Cove Horse Camp, Rural Retreat Lake, Salt Trail, New River, and Holston River.

Efforts to develop and revitalize downtowns and community centers are linked to asset based development. The 'Main Street Movement' has been and can continue to be a benefactor to many of the towns across the Mount Rogers Planning District and has led to improved tourism for many of these communities. Tourism related projects like the 'Crooked Road' and 'Round the Mountain' have symbiotic relationships with these downtown revitalization efforts. Localities that are currently involved in downtown revitalization projects or have plans for similar projects are Abingdon, Chilhowie, Damascus, Glade Spring, Independence, Marion, Rural Retreat, Saltville, and Wytheville. Improvements to these downtowns include adaptive reuse of underutilized or abandoned buildings and facade upgrades.

According to the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Virginia tourism increased by 10.5 percent from 2012 to 2016, topping out at over \$21.2 Billion in travel expenditures. Continuing to support asset based development will take advantage of the trend towards increased tourism spending in Virginia. An example of an asset based development project that is increasing tourism to the region is the 'Appalachian Spring Initiative'. The 'Appalachian Spring Initiative' is a collaborative project that brings Southwest Virginia organizations together to brand and market cultural and natural assets of the region. This project is a successful example of regionally focused asset based development. Collaboration between the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and its localities with projects like 'Appalachian Springs Initiative' should be a priority of economic development strategies in the future.

# CHAPTER 5 - INDUSTRY CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Through the SET process, regional leaders analyzed the region's industry cluster data and identified mature, transforming, emerging, and Star clusters within the region. This analysis was used to help determine the focus clusters to be targeted with the Mount Rogers Region Economic Development Plan. Clusters that are more concentrated and growing in the region are labeled as star clusters, while mature clusters are those within the region that are concentrated but are experiencing negative growth. Agribusiness and several areas of manufacturing were both identified as star clusters, while the tourism cluster was identified as transforming. Star clusters in the region included agribusiness and food processing and various areas of manufacturing, such as transportation equipment manufacturing and primary metal manufacturing.

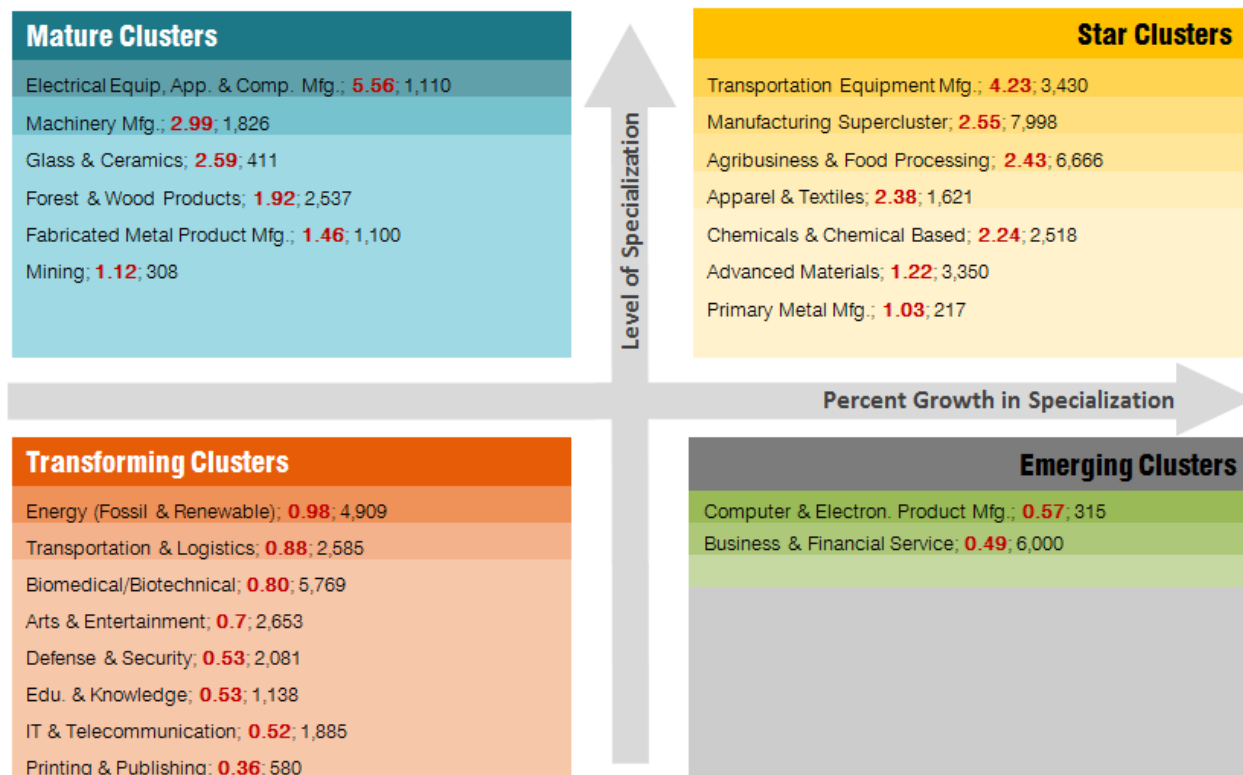
**Industry Cluster Analysis Explanation**

**Emerging** (bottom right): Contains industry clusters that are underrepresented in the region (low Location Quotient (LQ)) but are growing. *Weak but advancing*

**Stars** (top right): Contains industry clusters that more concentrated in the region (LQ over 1) and are growing. *Strong and advancing*

**Mature** (top left): Contains industry clusters that are more concentrated in the region (LQ over 1) but are decreasing or declining (job losses). *Strong but Declining*

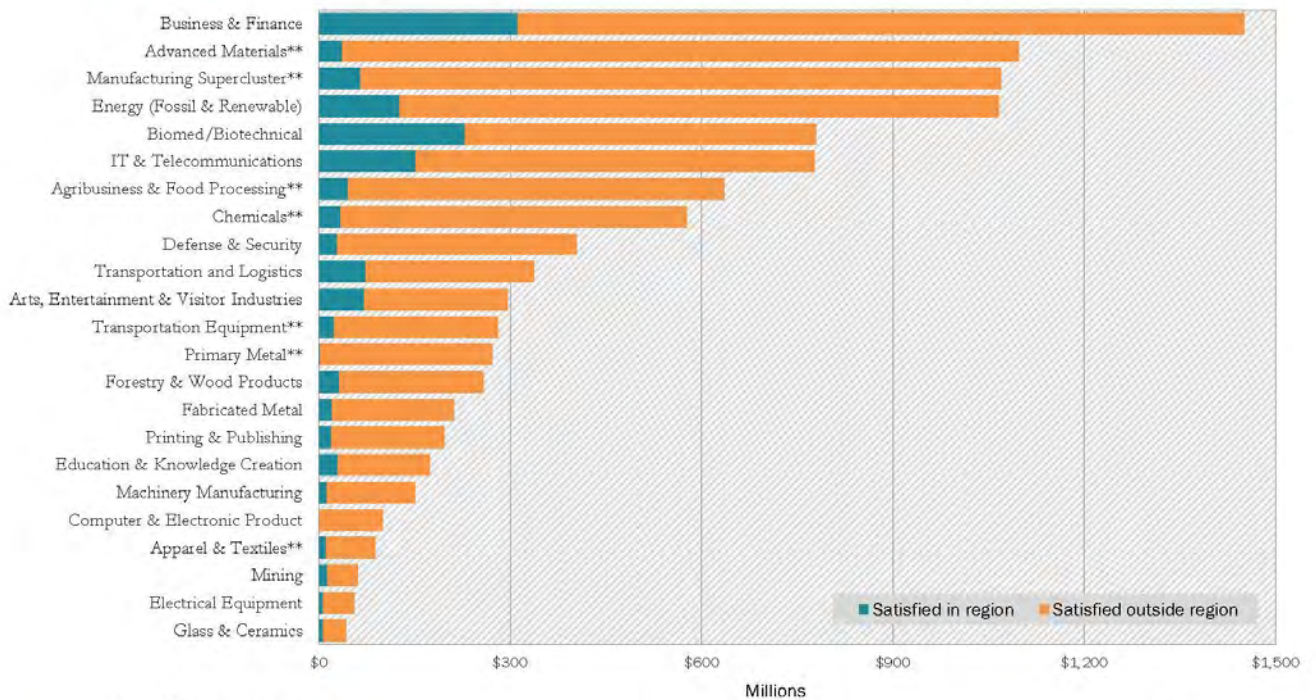
**Transforming** (bottom left): Contains industry clusters that are underrepresented in the region (low LQ) and are also decreasing or declining (job losses). *Weak and declining*



i: Mount Rogers Region Industry Cluster Analysis, prepared by Purdue University

As part of the analysis, a review was conducted on each cluster’s leakages and the potential for capturing new market share (see the figure below). The review encouraged consideration of all the suppliers and producers that bring a product or service into existence and where the possibility for new development exists. The analysis showed large amounts of leakages in the areas of manufacturing, agribusiness, and tourism (Arts & Entertainment) and helped the group chose those clusters as their focus for the plan. Despite the tourism cluster’s label of transforming, the leakages analysis results and feedback from participants regarding major regional projects and initiatives in the cluster, helped lead the group to choose it as a regional focus.

## Industry Clusters: Leakages Regional requirements, 2013



Note: \*\* shows Star clusters  
 ii. Industry Cluster Leakages, 2013

## CHAPTER 6 - VISION AND STRATEGIES

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Prior to developing goals, the SET Committee and the CEDS Committee completed a SWOT Analysis for the region. The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats were identified:

### Strengths

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- ✓ Cultural/natural resources related to recreation and eco-tourism, including arts
- ✓ Resource Rich - Variety of organizations and agencies offering resources to support area
- ✓ Quality of life with low cost of living
- ✓ Strong sense of community with passionate individuals
- ✓ Local and resilient workforce with strong work ethic
- ✓ Utility infrastructure is second to none
- ✓ Accessibility related to geographic area
- ✓ Educational opportunities
- ✓ Agricultural industry is growing especially around local foods systems
- ✓ I-81 and I-77
- ✓ Rural area
- ✓ Main Street push, number of certified Main Street communities
- ✓ Passionate Leadership
- ✓ Access to higher education—including continuing education for working adults
- ✓ Career and Technical Education Programs (students need more exposure to CTE)
- ✓ Diversified economy—not solely reliant on one industry (strong manufacturing & agriculture base)
- ✓ United Way of SWVA (coordination of resources)
- ✓ Flexibility of region
- ✓ Increased collaboration/communication (between organizations but not with public)
- ✓ Friendly communities
- ✓ Tourism Destination for outdoor recreation

### Weaknesses

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- ✓ Lack of unified approach has created an overlap in planning and access to resources
- ✓ Stigma of technical education or obtaining “just” a two-year degree
- ✓ Inability of region to accept reality and/or change
- ✓ Overcoming “the nothing to do” mentality (both amenities and job opportunities)
- ✓ Need for talent attraction
- ✓ Connecting the dots between workforce and education (or interest and skills to jobs)
- ✓ Moving/aging populations creates a “brain drain” with talent leaving the region
- ✓ Aging population impacts the need for health care workers
- ✓ Access to education (educational opportunities are available but not accessible to everyone)
- ✓ Workforce issues including underemployment and availability of skilled workers
- ✓ Plant/company closures
- ✓ Lack of high paying jobs

- ✓ Poverty still exists and families are locked into it
- ✓ Lack of diversity of population impacts the development of a robust economy – region must become more inclusive and welcoming
- ✓ Lack of access to transportation and internet in remote areas
- ✓ Wi-Fi and cell services availability affects information infrastructure
- ✓ Leary of newcomers/outside—unwelcome to/fear of change
- ✓ Lack of diversity (people/cultural)
- ✓ School systems (old school buildings and no new curriculum for upcoming changes in workforce as related to technology, etc.
- ✓ Out migration/lack of new families coming in, particularly young families
- ✓ Work ethic
- ✓ Lack of awareness/communication with general public
- ✓ MENTAL HEALTH—Drugs/addiction/hopelessness → scarcity mindset – 2 generations removed from Great Depression
- ✓ Not Metropolitan Statistical Area (4 media markets – Winston Salem, Tri Cities, Bluefield, Roanoke)
- ✓ “Old mindsets”

## Opportunities

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- ✓ Communication/Network
  - Increase coordination between agencies—using initiatives like SET
  - Increase dialog among stakeholders
  - Workforce Development and economic development entities work collaboratively and meet quarterly
  - Leadership/facilitation—>enhance ways to work together
  - Models of cooperation
- ✓ Workforce/Education
  - Linking with the Sector Strategy Initiative
  - Changing perception of technical education
  - Develop workforce to meet current and emerging careers
  - Match education with current and future vocational employment needs
  - Connect K-12 education system with workforce pipeline
- ✓ Awareness/Education
  - Educate K-12 students about region and opportunities
  - Educate parents and teachers to funnel students in the right direction
- ✓ Entrepreneurship
  - Strong correlation between technical skills and entrepreneurship
  - Growth from within is vital requiring the region to increase the support to entrepreneurship and increase the marketing skills as well as the marketing region
  - Current and future jobs require technical training requiring the region to focus increasing the educational attainment of those who only hold a high school diploma
- ✓ Economic Strategies
  - Double down on agriculture—keep locally grown products local

- Manufacture outdoor recreation products for outfitters
- ✓ Regional Rebrand
  - Rebrand and correct the stereotypes both internally and externally associated with Appalachia.
- ✓ Employers create a better culture for staff to reduce turnover.
  - (Example: great culture at Scholle IPN in Chilhowie and Blue Ridge Knives in Marion)
- ✓ Rehab for addiction
- ✓ Engaging local elected officials
  - Planning, raising taxes, forward thinking, etc.
- ✓ **Storytelling** – need for public understanding
  - Define the message!!—Need a PR strategy!! Tell the story!!
  - Develop new ways to engage community
  - Livability Study
  - Use the “off-years” of CEDS for public engagement
  - Embrace changes and sell them – Example: Marion as mini-Asheville
- ✓ Communicate with businesses about needs (United Way/Chambers of Commerce)
- ✓ Reach out to other cultures
- ✓ Mentorships for young people interested in becoming entrepreneurs
- ✓ Utilize new technologies – wireless vs. broadband
- ✓ Affordable! Internet
- ✓ Reach out to high school and college students
  - What would it take to KEEP them?
  - What do they want?
  - What is a livable standard?

## Threats

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- ✓ Drugs/Addiction
- ✓ Funding streams (ex: ARC on chopping block)
- ✓ Leadership succession plans in both public and private sector
- ✓ Lack of faith in ourselves on a community level – self-fulfilling prophecy
- ✓ Our current story (in mainstream media)
- ✓ Advancement in technology
- ✓ Underdeveloped infrastructure – last mile broadband/wireless—are we providing suitable last mile for 10-15 years from now?
- ✓ Demographic trends—aging population, young professionals moving out of the region.

## Vision

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As part of the strategic planning process, the following regional vision was developed by the CEDS Committee:

“The Mount Rogers Region of Virginia is a region in renewal; with opportunities for industry, tourism, and young families. While taking pride in how the region was shaped by its history, the region is making strides to invent its own unique future. A thriving region where beauty meets

adventure, the Mount Rogers region is a wonderful place to live, with excellent opportunities for education, jobs, healthcare, and outdoor adventures. It's a place where you will feel right at home, no matter where you are from."

## Goals

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The following goals were developed through the SET process, with additional goals added by the CEDS committee:

### Tourism

- GOAL 1: Collectively deploy the shared SWVA brand.
- GOAL 2: Implement a hospitality training program to create a high standard of service and to project Southwest Virginia as a region of choice.
- GOAL 3: Secure funding to grow and attract new tourism businesses for visitors and investment.
- GOAL 4: Increase local business sourcing by aligning local resources with regional tourism cluster needs.
- GOAL 5: Create focus on the exclusivity of the Mount Rogers Region.

### Agribusiness

- GOAL 1: Advance economic opportunities in agriculture, food, and natural resources.
- GOAL 2: Equip the region's youth and adults for employment in the agribusiness industry.
- GOAL 3: Develop an Agribusiness Trail.

### Manufacturing

- GOAL 1: Create accessible high quality regional data for Mount Rogers.
- GOAL 2: Develop a coordinated, regionally funded marketing strategy to attract new manufacturers.
- GOAL 3: Cultivate regional linkages between workforce initiatives.
- GOAL 4: Coordinate effective plan to address workforce turnover/retention in manufacturing for Mount Rogers Region.
- GOAL 5: Create more awareness for the existing Career and Technical Education programs in the school systems to create a stronger workforce with the necessary skills.

### Community Enhancement

- GOAL 1: Develop a public relations strategy to keep the public informed about the region and empower them to help "tell the story" of the region.
- GOAL 2: Enhance the overall health and wellness –mental and physical– of the community, with a focus on support and opportunities for those struggling with addiction.
- GOAL 3: Build partnerships with local governments and other agencies to ensure the proper infrastructure is in place to support current needs and future growth for the region.

## CHAPTER 7 - VITAL PROJECTS

Each year, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission collects updated project lists from each locality. These projects range from projects that are only in the planning stages through projects that are already under construction. The following pages include projects from each of the localities.

### Town of Abingdon Vital Projects

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
French Moore BLVD–Stone Mill RD–Cook ST Extensions Study	Connection of existing roads with extensions to promote better traffic flow at Exits 14 & 17	UNK	Local, State, Federal, VATIF	Offer emergency entrance/exit to Tech Park/ Community College/Higher Ed/Heartwood Campus	2023	X				Postponed until next round of VDOT Smart Scale Funding
Abingdon Urban Paths–Sidewalk	Connection of neighborhoods through the use of low-impact development of unopened rights-of way and sidewalk connectors	\$500,000	Local, State, Federal, VATIF	N/A	2018	X	X	X		Waiting on VDOT to approve bid for construction
Park Street Enhancement Project	Design and construction of pedestrian improvements in	\$727,050	VDOT, Local		2019	X	X	X		Surveying underway

	downtown Abingdon including sidewalks, connector trails, and landscaping.									
Green Springs Road			Local		2019	X				Out for Bid
Sports Complex			Local		2020	X	X			Working with CHA on final design
East Main Street widening			VDOT, Local		2024	X				Will be put in next round of Smart Scale Funding (VDOT)
Stanley Street Sidewalk			VDOT, Local		2019	X	X	X		Construction will begin in Spring 2018

## Bland County Vital Projects

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Rtes 52/614 Interchange	Redesign of the Rte 52/614 interchange near I-77/exit 58.	\$4,491,045	VDOT	Due to the Love's Travel Stop development, location of the Commerce Park, and Wolf Creek Indian Village, improvements are needed at this interchange to allow additional properties at this exit to develop as well as handle to amount of new traffic due to the opening of Loves's Travel Station.	2023	x	x			Funded in Round 3 of VDOT's SMART SCALE.
Bland County Telecommunications	Expansion of the Bland County Hybrid Network	\$2,000,000	DHCD / ARC / Private Match	This project seeks to expand broadband services to the residents and businesses throughout the unserved/underserved areas of Bland County. Underserved areas are measured by services	2022	x		x		The Hollybrook phase has been funded through DHCD is operational and additional segments still need constructed.

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
				under 10 Mbps.						There are various terrain and property right a way issues that the county and ISP provider are working to overcome. The Rte. 52 Fiber phase, funded by ARC and private match, is currently awaiting the start of construction. Additional phases and funding opportunities are being developed.
Southgap Waterline Replacement	Replacement of 2 miles of waterline.	\$600,000		This is the main waterline that feeds the Bastian	2018	x				Additional funding sources are

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
				Community, Interstate Rest Areas/Welcome Center, Commerce Park, Industrial Park, GIV/Henry Schein, Medical Center, Rehabilitation Center, and all developments at Exit 58.						needed.
Rocky Gap Greenway	Revitalization, streetscape and bridge improvements, and trail system in the Rocky Gap community	\$1,275,000	Local, VDOT, DEQ/VEDP, Wythe-Bland Foundation,	Revitalize and market the Rocky Gap community with its various natural and man-made assets. Access to I-77, access to two VDGIF stocked trout streams, access to the newly developed Twin Depots Scenic Trail.	2021	x	x	x		Segment II was completed in 2017. Segment I, which includes the phoenix bridge, went to bid in 2019. Bids exceeded funding by approximately \$400,000. Main challenge is the size of the bridge and the

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
										amount of lead based paint that needs to be removed. Options are being explored with VDOT in 2020 to reduce overall project costs.
Rtes 52/614 Interchange	Redesign of the Rte 52/614 interchange near I-77/exit 58.	\$3,868,000	VDOT	Due to the Love's Travel Stop development, location of the Commerce Park, and Wolf Creek Indian Village, improvements are needed at this interchange to allow additional properties at this exit to develop as well as handle to amount of new traffic to be expected with Loves's opens in beginning of 2018.	2019	x				VDOT initiated project

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Rte 61 Trail Designation	Regional partnership with Tazewell and Giles Counties and the Towns of Narrows and Tazewell, to designate Rte 61 from Tazewell to Narrows, "Twin Depots Scenic Trail"	Unknown at this time			2021	x				Project still in planning stages. Bland County has adopted a resolution of support.

