

# COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

for the

## MOUNT ROGERS PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

**2011 – 2012**

(Adopted June 2, 2011)



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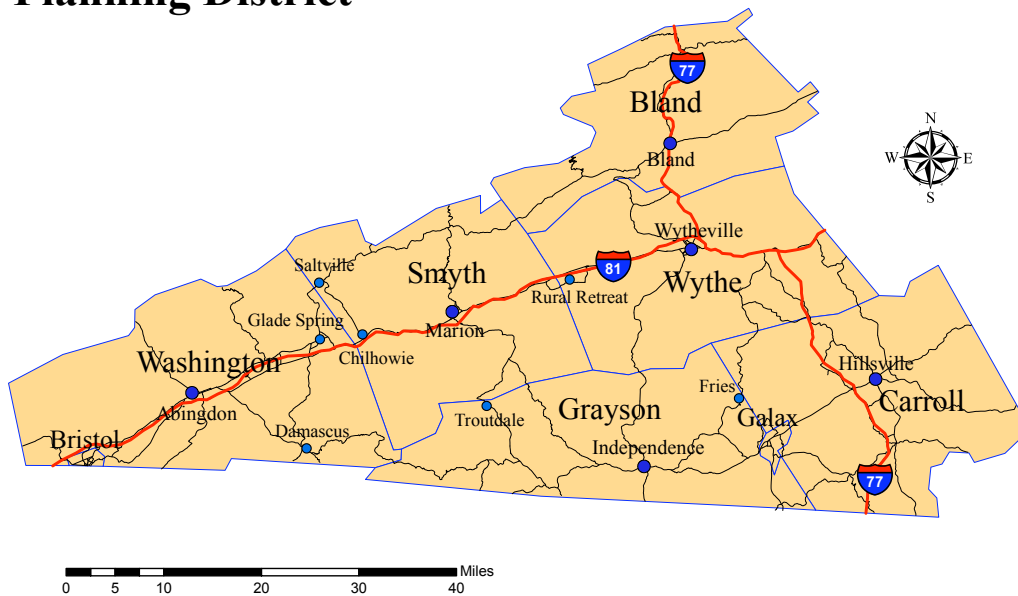
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mount Rogers Economic Development District

1.1.1 General Description

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.

Mount Rogers Planning District



In all, the Planning District totals approximately 2,800 square miles and contains a population of 193,595 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census). Population density is approximately 68 persons per square mile or 9.4 acres per person. In 1990, density was 69.1 persons per square mile or 9.26 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 138.3 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, 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. 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 ensure that the educational and training levels are raised 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.

### **1.1.2 History**

Officially established July 1, 1969, the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission is authorized under the Virginia Area Development 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. In order to insure 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 semi-annually, in September and in April. An Executive Committee chosen by the following method conducts the month-to-month activities of the Commission. At the April meeting of the 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.

### **1.1.3 Partnerships**

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 Programs have provided over \$6.3 million in low interest financing for 65 manufacturing and service oriented startups and expansions to assist in the creation of 699 new jobs and the retention of 1,102 existing jobs.



The **Virginia's aCorridor/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 six counties and two cities, the economic organization has provided the link to the state's Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the marketing representatives and broad array of services available to local areas for economic development.

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.

**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 regional **Virginia Employment Commission** offices and the **Vocational Technical Skill Centers** in each locality have played 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-Atkins), 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 transportation services.

The **Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program** provides vital educational resources the adult population, age 18 and older, to address adult illiteracy and low educational attainment and foster a more educated workforce.

**People Inc.**, a regional non-profit service provider, 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.



## 1.2 Purpose & Methodology

### 1.2.1 Purpose & Methodology

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 installation 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 and 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 a 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.

As part of the 2008 MRPDC CEDS update, another series of public visioning sessions was held in the spring of 2007. Three sessions were held at strategic points across the planning district and focused on evaluating current economic conditions and collecting ideas and strategies to update the regional goals and strategies. Participants included government officials, planning commission members, educators, non-profit organizations, tourism agencies, and small business and industries leaders.

Public input from both visioning initiatives was ranked according to the number of votes made or points assigned during the visioning process and later during data analysis. Data analysis largely involved grouping or "collapsing" similar ideas together from across the various visioning sessions to help summarize the results. The results were then used to evaluate and update the CEDS goals and strategies.