## City of Bristol

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Sugar Hollow Business Complex	Expansion of the existing two site park into a park with 10 potential prospect locations and consisting of over 300 acres.	\$25 million	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Tax Credits, Utility Cost Reductions	500	2020	X	X	X		Presently completing construction of complex's first major tenant and reserving second lot for possible expansion if needed
Gordon Business Park	Market and attract new businesses to as many as 4, 4 acre tracts remaining in this park	\$3 million	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Tax Credits, Utility Cost Reductions	1000	2017	X	X	X		This 16 acre park currently has one tenant on 4 acres, and additional 4 tracts are available or combination thereof to new businesses
White Site Industrial	Market and attract new businesses to as many as 2, 5	up to 1\$million	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General	1000	2017	X	X	X		This 10 acre location is surrounded by other industrial

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
	acre tracts remaining at this industrial location		Funds, Tax Credits, Utility Cost Reductions							development with excellent access to Interstate 81 and is a corner parcel with no tenant
Bob Morrison Blvd	Redevelop existing manufacturing location with approximately 10 acres and several structures, previously a hosiery	up to 1\$million	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Tax Credits, Utility Cost Reductions	500	2017	X	X	X		This 10 acre location is the former location of Bristol Lingerie and is currently vacant including the main facility and the other accessory structures, this site boasts blvd style frontage
Twin Cities Metal	Redevelop existing vacant manufacturing location with approximately 24 acres and	\$500,000	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Virginia HUD	100	2020	X	X	X		This 24 acres site is bounded by Beaver Creek and is located in close proximity to downtown,

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
	several structures		Brownfields Grant							current potential projects include a multi-field tournament sports complex
Gordon Garment Location	Redevelop existing vacant manufacturing location with approximately 4 acres and 1 major facility	\$500,000	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Virginia HUD Brownfields Grant	300	2020	X				This 4 acre location is adjacent to the Twin Cities Metal Site, the previous tenant was a clothing manufacturer and the property still maintains a large manufacturing facility
Gateway Improvements	Invest in gateway modification to include landscaping and branding at key corridor entrances	\$300,000	CDBG Funds, General fund, VDOT Grants	Beautification	2015	X				The City intends to partner with local colleges to complete a gateway improvement plan for the City's 5 major

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
										gateways
Corridor Improvement	Invest in Corridor improvements to facilitate revitalization and citizen investment	\$500,000	CDBG Funds, General fund, VDOT Grants	Beautification	2015	X				The City intends to partner with local colleges to complete a corridor improvement plan for the City's 5 major corridors

## Carroll County

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Pipers Gap Water expansion	To hook up approximately 180 customers	\$3 million estimate	USDA-RD, Locality, MRPDC		2014-2017	x				PER underway
Phase IV School Construction	Upgrades to Carroll County High School to add an Auxiliary Gym	\$3 million	USDA-RD, Locality	Due to the increase of 9th grade students to CCHS and the pressure for more recreation for students, the new Gym is needed to support the County goals.	2014-2016	X				
Coon Ridge Water	Provide water services from Airport Road water East across I-77 to US 52	\$3 million	USDA-RD, Local, MRPDC, VDH	Provide approximately 200 connections to a sustainable water supply	2010-2013	X	X	X		In process
Recreation Park Development	Woodlawn School Rehabilitation	\$5 million	DHCD, VHDA, USDA-RD, ARC, Locality, Private investment, MRPDC	Convert the Woodlawn building into a usable facility for the community	2014-2018	X				
Natural Gas	NG Line construction to Mohawk Inc. by the IDA and Operations by the County	\$1.5 million	Mohawk IDA	Retain 154 jobs and \$1 million in Capital investment	2012	X	X	X	x	Completed

## Town of Chilhowie

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/ Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Chilhowie Walking Trail		\$400,000	VDOT		2014	X	X			Awaiting final VDOT review. Project started using Town resources due to delays imposed by VDOT.
500,000 Gallon Water Tank – In Town		\$1,000,000			2013	X				
New Sludge Handling Facility at Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant		\$150,000	DEQ		2012-13	X	X	X		
New Laboratory at Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant		\$300,000	DEQ		2012-13	X	X	X		
New Fire Department and Rescue Squad Building		\$1,000,000			2015	X				
Burn Building for Fire Department Training		\$430,000	Fire Programs		2013-14	X	X	X		

## Town of Damascus

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Damascus Library and Tourism Center	Construction of the Beaver Dam Creek Trail Damascus Library and Tourism Center	\$1,100,000	VDOT, Washington County, TIC	Economic impact through improved tourism attractions	2012	X	X	X	X	Complete (Initial phase of Beaver Dam Creek Trail)
Beaver Dam Creek Trail	Beaver Dam Creek Trail and Bridge (Main Phase)	\$390,000	VDOT, Damascus	Improved transportation around town and connectivity to trail networks	2017	X	X	X		Construction phase
Damascus Downtown Revitalization	Façades, property acquisition, streetscape, and greenway construction	\$869,000	DHCD, Damascus, Private	Removal of blight, connection of downtown to key assets	2015	X	X	X		Design phase
Waterfront Asset Development Initiative	Construction of greenway, stage, access road, and town green	\$500,000	ARC	Acquisition of property in floodway and created of community park connected to downtown and Creeper Trail	2016	X	X	X		Design phase
Trail Center	Construction of Trail Center operated by ATC	\$779,000	ARC-POWER, TRRC	Strengthen downtown, create jobs, increase tourism	2016	X	X	X		Construction phase

## Town of Fries

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Fries Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades	Repairs to wastewater treatment facility	\$25,000	SWVWCF, SERCAP	Improved waste water service to 314 households	2018	X	X			

## City of Galax

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Project Light/God's Storehouse	Renovation of blighted building for non-profit community services.	\$1.6M	Local, private match, DHCD	Addiction recovery services, including employment assistance; literacy and family education service; and training and community Soup Kitchen for 1,200 meals/ week	2022	X				Application in progress
Signal Modification Route 58 at Food City Intersection	Modify signal at the intersection of Route 58 and the Food City Shopping Center to signalize turn movement at the north side of the intersection.	\$826,345	VDOT-SMART SCALE	Safety improvements	2025	X	X			Funded in Smart Scale Round 4
Kipling Lane Housing Feasibility Study	Develop market study to evaluate property and determine refined project concept to be implemented.	\$20,000	VHDA	Workforce Housing Development	2021	X	X	X		Consultant is currently working on the study.
Wired Road Wireless Project	Implement wireless broadband in the Twin Counties area.	\$300,000	Tobacco Commission	Economic development potential	2021	X	X	X		
Wired Road	Fiber to the home	\$600,000	ARC	Economic development	2021	X	X	X		

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Airport Road Fiber	and fiber to businesses along airport road			potential						
Main Street Pedestrian Safety Project		\$55,000	VDOT	Safety improvements	2022	X	X			
Recreation Center Pool HVAC Update	Replacement of HVAC unit at rec center	\$100,000	Local		2021	X	X			
Galax Housing Rehabilitation Planning Grant	Planning grant for Eastview and Matthews Streets	\$40,000	DHCD		2021	X	X			Funded in fall 2020
S. Main St./Calhoun St. Stormwater project	Stormwater improvements		VDOT Revenue Sharing, local match		2025	X	X			
SRTS - Phase II - McArthur Street	replacement of 900 l.f. of sidewalk	\$280,000	VDOT TA Program, local match	Safety improvements	2018-2019	x	x			waiting on VDOT contract
McArthur St traffic signal	new traffic signal	\$390,000	VDOT HSIP	unknown	2018	x	x			waiting on VDOT contract
Primary Extension Paving Programs	Paving on E. Stuart Drive	\$500,000	Primary Extension Program, VDOT	unknown	2018	x	x	x		RFP's issued

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
SRTS Phases III, IV, V	New SRTS projects extending sidewalk from GES	\$750,000	VDOT TA Program, Local match	unknown	2018-2021	X				applications being submitted
Downtown Road Diet Project - 3 phases	expansion of pedestrian sidewalks by eliminating 3rd lane in key areas.	\$750,000	VDOT TA or HSIP	unknown	2018-2020	x				applications to be submitted in FY2018
Galax WTP PER	PER study to determine needs at water treatment plant	\$35,000	MRPDC, VDH	unknown	2018-2020	X	X			

## Town of Glade Spring

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Downtown Revitalization	Provided façade improvements to 10+ buildings and started a small business loan program	\$562,000	DHCD CDBG, Local	Economic Stimulus for Central Business District	2017	X	X	X	X	Completed
Farmers Market	Demolish blighted structure and rebuild energy efficient event space for farmers markets and other town events	\$150,000	TIC, RD, Local	Economic Stimulus for Central Business District	2017	X	X	X	X	Completed
Powerhouse Whole-Health Wellness Center	Renovate vacant storefront to create comprehensive wellness center, including addiction services.	\$1,963,115	IRF, ARC, RD, Tax Credits	Enhance overall health and wellness of community, with focus on support for addiction	2021	X				Applications pending
Salt Trail	Extend trail from current trailhead into the town square	\$427,440	VDOT, Local	Economic Stimulus for Central Business District	2019	X	X	X		In design phase
Farmers market, Phase II	Addition of kitchen and outdoor stage to increase public usability of building and enhance marketability of the facility	\$100,000		Economic Stimulus for Central Business District	2021	X				Planning phase
Library Expansion and Transitional	Renovate second floor of library to be used for economic development hub	\$520,000	Local	Economic Stimulus for Central Business District	2020	X				Pending applications

Economies Hub	and additional education opportunities for students and entrepreneurs									
Municipal Facility	New facility to house town hall, police department, and maintenance	Unknown	Unknown		2023	X				Still in planning phase

## Grayson County

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Grayson County Industrial Park	Infrastructure needed	\$1 million	RD	multiple jobs	2012	X				Necessary to enable promotion of industrial sites
School Construction/ Renovation Plan	Replace/ Remodel all Grayson County schools	\$53 million			2013	X	X	X	X	Complete
Community Fitness Facility	Renovate / Construct Community Fitness Facility	\$2.5 million	TCRH	Important to the health and quality of life to the community	2020	X				Business Plan Development
Health Center	Construct Community Health Center	UNK	UNK	Important to the health and quality of life to the community	2020	X				Planning Stages
Amphitheatre	Develop amphitheater for community use	UNK	UNK		2019	X				Planning Stages
Broadband Project	Increase availability of broadband	UNK	UNK	Important to the economic development efforts of businesses	2019	X				Planning Stages

## Town of Hillsville

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Wastewater Plant UV System Upgrade	Improve the UV system at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.	\$149,000	DEQ	Increased efficiency.	2013/14	X				
Emergency Power Generation	Upgrade the emergency power generation at the Wastewater Treatment Plant	\$100,000	unknown	Continued reliable sewerage treatment.	2014	X				
Maintenance Facility	Construct new maintenance facility utilizing old sewer lagoon property.	\$100,000	unknown		2014	X				
Housing Rehabilitation	Adaptive reuse of old hotel downtown and other properties.	\$500,000	CDBG, Local, Other	Economic development and safety, eliminate blight	2015	X				
Relocate overhead power lines	Move overhead utility lines from Main St. to Pine St.	\$250,000	CDBG, Local, Other	Downtown blight and blight removal	2016	X				
Water and sewer extension Hwy. 58 East	Extend water and sewer to new bypass intersection	\$1,500,000	unknown	Economic and commercial development	2015	X				
Raintree Road Sewer	Extend sewer service to the Raintree Rd./Cumberland Dr. area	\$500,000	unknown	Alleviate filling septic systems	2017	X				

## Town of Independence

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes / Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Main Street Revitalization	Downtown revitalization, economic restructuring, and removal of slum and blight	\$3M	DHCD, TIC, ED		2021	X				should compliment Park project to spur growth
Town Park - Farmers Market	Development of corner lot - Rt21 & Rt58 & constr. Of Park & Market facilities	\$500,000	ARC, EPA, DEQ, MRPDC	foundation for revitalizing small busn & tourism business	2021	X				ARC PG completed, EPA helped with mitigation
New Sidewalks	Build sidewalks in commercial districts where sidewalks don't exist making retail businesses more	\$75K	RD	19 small businesses indicated they could possibly increase profits hoping to save 99 jobs	2021	X				TOI is making application to RD

	accessible to residential districts									
Grayson County Enhancement Trail - Phase III	Complete the trail system and connect Independence with the park providing alternative transportation for pedestrians.	\$700,000	VDOT, Grayson County		2022	X	X	X		Continuation to complete trail from Industrial Lane to County Recreation Park
Grayson Agriculture and Technical Education (GATE) Center	Redevelopment of old jail to be used as multi-use facility with focus on ag/tech education	\$300,000	TRRC, MRPDC, Grayson County		2020	X	X	X		
West End McAllister Mills Building Redevelopment	Repurpose McAllister Mills west end building as a new manufacturing facility	\$150,000	Town of Independence	10 new jobs	2019	X	X	X		Town acquired building in March 2019 and business should set up shop in summer
Robert Shaw	develop old	\$1M	MRPDC, EDA, RD, Town of	60 to 120	2013/14	X	X	X	X	Oak Hall

Building	86K sq. ft. building		Independence	new jobs						Cap & Gown opened in 2015 and added 100-150 jobs
Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	Upgrade/improve the town's wastewater treatment plant	\$2.2M	MRPDC, RD	Supports new \$99 million prison facility, with 350 jobs created	2010 - 2011	X	X	X	X	Project completed
Water Delivery System to Prison	Upgrade bottlenecks from Water Authority delivery point south of Independence to the Prison on the east side	\$417,000	Town of Independence, Grayson County IDA	Supports new \$99 million prison facility, with 350 jobs created	2010	X	X	X	X	Project completed

## Town of Marion

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Marion Sewer Treatment Plant Headworks Renovation Project	Replace grit collection system	\$250,000	SWVWWWCF, Local	Improve water service for 4,000 residents	2018	X	X	X	X	
Marion Lincoln Theatre Technology and Film Project	Upgrade of technology to meet local and regional needs/demands for economic development and tourism	\$200,000	ARC, Lincoln Theatre, Local	Create 1 FTE job and 5 half-time jobs. Upgrade of facility.	2022	X				
Gateway Revitalization Planning Grant	Study opportunities to revitalize Marion's primary gateway (exit 45 to Main Street)	\$35,000	DHCD	Provide study necessary to apply for CDBG funds to revitalize the gateway corridor and provide adequate wayfinding signage.	2015	X	X	X	X	
Sheffey Street Housing Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate houses on Sheffey Street to revitalize town living conditions.	\$710,900	DHCD, Local	Improve housing conditions within town limits	2021	X	X	X		
Crescent-Palmer Housing Development	Rehabilitate houses on Crescent Street and Palmer Avenue to revitalize town living conditions.	\$631,411	DHCD, Local	Improve housing conditions within town limits	2018	X	X	X	X	

Crescent-Palmer Streetscape	Construction of sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and landscaping in the Marion Downtown District.	\$682,412	VDOT, Local	Improved streetscape to promote economic development in downtown business district.	2018	X	X	X	X	
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## Town of Rural Retreat

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Downtown Revitalization	Improve the central business district.	\$695,000	DHCD	Promote new business development and retain local businesses.	2019	X	X	X		
Farmers Market	Construct a permanent farmers market	\$100,000	Wythe-Bland Foundation	Provide a permanent home for the farmers market and access to healthy foods for residents	2018	X	X	X		
Sidewalk Replacement Project (Phases IX, X)	Continue with sidewalk, drainage, and streetscape improvements in the downtown business district.	\$541,668	VDOT, Local	Improve sidewalks and drainage to create a more connected community	2018	X	X	X		
Sidewalk Replacement Project (Phases XI)	Continue with sidewalk, drainage, and streetscape improvements in the downtown business district.	\$200,000	VDOT, Local	Improve sidewalks and drainage to create a more connected community	2020	X	X	X		

Wastewater Collection Improvements	Manhole replacement and grinder pump replacement	\$100,000	SWVWCF	Reduce I & I	2018	X	X	X		
Rural Retreat Train Depot	Rural Retreat Train Depot Restoration	\$200,000	TIC, Private Donation	Preserve the station to promote tourism	2015	X	X	X	X	

## Smyth County

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Atkins Water Source	Development of a new drinking water source for the eastern end of Smyth County to serve both residential customers as well as provide water to a high volume industrial development. The project would also include construction of a new 500,000 gallon water tank	\$1.8 million	None Secured	Additional water capacity for the system to support growth in the eastern corridor of I-81 and Highway 11 (residential, commercial, and industrial)	2014	X				A spring source is in the final stages of being secured, with the required analysis for quantity and quality to immediately follow. A membrane filtration plant will be required due to the nature of the source.
Hutton Branch Phase II Water Project	Public water extension in the Atkins area to interconnect two sources and their respective systems will provide additional water capacity to help with growth, in addition to redundancy for a high volume industrial project	\$3 million	VDH	Provide quality drinking water mostly for residences, but business growth is anticipated with increased service area. 150 new connections projected. Project also provides interconnection of two systems to allow for additional water	2014-2015	X				VDH funded the design of the interconnection and distribution mains, its Final design is complete and waiting for construction funding. The County has applied for funding from multiple sources, but has not been successful to date for the construction portion.

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
				capacities along the Highway 11 corridor for industrial and commercial growth.						
Smyth County, Wythe County, Town of Rural Retreat water interconnection and source development	Development of a new drinking water source in the Rural Retreat area jointly with the other 2 localities. This source is approximately 600,000 gallons per day and the interconnection involves about 12,000 linear feet of pipelines	\$2.2 million	MRPDC	Additional water capacity for all 3 localities. This interconnection will support growth in the eastern corridor of I-81 and Highway 11 (residential, commercial, and industrial) and secondarily can provide the ability to move water between the New River in Wythe County and Highway 16 in Smyth County in emergency situations.	2021-2022	X				PER Completed through local funding and MRPDC funds, localities having ongoing meetings to structure ownership and operations parameters and to agree on design and construction funding pursuit.
Walker Mountain Overlook Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of an existing overlook on Route 16, a Virginia Byway known as The Back of The Dragon.	\$920,000	VDOT, Local			X	X	X		

## Town of Troutdale

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Troutdale Housing Rehabilitation Project	Rehabilitate 12 houses and demo/rebuild 4 houses.	611,299	SERCAP & SWWWCF	Rehabilitate homes in town	2017	X	X	X	X	
Public Water Expansion Project	Expand Troutdale's public water capacity to serve the Grayson County's new Grayson Highlands school, and 58 potential residential Grayson County households.	165,700	SERCAP & SWWWCF	Expanded water capacity would ensure that Troutdale does not produce over their permitted capacity, per VDH regulations, resulting in any potential system failure or unreliable drinking source.	2016	X	X	X	X	

## Washington County

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Access to Public Water in Remote Areas	Extension of public water to unserved areas of Washington County	Variable	seeking funding sources	Provide families in Washington County with access to clean water. Many are still on well water	Ongoing	X				Planning grant, income surveys, and construction of water lines. Some residents may be on Public Health notice concerning private supplies.
Regional Recreational Sports Multi-plex	development of outdoor sports fields including soccer, softball, baseball	UNK	Seeking funding sources	Provide outdoor sport fields for softball, baseball, soccer, and football; regional competitions	UNK	X				Preliminary regional discussions
King College School of Medicine	Medical school for underserved region of Southwest Virginia to be located in Abingdon	\$100 million	TC, VDOT, RD, NMTC, Local, seeking other source	Advantage to medically underserved region; Creation of medical teaching	2011-2014	X				\$25 million TC grant requires match; local funds of \$7.5 each from WC and Town; site

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
				positions; bio-tech research; tourism; related						location Abingdon; private fundraising underway.
BWCIP Expansion	Expansion of Bristol-Washington County Industrial Park / Potential for a Regional, rail-served, Mega Site	Tobacco Commission	TC, VDOT, Local, seeking other source	\$35,000 grant for preliminary engineering study; 2012 Mega Site application round Oct 2012.	UNK	X				Feasibility study funded by TC in 2011; discussions pending
Washington County Main Library - New	Construction of a new mail branch library for Washington County in or around Abingdon	UNK	seeking grant sources	Current main branch in Abingdon has been outgrown	2013	X				Site selection under discussion
Damascus/Johnson County, TN Bike Trail Link	Connect the Virginia Creeper Trail to a trail system in Johnson County, TN/Mountain City, TN; first link Damascus to Camp	UNK	Seeking funding sources	Enhance tourism, recreation, and economic opportunity for the Town of Damascus	UNK	X				Meetings with Johnson County and TN state officials; meetings underway to discuss feasibility of

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
	Ahistidy									connection between VA Creeper Trail and Mt. City, TN
12 MGD Water Treatment Expansion	Involves expansion of the Middle Fork of the Holston River Drinking Water Plant from 4.6 MGD to 12.0 MGD and includes a new raw water intake.	28.7 million	USDA Rural Development	The additional capacity is to address County needs for the next 40 years.	complete	x	X	X	x	Project complete and in operation.
Galvanized Water Line Replacement	Involves replacement of 200 miles of pipeline that underserves (pressure, fire flow and water quality) 8,000 connections or approximately 19,200 County residents.	30.0 million	USDA Rural Development	Improved water quantity, quality and flow to meet existing and future needs.	2019	X	X	X	X	Phase 1 and Phase 2 are complete. Phase 3 will advertise for bids in Summer of 2018. Project completion Fall of 2019
Route 58 Improvements Project	Involves Installation of a 1 million-gallon water storage tank	2.19 million	USDA Rural Development	Improve pressures and water	2018	x	x	x		Construction is underway on all three contract.

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
	is Damascus. Water line improvements in Denton Valley and Drake Road			distribution						Estimated completion is July 2018.
Hidden Valley Phase 2	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents in the Phase 2 area of Hidden Valley	\$650,000	VDH, DHCD, WCSA	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents in the Phase 2 area of Hidden Valley	2020	x	x	x		Design is underway. Projected project completion in 2020
Chip Ridge Water Line Extension Project	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents in the project areas	\$130,000	VDH	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents	2018	x	x	x		Project has advertised for construction. Anticipated completion is November 2018
Rattle Creek Water Line Extension Project	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents in the project areas	\$240,000	VDH, WCSA	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents	2019	x	x	x	x	Project has been completed.
Sugar Cove Water Line Extension Project	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents in the	\$460,000	VDH, WCSA	Improve the quality and quality of water	2019	x	x			Project expected to advertise April

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
	project areas			to residents						2018 and construction be completed by February 2019
Rich Valley Road Water Line Extension Project	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents in the project areas	\$3.2 million	VDH, WCSA	Improve the quality and quality of water to residents	2019	x	x			Project expected to advertise May 2018 and construction be completed by September 2019
Abingdon Water Storage Tank Project	Replace two aged existing water storage tanks with a 1.5 million-gallon tank	\$1.7 million	USDA Rural Development	Replace two aged existing water storage tanks with a 1.5 million gallon tank	2019	x	x			Project projected to advertise in Summer 2018
Childress Hollow Water Line Extension Project	Waterline extension to alleviate existing water supply that was questionable in quality and quantity	\$260,000	VDH	Waterline extension to alleviate exiting water supply that was questionable in quality and quantity	2016	x	x	x	x	

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Haskell Station Road Water Line Extension Project	Waterline extension to alleviate existing water supply that was questionable in quality and quantity	\$215,000	VDH	Waterline extension to alleviate existing water supply that was questionable in quality and quantity	2017	x	x	x	x	
Ritchie Road Water Line Extension Project	Waterline extension to alleviate exiting water supply that was questionable in quality and quantity	\$170,000	VDH	Waterline extension to alleviate existing water supply that was questionable in quality and quantity	2019	x	x	x		

## Wythe County

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Regional Water Interconnects	Provide redundant water sources	\$5,000,000	RD, DHCD, ARC	provide water reliability and capacity	2020	X				connection to Smyth PER complete, connection to Pulaski, PER complete
Business Incubator	Construction/renovation of a small business incubator as part of Phase II of the Southwest Regional Enterprise Center's regional plan to develop incubator facilities in Galax and Wytheville	\$250,000	RD, TICRC, ARC	Encourage entrepreneurship and small business development in Wythe County	2018	X				
Speedwell - Wytheville Interconnect	Construction of water line to provide water from NRRWA and provide required source supply	\$8,000,000	RD	provides adequate and reliable source and provides availability to over 200 homes	2014			X		Finalize Dec 17
Lots Gap Tank		\$2,500,000	RD, TICRC, ARC	Town of Wytheville & County	2017	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Exit 24 Wastewater Improvements		\$1 million			2017			X		Under Construction 2017
Joint Smyth Wythe Industrial Park Site		\$1-1.5 million	RD, TICRC, ARC			X				
Grading of Industrial Development Lots in PP	Grading/Site Development/Extension of Utilities	\$20 million	RD, ARC, EDA, CDBG, TICRC			x				
County Wide Wireless		\$800,000	TICRC		2019	X				
Upgrade Entrance to Progress Park		\$9 million	VDOT, TICRC		2020	X				
Route 94 Water Upgrades & Replace Existing Lines		\$614,250	RD		2019	X				
Foster Falls Water Extension		\$574,460	RD		2019	X				
Airport Improvements		\$500,000			2020	X				
Ft. Chiswell Sewer Plant 2 MGD		\$2 million	RD		2019	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Progress Park Sewer Laterals & FM Extensions		\$2 million	RD		2018	X				
Ft. Chiswell Ext S Along Route 94 - Sewer		\$1 million	RD		2019	X				
Ivanhoe Sewer Project		\$10 million	RD		2021	X				
Piney Extension		\$3,738,150	RD		2021	X				
Spiller Annex		\$450,000			2020	X				
Poplar Camp/Foster Falls Sewer System		\$3,454,650			2021					
Regional Exposition Center		\$8 million	RD/TICRC		2017	X		X		Additional Funding needed
Recreational Complexes		\$1 million			2020					
Exit 77 Retail Site Development		\$2.5 million			2019					Development of county property sites
Ager Park Upgrades		\$140,000			2019					
Progress Park Connector Road	Construct a connector road between Progress	\$15 million	VDOT, TICRC	Key to the long-term success of	2018	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
	Park and Interstate 81/77			Progress Park and for regional economic development						
Progress Park Recycled Water Line	Construct a line for recycled water from the WWTP to Progress Park	\$3 million		Key to the long-term success of Progress Park and for regional economic development	2019					

## Town of Wytheville

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Downtown Revitalization	Facades, Streetscape, lighting, and signage	\$4 million	VDOT, DHCD, USDA-RD, Local		2018	X	X	X	X	
Farmers Market	Acquisition of building and renovation for indoor year-round farmers market	\$400,000	Wythe-Bland Foundation, Local		2018	X	X	X	X	
Freedom Lane Veteran Housing Development	Construction of 24 housing units for veterans	\$3 million	HOME, DHCD, Tax credits		2017	X	X	X	X	All units occupied
Heritage Walk	2,000 linear foot sidewalk/walkway will ultimately connect two local community parks and includes improved lighting and amenities.	\$655,310	VDOT, Local		2018	X	X	X	X	
East Main Street Improvements	This project involves the curbing and guttering, sidewalks; landscaping and white-way lighting for East Main Street from Cassell Road eastwardly to I-81	\$1.9 million	VDOT, Local	These improvements will improve the pedestrian access between the hotels at Exit 73 towards town as well as improve drainage and improve aesthetics for this entrance to Town	2018	X	X	X		Awaiting completion of warranty repairs for landscaping.

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Millwald Theatre Restoration	The restoration and reuse of the Historic Millwald Theatre as the anchor and centerpiece of an arts district. Millwald Inc.'s business plan says, "the Millwald Theatre is being renovated to be the community's auditorium for live and film entertainment as well as a center for performing arts education. The product/service mix will include movies, live music, live theatre, and a variety of instructed courses to introduce youth and adults playing an instrument and acting in plays.	\$6.2 million	DHCD-IRF, ARC, Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, Local	This project will include the creation of 7 new full-time staff, 3 half-time staff and numerous part-time discretionary event staff equivalent to 6 FTE's. The facility will also make Downtown Wytheville more attractive as a business location creating additional economic benefits through multiplier effects.	2021	X	X	X		Building purchased. Funding received from ARC. Funding application pending for IRF
Monroe Street/ US 11 Intersection Realignment	Realign the north leg of Monroe Street with the south leg for improved safety and flow of the intersection.	\$2,912,670	VDOT, Local	New retail development in the area combined with high school traffic is increasing congestion and causing unsafe driving conditions that have already resulted in a high traffic accident rate.	2025	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
4th Street/ Holston Road/ I-81 Exit 70 Intersection Improvements	Reconfiguration of the intersection to improve safety and facilitate turning movements and eliminate occasional gridlock events.	\$1,969,486	VDOT, Local	The existing turn lane configuration creates a hazardous situation where left turning vehicles must cross paths twice, resulting in periodic traffic stoppages.		X				
Heritage Walk Extension, Tazewell Street	Provide a complete sidewalk connection between the E. Lee Trinkle Regional Visitor's Center and existing sidewalk at Tazewell Street and Ridge Road.	\$520,000	VDOT, Local	This will provide a safe route for pedestrians and elementary school students visiting the Visitor's Center and Willow Brook Homestead Museum.	2022	X	X	X		
Heritage Walk Museum Connector	Provide enhanced and ADA compliant sidewalk connections between Heritage Walk in Withers Park and the Town of Wytheville museum facilities on Spiller and Tazewell Streets	\$530,000	VDOT, Local	This will provide access to the Heritage Preservation Center, the Boyd Museum, the Haller Gibboney Rock House Museum and the future Historical Society Building	2024	X	X			

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Northwinds Pedestrian Link	Create a pedestrian walkway or sidewalk along 4th Street from Virginia Avenue to Northwinds Apartments.	\$712,667	VDOT, Local	Pedestrians living in Northwinds Apartments, a subsidized apartment complex, must walk into town for employment, often at late hours. Sidewalks will eliminate the need for pedestrians to walk in the traveled roadway after dark.	2025	X				
Police, Fire, and Rescue Station	Conduct an architectural programming study, including site investigation to develop a new public safety facility. After identification of a suitable site, construct the recommended facilities.	To be determined	Local and other sources to be determined	The existing Police, Fire and Rescue facilities have become overwhelmed due to the shift from volunteer to paid staff organizations for Fire and Rescue. New facilities capable of housing the expanded personnel are required.	2025	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Parallel Routes Signalization Upgrade and Coordination	Provide coordinated signalization with emergency preemption for all signals along potential Interstate Highway detour routes.	\$2,052,157	VDOT	Periodic emergency detours create severe congestion at signalized intersections. VDOT has allocated funds to improve and coordinate traffic signals to keep traffic moving while protecting the safety of local pedestrians and drivers.	2023	X	X			
Tazewell Street Realignment	Realign Tazewell Street at the curve near Valley Street to eliminate a variable radius curve, provide a safety shoulder and reduce or eliminate traffic accidents.	To be determined	VDOT, Local	Traffic visiting the E. Lee Trinkle Regional Visitor's Center, including bus and RV traffic, must navigate this tight section of roadway with guardrails and a variable radius curve. Frequent vehicular accidents with the guardrail and/or head-on traffic would be reduced or eliminated.	2025	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Peppers Ferry Road Sidewalk Extension	Construct sidewalk between the existing sidewalk near the former Alco site to Community Blvd.	\$232,205	VDOT, Local	This will close a gap in sidewalk between Community Blvd and East Main Street. It will help create a safe walking and jogging loop.	2025	X				
Emergency Access Improvements South of Railroad	Create a reliable access point for emergency vehicles to neighborhoods south of the railroad.	To be determined	VDOT, Local	Structural weakness of the 20th Street Bridge and narrowing of the 3rd Street Underpass have eliminated direct access to many of the neighborhoods south of the railroad. A new bridge is needed, either at 20th Street or near 4th Street at Marshall Street to provide safe access for Fire and Rescue vehicles.	2030	X				
Pedestrian Safety Crossing at WCC Entrance	Install crosswalk and pedestrian safety signalization at entrance to Wytheville Community College Walking Path near Withers Lane intersection.	\$200,000	VDOT, Local	This will provide a safe pedestrian crossing for pedestrians and joggers using the WCC walking track.	2025	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Scott Memorial Middle School Sidewalk Extension	Extend sidewalk from Withers Road to Scott Middle Memorial School	To be determined	VDOT, Local	This will provide a safe route to school at the Middle School	2030	X				
11th Street Intersection and Signalization Upgrades	Intersection and signalization upgrade at 11th Street intersections with East Main Street and Peppers Ferry Road	To be determined	VDOT, Local	Heavy traffic loads on the one block roadway create occasional delays. Approaches that can reduce delays while protecting pedestrian safety are needed.	2030	X				
Withers Park Stadium Repairs	Provide structural analysis and repairs to allow the resumption of use of the Withers Park Stadium grandstands as a venue for community gatherings and public events.	To be determined	Local and other sources to be determined	A structural analysis identified deterioration of structural members that may compromise the structure under heavy occupant loads.	2025	X				
East Main Street Extension	Extend East Main Street to Nye Road and in a second phase, to Progress Park	To be determined	VDOT, Local	Access to industrial areas and potential development sites on the north and east of the I-77, I-81 corridor is limited. Better access would improve the access and marketability of these industrial sites.	2030	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Lithia Road Sidewalk Extension	Construct sidewalk between the Lithia Road I-81 bridge and East Main Street	\$473,540	VDOT, Local	This will close a gap in sidewalk between Community Blvd and East Main Street. It will help create a safe walking and jogging loop.	2030	X				
George Wythe High School Sidewalk Improvements	Upgrade sidewalks along Spiller Street for ADA compliance	To be determined	VDOT, Local	This will provide a safe route to school at the Middle School	2030	X				
Heritage Walk, Truss Bridge Park Connection	Extend a branch of the Heritage Walk Trail System to Truss Bridge Park	To be determined	VDOT, Local and Private	The route will create a walking path to Truss Bridge Park across donated ROW	2035	X				
Heritage Walk Trail System Improvements	Construct a trail system that links neighborhoods with new and proposed parks, shopping districts and community facilities.	To be determined	To be determined	This will connect existing facilities including Withers Park, Elizabeth Brown Park, and the Community Center. It will eventually extend to future park facilities. Routes selected will also link neighborhoods with shopping and other community facilities.	2040	X				

Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outcomes/Jobs Created or Saved	Time Frame	Project Status				Notes
						Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	
Alignment and Signalization of East Main Street, Wither's Lane and WCC Access Road	The realignment and signalization of this intersection	\$1,000,000	VDOT, Local	This project will improve safety at this intersection. There are large volumes of traffic traversing this intersection and re-alignment and signalizing would improve safety and traffic flow	2018	X				
Alignment and Signalization East Main Street and Lithia Drive	The realignment of Lithia, Malin Drive and East Main Street to improve traffic flow	\$1,500,000	VDOT, Local	This intersection has large volumes of traffic entering and exiting the Interstate. These improvements will improve safety and traffic flow in this area	2018	X				
General ADA Sidewalk Improvements	Upgrade existing sidewalks Town-wide for ADA compliance	To be determined	VDOT, Local	This will make existing sidewalks accessible.	2030	X				

## SMART SCALE Projects

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Transportation needs will almost always be greater than the funds available to address them, especially in rural areas. In 2013, the signing of House Bill 2313 (HB 2313) created a more sustainable revenue source supporting transportation funding. While passage of this bill enabled the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to add significant revenues to Virginia's transportation program, there are still many transportation needs that cannot be addressed with available revenues. To find a way to better balance transportation needs and prioritize investments for both urban and rural communities throughout the Commonwealth, new legislation – House Bill 2 – was signed into law in 2014. In 2016, the process was renamed "SMART SCALE, Funding the Right Transportation Projects in Virginia." SMART SCALE stands for System Management and Allocation of Resources for Transportation: Safety, Congestion, Accessibility, Land Use, Economic Development and Environment.

The purpose of SMART SCALE is to fund the right transportation projects through a prioritization process that evaluates each project's merits using key factors, including: improvements to safety, congestion reduction, accessibility, land use, economic development and the environment. The evaluation focuses on the degree to which a project addresses a problem or need relative to the requested funding for the project. With the latest updates to the program's design and project scoring and evaluation, SMART SCALE is moving to a biennial application process, with applications being due in August of years ending in even numbers.

### Round Three SMART SCALE Projects

In Round Three of the SMART SCALE process, due in 2018, the following projects were funded in the Mount Rogers Region:

#### Town of Abingdon

##### Hillman Highway & Old Eleven Drive Intersection Improvements - \$668,000

The project includes removing a skewed intersection and installing a ninety degree intersection at Hillman Highway and Old Eleven Drive. The project would construct a right and left turn lane on Old Eleven Drive on to Hillman Highway. It would also remove the multiple stop points in the existing skewed intersection. It will create a better sight distance.

##### Russell Road & Poplar Street Intersection Improvements - \$765,000

This project removes two skewed intersections and install a new ninety degree intersection, improving the safety along Russell Road, Alt 58, with better sight distances and easier traffic patterns. This project removes portions of Old Russell Road, where on the southern end there would be a hammerhead turn around installed. It will extend Poplar Street to intersect with Russell Road with ninety degree turns.

#### Bland County

##### US Route 52 Intersection Safety Enhancements - \$4,491,045

This project will address safety issues along US 52, in the vicinity of Route 666 and Grapefield Rd. At the intersection of US 52 and Route 666, the existing southbound left-turn lane will be lengthened to

provide 200' of storage necessary to better accommodate an increase in truck traffic resulting from approved future economic developments in the area. US 52 will be widened along this section to accommodate a two-way left turn lane (TWLTL). The TWLTL will provide the area needed to delineate the storage length necessary for left-turning vehicles without impacting the through traffic lane. For the northern most access driveway serving the site, a new southbound left-turn lane will add 150' of storage and a 100' taper. The widening will also revise the vertical geometry at this location to enhance sight distance. At the intersection of US 52 at Grapefield Rd, a southbound right-turn lane will be added that provides 200' of storage and a 200' taper. The addition of the right-turn lane will mitigate horizontal and vertical sight-distance issues that are present for the eastbound approach to the intersection, due to the steep cut slope along the western side of US 52. As part of the improvements, this slope will be reduced and vegetation cleared. A northbound left-turn lane with 200' of storage and a 200' taper will also be constructed into the existing US 52 median. Since US 52 will be widened and the median modified, the existing stormwater collection system located in the median will be replaced with an underground closed drainage network and new driveway culverts along the corridor. To the south of Grapefield Rd, US 52 has a small horizontal curve with steep side-slopes. Therefore, horizontal alignment warning signs with advisory speeds and chevron alignment signs will be added. Finally, a pedestrian crosswalk and advance warning signs will be added across US 52 near the Wolf Creek Indian Village Museum that ties into existing trails located near Commerce Drive.

## **City of Bristol**

### **Lee Highway and Euclid Avenue Roundabout - \$2,825,000**

Provide for design, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and construction of a 150-foot diameter, single lane roundabout at the intersection of Euclid Ave., Lee Highway and Moore St. A retaining wall will be required along the north side of the roundabout. This area is located along a city gateway route that connects the city's downtown and a large commercial center on I-81 as described in the city's comprehensive plan. The intersection is currently un-signalized with a difficult left turn onto Lee Highway due to sharp angles and site distance issues. The intersection is close to public housing and a senior center and is not pedestrian friendly. The conversion to a roundabout will increase intersection vehicle capacity and reduce wait times while providing shorter and safer pedestrian crosswalks.

## **City of Galax**

### **E. Stuart Drive Sidewalk Project - Phase II - \$2,013,000**

This project will construct approximately 5,000 linear feet of new sidewalk with crosswalks and associated pedestrian traffic controls along East Stuart Drive (Route 58) in the City of Galax from Larkspur Lane to Taylorwood Road. E. Stuart Drive is a corridor of statewide significance and the location serves as the primary retail, grocery, clothing, furniture, restaurant, businesses and department store area for the region with adjoining residential neighborhoods. Although the present route has no pedestrian accommodations, walking paths are evident along the corridor. New sidewalk, crosswalks and pedestrian traffic controls will afford safe access for workers, post-secondary and technical trade students, shoppers and visitors by moving them from the curb area and walking paths to a defined sidewalk. Access and pedestrian improvements will aid bus transit lines and provide safer highway crossings for bus riders. Most importantly, the project creates safe passage for underserved low-income minority neighborhoods to jobs, groceries and shopping. The project CoSS location is the

economic growth corridor for the region, with recent new businesses on the route bringing \$5 million in commercial investments and producing 100 new jobs. A huge parcel on the route, donated a month ago to the City, has astronomical economic development potential. Based on the track record of the past two years, projected growth of the parcel in this phase should create hundreds of new jobs and leverage tens of millions in private investments. This Phase II builds upon the first phase to construct new sidewalk from Larkspur Lane to the eastern City limits, providing safe access for non-motorized transit on the busiest connecting highway in the region. The project is vital to economic growth, improving safety and providing accessibility while reducing vehicular congestion and aiding the environment.

## **Grayson County**

### **SR 89 AT SR 613 Realignment - \$4,068,990**

The proposed project will realign the westbound approach of State Route 613 (Snow Hill Rd) at State Route 89 approximately 60 feet to the south of its current location, so it aligns with the eastbound approach (Edmonds Rd). Approximately 140 feet of existing Snow Hill Rd will be removed as part of the realignment. Additionally, State Route 89 will be widened over a distance of approximately 1,725 feet (to accommodate turn-lanes, taper, and associated transition) along the east side of the existing roadway to accommodate left-turn lanes on State Route 89 at the intersection with State Route 613 for both the northbound and southbound approaches. These turn lanes will provide 200 feet of storage with 200-foot tapers for turning vehicles on State Route 89.

## **Smyth County**

### **US Route 11 / SR 660 Roundabout North - \$3,572,022**

The proposed project involves constructing a single lane roundabout at the intersection of U.S. Route 11 and State Route 660 (north side). The proposed roundabout has an inscribed diameter of 100 feet and one circulating lane. The existing eastbound right-turn lane will be removed from the intersection. No sidewalk or curb and gutter is included as part of this project. The bridge located to the north has been decommissioned and the pavement will be removed so that the previous north leg will no longer be included with the new roundabout intersection. This project will address the Crescent Corridor (CoSS) Segment B1, Needs B and M as identified in the VTrans 2040 document. The proposed project directly addresses reliability and congestion issues along U.S. Route 11. Highway 11 being the primary roadway should have priority in traffic flow and movements. At the current intersection, highway 11 has stop signs in the left turn direction, thus impeding the traffic flow, especially during congested times or when large vehicles are present. The improvements associated with this project will eliminate the stop signs and allow for continuous flow of traffic in all directions. By modifying this intersection, the existing congestion and safety issues will be improved, which will allow U.S. Route 11 to serve as a better parallel facility to I-81. The Interstate 81 Incident Detour Plan routes both Northbound and Southbound Interstate traffic directly through this intersection for incidents occurring between Exits 39 and 44. The current configuration of the intersection does not allow for Tractor Trailer maneuvers without impacting oncoming traffic lanes. A roundabout in this area will allow for larger turning movements as well as separated traffic lanes to allow those movements. Several Commercially Zoned parcels are adjacent to the project, this project will allow for improved access and traffic flows to these highly important development parcels.

## Wythe County

### Progress Park Connector - \$12,857,000

The proposed Progress Park Extension project includes the construction of an approximately 2.3 mile, 2-lane roadway with travel lanes that are 12-foot wide and include 4-foot wide paved shoulders and 4-foot wide graded shoulders from E Lee Tinkle Drive to Nye Road in Wythe County. The new road will provide a connection to/from the Progress Park Industrial development to/from Nye Road. A new southbound exclusive left-turn lane (250 feet of storage/200-foot taper) will be constructed on Nye Road at the Progress Park Extension intersection. As part of this proposed project, the roadway construction will include a new unsignalized intersection at Lover's Lane.

## Round Four SMART SCALE Projects

During Round Four of the SMART SCALE process, the continued close working relationship between the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, its localities, the Bristol Tennessee/Virginia Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Bristol MPO), and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has ensured a group of strong projects for the region. The attentive staff at VDOT, both in the Bristol District Office and the Salem District Office (covering the localities of Carroll County and the City of Galax) has worked one-on-one with localities to create the most necessary, yet fundable, projects Mount Rogers Region. The following projects for Round Four will be submitted in 2020:

### Town of Abingdon

#### Cook Street Extension

The proposed project involves extending Cook St to Stone Mill Rd to the west. The proposed Cook St extension is an approximately 3,000-foot-long, two-lane, undivided roadway that will serve as a connecting road to Cummings Street. The proposed cross section of the roadway includes 12' wide travel lanes with curb and gutter. Right-of-way acquisition will be required throughout the length of the project.

#### Roundabout at Thompson Drive and Stanley Street

This project removes driveway access from the intersection of Thompson Dr at Stanley St and converts it to a single-lane roundabout. A sidewalk will also be constructed along the southeast quadrant of the roundabout extending back to Radio Drive. The remaining access driveway on the east side of Thomson Drive will be moved to the north to align with the shopping center driveway. Project includes acquisition of ROW and the relocation of overhead utilities and guardrail along Thompson Drive.

### City of Bristol

#### Widen U.S. 11 (Eastern Section)

The proposed project involves widening U.S. Route 11 to a four-lane, divided roadway from the church entrance to the west to approximately 400 feet to the west of Old Airport Road. The new typical section of the road will include 11' wide travel lanes, curb and gutter, pedestrian crosswalks and a 6' wide sidewalk located on the north. Project includes some ROW acquisitions, the relocation of overhead utilities poles, and the installation of a retaining wall on the north side.

### **Widen U.S. 11 (Western Section)**

The proposed project continues the widening of US11 to a four-lane, divided road from Alexis Dr to west of Dominion Pl. The south side of US11 will be kept constant and all widening occurring to the north. The new typical section of the road will include 11' wide travel lanes, curb and gutter, pedestrian crosswalks and a 6' wide sidewalk located on the north. Project includes some ROW acquisitions, the relocation of overhead utilities poles, and the extension of a culvert east of Alexis Dr.

### **Five Points Intersection (MLK Jr. Boulevard at Moore Street Roundabout)**

The proposed project involves constructing the signalized intersection of MLK Jr Blvd at Moore St into a single-lane roundabout with a 150' wide inscribed diameter. As part of this construction, the westbound left of Oakview Avenue will be closed and dead-end into the adjacent parking area. The other 4 legs of the intersection will tie into their respective existing/proposed cross-sections. Pedestrian accommodations will be provided at all legs of the roundabout with 5' wide sidewalks.

### **I-81 Frontage Road - Stage Coach Rd to Flame Leaf Dr. Connection<sup>1</sup>**

The proposed project involves the construction of a 2-lane frontage road to the south of I-81. The frontage road will extend from Stage Coach Road to Old Dominion Road for approximately 1.5 miles. The proposed road will consist of a 2-lane typical section with curb and gutter. ROW acquisitions will be required for the length of the project.

## **Carroll County**

### **Carroll County High School Sidewalk Project**

This project involves continuing the pedestrian corridor from the high school to Town of Hillsville by providing a raised pedestrian island for the crossing on Rt 58 from high school to athletic training field and a hard-surfaced pedestrian accommodation along Rt. 58.

## **City of Galax**

### **E. Stuart Drive Sidewalk Project - Phase I**

The E. Stuart Drive Sidewalk Project Phase I is approximately 5,000 feet of new sidewalks along US 58 improving major intersections with signalized legs for pedestrian controls. The project begins at the Hanes/Taylorwood Road intersection and extends to the Cherry Hill Shopping Center with Walmart. The sidewalk crosses sides of E. Stuart Drive and serves The Crossroads Institute.

### **Signal Modification Route 58 Food City Intersection**

The proposed project will modify the signal at the intersection of East Stuart Drive and the Food City Shopping Center to signalize turn movement at the north side of the intersection.

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<sup>1</sup> I-81 Frontage Road - Stage Coach Rd to Flame Leaf Dr. Connection is located in both Washington County and the City of Bristol and is a priority of both localities, as such it is listed under both.

## **Grayson County**

### **US 58 at Delhart Rd Turn Lane Improvements**

Description: The proposed project involves extending the turn lanes at the US Route 58 at Delhart Road intersection to meet minimum VDOT standards. The proposed eastbound left-, existing eastbound right-, and existing westbound left-turn lanes will be installed/extended to provide storage and taper lengths of 200 feet each. The eastbound and westbound left-turn lane will have an inside paved shoulder of 4ft. The eastbound right-turn lane will have an 8' paved outside shoulder and a new guard rail will be installed along its length.

### **US 58 at SR 94 Turn Lane Improvements**

The proposed project extends the turn lanes at US58 at SR94 intersection to meet minimum VDOT standards. The eastbound left-, westbound left-, and westbound right-turn lanes will be extended to provide storage and taper lengths of 200' each. The eastbound and westbound left-turn lane will have an inside paved shoulder of 4'. The westbound right-turn lane will have an 8' paved shoulder and chevrons to delineate the area between the channelized right-turn lane and the adjacent through lane.

## **Smyth County**

### **US Route 11 / SR 660 Roundabout (South)**

The proposed project involves constructing a single lane roundabout at the intersection of U.S. Route 11 and State Route 660 (south side). The proposed roundabout has an inscribed diameter of 100 feet and one circulating lane. Some ROW acquisitions are anticipated for this project. No sidewalk or curb and gutter is included as part of this project. New guardrail will be installed on the northeast and southeast quadrants of the proposed roundabout.

### **US 11 at Rifton Dr (Exit 47) Intersection Safety Improvements**

The proposed project involves converting the intersection of Rifton Dr and US11 to an unsignalized Green-T. A raised channelized median will be constructed in the intersection and raised flex-post delineators will be added along US 11 to accommodate the Green-T concept. New signs and pavement markings will be installed to delineate movements at this intersection. This project will mill and overlay the intersection.

## **Washington County**

### **US 19 Access Management**

This project consists of implementing access management and intersection improvements along a 1.2-mile portion of US19 in Washington Co., VA. Elements of the project include: converting the signalized Chantilly Way intersection to an unsignalized right-in/left-in/right-out. A new road from Rustic Lane to US19 will be constructed at the existing traffic signal. The intersection of Public Safety Ln will be closed with Steinman Rd realigned and extended to a new signalized intersection on US19.

### **US 11 at US 58 Roundabout**

The proposed project converts the existing signalized intersection of U.S. Route 11 and U.S. Route 58 in Washington County to a roundabout. The proposed roundabout has an inscribed diameter of approximately 180 feet and includes 2 circulating lanes for 3 of approaches. The westbound right-turn

lane will be constructed as a slip lane. Access to an existing business located to the west will be maintained and brought into the roundabout's operation as a fourth leg.

### **I-81 Frontage Road - Stage Coach Rd to Flame Leaf Dr. Connection<sup>1</sup>**

The proposed project involves the construction of a 2-lane frontage road to the south of I-81. The frontage road will extend from Stage Coach Road to Old Dominion Road for approximately 1.5 miles. The proposed road will consist of a 2-lane typical section with curb and gutter. ROW acquisitions will be required for the length of the project.

## **Wythe County**

### **US 52 at Apache Run Realignment**

The proposed project involves modifying the Apache Run Rd and US 52 intersection to remove its skew. A new connection will be constructed north of the existing intersection that provides access from Apache Run Rd to US 52. The remaining section of Apache Run Rd will terminate into a cul-de-sac (without access to US 52) and access to the adjacent properties will be maintained. As part of this project, the right-turn lane for the shopping center to the south of Apache Run Rd will be extended.