**1.2.2 CEDS Committee**

The governmental units comprising the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission have agreed to allow the MRPDC's Executive Committee to serve as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee. Those members are listed below.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Represents</b>
Larry Bartlett	Grayson County
Brenda Thompson	Bland County
Willie Greene	City of Galax
Paul Hurley	City of Bristol
Guy Odum	City of Bristol
Ron Catron	City of Galax
Karen Hodock	Bland County
Steve Winesett	Carroll County
Jonathan Sweet	Grayson County
Roscoe Call	Smyth County
Kenneth Reynolds	Washington County
Bucky Sharitz	Wythe County
Andre Richmond	City of Bristol

**1.2.3 Staff Support**

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 12 full-time persons trained in a variety of fields.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Dave Barrett	Executive Director
Michael Armbrister	Deputy Director
Toby Boian	Planning Director
James Dillion	GIS Director
Chris Gilley	Regional Planner II
Brenda Hooper	Finance Director
Stephanie Patton	Administrative Assistant
Brian Martin	Regional Planner II
Lynn McKinney	Transportation Planner
Brian Reed	Senior Planner
Aaron Sizemore	Regional Planner II
Greg Vannoy	Regional Planner II





**CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS**

**2.1 Regional Profile**

**2.1.1 Population**

According to the 2010 Census, the Mount Rogers Planning District had a population of 190,020. Since 2000, regional population has been relatively stable with only a 2.44 percent growth rate between 2000 and 2010. Local population trends were mixed over the decade with Bland, Grayson, and Smyth all experiencing a decline in total population and the rest of the district’s localities experiencing growth. Grayson County experienced the greatest decline over the decade with a loss of over 13.3 percent. Between 2000 and 2010, the Mount Rogers Planning District population growth rate (2.44 percent) was lower than the rate in neighboring New River Valley Planning District (7.93 percent) and higher than the rate in LENOWISCO Planning District (1.15 percent). The adjacent Cumberland Plateau Planning District experienced a 2.77 percent population decline during the decade.

**Regional Population Trends  
2000 – 2010**

Planning District	2000	2010
Cumberland Plateau	117,229	113,976
LENOWISCO	93,105	94,174
Mount Rogers	188,984	193,595
New River Valley	165,146	178,237

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Data

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.

**Population Trends  
1990 – 2030**

Area	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Bland	6,514	6,871	6,824	7,085	7,285
Bristol	18,426	17,367	17,835	17,078	17,075
Carroll	26,594	29,245	30,042	29,420	29,592
Galax	6,670	6,837	7,042	6,567	6,573
Grayson	16,278	17,917	15,533	15,310	15,311
Smyth	32,370	33,081	32,208	31,864	31,856
Washington	45,887	51,103	54,876	54,138	55,837
Wythe	25,466	27,599	29,235	30,280	31,773

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & Virginia State Data Center



**Population Trends - Percent Increase  
1990 – 2030**

Area	1990 - 2000	2000 - 2010	2010 - 2020	2020 - 2030
Bland	5.48%	-0.68%	3.82%	2.82%
Bristol	-5.75%	2.69%	-4.24%	-0.02%
Carroll	9.97%	2.73%	-2.07%	0.58%
Galax	2.50%	3.00%	-6.75%	0.09%
Grayson	10.07%	-13.31%	-1.44%	0.01%
Smyth	2.20%	-2.64%	-1.07%	-0.03%
Washington	11.37%	7.38%	-1.34%	3.14%
Wythe	8.38%	5.93%	3.57%	4.93%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & Virginia State Data Center

**Age of Population  
2005 – 2009 Estimate**

Area	0 - 17	18 - 29	30 - 49	50 - 64	65+
Bland	1,351	812	1,852	1,571	1,206
Carroll	5,797	3,641	7,946	6,426	5,327
Grayson	2,985	1,835	4,290	3,695	3,251
Smyth	6,798	4,387	8,685	6,610	5,516
Washington	10,347	7,509	14,384	11,423	8,884
Wythe	6,090	3,846	7,727	5,938	4,916
Bristol	3,486	2,540	4,361	3,136	4,003
Galax	1,043	1,102	1,485	1,139	2,037
MRPDC	37,897	25,672	50,730	39,938	35,140
Virginia	1,831,470	1,335,146	2,250,036	1,397,220	907,858

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Age of Population  
Percentage of Total Population  
2008**

Area	0-17	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Bland	19.89%	11.96%	27.27%	23.13%	17.76%
Carroll	19.90%	12.50%	27.27%	22.05%	18.28%
Grayson	18.59%	11.43%	26.72%	23.01%	20.25%
Smyth	21.25%	13.71%	27.14%	20.66%	17.24%
Washington	19.69%	14.29%	27.37%	21.74%	16.91%
Wythe	21.36%	13.49%	27.10%	20.82%	17.24%
Bristol	19.89%	14.49%	24.88%	17.89%	22.84%
Galax	15.32%	16.19%	21.82%	16.74%	29.93%
MRPDC	20.01%	13.56%	26.79%	21.09%	18.56%
Virginia	23.72%	17.29%	29.14%	18.09%	11.76%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



The median age of the population in the Mount Rogers Region was 40.3 years in 2000, which is 3 years older than the median age in 1990. By 2009, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the median age of the region to be 43.1 years, indicating an aging population. Overall, the population of the region is significantly older than the state as a whole. According to the American Community Survey, 18.56 percent of the region's population were age 65 and over compared to 11.76 percent for Virginia, and 21.09 percent were age 50 to 64 in the region compared to 18.09 percent for Virginia. In contrast, the region was under-represented relative to the state in all age groups below age 50.