### **I-77 Truck Climbing Lane (North Segment)**

The proposed project consists of installing an additional 12ft wide truck climbing lane to allow vehicles an opportunity to pass slow-moving trucks traveling northbound on I-77. The northbound direction of I-77 will be widened north of State Route 629 bridge to the northbound I-81 off-ramp for an approximate distance of 1 mile. Widening will occur into the existing median and the inner most lane will be constructed with an 8ft shoulder.

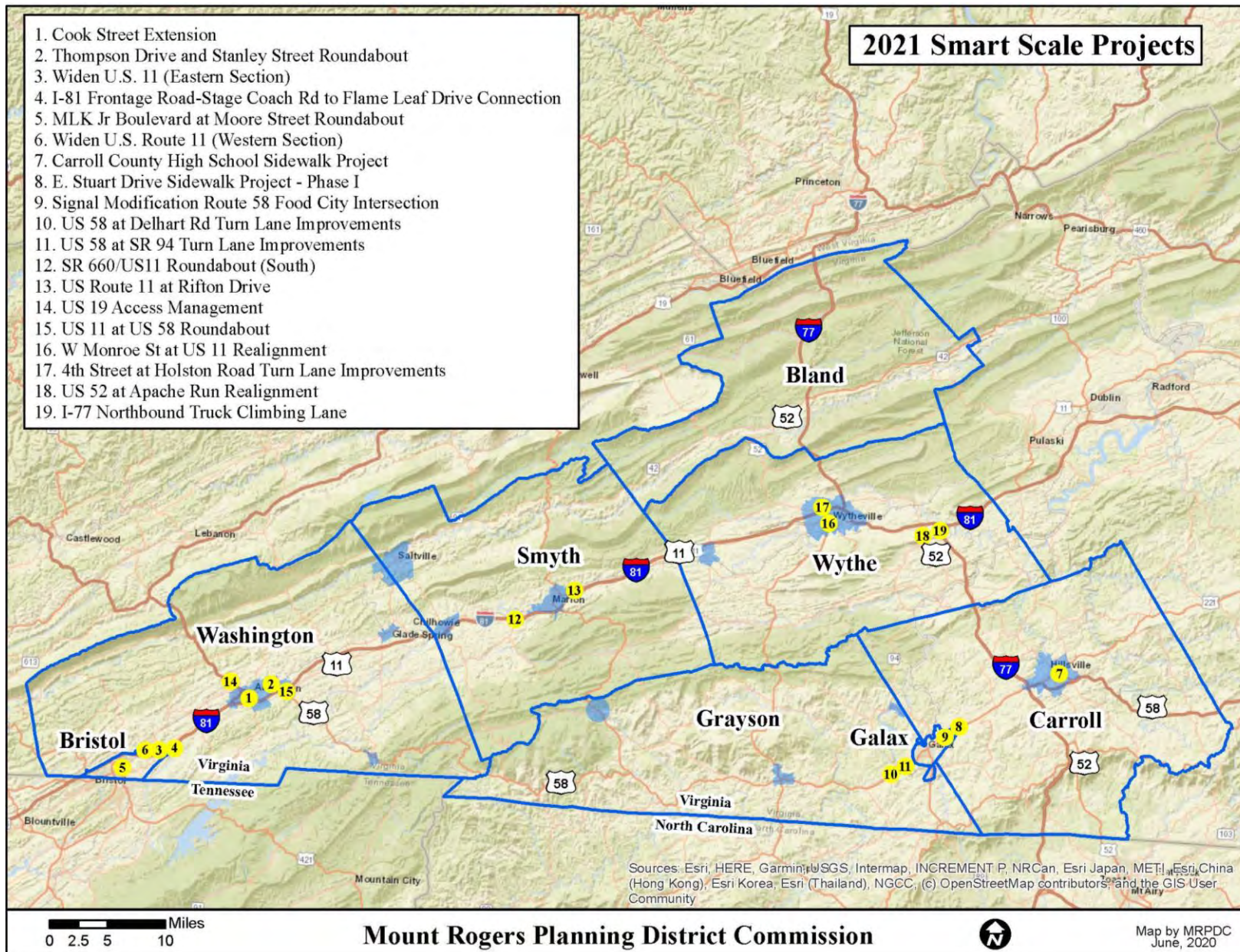
## **Town of Wytheville**

### **W Monroe St at US 11 Realignment**

The proposed project involves realigning the north leg of the Monroe St approach at its intersection with US 11. ROW acquisitions will be required as part of this project and includes relocating existing utilities. Driveway stubs will be provided at adjacent properties to maintain their access. Left-turn lanes will also be delineated on US 11. The eastbound left-turn lane will have a 200' of storage and 150' of taper. The westbound left-turn lane is a drop lane that extends 300' to Lee Hwy.

### **4th Street at Holston Road Turn Lane Improvements**

The proposed project involves constructing a new eastbound left-turn lane at the 4th St and Holston Rd intersection. This turn lane will have storage and taper lengths of 200 ft. The proposed turn lane will be constructed into the existing median and offset from the westbound left-turn lane to increase sight-distance. The existing westbound left-turn lane will also be shifted and offset into the median. Existing Pavement markings in the median opening will be removed.



## Federal Lands Access Program Projects

Through the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) funding is available to “improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands.” FLAP funding supplements state and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on the improvement of access to federally owned high-use recreation sites and Federal economic generators.

The Mount Rogers region is known for its outdoor recreation assets and economic development plans focus upon the development of cultural and recreational tourism, and developing cross-sector economic linkages, especially those that can take advantage of the region’s natural resources in sustainable, non-consumptive ways. The Mount Rogers Planning District has the right ingredients - outdoor recreation, historic sites, and a unique heritage - to support its budding tourism industry. With continued infrastructure improvements, and increased travel-related services, tourism will continue to become a vital part of the district’s economy. In 2015, the Southwest Virginia region launched a new branding campaign to drive tourism and brand the Southwest Virginia region as a tourist destination. The number of outdoor recreation opportunities has increased significantly, and the new brand has brought national attention to the region. The region covers a total of over 1.78 million acres and 273,220 acres, or 15.3%, are National Forest. The following table shows the localities and their National Forest acreages.

LOCALITY	TOTAL ACRES	NATIONAL FOREST ACRES	PERCENTAGE
Bland County	229,569	76,556	33.30%
Smyth County	289,467	75,252	26.00%
Wythe County	297,339	58,414	19.60%
Grayson County	285,392	33,339	11.70%
Washington County	363,237	22,514	9.50%
Carroll County	305,834	7,145	2.30%
City of Bristol	7,422	0	0%
City of Galax	5,127	0	0%
<b>Mount Rogers PDC Total</b>	<b>1,783,387</b>	<b>273,220</b>	<b>15.30%</b>

A collaborative effort between the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), with assistance from the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and other partners, resulted in the development of a list of projects, showing the great need for improvements in trail accessibility and safety throughout the region. A review of the region showed that numerous parking facilities, shoulders, sidewalks, and crossings were needed to maintain the safety of pedestrians and horseback riders trying to gain access to trails, as well as the motorists on the roadways.

Following are a map of project locations and overviews for the prioritized projects in the region, including their numbered map location. Fall 2020 Eastern Federal Lands Access Program applications will be developed for these projects.

## **Grayson County**

### **Creeper Trail Crossing at Intersection of Routes 726 and 755 (#1)**

The project will replace the at-grade crossing of the Virginia Creeper Trail at the intersection of Routes 726 and 755 with a bridge taking Rte. 726 over the Trail and then tying it in with Rte. 755.

### **Route 602 Brush Creek Parking (#2)**

The project will construct a parking facility located adjacent to Route 602 at M.P. 2.985 (0.82 miles West of the Grayson/Carroll County Line).

### **Route 603 Grayson County Shared Use Crossing (#3)**

The project will construct a shared use path and will install shoulders and signs along Route 603 in Grayson County. The termini for the project is M.P. 2.649 to M.P. 3.059 on Route 603 in Grayson County (0.41 miles).

### **Route 603 Scales Access, Lewis Fork Parking, and AT Access (#4, 5, and 6)**

The project will construct three parking facilities located adjacent to Route 603 at M.P. 3.03 (Scales Trail Access), M.P. 1.675 (Appalachian Trail Access) and M.P. 0.848 (Lewis Fork Parking) on Route 603.

### **Route 600 Elk Garden Parking Facility (#7)**

The project will construct a parking facility located adjacent to Route 600 at M.P. 5.97 (3.0 MI. N. of Route 58) (Appalachia Trail Access), which straddles the Grayson/Smyth County Line.

## **Smyth County**

### **Route 16 Raccoon Branch Parking Facility (#8)**

The project will construct a parking facility located adjacent to Route 16 at M.P. 20.448 (Raccoon Branch Trail Access).

## **Washington County**

### **Douglas Drive Sidewalk Project in the Town of Damascus (#9)**

The project will construct ADA-compliant concrete sidewalks and curb/gutter sections along the Eastbound side of Route 58/91 from mile post 125.14 to 125.38.

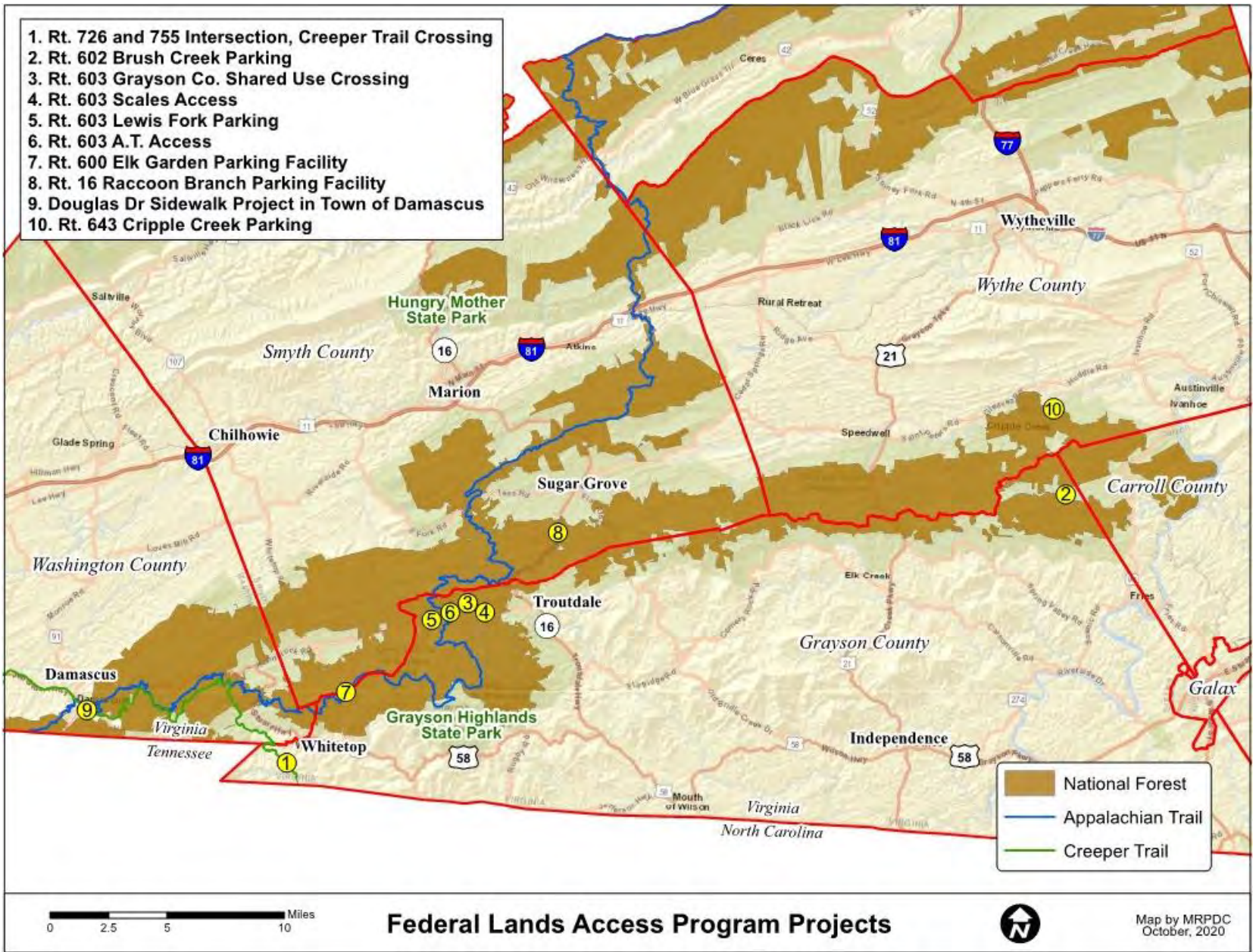
### **Route 58 Proposed Crosswalks for Virginia Creeper Trail**

An expected upcoming project for the region, which is not part of the 2020 application process, this project will reroute a small section of the Virginia Creeper Trail and install high visibility crosswalks, as well as other safety features, along the Westbound side of Route 58 from mile post 124.56 to 124.67. The project area borders the Damascus Town Park and is a highly trafficked section of the Creeper Trail.

## **Wythe County**

### **Route 643 Cripple Creek Parking (#10)**

The project will construct a parking facility located adjacent to Route 643 at M.P. 1.463 (0.436 MI. S. of Route 643).



## CHAPTER 8 - PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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### Measurable Comparison

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Since there are various geographic and social advantages and disadvantages the Mount Rogers Planning District has compared to other regions and geographies, it is necessary to compare the Mount Rogers district at different geographic scales - surrounding planning district; state; nation; and other localities that share similar characteristics to the localities of the MRPD. Population & Jobs

The Mount Rogers Planning District has seen a very slow increase in population over the last few decades and population projections reiterate that trend. Many of the localities that have the most population loss have had the most job losses as well. The region has an aging population and job types may need to change to reflect this change in population demographics. Monitoring population change compared to job growth will be important for future CEDS efforts, particularly at the local level. Monitoring job types compared to population age demographic change could predict a change in industry types in the Mount Rogers Planning District.

- Population change and job growth
- Population demographic age change and job types
- Population change and other demographic population change measures

### Labor Force & Unemployment

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Unemployment numbers across the Mount Rogers Planning District are high. Labor force rates have remained steady. However, there is a concern that the labor force may be seeing some signs of deterioration. Continued study of the labor force and other social factors may be necessary. Social service pressures across many of the Mount Rogers Planning District localities have increased in recent years and there is concern of substance abuse problems.

- Unemployment rate
- Labor force measures
- Social service measures
- Substance abuse measures

### Income & Wages

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Per capita and household family income in the Mount Rogers Planning District is lower compared to state and national averages. Additional comparison of these numbers to the surrounding planning districts and other nearby localities will be necessary. Comparison of various industry wages will be considered, particularly when identifying target industries.

- Per capita income
- Household income
- Wage comparison by industries

## Industry

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Identifying target industry clusters for the region is a major component of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission's CEDS strategies. Measuring industry growth in the region with job growth and wage increases will be a priority. Identifying target industries and then measuring the job growth in these industries across the region will gauge the success of recruiting target industries.

- Industry cluster analysis
- Target industry job and wage growth

## Local Projects

---

Defining measures for prioritizing projects at a regional level will be important in future CEDS. Prioritizing projects by the infrastructure needed to recruit target industries and basic infrastructure to offer a higher quality of life for locality residents will be two key elements. Projects that align with the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission's CEDS strategy will be prioritized. The performance measures will depend on how timely the prioritized projects are completed.

- Define methods of project prioritization
- Completion time of prioritized projects

## APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC INDUSTRIAL SITES

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- Pathway Park (Epoch Site) - TBD Industrial Park Rd, Chilhowie, VA 24319
- Highlands Business Park - 13306 Owens Drive, Glade Spring, VA 24340
- Oak Park Center - 18259 Oak Park Drive, Abingdon, VA 24210
- Progress Park - Peppers Ferry Road and E Lee Trinkle Drive, Wytheville, VA 24382
- Wildwood Commerce Park - Coulson Church Rd and I-77, Hillsville, VA 24343

# APPENDIX 2 – SET PLAN

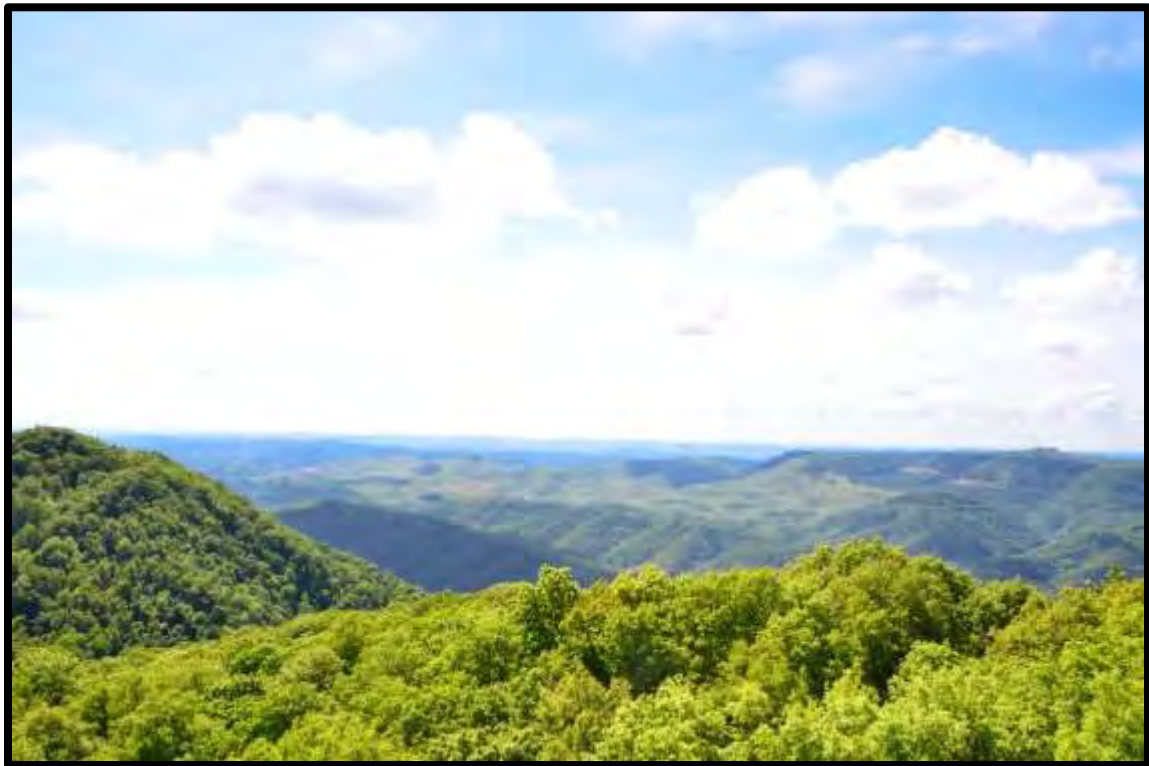
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# Mount Rogers Region



*A different side of Virginia*



# Regional Economic Development Plan

2016 - 2019



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## Acknowledgements

The Mount Rogers Region would like to thank the staff from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University and Virginia Cooperative Extension for support throughout the course of this project. We would also like to show our appreciation to the distinguished individuals that took part in the training and planning sessions for their invaluable insight and ideas that led to the creation of this plan. The full list of participants is available in Appendix A.

## Stronger Economies Together Initiative

USDA Rural Development launched the Stronger Economies Together (SET) in 2009 in **collaboration with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) and their** land-grant university partners. **SET's purpose** is to strengthen the capacity of communities in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. Important elements of the Stronger Economies Together program will build collaboration between communities in a **region, provide economic analyses tailored to help capture the region's current** or emerging clusters and comparative economic advantages and supported by technical assistance provided by land-grant university extension systems to the regions over a period of several months including the SET training.

The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC), **the region's Economic Development District (EDD)** as recognized by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Local Development District (LDD) as recognized by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), applied for the region to be accepted as a SET region in May 2015. As an EDD, the MRPDC directs and **updates the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and felt that the** CEDS plan could be maximized by layering it with the economic development blueprint developed through the SET process. The MRPDC saw SET participation as an avenue to receive additional guidance and technical assistance—namely, this was an opportunity to synchronize local and regional efforts to develop a more cohesive, overarching plan for the Mount Rogers Region.

The MRPDC was notified of its acceptance as a SET region in August 2015 and began working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) in September to organize the **initiative's sessions and membership**. As a leadership and planning initiative, SET brought leaders from the Mount Rogers Region together to develop and implement an economic development blueprint. Approximately 60 individuals from the region participated throughout the SET process beginning in October with the Mount Rogers Regional forum where the group conducted an in-depth SWOT analysis. From December 2015 to May 2016, meetings and planning sessions were held and the group determined its plan of work.

## Executive Summary

Steeped in rich musical, culture, and natural history, **Appalachian Virginia's Mount Rogers Region** is using these assets to a change the way the region perceives economic development and growth. This Regional Economic Development Plan ties in with other regional plans and will serve as a roadmap for the future economic development efforts of the Mount Rogers Region.

Through the SET process, key regional stakeholders embraced a spirit of regionalism to support this initiative. Implementing the action items described within this document will strengthen the ability of the Mount Rogers Region to secure its economic future and position it as a competitive region. This plan reflects a five module planning process with active participation from business, civic, and community leaders. Significant research and discussions have led to the development of this plan.

During the planning process, the group identified three major areas of focus for the region: **tourism, agribusiness, and manufacturing**. **The region's natural** and cultural assets, including the Appalachian Trail, Creeper Trail, Crooked Road, Grayson Highlands State Park, and the Jefferson National Forest are an attraction to the area that bring thousands of visitors each year. Continuing with those natural assets, **the region's culture** is also largely dependent on its agriculture and related industries, and several of its counties are among the top beef cattle and sheep producing counties in the state. Manufacturing is central to the region as twelve **of the region's 50 largest** employers are manufacturers and this industry continues to have some of the highest wages within the region.

To create the most productive environment to prepare the SET plan, SET participants were asked to divide into groups based on their areas of expertise and it was apparent from early on that each group had its own unique dynamic and way of functioning. The smaller subgroup division allowed each area to work within its own culture and develop, or expand upon, the relationships needed to see these efforts through to fruition. The SET plan builds upon the strengths within each group, allowing the plan to be structured in way that it is the most effective for each group.

To drive economic development in the region over the coming years, the three cluster groups developed SMART goals that were refined over the course of several months before being included in the final SET plan. These goals include:

### Tourism

- Collectively deploy the shared SWVA brand
- Implement a web-based hospitality training program
- Secure funding to grow and attract new tourism businesses.
- Increase local business sourcing by aligning local resources with regional tourism cluster needs.

### Agribusiness



*A different side of Virginia*

- Advance economic opportunities in agriculture, food, and natural resources
- Equip the region's youth and adults for employment in the agribusiness industry

#### Manufacturing

- Create access to high quality regional data
- Develop a coordinated, regionally funded marketing strategy to attract new manufacturers
- Cultivate regional linkages between workforce initiatives
- Coordinate effective plan to address workforce turnover/retention in manufacturing

There are several items that apply in more than one focus area and once they are achieved in one area, there may be noted impacts in another area. Notably, any developments in regional workforce linkages will affect the entirety of the SET plan.

Based on regional data and trends, the Mount Rogers Region Economic Development Plan will serve as the roadmap for future regional economic development efforts. One of the most important goals of the SET group was to build on efforts currently underway in the region, avoiding duplication of efforts. The Mount Rogers Initiative is a tourism initiative put in place to build a regional tourism brand, which will be rolled out in one section of this plan. Additionally, the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (WDB) began facilitation of a manufacturing Sector Strategy during the same timeframe as the SET process and the team is working closely with the WDB to align the SET plan with the Sector Strategy. Virginia Cooperative Extension is working to develop the New River Hill Farm as an agricultural and natural resources laboratory. SET efforts will tie in with current plans for New River Hill Farm and help implement it as a regional project, setting the stage for regional resource sharing.

### Regional Collaboration

The Mount Rogers Regional Economic Development Plan has buy-in from key decision makers in the region including each of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission member localities—the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington and Wythe, the independent cities of Bristol and Galax, and the towns of Abingdon, Chilhowie, Damascus, Fries, Glade Spring, Hillsville, Independence, Marion, Rural Retreat, Saltville, Troutdale, and Wytheville. Local and regional development authorities, non-profits, and various others helped develop the plan and will be instrumental in its implementation.

The members of the regional SET Steering Committee submitted support letters and participated in SET sessions. They helped guide the larger group sessions, developed actions for implementing the goals established in the program, and helped review and edit plan drafts.

### Region Description

The Mount Rogers Region encompasses Washington, Smyth, Grayson, Bland, Wythe, and Carroll counties and the independent cities of Bristol and Galax. This geographical span was selected in 1969 as Planning District 3, or the Mount Rogers Planning District (MRPD). While each jurisdiction in the district retains its individual character, they do share many common features. All of the jurisdictions are similar in that the region is mountainous. The region is divided into two physiographic provinces: the Blue Ridge Province and the Ridge and Valley Province. The localities have a long history of working together and **leaders meet monthly at the MRPDC's executive committee meeting.**



Many regional cooperatives and partnerships exist throughout the MRPDC that assist with a variety of regional planning topics including economy, transportation, tourism, education, and health care. The Mount Rogers Region is the western half of the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board and is also classified as **Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance (VIAA)**, an economic development partnership. The localities are interdependent with regard to labor exchange (i.e. commuting patterns), retail trade, shared problems, and shared opportunities. The region is traversed by Interstates 81 and 77, which intersect in, and run concurrently through, Wythe County. Grayson County is the only locality in the area without immediate access to a major interstate.

The physical environment is largely unspoiled, and may be a key factor in stimulation of regional economic vitality. The region is classified as rural and has traditionally been an agricultural, manufacturing, and coal supply chain. The natural barriers that the region has coped with, historically, have resulted in long-lasting infrastructure, income, and employment effects. Thus, the region is concerned with the availability of jobs, finding profitable new and alternative agricultural products and markets, the development of cultural and recreational tourism, and developing cross-sector economic linkages, especially those that can take advantage of the **region's natural resources in sustainable, non-consumptive ways.**

Despite the fact that the district has struggled with economic and infrastructure problems (such as water, sewer, roads, industrial sites, high development cost of land due to topography), significant opportunities for economic development do exist. Advanced telecommunications networks, such as the Wired Road in Carroll and Grayson counties and the City of Galax, are **opening the region's small communities to high-tech business that attracted by the region's low costs of living, scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and relative absence of crime, pollution, traffic congestion, and other problems that characterize urban metro areas.** Additionally, localities such as Bland County are utilizing the most up-to-date technologies, such as using wireless networks instead of fiber, to overcome the geographical challenges of the region.

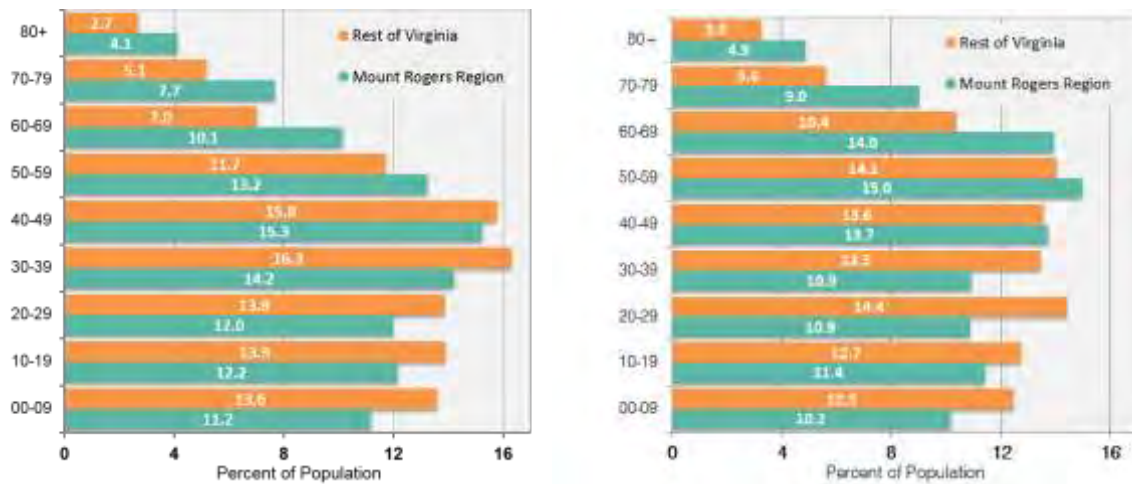
The most important asset in the Mount Rogers region is the workforce. To be competitive, the region must ensure that the educational and training levels are raised to meet technological and information advances. Additionally, the region must continue to push for transportation access improvements and maintain a competitive cost of doing business.

## Evidence Basis for Plan

### Regional Demographic Data

#### Population

With an estimated population of 192,407 in 2014, one of the most readily apparent issues within the Mount Rogers Region is the aging population, which is solidly higher than the rest of the Commonwealth. The area has a noticeable lack of population in the areas of 20-29 and 30-39, which **solidifies the group's assertion that we have a talent attraction and "brain drain" issue** where the younger generation is leaving the area after reaching their maturity. In the 14 years from the 2000 Census to the most recently available population estimate, 2014, the percentage of the population under the age of 50 dropped by 7.8%, with 4.4% of that population change being in the 20-29 and 30-39 age ranges.



i. Population Age Structure 2000 (left) and 2014 (right), prepared by Purdue University

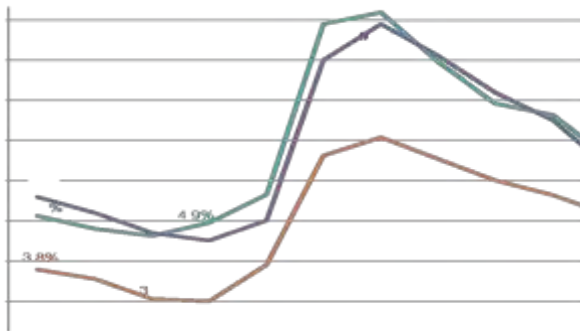
### Poverty and Unemployment

The Mount Rogers Region's poverty rate rose sharply from 2003 to 2008, and while it has continued to rise, the amount of change from 2008 to 2013 was slower. However, despite this slow down, poverty in 2013 was 16.7%, sharply higher than the Commonwealth's rate of 11.7%.

Despite the fact that poverty rates have continued to rise since 2008, after unemployment rates hit their highest in 2009-10 they had leveled out to almost pre-Recession rates by 2014. These figures in combination suggest the possible underemployment of area residents.

	2003	2008	2013
Total Population in Poverty	13.8%	16.1%	16.7%
Minors (Age 0-17) in Poverty	21.5%	23.2%	25.3%
Real Median Household Income* (\$ 2013)	\$40,369	\$39,902	\$38,683

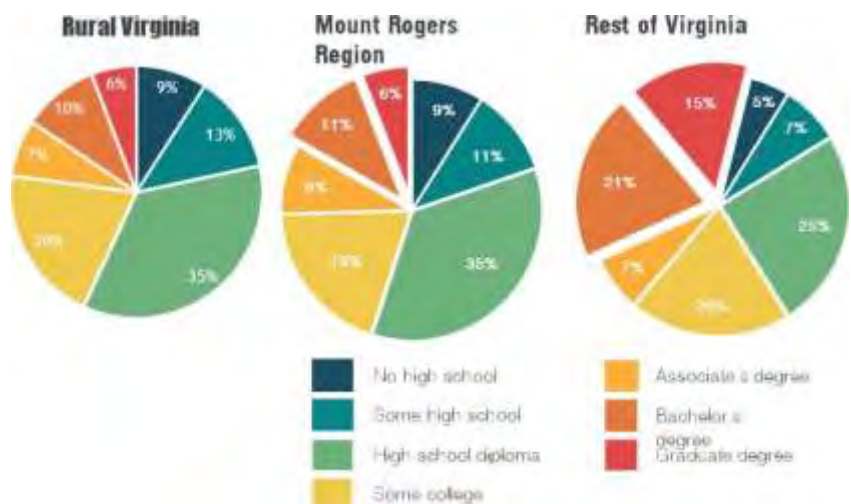
ii. Poverty and Median Income, prepared by Purdue University



iii. Regional Unemployment 2004 – 2014, prepared by Purdue University

### Educational Attainment

With 17% of the population having a bachelor's degree or higher, the Mount Rogers Region has a lower education attainment rate than the rest of the Commonwealth. However, when compared to rural Virginia as a whole, the region's rate is actually only slightly higher than rural rate of 16% for a bachelor's or higher and the region's percentages are very representative of rural Virginia.



iv. Educational Attainment, Prepared by Purdue University

## Regional Economic Data

Through the SET process, regional leaders analyzed the region's industry cluster data and identified mature, transforming, emerging, and Star clusters within the region. This analysis was used to help determine the focus clusters to be targeted with the Mount Rogers Region Economic Development Plan. Clusters that are more concentrated and growing in the region are labeled as star clusters, while mature clusters are those within the region that are concentrated but are experiencing negative growth. Agribusiness and several areas of manufacturing were both identified as star clusters, while the tourism cluster was identified as transforming. Star clusters in the region included agribusiness and food processing and various areas of manufacturing, such as transportation equipment manufacturing and primary metal manufacturing.

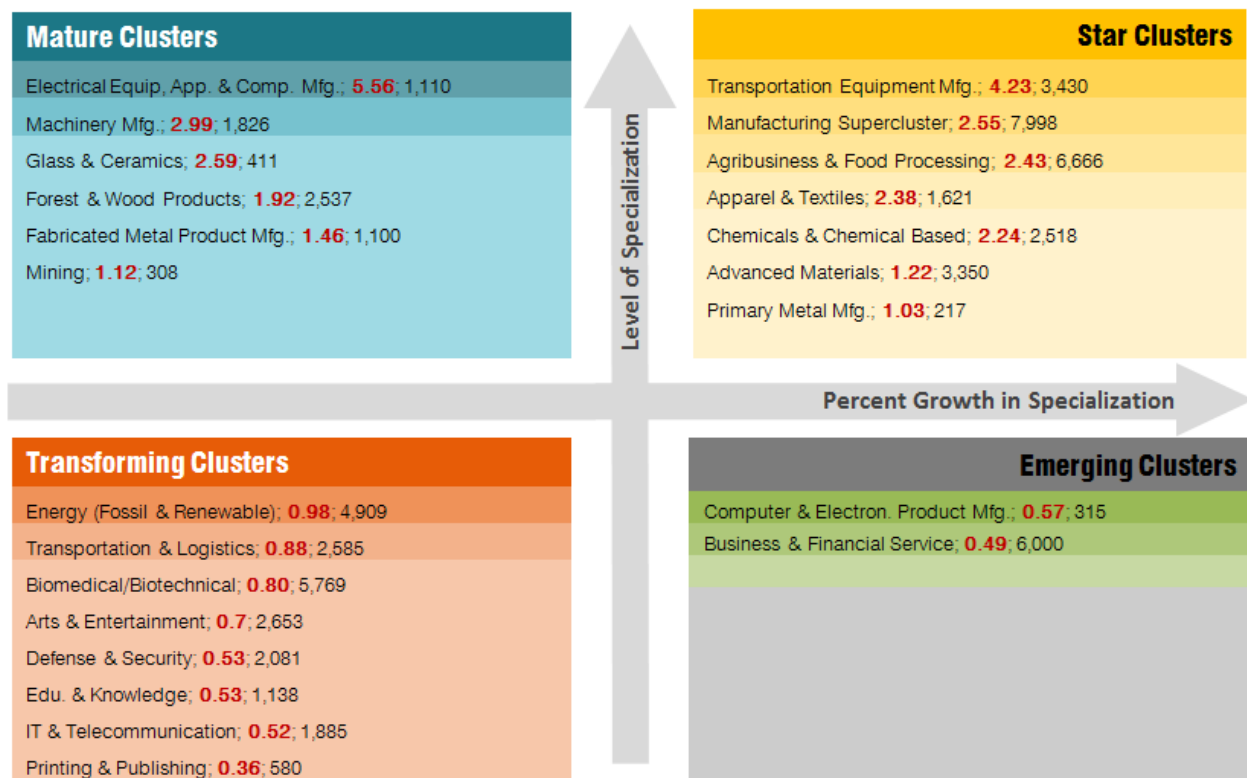
### Industry Cluster Analysis Explanation

Emerging (bottom right): Contains industry clusters that are underrepresented in the region (low Location Quotient (LQ)) but are growing. *Weak but advancing*

Stars (top right): Contains industry clusters that more concentrated in the region (LQ over 1) and are growing. *Strong and advancing*

Mature (top left): Contains industry clusters that are more concentrated in the region (LQ over 1) but are decreasing or declining (job losses). *Strong but Declining*

Transforming (bottom left): Contains industry clusters that are underrepresented in the region (low LQ) and are also decreasing or declining (job losses). *Weak and declining*

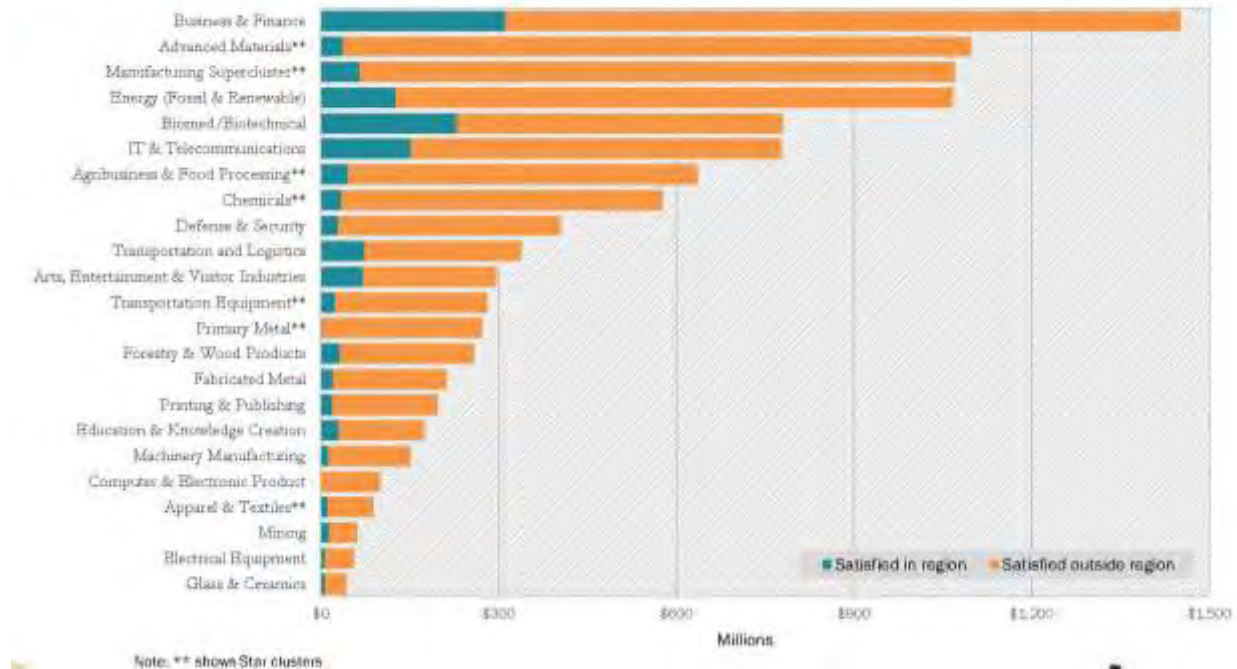


v: Mount Rogers Region Industry Cluster Analysis, prepared by Purdue University

As part of the analysis, a review was conducted on each cluster's leakages and the potential for capturing new market share (See Figure vi.). The review encouraged consideration of all the suppliers and producers that bring a product or service into existence and where the possibility for

new development exists. The analysis showed large amounts of leakages in the areas of manufacturing, agribusiness, and tourism (Arts & Entertainment) and helped the group chose those clusters as their focus for the SET plan. Despite the tourism cluster's label of transforming, the leakages analysis results and feedback from participants regarding major regional projects and initiatives in the cluster, helped lead the group to choose it as a regional focus.

## Industry Clusters: Leakages Regional requirements, 2013



vi. Industry Cluster Leakages, 2013

## Strengths and Assets

At the Civic Forum, attendees cataloged the strengths and challenges of the region and then used these to develop regional opportunities. These strengths and weaknesses were frequently revisited as the planning process continued and many of the noted opportunities can be found within the goals of each subgroup.

Many quality of life factors were listed as strengths including the strong sense of community, low cost of living, and access to educational opportunities. Additional strengths in the region focused on the cultural and natural resources and discussion centered the ways that we can leverage those for our economic benefit, including the regional trends in and push for cultural and natural resources tourism and recreation. The region's extensive agricultural and manufacturing industries were detailed at great length. From this discussion, it was apparent early on that tourism, manufacturing, and agribusiness would have great influence on the region's economic development plan.

## Strengths:

- Cultural/natural resources related to recreation and eco-tourism, including arts
- Variety of organizations and agencies offering resources to support area
- Quality of life with low cost of living
- Strong sense of community with passionate individuals
- Local and resilient workforce with strong work ethic
- Utility infrastructure is second to none
- Accessibility related to geographic area
- Educational opportunities
- Agricultural industry is growing especially around local foods systems

The Mount Rogers Region is blessed with a multitude of assets at its disposal, which the region has used as an economic driver for many of its recent regional plans. Regional assets committed to help support the SET plan include an immense array of regional natural assets, such as the state parks within the region: Hungry Mother, Grayson Highlands, and New River Trail. Strong cultural ties **draw their roots from the Appalachian culture, with events such as the Galax's Old Fiddlers' Convention and the Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion music festival taking center stage.**

**The region's human capital is supported by strong relationships built within** the K-12 and secondary education, as well as strong career and technical education programs and a top-tier workforce development structure. The strong working relationships and networks within K-12 education, the community college system, and workforce development allows the address the needs of the workforce and help prepare individuals for the next step in their career.

Social capital in the region draws its strength both from long-time residents and from "imports" who have fallen in love with the region and decided to make it their home. One such example of **this is in the Town of Damascus where the Damascus Business Group's most active members are** individuals who have visited the area and then moved here to live and open businesses. These individuals and others like them region-wide who have opened breweries, restaurants, lodging establishments, and outfitters are a true asset for positive change, because they see the potential for the region to develop, while remaining true to its culture and retaining its natural assets.

## Challenges and Related Strategies

When attendees were asked to focus on the challenges in the region, the answers were much broader than the answers for strengths. In addition, due to various factors, including geographic diversity of the region, some of the challenges noted in one county may have been strengths in another (e.g. access to major roads or internet). One topic that was the focus of much discussion over the course of the project was the stigma attached to technical education and to "just" having a two-year-degree, despite the fact that many of the employers in our region need employees with technical skills and education.

One of the region's major barriers is its population pyramid structure, showing an aging regional population. With a lower than average population in the working age brackets, the region may have difficulty in the future maintaining itself because of the overrepresentation in the elderly population and the demands that this population makes upon regional economic resources. The region is looking to combat the out-migration of its younger population with goals focused around expanded education opportunities for both youth and the current workforce. Many of these strategies are shown in the SET plans of work, which show various methods of targeting the younger workforce across the region's diverse cluster groups.

Challenges:

- Lack of unified approach has created an overlap in planning and access to resources
- **Stigma of technical education or obtaining "just" a two-year degree**
- Inability of region to accept reality and/or change
- **Overcoming "the nothing to do" mentality (both amenities and job opportunities)**
- Need for talent attraction
- Connecting the dots between workforce and education (or interest and skills to jobs)
- **Moving/aging populations creates a "brain drain" with talent leaving the region**
- Aging population impacts the need for health care workers
- Access to education (educational opportunities are available but not accessible to everyone)
- Workforce issues including underemployment and availability of skilled workers
- Plant/company closures
- Lack of high paying jobs
- Poverty still exists and families are locked into it
- Lack of diversity of population impacts the development of a robust economy - region must become more inclusive and welcoming
- Lack of access to transportation and internet in remote areas
- Wi-Fi and cell services availability affects information infrastructure

## Regional Opportunities

After discussion of strengths and weaknesses at the Civic Forum, participants were asked what opportunities could help make the Mount Rogers region more vibrant. The group placed the opportunities into six major categories, which were communication/network, workforce/education, awareness/education, entrepreneurship, economic strategies, and rebranding region. These opportunities were often the focus of discussion for SET meetings and many of them can be noted in the region's goals, such as the agribusiness group's education goals, the manufacturing group's workforce goals, and the tourism group's entrepreneurship goals.

Participants were instructed to select one of the categories of "opportunities" that should be a priority. The overwhelming choice of this exercise, with over half of the participants choosing it, was the workforce/education category. The top areas of opportunities in the region included

workforce/education, awareness education, entrepreneurship, and rebranding the region, all of which can be seen in the SET plan goals.

#### Communication/Network

- Increase coordination between agencies—using initiatives like SET
- Increase dialog among stakeholders
- Workforce Development and economic development entities work collaboratively and meet quarterly
- Leadership/facilitation—>enhance ways to work together
- Models of cooperation

#### Workforce/Education

- Linking with the Sector Strategy Initiative
- Changing perception of technical education
- Develop workforce to meet current and emerging careers
- Match education with current and future vocational employment needs
- Connect K-12 education system with workforce pipeline

#### Awareness/Education

- Educate K-12 students about region and opportunities
- Educate parents and teachers to funnel students in the right direction

#### Entrepreneurship

- Strong correlation between technical skills and entrepreneurship
- Growth from within is vital requiring the region to increase the support to entrepreneurship and increase the marketing skills as well as the marketing region
- Current and future jobs require technical training requiring the region to focus increasing the educational attainment of those who only hold a high school diploma

#### Economic Strategies

- Double down on agriculture—keep locally grown products local
- Manufacture outdoor recreation products for outfitters

#### Regional Rebrand

- Rebrand and correct the stereotypes both internally and externally associated with Appalachia.

When determining the plans of work, the group often pulled back to strengths, challenges, and opportunities addressed at the Civic Forum and determined those that they would like to capitalize upon. This method also pulled the **group's** focus back to one of the major takeaways from the Mount Rogers Region Civic Forum: our goals are interdependent. Regardless of different agencies, missions, or focus areas, regional leaders all generally want the same thing and are working toward the same type of goals. There may be a slightly different focus, but many goals across the

region are interconnected. While one area/agency may have good short-term outcomes, in order for the region to succeed in the long-term, it must work together to create lasting solutions. While regional leaders highlight that many of **the region's** greatest strengths revolve around its attractiveness regarding natural/cultural assets and way of life, they know that the region cannot rely on tourism as its main industry. What leaders can focus on as a region is using its tourism industry to spur business and entrepreneur growth. Through regional branding and marketing efforts for our assets we can improve the way the outside world views our region and we can change the way residents perceive it, prompting the younger demographic to understand that this is a region worthy of investing their time, efforts, and futures. This improved perception of the quality of life in our region not only affects individuals, it also changes the way companies view our region and may be a determining factor in their willingness to locate or stay within the region.

## Industry Cluster Focus

After reviewing data compiled by United States Department of Agriculture, Purdue University, and Virginia Tech, the group decided on the cluster focus areas of tourism, manufacturing, and agribusiness. The region had originally considered the fourth focus area of health care, but, due to extenuating circumstances, including a preliminary merger negotiations between service providers in a great part of the region, the SET group was unable to garner the human capital deemed necessary to develop strong and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-framed) goals, so it was decided to dissolve the health care group in order to devote efforts toward strengthening the other cluster.

One of the main goals of the Mount Rogers Region Stronger Economies Together (SET) initiative was to avoid duplication of efforts and to capitalize on and strengthen projects already in progress. There are a variety of these efforts including the Mount Rogers Regional Initiative, a tourism and branding-focused initiative, and Appalachian Spring, an outdoor recreation initiative focused on highlighting **and marketing the region's natural assets**. The **New River/Mount Rogers Sector Strategy**, facilitated by the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, is based upon the manufacturing cluster in the region and is serving as the model for sector strategies in workforce development areas throughout the state. The Sector Strategy is being developed and implemented based on input provided by the regional businesses and industry as to what are their critical workforce needs.

The SET group frequently noted that there are several areas that serve as support within the region and do not align with only any single industry. These include education, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, and utilities. While some of these areas are noted in goals, others are not addressed in the SET plan, as they are part of other plans and the group wanted to avoid duplication. One example of this is that internet access is vital to the **area's growth and development**. **Although the SET goals do not specifically address the regional need for broadband expansion**, the SET group will provide assistance and support to other agencies with broadband/wireless initiatives already in place, such as the Wired Road Authority and the Bland Wireless Authority. The MRPDC is actively

involved in all of the previously mentioned initiatives and will update the group on the progress of each of these initiatives quarterly.

## Regional Economic Goals

Through assistance provided by the state and national SET teams, the Mount Rogers Region's SET plan is evidence-based, relevant to the region, and realistic. The plan engages the resources in the communities and relies on collaboration to leverage support and reduce duplication in developing economic initiatives. The community capitals upon which strong economies are built are incorporated into the plan, capitalizing on the built infrastructure, political will, natural and cultural assets, social and human resources, and financial options of the region.

Based upon input from the **Mount Rogers Region's Stronger Economies Together (SET)** participants, coupled with the regional economic and demographic data and resources explored through SET, the following goals were selected for the Mount Rogers Region:

### Tourism

Collectively deploy the shared SWVA brand	Secure funding to grow and attract new tourism businesses.	Implement a hospitality training program	Increase local business sourcing by aligning local resources with regional tourism cluster needs.
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### Agribusiness

Advance economic opportunities in agriculture, food, and natural resources	Equip the region's youth and adults for employment in the agribusiness industry
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### Manufacturing

Create access to high quality regional data	Develop a Coordinated, Regionally Funded Marketing Strategy to attract new manufacturers	Cultivate Regional Linkages Between Workforce Initiatives	Coordinate effective plan to address workforce turnover/retention in manufacturing
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## Tourism

The Mount Rogers Region has a very strong tourism cluster, as there are several initiatives on going in the region, including the rebranding of the region as ["The Other Side of Virginia"](#) (See logo, right, and Appendix B – Tourism for additional branding materials). This group is established and has worked with [Arnett Muldrow & Associates](#) to develop a regional branding plan that will be implemented as part of the SET plan.



Tourism in the Mount Rogers Region is a rapidly growing industry with, travel expenditures from 2004 to 2014 increasing by 48% from \$282.6 million to \$418.9 million. Local travel related tax revenues increased by 33% from \$8.35 million to \$11.1 million; state travel related tax revenues increased by 26% from \$14.8 million to \$18.7 million. During that same period, overall employment in Mount Rogers PDC area decreased by 5.5%, but employment in the Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service industry cluster, employment increased by 20.8%. According to a report from VTC, travel employment in the Mount Rogers area was 3,867 in 2014. The state parks within the Mount Rogers PDC (Grayson Highlands, Hungry Mother, New River Trail) had an attendance of 1,385,112 with economic impact of \$28,150,098 in 2014.

According to a survey completed during the SET process, tourism leaders in the region state that Outdoor recreation and entertainment are the primary reasons visitors travel to the Mount Rogers area. Visitors to the region primarily come from other areas in Virginia and its neighboring and nearby states: North Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, with the most common travel party origin being North Carolina (See Figure vii). Top organizational priorities collected from the survey are: increased tourism funding for better marketing campaigns; more tourism related businesses or attractions; more or higher quality dining and lodging opportunities; and more networking among tourism related businesses and attractions. The top three needs for businesses are marketing, customer service training, and partnerships—all areas addressed with the SET initiative.

## Top Five Travel Party Origin

1. North Carolina
2. Virginia
3. Tennessee
4. Ohio
5. Pennsylvania



Please list the states of origin for the travelers visiting your community. Please rank the top five states in order of visitation with #1 being the top state where travelers are coming from. Please note that your community refers to the area of interest represented by you, your employer, or organization. For example, the community for businesses such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, etc. might be the local city/county/town where the business is located, while the community for regional or state organizations will be a defined region or the state overall, respectively.



### vii: Tourism Travel Party Origin

The tourism industry within the Mount Rogers Region should not be thought of something that simply brings in visitors; tourism efforts allow the local population to stay in their hometowns by providing them with entrepreneurial opportunities that might otherwise be nonexistent. Marketing and branding efforts keep our region fresh and, while they do draw in visitors, they show locals a different side of the area and instill regional and community pride. Our tourism industry does not just showcase that Southwest Virginia is an exciting place to visit; it emphasizes that it is **a great place to build a life**. The tourism group's focus on marketing the quality of life in the region holistically assists the SET plan and all of its focus groups.

### Agribusiness

Mount Rogers Planning District stakeholders agree that the Agribusiness industry segment is **more broad than the traditional definitions of "agriculture" and "agribusiness"**. Clearly defining these terms is imperative to capture the scope of work as the Agribusiness Plan of Action is formalized. From henceforth throughout this document, **"agriculture" will include the production of all food, raw natural fiber and forest products. "Agribusiness" will be defined as all businesses engaged in the supply chain of food, fiber and forest products from the raw materials to final consumer.** Such enterprises include, but are not limited to, farms, sawmills, grocery outlets, value-added processing, aggregation and distribution, farmers markets, bottling, etc of such goods.

Agribusiness is a star cluster within the Mount Rogers Region, indicating that it is strong and positioned for advancement. With 6,666 jobs in the industry cluster region-wide, **the region's**



*A different side of Virginia*

Location Quotient for agribusiness and food processing is 2.43 meaning there are nearly 2.5 times more jobs in the cluster in the region than the national average. Leakage data from the cluster indicates that a significant amount of the materials and services to support the industry are produced outside of the region. Exempting Bland County (which is approximately 33% National Forest and 33% farm land), every county in the region was over 45% farm land, compared to the US percentage of 41%.

Having those 6,666 jobs spread out over the 5,452 farms (as of the 2012 Census of Agriculture) and over 91% of those farms having sales of less than \$100,000, shows that the Mount Rogers **Region's farms are small and** generally supporting solely one individual or family. Oftentimes these farms are second jobs, but with a total farm sales of over \$270 million in 2012, they are a very important part of the economy and culture of the region. The direct and total economic impact of agriculture and forestry in the region in 2011 was over \$1.62 billion.

Traditionally, the agribusiness sector, much like its producers themselves, has been an independent and very self-reliant group. The SET group is working to change the culture within the region to create more regionalized thinking and projects that capitalize on the assets of each locality for the good of the region as a whole. Due to this need for a culture shift, the group has been conservative in creating what they consider realistic and attainable goals. The group feels that the project will have its greatest hurdles in the beginning of the project with getting buy-in and participation from groups. Much like the successes within the tourism sector, once a revitalized and strengthened regional coalition has been established, the future of regional efforts will be more productive and easier to implement.

## Manufacturing

Manufacturing is another star cluster within the region and with 7,998 jobs in the industry cluster in the region, the Location Quotient for manufacturing is 2.55 meaning there are over 2.5 times more jobs in the cluster in the region than the national average. Between 2009 and 2014, there was a 3% increase in overall manufacturing employment in the region from 14,286 to 14,666. State manufacturing employment decreased 2.1% in the same time frame. The share-shift analysis shows that seven industries in the manufacturing supercluster experienced positive regional performance from 2000 to 2014, outpacing national employment figures. Those industries are: truck trailer manufacturing, motor vehicle steering and suspension components manufacturing, plate work manufacturing, mining machinery and equipment manufacturing, travel trailer and camper manufacturing, motor vehicle gasoline engine and engine parts manufacturing

There is significant leakage within the manufacturing industry with over \$1.07 billion in expenditures dedicated to the manufacturing supercluster—93% of which are satisfied outside of the region. Only \$65 million of input expenditures are spent within the region.

The SET manufacturing cluster group is in the midst of transition as new leadership in several localities and agencies is creating a culture of regionalism with leaders understanding and

embracing the need to work together for larger, more regionalized successes rather than pitting themselves against each other for smaller, localized gains. This new leadership is knowledgeable in the current business atmosphere and forward-thinking in its drive to work in the present to create regionalized future solutions.

The group's goals focus around addressing the workforce needs of current manufacturers to retain them in our area and ensure they have a stable workforce, allowing us build that workforce up and work toward attracting new manufacturers to the region. Existing manufacturers sometimes struggle to find well-suited candidates for their opens positions and have expressed concern about bringing in additional companies before we have strengthened our regional workforce pool.

## Regional Economic Development Plan

The Mount Rogers Regional Economic Development Plan is outlined in the following tables, which show the in-depth strategies, processes, and steps needed for each of these goals to be successful. Each subgroup will use the plan they created as a guide to implementation of the SET initiative.

All **"Key Contact/ Convener"** sections list the person who is responsible for coordinating this strategy and we are aware that personnel may change. For more information regarding our procedures, please see the Succession Plan (page 36). The Mount Rogers Region strives to make this a usable plan, thus, any changes in personnel will be updated in the document. We will also be **updating each strategy's "Progress Status" as new updates become available. To ensure that you have the most recent copy of this plan, please check the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission SET webpage (<http://www.mrpdc.org/set.htm>) or contact Rocky Warren at [rwarren@mrpdc.org](mailto:rwarren@mrpdc.org) or (276) 783-5103.**

## Tourism

GOAL 1: Collectively deploy the shared SWVA brand.

The Mount Rogers regional tourism brand was developed through a 2015 Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development grant and is now ready for deployment in the region as a coordinating symbol. With a fully deployed regional tourism brand, Mount Rogers will become a vibrant, recognizable tourist destination where all its natural and creative resources are celebrated, local entrepreneurs are profitable, and tax revenues from tourism are increased.

### Objective A: Introduce the regional brand to the region's tourism entrepreneurs by December 2016 to grow awareness of Southwest Virginia as visitor destination and a region of choice for investment.

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
<p>Compile a database of brand evangelists.</p> <p>*Refer to SWVA database</p>	<p>Mount Rogers Planning District (MRPDC), with support from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation</li> <li>• Chambers</li> <li>• Main Street Directors</li> <li>• Tourism Officials</li> <li>• Town and City Managers (staff)</li> <li>• MySWVAopportunity</li> </ul>	<p>Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC)</p>	<p>Baseline by June 2016 with updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November 2016</li> <li>• June 2017</li> <li>• November 2017</li> <li>• June 2018</li> <li>• November 2018</li> </ul>	<p>The baseline data (inventory of businesses will not be exhaustive. The goal is to continue to grow the tally and the number of tourism businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed inventory</li> <li>• Updated semiannually</li> <li>• Growth of 10% by June 2017</li> <li>• Growth of 10% by November 2017</li> </ul>	<p>The inventory has been started and is currently under development.</p>
<p>Establish a coordinated communication network for Mount Rogers Regional Brand Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MRPDC with support from the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC) will develop the communication tools</li> </ul>	<p>First Newsletter out in Fall 2016 with seasonal updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall 2017-2018</li> </ul>	<p>Newsletter template will be developed and reviewed for overall tourism business message and content of first issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set baseline of opens and click throughs.</li> <li>• Measure opens and click throughs to assess the nature of useable information.</li> <li>• Grow average opens and click-throughs by 10 % annually</li> </ul>	
<p>Develop and deploy Brand Partner menu with demonstrated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenna Wagner (CHF Marketing Director) with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May 2016: menu developed of</li> </ul>	<p>A menu of options will present the brand as an "opt in at your comfort level"</p>	<p>10 projects shared by communities</p>

participation by community and business partners		support from Becky Nave (VTC)	brand partner options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer 2016: menu presented through newsletter</li> <li>• Ongoing: menu tracked for implementation</li> <li>• Ongoing: menu added to with examples from the community</li> </ul>	strategy with clear ideas for simple alignment  By December 2016 at least 10 of the 100 strategies will have been deployed.  By December 2017, at least 30 of the 100 strategies will have been deployed.  By December 2018, at least 50 of the 100 strategies will have been deployed.	have been established
Develop a one page brand partner sheet to communicate how to be a brand partner and why to be a brand partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation with support from Virginia Tourism Corporation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenna Wagner with support from Becky Nave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft developed by MAY 2016</li> <li>• Revision by June 2016 with inclusion on brandswva.com</li> <li>• Summer 2016: Brand partner sheet presented through newsletter</li> </ul>	A one page sheet will communicate the history and value of regional collaboration in the presentation of a positive united identity that supports, supplements, and connects existing local identities, while welcoming new participants as brand partners.	The brand partner sheet is being distributed to regional partners.
Distribute branding materials throughout the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation via <a href="http://www.brandswva.com">www.brandswva.com</a></li> <li>• Mount Rogers Planning District Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenna Wagner with support from Becky Nave and Aaron Sizemore</li> </ul>	December 2016  December 2017	By December 2016, help the region as a whole to reach 300 brand partners from businesses, localities, organizations, institutions in the Mount Rogers Region will have downloaded the brand package.  By December 2017, 1000 brand partners from businesses, localities, organizations, institutions in the Mount Rogers Region will have downloaded the brand package	The brand is currently being deployed throughout the region. A brand rollout ceremony was held and attended by 200+ individuals.

**Objective B: Provide technical assistance on the most effective usage of the regional tourism brand throughout 2016, 2017 and beyond.**

<p>Identify at least 5 communities or entrepreneurs to pilot the brand in 2016.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grayson County</li> <li>• Town of Damascus</li> <li>• Town of Chilhowie</li> <li>• Town of Marion</li> <li>• Town of Wytheville</li> <li>• Emerging SET Agricultural Coalition</li> </ul>	<p>One-on-one outreach by team leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marie Isom</li> <li>• Aaron Sizemore</li> <li>• Becky Nave</li> <li>• Brenda Bonk</li> <li>• Rosa Lee Jude</li> </ul>	<p>October 2016</p>	<p>5 or more willing early adopters will be identified.</p>	<p>Branding Pilot meetings have begun with the first meeting being held in Damascus in early May 2016</p>
<p>Host training sessions on deployment strategies with communities, entrepreneurs, and tourism stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Regional Tourism Team</li> </ul>	<p>One-on-one outreach by team leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marie Isom</li> <li>• Aaron Sizemore</li> <li>• Becky Nave</li> <li>• Brenda Bonk</li> </ul>	<p>2016 - 2017</p>	<p>By June 2017, at least 5 participating organizations, communities, or businesses will be highlighted as case studies and shared throughout the region via the newsletter.</p> <p>Each will have incorporated the brand in at least 3 ways through a variety of media</p>	
<p>Showcase the pilot communities/ entrepreneurs throughout the region using video, web-based, and printed technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenna Wagner (CHF)</li> </ul>	<p>June 2017</p>	<p>An opportunity will be identified following June 2017 for a public or innovative presentation of case studies such as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference</li> <li>• Webinar</li> <li>• Podcast</li> </ul>	

GOAL 2: Implement a hospitality training program to create a high standard of service and to project Southwest Virginia as a region of choice for visitors and investment.

The regional tourism workforce will understand and have knowledge of the regional tourism products offered and expand customer service skills to support the tourism industry thereby enhancing the visitors' experiences.

**Objective A: Train at least 25 Certified Regional Hospitality Ambassadors in regional products and customer service skills by December 2016.**

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Deliver at least 1 Train-the-Trainer program for tourism directors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becky Nave</li> </ul>	Spring/Summer 2016:  First session held MAY 5	Prior to the session, At least one person from each county or town will commit to attending the Train-the-Trainer program	The Train-the-Trainer session has been held and was attended by individuals from all localities
Develop regional web-based customer service training for tourism workers based on the Abingdon Ambassador "product knowledge" training or the nationally recognized Retail Trade Federation. OR as a backup: YouTube video.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MRPDC and Town of Abingdon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kevin Costello</li> </ul>	Fall 2016  June 2017	Develop a coordinated web tool that builds on existing resources and highlights the best of the communities across the Mount Rogers Region.  Present opportunity to Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation Marketing Committee in Fall 2016  Solicit quotes by May 1, 2017  Develop grant application(s) to fund a comprehensive strategy for regional product awareness by May 1, 2017  If grant funding is not possible, explore cheaper alternatives, such as coordinated education through the newsletter.  Tool developed by December 2017	

Train and certify at least 25 tourism ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Tourism Team with support from Virginia Tourism Corporation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin Costello (Town of Abingdon)</li> </ul>	Summer 2017 through 2018	<p>25 tourism ambassadors will be trained and certified in 2017.</p> <p>By December 2021, 100 will be trained and certified.</p>	
Offer the Mount Rogers region as a test market for tourism training that can be replicated throughout Virginia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becky Nave (VTC)</li> </ul>	June 2017-2018	Roll out product with support from Virginia Tourism Corporation to measure effectiveness and usability.	

**GOAL 3: Secure funding to grow and attract new tourism businesses.**

Since 2012, efforts to build entrepreneurial communities have primarily taken the form of public business plan competitions. The events build awareness and encourage local support for business development and attraction.

**Objective A: Increase financial resources for business plan competitions by 5% by June 2017.**

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Prepare an inventory of current sources of business funding including banking industry, insurance companies, EDAs, and other innovative funders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Planning District Commission with the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore, with support from Josh Smith and Robyn Lee</li> </ul>	Summer to Fall 2016	<p>The aggregated resources will be promoted on the mySWVAopportunity website and the Mount Rogers Tourism Team newsletter.</p> <p>The inventory will be marketed with a case study of an entrepreneur in the region and the resources they have tapped in the Mount Rogers Tourism Team newsletter and the mySWVAopportunity newsletter.</p>	The inventory is currently under development
Explore and share examples of town and county funding investments to provide matching funding for business development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Planning District Commission with mySWVAopportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore with support from Robyn Lee and Mandy Archer</li> </ul>	Fall 2016/Winter 2017	Community partnerships and their measured outcomes will be highlighted with a case study in the Winter 2017 Mount Rogers Tourism Team newsletter and the mySWVAopportunity newsletter.	

Partner with SBDC and mySWVAopportunity (business development roundtable) and create financial packages for specific competition based strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Planning District Commission with mySWVAopportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore with support from Robyn Lee and Mandy Archer</li> </ul>	Measures in December of each year. 2016-2018	<p>At least 3 business plan competitions will be held in the region in 2016, with at least 7 new businesses established</p> <p>At least 3 business plan competitions will be held in the region in 2017 with 10 business established.</p> <p>At least 3 business plan comp At least 3 business plan competitions will be held in the region in 2017 with 10 businesses established.</p>
Convene regional financial services in support of entrepreneurship to create shared structure of support for entrepreneurs in the region from the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Planning District Commission with mySWVAopportunity and Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC) with support from Ken Heath, Olivia McDonald, Josh Smith, Ernie Maddy, Mandy Archer</li> </ul>	Early 2017	<p>Representatives from at least 20 private, for profit will gather in a roundtable setting to explore collaborative strategies to support emerging and growing businesses.</p> <p>At least one collective strategy will be pursued with support from the Mt. Rogers Tourism Team</p>

GOAL 4: Increase local business sourcing by aligning local resources with regional tourism cluster needs.

After changing attitudes toward collaborative strategies within industry clusters, business leaders will be encouraged to develop and prioritize actions to address shared opportunities.

**Objective A: Create a sector partnership by engaging tourism entrepreneurs in collaborative discussions.**

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Pilot an outdoor recreation industry cohort roundtable by first gathering a community specific roundtable focused on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MRPDC through the Mount Rogers Outdoor economy efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC)</li> </ul>	Late Fall 2016 (at the tail end of the season, before losing	The group will identify potential collaborative strategies or collective benefits of communication.	

bicycle outfitters in Damascus.			them for the winter.)	
Identify training, policy, business needs by supporting and listening:  General needs will be identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Planning District through the Mount Rogers Outdoor economy efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC) with support from Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation Appalachian Spring Staff (The position is being advertised in June 2016)</li> </ul>	Spring 2017	<p>One outcome/next step of the meeting will be identified.</p> <p>The bicycle pilot group is considering ongoing benefits of organized discussion.</p> <p>The bicycle pilot group will be guided through a discussion of potential expansion to additional communities or development of a broader 19 county SWVA biking industry cluster group.</p>
Share Spotlight Southwest Virginia as a model, both with the Bicycle network and with more broadly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lincoln Theater and Spotlight Southwest Virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristin Untiedt-Barnett with support from Amy Ball Braswell</li> </ul>	Spring 2017	Include a summary of the Spotlight Southwest Virginia theater network as an industry network in the Mount Rogers Tourism Team Newsletter
Begin convening of an additional tourism business cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Tourism Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC)</li> </ul>	Spring 2017-Fall 2017	Through one on one conversations in response to the newsletter article on the industry cluster roundtable strategy, an additional cohort will be identified
Add one additional cohort in 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Tourism Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC)</li> </ul>	2018	Through one on one conversations in response to promotion of the work of the bicycle cluster, an additional cohort will be identified
Have developed 5 cohorts by 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Tourism Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC)</li> </ul>	Spring 2020	Cohorts will be developed across the region and industry clusters are identified are identified and self-select.

**Objective B: Identify existing leakages among the tourism cluster.**

Communicate the buy local/leakage model in more broadly by including it in the Mount Rogers Tourism Team Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Tourism Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olivia McDonald (Marion Downtown)</li> </ul>	Spring 2017	A tailored approach to buy local at the industry scale will be communicated in a handout and newsletter.	
Interview tourism entrepreneurs confirming source leakages, beginning with the pilot bicycle group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Tourism Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC)</li> </ul>	Summer 2017	Identify and capture cost savings and leakage for at least one supply.	
Organize cohort strategy for one supply input for the 2018 season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers Tourism Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aaron Sizemore (MRPDC)</li> </ul>	For 2018 season	Increase local business sourcing in one product line by 10%	

## Agribusiness

GOAL 1: Advance economic opportunities in agriculture, food, and natural resources.

Healthy local agribusiness brings economic growth and development to the Mount Rogers region. Food and agribusiness have a massive economic, social, and environmental footprint. When the direct and indirect impacts of the agribusiness sector to employment, output, and value-added are considered, the contributions of the agribusiness sector to the level of economic activity in the region are even more impressive. The economic multipliers generated by activity in the agribusiness sector give credence to the fact that the agribusiness sector has significant direct and indirect impacts on our region.

While there is a strong core of fundamental values for agribusiness in the region, urbanization and lack of financial and other support threaten economic growth. Agricultural entrepreneurs and organizations appear to **work independently with very little collaboration**. To advance agriculture's economic opportunities, the agricultural stakeholders must build a regional foundation of collaboration that promotes agriculture.

### Objective 1: Develop a regional agricultural economic advancement plan by December 2016.

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Build a regional coalition addressing how the region works together more effectively than working independently on agriculture issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southwest Virginia Agricultural Association</li> <li>• Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC)</li> <li>• Agribusiness lenders</li> <li>• County Farm Bureaus</li> <li>• Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• Appalachian Sustainable Development</li> <li>• Economic Developers</li> <li>• Agribusiness industries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin Spurlin, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)</li> <li>• Rocky Warren Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC)</li> </ul>	April 2017 and then to meet quarterly	<p>Discussion with Southwest Virginia Agricultural Association Board.</p> <p>A SET agribusiness cluster representative is added to the Southwest Virginia Agricultural Association Futuring Committee.</p> <p>Establish the mission, plan of work, and operational structure of a regional agricultural coalition.</p>	<p>Conversations have been held with area farmers and agricultural associations.</p> <p>Southwest Virginia Agricultural Association has determined the SET goals line up with the mission of the SAA</p>
Integrate regional coalition into SET Implementation Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southwest Virginia Agricultural Association</li> <li>• Agribusiness lenders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rocky Warren (MRPDC)</li> <li>• Kevin Spurlin (VCE)</li> </ul>	April 2017	The agricultural coalition will be established with reporting process to the SET implementation team.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Farm Bureaus</li> <li>• Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• Southwest Virginia Agricultural Association</li> </ul>				
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**Objective 2: Communicate agriculture’s regional economic impact at least quarterly through area media and face-to-face presentations.**

Provide coordinated agricultural information to news media in each area of the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural coalition communication team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Agricultural Coalition</li> </ul>	May 2017	Increased publicity on the economic impact of agriculture as measured by the number of news stories from less than 2 per year to at least 4 per year.	
Present agricultural economic impacts to local business community and governing bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural coalition communication team</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Elected officials</li> <li>• Government Staff</li> <li>• Economic Developers</li> <li>• Mount Rogers PDC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Rogers PDC</li> <li>• Regional Agricultural Coalition</li> </ul>	Semi-annually, beginning June 2017	At least 4 presentations will be made to the local business community through area Chambers of Commerce and to the elected officials through their monthly meetings and PDC sessions.	

Goal 2: **Equip the region's youth and adult for employment in** the agribusiness industry.

The Mount Rogers region must create a skilled, affordable, and accessible workforce. We seek to inspire and educate the next generation of agricultural workers.

Situated in Appalachia, the Mount Rogers region has significantly lower per capita and household income, higher rates of unemployment and poverty and lower educational attainment than the statewide averages. As such, there are significant obstacles to build an educated and skilled workforce relying on an impoverished taxpayer base. School divisions lack resources to establish or duplicate educational resources.

A regional collaborative effort to provide and access educational and training opportunities would benefit building a skilled and educated workforce.

**Objective 1: Provide regional K-12 youth with at least 4 out of school, hands-on agricultural training experiences each year.**

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Inventory regional K-12 educational assets and establish a regional utilization agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local school systems</li> <li>Agriculture educators and Career &amp; Technical Directors</li> <li>New River Soil &amp; Water District</li> <li>Virginia Tech Agriculture Research and Extension Center (AREC)</li> <li>Carroll County STEM lab</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Agricultural Coalition</li> <li>Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> </ul>	May 2017	<p>A comprehensive inventory of K-12 educational assets will be developed.</p> <p>A formal agreement on a regional, shared utilization plan will be approved.</p> <p>Increased number of training opportunities for area youth.</p>	
Develop at least 1 regional site such as the New River Hill Farm or the Blue Ridge Discover Center as a unique agricultural and natural resources laboratory for youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New River Soil &amp; Water District</li> <li>Blue Ridge Discovery Center</li> <li>Local school systems</li> <li>Virginia Department of Forestry</li> <li>Matthews Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kevin Spurlin, Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> <li>Brenda Bonk, Blue Ridge Discover Center</li> <li>Brenda Marrah, City of Galax</li> </ul>	<p>Summer 2017 (pilot)</p> <p>Summer 2018</p>	At least 1 regional site offering agricultural and natural resource laboratory experiences for youth will be operational.	The New River Hill Farm has drafted a plan of work for a 140-acre site.

Promote regional out-of-school agricultural training schedule.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appalachian Sustainable Development</li> <li>• New River Soil &amp; Water District</li> <li>• Blue Ridge Discovery Center</li> <li>• Local school systems</li> <li>• Virginia Department of Forestry</li> <li>• Matthews Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sylvia Crum, Appalachian Sustainable Development</li> </ul>	Fall 2017	<p>A published schedule of regional out-of-school youth agricultural training options.</p> <p>At least 200 K-12 youth will complete at least 1 out-of-school agricultural training each year as measured by training attendance documentation.</p>	Blue Ridge Discovery Center is currently engaging the school systems of the City of Galax and the county of Grayson.
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**Objective 2: Train and link adult agricultural workers to educational, employment, and market opportunities.**

Offer and publicize regional agricultural training options for adult workers and agricultural management through local media and web sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm Credit</li> <li>• People Incorporated</li> <li>• USDA Rural Development</li> <li>• Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• Virginia Employment Commission</li> <li>• Virginia Highlands Community College</li> <li>• Region II Workforce Development Board</li> <li>• Wytheville Community College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Development Board</li> </ul>	Quarterly, beginning September 2017	<p>An up-to-date, communication hub will be established to publicize agricultural trainings for adult workers.</p> <p>A training schedule for the agribusiness workforce will be published each quarter using social media, electronic communication, and the website.</p>	
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Link agribusiness management to potential workers through at least 1 regional agricultural job fair each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region II Workforce Development Board</li> <li>• People Incorporated</li> <li>• Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• Virginia Employment Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Development Board</li> <li>• Regional Agricultural Coalition</li> </ul>	Semi-annually, beginning June 2017	At least 10 agribusiness operations will participate in at least 1 job fair connecting at least 20 people to agricultural jobs.	
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<p>Explore at least two agricultural marketing and viable product opportunities annually,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Department of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services</li> <li>• Virginia Highlands Community College</li> <li>• Wytheville Community College</li> <li>• Virginia Department of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services</li> <li>• Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• Appalachian Sustainable Development</li> <li>• Danny Neel, Virginia Department of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>October 2017 and ongoing</p>	<p>At least 10 farms will participate in marketing and product discussions, farm tours, and/or conferences.</p> <p>At least 1 farm will pilot a new market or product each year.</p>	
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## Manufacturing

GOAL 1: Create accessible high quality regional data for Mount Rogers by June 30, 2018

Eliminate duplication of data. Provide real time data (improve quality).

### Objective A: Hire a quality data savvy research manager for Mount Rogers region

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Create job description that captures the regions data needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMRWDB)</li> <li>• Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance (VIAA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josh Lewis (VIAA)</li> <li>• Marty Holliday (NRMRWDB)</li> </ul>	Aug 31, 2016	The job description will be complete.	Job description is complete.
Create buy-in and support for this position more data-driven decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRMRWDB</li> <li>• VIAA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josh Lewis</li> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> </ul>	Dec 31, 2016	Executive board/localities will be in support of adding the new position in the region.	
Establish Funding for position and data tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRMRWDB</li> <li>• VIAA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josh Lewis</li> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> </ul>	June 30, 2017	Utilization of funding from multiple sources	

### Objective B: Develop culture that supports data-driven decision-making.

Create a dashboard/ website to house and disseminate information (interface)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDP in each locality</li> <li>• VIAA</li> <li>• NRMRWDB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josh Lewis</li> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> </ul>	Dec 31, 2017	Dashboard/Website will be live.	
Develop a process/timeline for updating information and handling requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDP in each locality</li> <li>• VIAA</li> <li>• NRMRWDB partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josh Lewis</li> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> </ul>	June 30, 2018	<p>Data requests will be made through one website.</p> <p>Process will be tested and implemented with continued monitoring to ensure efficiency and effective use of the information.</p>	

GOAL 2: Develop a coordinated, regionally funded marketing strategy to attract new manufacturers by Dec. 31, 2017

Market our region as premier location for manufacturing (PML). As region we know how to collaborate and work together to be proactive and not reactionary

**Objective A: Create a new marketing plan for the Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance (VIAA).**

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Identify current initiatives in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>VIAA</li> <li>Other regional partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Josh Lewis (VIAA)</li> </ul>	June 30, 2016	Current initiatives will be documented and used to create new marketing plan.	Current initiatives have been documented.
Identify potential funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>VIAA</li> <li>Private sector partners</li> <li>Other regional partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Josh Lewis</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Funding sources will be identified and contacted.	Ongoing
Facilitate meetings w/ local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>VIAA</li> <li>Private sector partners</li> <li>Other regional partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Josh Lewis</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Information from meeting with stakeholders will be collected and distributed to all parties involved in the process.	<b>4 local ED meetings and 3 regional locality meetings already completed.</b>

**Objective B: Implement new marketing plan**

Write the plan – convene ad hoc committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>VIAA</li> <li>Other regional partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Josh Lewis</li> </ul>	June 30, 2016	Plan will be complete	Marketing plan is complete.
Create buy-in for plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>VIAA</li> <li>Other regional partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Josh Lewis</li> </ul>	Aug 31, 2016	All localities and stakeholders will support the plan.	Creating buy-in is an ongoing process.
<b>Strong</b> regional branding and story telling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>VIAA</li> <li>Other regional partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Josh Lewis (VIAA)</li> <li>David Manley (Joint Industrial Development)</li> </ul>	Dec 31, 2017	All localities and stakeholders will be telling the same story of the region.	

		Authority of Wythe County)			
<b>Objective C: Access and adjust marketing plan</b>					
Evaluate marketing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>• VIAA</li> <li>• Other regional partners</li> </ul>	• Josh Lewis	June 30, 2018 June 30, 2020	Utilize VEDA CARDINAL program for planning/completing the evaluation	

GOAL 3: Cultivate regional linkages between workforce initiatives by December 31, 2018

Creating more channels of communication between workforce development professionals throughout the region..

**Objective A: Create communication channels**

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Identify various initiatives and lead organizations/person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMRWDB) partners</li> </ul>	• Marty Holliday (NRMRWDB)	June 30, 2017	A collective list of organization contacts and initiatives has been created.	
Facilitate a meeting between organization/persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board</li> </ul>	• Marty Holliday	Aug 31, 2017	Information will be gathered and distributed from meeting with stakeholders.	
Evaluate for potential for duplication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board partners</li> </ul>	• Marty Holliday	Dec 31, 2017	A list of duplicate programs has been created.	
Develop a communication system between each area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WCC Workforce Development</li> <li>• Virginia Workforce Network</li> </ul>	• Marty Holliday	Mar 30, 2018	A system of communication has been created.	

**Objective B: Implement communication channels**

Facilitate quarterly meetings between workforce and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRMRWDB</li> <li>• VIAA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> <li>• Josh Lewis (VIAA)</li> </ul>	June 30, 2018	Quarterly meetings will be scheduled and held.	
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GOAL 4: Coordinate effective plan to address workforce turnover/retention in manufacturing for Mount Rogers region by June 30, 2019  
 Develop more holistic support system for manufacturers, more stable workforce, better buy-in from local governments, and increase manufacturing profitability.

**Objective A: Gather information from existing manufacturers regarding the workforce**

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact/ Convener	Timeline	Activity Outcome/ Output Measurements	Progress Status
Compile research on climate survey best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMWDB)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marty Holliday (NRMWDB)</li> </ul>	Jun 30, 2018	Survey will be complete and information will be collected from the survey and compiled into one document.	
Create buy-in for climate survey with regional manufacturers (through Sector Partnerships or focus groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRMWDB</li> <li>• VIAA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marty Holiday</li> <li>• Josh Lewis (VIAA)</li> </ul>	June 30, 2017	Through focus groups and/or Sector Partnerships at least five (5) manufacturers agree to participate in the Climate Survey	
Conduct climate survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>• New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marty Holliday (NRMWDB)</li> </ul>	Jun 30, 2018	Survey will be complete and information will be collected from the survey and compiled into one document.	
Review outcome of survey with focus groups/company management (or in Sector Partnerships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>• New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lori Deel (Smyth County)</li> <li>• Local EDPs</li> </ul>	Aug 31, 2018	Focus group meetings have been completed and information from meetings and been collected and distributed.	
Create manufacturer buy-in to address retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> <li>• Lori Deel</li> </ul>	Nov 30, 2018	At least five (5) manufacturers are willing to participate in new plan	
Host regional meeting to discuss retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localities (IDAs/EDAs)</li> <li>• NRMWDB partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> </ul>	Sept 30, 2018	Regional meetings will be complete and information will be compiled from each meeting.	

**Objective B: Implement regional and collaborative training programs support system**

Cataloging and disseminating available training in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> </ul>	Mar 31, 2018	Regional training information will be in place for everyone to use as a resource. Consult manufacturing human resources staff about programs they may be using
Identify and offer needed/required training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector Partnerships/Business focus groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane Mitchell (Wytheville Community College)</li> <li>• Marty Holliday</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Effective training programs will be taking place throughout the region.

## Implementation and Evaluation Plan

At the Civic Forum, individuals from various agencies stated that communication and developing a network of coordination is a very important focus for the region. Investors want to be able to see tangible results and changes, therefore, the SET team will use its resources gained through the SET planning process to support a coordinated communication process that will continue through **the plan's implementation and beyond**. This coordinated communication network, headed by MRPDC, will help the group determine the best strategies for the region, keep the group up-to-date on happenings in other localities, and help disseminate information regarding the progress of SET goals.

In consideration of making the SET plan a functional working plan, implementation and evaluation will be through the working groups that were established in the planning process. These groups may be reorganized as additional group members vital to the achievement of plan goals are added. These groups will function under the organization of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC) and each will carry out the action steps needed to complete the strategies and achieve the goals set forth in the SET plan.

Measures were established for each goal in the plan of action and the MRPDC will coordinate the **reporting and evaluation of each group's goals**. Each working group will:

- determine the leadership and communication structures best suited to them
- designate a member who will be in charge of quarterly reporting to the MRPDC

A group representative or an MRPDC staff member will report progress of group at quarterly MRPDC Meetings. The group will also report a quarterly progress update to SET group through face-to-face presentation and the progress will be evaluated at this meeting. This format will allow the larger group to see what is going on in other groups, help provide solutions to any difficulties that may arise, or learn implement strategies from other groups that may be useful for them. Progress reports or summaries of quarterly reporting sessions will be made public at [www.mrpdc.org/set.htm](http://www.mrpdc.org/set.htm), giving the larger community a chance to view the data and weigh in on **the group's efforts**.

## Succession Plan

One of the most important portions of the SET implementation process will be the succession plan. The group was affected early on in the planning phase by turnover, with no less than 15% of members either in their first year at their new position or receiving a new position during the SET planning process, thusly, it was imperative to create a succession plan.

The **group's succession plan** will be coordinated by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. There will be some amount of personal responsibility placed on individuals to notify the group members, taking it upon themselves to appoint a successor from their own agency, if possible, before their departure. Ideally, the departing member will have adequate time to brief the successor with tasks of the group, responsibilities that will be turned over to the successor

and introduction to the focus group members. If the group member is unable to appoint a successor or begin succession training, the remaining group members will recruit a successor from within the agency of the departing group member, ideally within a month of the departure of the previous member. The **remaining group members will assess the new member's** experience and leadership skills, and, if necessary, reassign tasks within the group to accommodate differing skill levels. MRPDC will help coordinate these efforts and depending on the level of assistance needed, may use its contacts to lead new member recruitment efforts.

Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

Aaron Sizemore

Executive Director

mrpdc.org

(276) 783-5103 ext. 304

[asizemore@mrpdc.org](mailto:asizemore@mrpdc.org)



## Appendix A – Partnerships and Involvement

### Statewide Resource Team

USDA Rural Development—Dr. Basil Gooden, Janice Stroud-Bickes, Anne Herring, Craig Barbrow, David Foster, & Dr. Kasey Martin

Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade—Mary Rae Carter

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development—Doug Jackson & Michelle Jones

Virginia Rural Center—Christy Morton

Virginia Tourism—Steve Gaylean & Sandra Tanner

Virginia Economic Development Partnership—Liz Povar

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Virginia Tech)—Dr. Ed Jones, Dr. Jim Pease, Dr. Mike Lambur, & Dr. Martha Walker

Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development—Scott Tate

### Regional Steering Committee

ABB Ltd. Automation Company —Herb Grant

**Virginia’s Industrial Advancement Alliance (VIAA)**—Josh Lewis

Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority—Ken McFadyen

Chestnut Creek School of the Arts—Chris Pollins

Emory & Henry College—Lou Fincher & Dirk Moore

Grayson County—Elaine Holeton

Marion Downtown—Olivia McDonald

Mount Rogers Planning District Commission—Aaron Sizemore & Rocky Warren

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board—Marty Holliday

Smyth County—Lori Deel

Virginia Cooperative Extension—Kevin Spurlin

Washington County—Whitney Bonham

Wythe Joint Industrial Development Authority—David Manley

## Planning Team Members

Listed below are individuals who assisted in the planning process for the Mount Rogers Region Stronger Economies Together (SET) plan.

ABB Ltd. Automation Company—Herb Grant  
Appalachian Regional and Rural Studies Center, Radford University—Theresa Burris  
Appalachian Spring—Stephanie Otis  
Appalachian Sustainable Development— Sylvia Crum  
Bland County— Rodney Ratliff  
Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority— Ken McFadyen  
Blue Ridge Discovery Center—Brenda Bonk & Aaron Floyd  
Chestnut Creek School of the Arts—Chris Pollins  
City of Bristol—Melanie Fleenor & Bart Poe  
City of Galax—Ray Kohl, Brenda Marrah, & Jessica Milby  
Crossroads Institute—Brenda Sutherland  
People Incorporated of Virginia—Maggie Costello, Traci Mitchell, & Ellen Tolton  
Emory & Henry College—Lou Fincher  
Friends of SWVA—Jack Morgan  
Grayson County—John Fant & Elaine Holeton  
Grayson County Department of Social Services—Tony Isom  
Hands and Feet Ministries—Linda Austin  
Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County—David Manley  
The Lincoln Theatre—Kristin Untiedt-Barnett  
Marion Downtown—Olivia MacDonald  
Mount Rogers Planning District Commission—Aaron Sizemore & Rocky Warren  
New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area—Marty Holliday  
Office of Congressman H. Morgan Griffith—Cody Mumpower & Michelle Jenkins  
Smyth County—Lori Deel & Kendra Hayden  
Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation—Jeff Mansour  
Town of Abingdon— Kevin Costello  
Town of Fries—Marie Isom  
Town of Glade Spring—Dirk Moore  
Town of Marion—Bill Rush  
Town of Rural Retreat—Brian Reed  
Town of Wytheville— Wayne Sutherland  
United Way Virginia Highlands—Crystal Breeding  
U.S. Department of Agriculture – FSA— Aaron Blackburn, Lindsey Carrico, & Ron Hale  
Virginia Cooperative Extension— Kevin Spurlin  
Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services— Danny Neel  
Virginia Department of Social Services—Tommy Casteel  
Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator— Cathy Lowe

Virginia Tourism Corporation—Randy Rose, Michelle Workman, & Becky Nave  
Virginia's **Industrial Advancement Alliance (VIAA)**— Joshua Lewis  
Washington County— Jason Berry & Whitney Bonham  
Washington County Chamber of Commerce— Suzanne Lay  
Wythe County— Cellell Dalton  
Wytheville Community College—Perry Hughes, Jane Mitchell, & Dean Sprinkle



# Appendix B – Tourism

## Regional Branding Materials





## 1.2 Brand Message

The primary message used to express the brand promise. This reflects the desired position of the brand.

### LOGO

Logo design should be simple in style or tone and offer the user a clear sense of how to interact with the brand. The logo should be simple and easy to understand, and should be consistent across all platforms, including print, digital, and social media.

When you're creating a logo, go back through your marketing strategy and make sure that the logo is consistent with the brand's overall look and feel. The logo should be simple and easy to understand, and should be consistent across all platforms, including print, digital, and social media.

# Southwest Virginia: A Different Side of Virginia





## 2.1 Logo

Southwest Virginia already has a personality. The job of the brand is to preserve that personality while helping the community to realize its vision of its future.

### • LOGOMARK

The logo mark is a shield-shaped emblem that represents the history and culture of the region. It features a stylized mountain range, a sunburst, and the letters SW VA.

### • WORDMARK

The wordmark is a stylized, sans-serif font that reads "SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA". It is designed to be bold and legible, reflecting the strength and resilience of the community.

### • LOGO

The logo is the combination of the logo mark and the wordmark, creating a cohesive and recognizable brand identity. It is designed to be versatile and adaptable, ensuring that the brand remains strong across all applications.





## 2.2 Logo Variants

Choosing the right dominant color for your brand is crucial. This color should appear on all your materials, including your logo and signage.

**LOGO LIBRARY**  
To ensure consistency, all logos must adhere to the color palette and font styles outlined in this manual. The logo library includes all the branding elements you will need to create a cohesive and professional look for your organization. For more information, please contact your account manager.



*A different side of Virginia*



## Tourism Cluster Data

Reeder, Richard S. and Dennis M. Brown. 2005. "Recreation, Tourism, and Rural Well-Being." *USDA Economic Research Service*, Economic Research Report Number 7.

[http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/302182/err7\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/302182/err7_1_.pdf)

Here are some helpful findings from this report:

- Rural counties with recreation focused assets and economies have population growth three times more than non-recreation rural counties.
- Recreation focused counties have more than double the rate of employment growth compared to non-recreation counties.
- Per capita incomes were also growing more quickly in recreation-focused counties.
- Recreation focused counties also had lower poverty rates and better health outcomes.

Kramich, Richard. 2011. *People, Places and Landscapes: Social Change in High Amenity Rural Areas*. Chapter 2: Putting Rural Community Change in Perspective.

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/AE\\_Luloff/publication/251330873\\_Putting\\_Rural\\_Community\\_Change\\_in\\_Perspective/links/542062670cf203f155c59102.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/AE_Luloff/publication/251330873_Putting_Rural_Community_Change_in_Perspective/links/542062670cf203f155c59102.pdf)

- Key takeaways from this research:
- Non-economic amenities such as climate, topography, and proximity to water help to fuel rural population growth.
- There are many case studies of communities that were once isolated and dependent of extractive industries growing in to hubs of tourism because of natural resource amenities. In turn, permanent migrants to these areas are motivated by the quality of life assets.
- From 2004 to 2014, travel expenditures in the Mount Rogers PDC region increased by 48% from \$282.6 million to \$418.9 million.
- Local travel related tax revenues increased by 33% from \$8.35 million to \$11.1 million; state travel related tax revenues increased by 26% from \$14.8 million to \$18.7 million.
- Between 2000 and 2014, overall employment in Mount Rogers PDC area decreased by 5.5%, but employment in the Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service industry cluster, employment increased by 20.8%.
- The travel industry is the fifth largest private employer in Virginia. According to a report from VTC, travel employment in the Mount Rogers area was 3,867 in 2014.
- According to the 2012 Virginia Tourism Plan, the economic impact of the tourism industry in the state was \$20.4 billion in 2011.
- The state parks within the Mount Rogers PDC (Grayson Highlands, Hungry Mother, and New River Trail) had an attendance of 1,385,112 with economic impact of \$28,150,098 in 2014.

Shift-share analysis (# of jobs created in excess of national trends)

- Perform better than nationally: Golf Courses & Country Clubs (28); Museums (3)
- Perform on par with national trends: Radio stations (0); RV Parks and Campgrounds (0)
- Arts & Entertainment is a transforming cluster, meaning it is under-represented in the region and also losing jobs. Shows a general lack of competitiveness.
- Entertainment & Visitor Industries have the 11<sup>th</sup> highest regional requirements, representing just under \$300 million.
- **Food preparation and serving occupations comprise 7% of Mt. Rogers' occupations.**

The areas with the greatest leakage within Mount Rogers' Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Visitor Industries cluster are: Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services (91% out of region, 15<sup>th</sup> greatest \$ regional input); Corporate, Subsidiary and Regional Managing Offices (85%, 1<sup>st</sup>); and Sports Teams and Clubs (85%, 3<sup>rd</sup>).

Jobs in this cluster span a range of educational levels from 'Less than high school' to 'Bachelor's degree' and offer median wages between \$7.80 and \$15.30 per hour.

VTC economic impact report:

- Travel in Mount Rogers directly creates 3,867 jobs.
- In Washington County, the economic impacts of travel (e.g. jobs, expenditures, and tax receipts) are growing faster than in Virginia as a whole.
- The total economic impact of travel in the Mount Rogers region is \$538 million.

VTC Blue Ridge Highlands Region Travel Profile

- The most common reason for a trip to the Blue Ridge Highlands (a region that encompasses Mount Rogers) was to visit friends or relatives. Other common reasons included outdoor recreation, entertainment and sightseeing, and personal business.
- 48% of travel parties consisted of two people. 15% consisted of three people and 14% consisted of one person.
- 32% of travelers were ages 45-64. 14% of travelers were ages 25-34.
- 86% of travelers drove for their trip.
- The most common duration for a trip to the Blue Ridge Highlands was 3 days (20%).
- 45% of travelers stayed in a hotel/motel for a portion of their trip; 42% stayed in a private home.
- 30% of travelers to the Blue Ridge Highlands spent \$100-250 on their trip. The median amount spent was \$230.
- 30% of visitors visited relatives on their trip to the Blue Ridge Highlands. 20% participated in rural sightseeing, 18% went shopping, 17% visited a state/national park, and 17% visited a historic site or church.
- 37% of visitors decided to visit Virginia less than two weeks before their visit, and their primary sources of planning information were: their own experience (32%), friends/relatives (30%), and destination websites (12%).

- 14% of travelers originated from the Washington, DC area and 12% originated from the Roanoke-Lynchburg area. 32% came from Virginia and 86% were White/Caucasian. The average household size for travelers was 2 people, and 61% of travelers were married.

#### ESRI Community Analyst

The top five recreation expenditure categories of Mount Rogers households, by spending amount compared to national average, were:

- Purchase of RVs or Boats
- Hunting and Fishing Equipment
- Other Sports Equipment
- Rental/Repair of Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment

The top two broad recreation expenditure categories of Mount Rogers households by dollar amount were:

- Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions \$27,151,474
- Recreation Vehicles and Fees \$14,782,223

The highest market potential recreational activities that Mount Rogers households participate in are: hunting, fishing, archery, horseback riding, and target shooting.

## Tourism Leader Survey Data

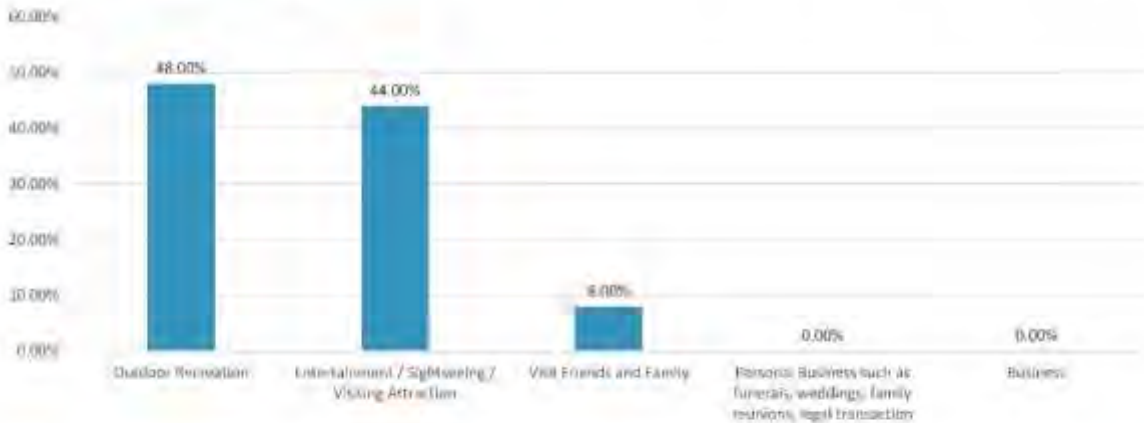
- Outdoor recreation and entertainment are the primary reasons visitors travel to the Mount Rogers area.
- 52% of travelers come for leisure, 34% pass through and 14% come for business.
- The peak tourism season is late spring through October.
- Visitors primarily come from Virginia and its neighboring and nearby states: North Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The most common travel party origin is North Carolina.
- The top three needs for businesses are marketing, customer service training, and partnerships.
- Top organizational priorities are: increased tourism funding for better marketing campaigns; more tourism related businesses or attractions; more or higher quality dining and lodging opportunities; and more networking among tourism related businesses and attractions.

# Tourism Leader Survey

Mount Rogers Planning District Commission  
Virginia Tourism Corporation



**Outdoor Recreation, Entertainment** are primary reasons visitors travel to the community.



What is the primary reason visitors travel to your community? Primary reason refers to the number one reason a visitor comes to your community. Please note that your community refers to the area of interest represented by you, your employer, or organization. For example, the community for businesses such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, etc. might be the local city/county/town where the business is located, while the community for regional or state organizations will be a defined region or the state overall, respectively.



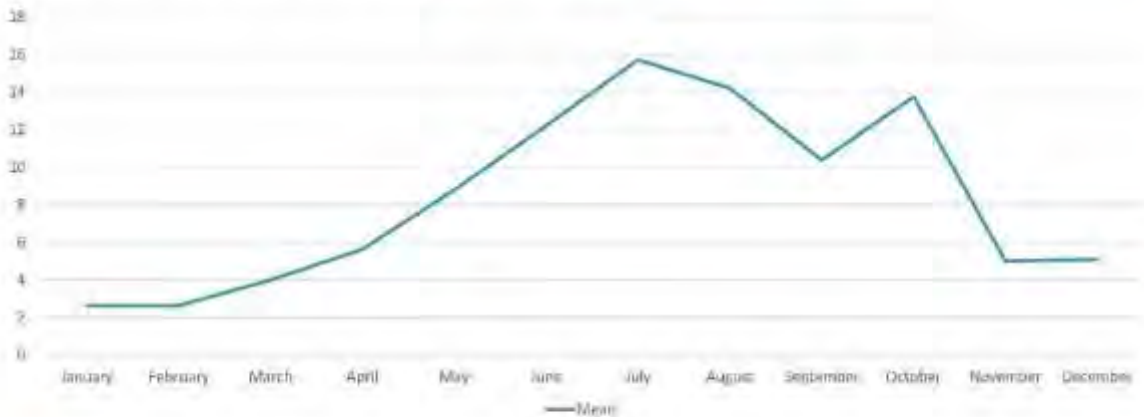
More than half of visitors are **leisure** travelers - one third are **pass-through** and 14% are **business** travelers.



What percentage of visitors to your community are leisure, business or pass-through? Total must sum to 100. Please note that your community refers to the area of interest represented by you, your employer, or organization. For example, the community for businesses such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, etc. might be the local city/county/town where the business is located, while the community for regional or state organizations will be a defined region or the state overall, respectively.



Seasonality is a challenge for the region- **late spring through October** are the months with the **highest visitation**.



Please indicate seasonality for your community by selecting a distribution of visitation by month. Total must sum to 100. Please note that your community refers to the area of interest represented by you, your employer, or organization. For example, the community for businesses such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, etc. might be the local city/county/town where the business is located, while the community for regional or state organizations will be a defined region or the state overall, respectively.



## Top Five Travel Party Origin

1. North Carolina
2. Virginia
3. Tennessee
4. Ohio
5. Pennsylvania



Please list the states of origin for the travelers visiting your community. Please rank the top five states in order of visitation with #1 being the top state where travelers are coming from. Please note that your community refers to the area of interest represented by you, your employer, or organization. For example, the community for businesses such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, etc. might be the local city/county/town where the business is located, while the community for regional or state organizations will be a defined region or the state overall, respectively.



## Hotel Supply as reported by DMOs in the Mt. Rogers PDC:

Locality	Total Number of hotel/motel establishments in my community	Total Number of hotel/motel rooms in my community	Number of Bed & Breakfast establishments in my community	Number of vacation cabins or vacation rental homes in my community
Abingdon	7	600	7	8
Bristol	17	1550	0	5
Galax	4	202	1	17
Grayson County	0	0	6	45
Wytheville	27	1810	1	38

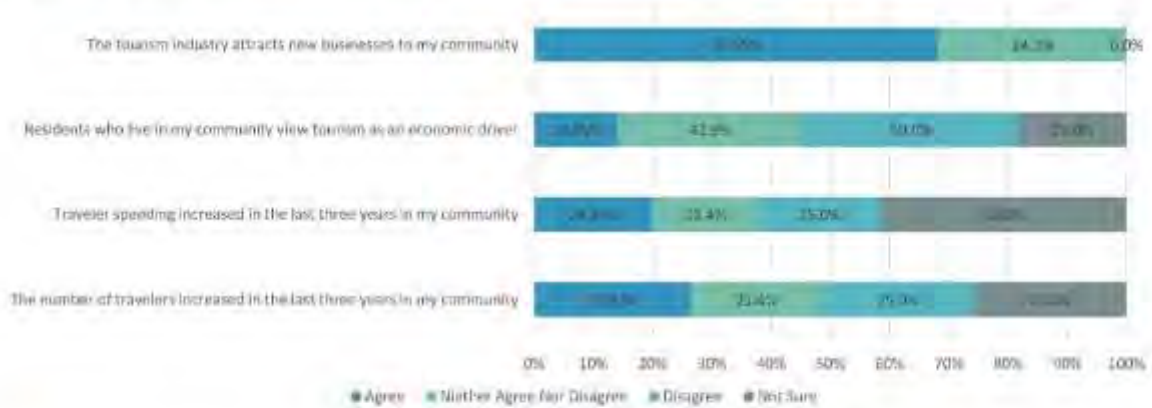


Can you tell us about lodging inventory in your community? If you do not serve as a Destination Marketing / Management Organization (DMO) or if you don't know the answer to this question, simply place N/A in the boxes or skip this question. Please note that your community refers to the area of interest represented by you, your employer, or organization. For example, the community for businesses such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, etc. might be the local city/county/town where the business is located, while the community for regional or state organizations will be a defined region or the state overall, respectively.





Overall **sentiment** of regional decision makers is **positive** in regards to new businesses, increase in travelers, and spending. **However, only 1-in-5 view tourism as an economic driver.**



How do you feel about the following statements? Please drag and drop each statement in the category you feel appropriate. Please note that your community refers to the area of interest represented by you, your employer, or organization. For example, the community for businesses such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, etc. might be the local city/county/town where the business is located, while the community for regional or state organizations will be a defined region or the state overall, respectively.



**Marketing, Customer Service Training and Partnerships** are the top three needs for businesses.



Based on your interaction with tourism-related businesses in your community, what would you identify as the top three needs for businesses? Please note that your community refers to the area of interest represented by you, your employer, or organization. For example, the community for businesses such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, etc. might be the local city/county/town where the business is located, while the community for regional or state organizations will be a defined region or the state overall, respectively.





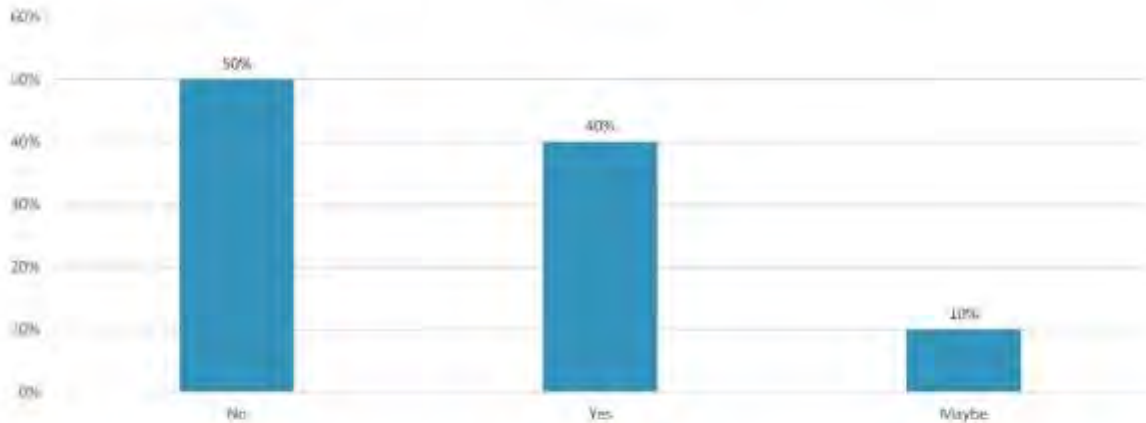
Respondents mentioned the need for more **Marketing**. Their tactics were **Diversified** and they were focused on the **Outdoors** and **Drive Market**.



If you had a million dollar advertising budget, what kind of marketing campaigns would you engage in, who would be your target market, and where would you market?



Only 40% of respondents have conducted **visitor research**.



Has your office or organization conducted any visitor research in the last three years?



## Appendix D – Agribusiness

### Agribusiness Cluster Data

2012 Census of Agriculture

<http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>, accessed 11/20/2015

Farms	5452
Farms by Sales less than \$100K	4968
Farms by Sales \$100K and over	484
Land in Farms (acres)	882,791
Total Sales (\$)	\$270,291,000
Crop Sales (\$)	\$35,524,000
Livestock Sales (\$)	\$234,767,000
Net Cash Farm Income (\$)	\$24,691,000

Economic impacts of Agriculture and Forest Industries in VA 2013, Terance J. Rephann

Table D.1 Direct and Total Economic Impacts of Virginia Agriculture and Forestry-related Industries by Locality, Output 2011 (\$ Millions)

	Agriculture		Forestry		Agriculture & Forestry	
	Direct	Total	Direct	Total	Direct	Total
Bland	19.1	20.9	1.2	1.4	20.2	22.2
Carroll (w/Galax)	210.8	244.4	143.3	181.7	354.1	426.0
Grayson	39.6	45	35.8	42.5	75.3	87.5
Smyth	39.8	48.7	57.8	81.4	97.6	130.1
Washington (w/Bristol)	254.5	323.2	28.5	39.5	283.0	362.7
Wythe	506.1	584.5	11.3	14.4	517.4	598.9

Table D.2 Direct and Total Economic Impacts of Virginia Agriculture and Forestry-related Industries by Locality, Employment 2011

	Agriculture		Forestry		Agriculture & Forestry	
	Direct	Total	Direct	Total	Direct	Total
Bland	291	305	4	5	295	310
Carroll (w/Galax)	1,662	1,970	1,064	1,397	2,726	3,367
Grayson	728	774	196	253	924	1,027
Smyth	718	801	464	680	1,182	1,481
Washington (w/Bristol)	1,822	2,356	147	238	1,969	2,594
Wythe	1,704	2,345	86	117	1,790	2,462

Table D.3 Direct and Total Economic Impacts of Virginia Agriculture and Forestry-related Industries by Locality, Value-added 2011 (\$ Millions)

	Agriculture		Forestry		Agriculture & Forestry	
	Direct	Total	Direct	Total	Direct	Total
Bland	3.9	5.2	0.7	0.9	4.6	6.1
Carroll (w/Galax)	55.0	76.1	54.5	76	109.5	152.1
Grayson	11.1	14.8	8.0	11.4	19.0	26.2
Smyth	11.0	16.8	17.0	29.8	28.0	46.5
Washington (w/Bristol)	64.3	108.1	10.0	16.8	74.3	124.9
Wythe	70.7	115.5	7.2	9.3	77.8	124.8

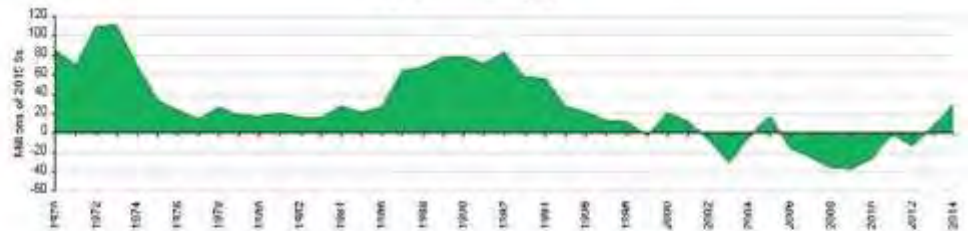
Farm Business Income 2014 (EPS Ag 2015)  
 From Headwaters Economics/Economic Profile System (EPS) Jan2015:

Farm Business Income, 2014 (Thousands of 2015 \$)

	Bland County, VA	Carroll County, VA	Grayson County, VA	South County, VA	Washington County, VA	Wythe County, VA	County Region	U.S.
Total Cash Receipts & Other Inc. (\$1000)	12,817	58,767	45,317	20,436	105,445	73,530	376,320	475,140,991
Cash Receipts from Marketing	11,795	53,625	41,022	76,050	87,562	54,786	347,036	428,591,959
Livestock & Products	10,550	43,425	34,534	71,723	91,351	59,775	315,359	393,600,426
Crops	1,239	10,201	8,488	4,327	9,211	7,007	35,676	69,071,532
Other Income	1,024	4,942	4,388	4,389	7,987	6,145	29,282	44,249,032
Government Payments	198	580	871	2,704	4,383	1,054	9,602	8,775,617
Imputed Rent & Misc. Income	830	4,352	3,615	1,686	3,504	3,689	19,661	14,472,415
Total Production Expenses	12,008	63,777	39,531	65,326	87,668	66,390	334,673	374,323,065
Realized Net Income (Receipts - Expenses)	139	5,488	5,786	15,113	7,762	7,140	41,445	75,817,827
Value of Inventory Change	-662	-2,113	-1,700	-2,761	-3,823	-2,435	-12,269	-14,212,746
Total Net Income Including Corp. Farms	-523	3,375	4,086	12,352	4,239	4,705	29,176	60,005,073
Ratio: Total Cash Receipts & Other Income/Total Production Expenses	1.01	1.10	1.18	1.23	1.26	1.11	1.12	1.20

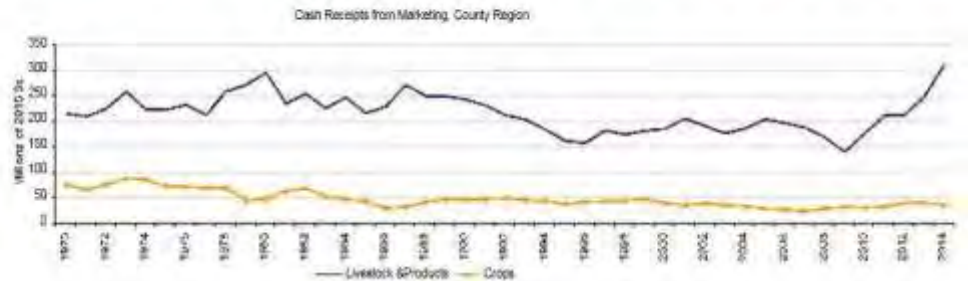
Total Net Income Including Corporate Farms, County Region

\* From 1970 to 2014, net income including corporate farms shrank from \$54.9 million to \$20.2 million, a 65.6 percent decrease.



\* From 1970 to 2014, cash receipts from livestock and products grew from \$215.5 million to \$311.4 million, a 44.5 percent increase.

\* From 1970 to 2014, cash receipts from crops shrank from \$75.5 million to \$35.7 million, a 52.8 percent decrease.

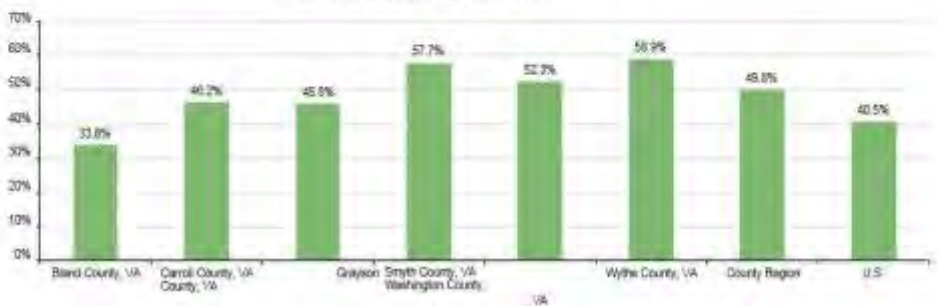


Number of Farms and Land in Farms (Acres) 2012

	Bland County, VA	Carroll County, VA	Grayson County, VA	South County, VA	Washington County, VA	Wythe County, VA	County Region	U.S.
Number of Farms	302	692	704	792	1,032	952	5,452	2,184,303
Land in Farms (Acres)	77,406	140,474	131,522	166,556	152,123	174,980	982,791	914,527,857
Average Farm Size (Acres)	254	203	173	210	130	183	182	414
Approximate Land Area (Acres)	238,845	303,022	288,266	288,594	367,352	295,668	1,772,531	2,280,583,352
Approximate Percent of Land Area in Farms	33.8%	46.2%	45.6%	57.7%	52.3%	59.2%	49.8%	40.0%

Approximate Percent of Land Area in Farms, 2012

\* In 2012, Wythe County, VA had the largest percent of land area in farms (59.2%), and Bland County, VA had the smallest (33.8%).



Number of Farms by Type, 2012

	Bland County, VA	Carroll County, VA	Grayson County, VA	Smyth County, VA	Washington County, VA	Wythe County, VA	County Region	U.S.
All Farms	362	980	764	792	1,600	993	5,452	2,109,303
Olive & Grain Farming	4	0	2	2	2	9	19	389,332
Vegetable & Melon Farming	1	24	3	6	28	2	64	43,021
Fruit & Nut Tree Farming	0	26	32	3	21	6	88	91,020
Greenhouse, Nursery, etc.	1	29	95	19	22	4	170	52,777
Other Crop Farming	67	175	157	193	454	187	1,253	496,837
Beef Cattle Ranch & Farm	237	563	381	441	827	562	3,011	619,172
Cattle Feedlots	3	22	8	8	13	11	65	13,734
Dairy Cattle & Milk Prod.	1	11	12	10	21	30	85	46,005
Hog & Pig Farming	0	1	6	1	1	3	6	21,667
Poultry & Egg Production	4	21	3	4	11	0	43	52,849
Sheep & Goat Farming	8	31	21	28	80	22	170	73,272
Animal Aquaculture & Other Animal Prod.	16	77	78	77	142	116	466	227,597
<b>Percent of Total</b>								
Olive & Grain Farming	1.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.9%	0.3%	17.5%
Vegetable & Melon Farming	0.3%	2.4%	0.4%	0.8%	1.7%	0.2%	1.2%	2.0%
Fruit & Nut Tree Farming	0.0%	2.7%	1.6%	0.4%	1.3%	0.6%	1.2%	4.4%
Greenhouse, Nursery, etc.	0.3%	3.0%	12.4%	2.4%	1.4%	0.4%	3.1%	2.5%
Other Crop Farming	24.0%	17.5%	20.5%	24.4%	28.3%	19.6%	23.0%	23.6%
Beef Cattle Ranch & Farm	65.6%	57.4%	49.9%	55.7%	51.6%	58.0%	55.2%	29.4%
Cattle Feedlots	0.8%	2.2%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	1.2%	1.2%	0.7%
Dairy Cattle & Milk Prod.	0.3%	1.1%	1.6%	1.3%	1.3%	3.2%	1.6%	2.2%
Hog & Pig Farming	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	1.0%
Poultry & Egg Production	1.1%	2.1%	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.0%	0.8%	2.5%
Sheep & Goat Farming	2.2%	3.2%	2.7%	3.5%	5.0%	2.3%	3.1%	3.5%
Aquaculture & Other Prod.	4.4%	7.9%	9.2%	9.7%	8.9%	12.2%	9.1%	10.8%

Land in Farms According to Use (Acres), 2012

	Bland County, VA	Carroll County, VA	Grayson County, VA	Smyth County, VA	Washington County, VA	Wythe County, VA	County Region	U.S.
Land in Farms	77,468	146,434	131,922	188,068	692,123	174,960	862,985	914,627,667
Cropland	14,090	41,488	27,879	34,332	54,154	49,459	221,580	389,686,414
Woodland	28,765	31,074	42,073	40,796	44,770	33,016	221,594	77,012,907
Land in Pasturelands & Subings	3,164	5,368	5,810	3,901	7,252	4,752	30,035	30,515,057
Permanent Pasture & Rangeland	30,457	62,079	56,360	107,027	51,947	88,733	428,367	415,309,280
<b>Percent of Total</b>								
Cropland	18.2%	28.0%	21.1%	20.6%	30.2%	38.4%	25.1%	42.8%
Woodland	38.4%	22.0%	31.9%	24.5%	23.9%	19.0%	25.1%	8.4%
Land in Pasturelands & Subings	4.1%	3.7%	4.3%	2.3%	3.8%	2.7%	3.4%	3.8%
Permanent Pasture & Rangeland	39.3%	44.2%	42.7%	52.6%	44.7%	49.9%	46.4%	45.4%



## Appendix E – Manufacturing

### Manufacturing Cluster Data

Purdue University, Center for Regional Development, Regional Snapshot: Mount Rogers Region

Manufacturing is rated as a star cluster (strong, concentrated and growing). The industry has a location quotient of 2.55, meaning there are 2.55 more manufacturing jobs in the region than the national average.

2009-2014: 3% increase in manufacturing employment in the region from 14,286 to 14,666. State manufacturing employment decreased 2.1% in the same time frame.

Shift-share analysis—7 industries in the manufacturing supercluster experienced positive regional performance, outpacing national employment figures.

Those industries are: truck trailer manufacturing, motor vehicle steering and suspension components manufacturing, plate work manufacturing, mining machinery and equipment manufacturing, travel trailer and camper manufacturing, motor vehicle gasoline engine and engine parts manufacturing

Significant leakage-- \$1.07 billion in expenditures are dedicated to the manufacturing supercluster, 93% of which is satisfied outside of the region. Only \$65 million of input expenditures are spent within the region.

### Virginia LMI Mount Rogers Community Profile

12 of the 50 largest employers in the area are in the manufacturing industry (excludes food manufacturing/agribusiness employers)

2. Utility Trailer Manufacturing

11. Bristol Compressors International

15. Electro Mechanical Corporation

16. General Dynamics Armament

17. Camac Corporation

22. Parkdale Mills Inc.

23. Paramount Manufacturing

26. Royal Mouldings Limited

27. ABB Service Company Division

32. Somic America Inc.

41. Strongwell

43. TRW Automotive US LLC

### Long-term Employment Projections 2012-2022

Manufacturing industry—3% decrease 230,941 to 224,319

Production occupations—2012-2022, 1.87% increase 182,924 to 186,349

Educational institutions/training providers: Emory and Henry College, Virginia Highlands Community College, Wytheville Community College, Washington County Adult Skill Center