**Population Change  
2000 - 2010**

Area	April 1, 2000 - April 1, 2010					
	Numeric			Percent		
	Change	Due to natural increase	Due to net migration	Change	Due to natural increase	Due to net migration
Bland	-47	-218	171	-0.7%	-3.2%	2.5%
Carroll	797	-319	1,116	2.7%	-1.1%	3.8%
Grayson	-1,348	-577	-771	-8.0%	-3.4%	-4.6%
Smyth	-873	-739	-134	-2.6%	-2.2%	-0.4%
Washington	3,773	-252	4,025	7.4%	-0.5%	7.9%
Wythe	1,636	-118	1,754	5.9%	-0.4%	6.4%
Bristol	468	-578	1,046	2.7%	-3.3%	6.0%
Galax	205	-160	365	3.0%	-2.3%	5.3%
MRPDC	4,611	-2,960	7,571	2.4%	-1.6%	4.0%
Virginia	921,994	460,494	461,500	13.0%	6.5%	6.5%

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

### 2.1.2 Income

In 2009, the region had a median household income of \$35,840 or 60.4 percent of the median household income in Virginia. Within the district, Wythe County ranked highest in median household income, while Bristol had the lowest median household income.

**Median Household Income  
2009**

Area	Income
Bland County	\$39,512
Carroll County	\$34,240
Grayson County	\$32,813
Smyth County	\$35,614
Washington County	\$40,638
Wythe County	\$40,927



Bristol city	\$30,663
Galax city	\$32,313
Virginia	\$59,372

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

During the period from 2005 to 2009, per capita personal income in the region rose by an average of 15.7 percent; however, all jurisdictions in the region have per capita income figures substantially lower than the state average. In 2005, the region average was 63.1 percent of the state figure. By 2009, the region's average had risen to \$28,409, representing 64.5 percent of the state average, at \$44,057.

### Per Capita Personal Income 2005 – 2009

Area	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Bland	22,961	24,436	26,684	28,008	28,773
Grayson	22,080	22,920	22,988	23,528	23,481
Smyth	24,844	25,771	26,618	27,818	27,917
Wythe	24,748	26,159	27,697	28,687	28,615
Carroll + Galax	24,987	26,130	27,066	28,415	29,162
Washington + Bristol	27,657	29,880	30,895	32,454	32,506
Virginia	38,892	41,267	43,158	44,075	44,057

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

### 2.1.3 Wage Characteristics

The average weekly wage in the Mount Rogers district increased consistently over the past ten years; nevertheless, the 2009 regional average weekly wage of \$586 is only 63.1 percent of the state average. Carroll and Grayson Counties showed especially low average weekly wages, while Bland County and the City of Bristol 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.

### Average Weekly Wages, All Industries 2009

Area	Average Establishments	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
Bland	114	1,949	\$684
Carroll	559	6,078	\$511
Grayson	340	2,382	\$489
Smyth	758	11,644	\$597
Washington	1,494	19,486	\$644
Wythe	841	11,437	\$547
Bristol	681	12,402	\$683
Galax	382	6,369	\$530
MRPDC	5,169	71,747	\$586

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Labor Market Statistics



With an average weekly wage of \$691 in Manufacturing, 71.8 percent of the state average, only five other planning districts had averages below the Mount Rogers District. Looking at other industry sectors in the Mount Rogers District: construction was \$640 or 73.5 percent of the state average; retail trade was \$390 or 80.6 percent of the state; accommodation and food services was \$244 or 79.5 percent of the state; and public administration was \$679 or 52.8 percent of the state.

### Average Weekly Wages, Manufacturing 2009

Area	Average Establishments	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
Bland	10	552	\$897
Carroll	25	963	\$546
Grayson	17	485	\$604
Smyth	44	3,286	\$724
Washington	73	3,414	\$720
Wythe	56	2,113	\$750
Bristol	23	1,798	\$756
Galax	17	1,474	\$531
MRPDC	265	14,085	\$691

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Labor Market Statistics

### Average Weekly Wages, Retail 2009

Area	Average Establishments	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
Bland	14	97	\$328
Carroll	88	749	\$385
Grayson	25	169	\$304
Smyth	116	1,243	\$367
Washington	206	2,922	\$403
Wythe	129	1,943	\$400
Bristol	152	1,891	\$381
Galax	62	1,091	\$403
MRPDC	792	10,105	\$371

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Labor Market Statistics

#### 2.1.4 Poverty

Over 17.0 percent of all persons in the region lived below the official poverty line in 2008, higher than the 10.2 percent figure for the state as a whole. Within the region, Bristol had the highest poverty rate with 21.3 percent of persons living below the poverty line. At 14.0 percent, Wythe County had the lowest incidence of poverty in the region.



**Persons Living in Poverty  
2009**

Area	Number	Percent
Bland	921	15.0
Carroll	4,886	16.9
Grayson	2,574	16.5
Smyth	5,516	17.8
Washington	7,165	13.9
Wythe	4,058	14.3
Bristol	3,458	20.2
Galax	1,286	19.1
Virginia	805,555	10.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Over the 1990-2000 decade, the incidence of poverty for persons and families decreased with 23,407 persons and 5,201 families below poverty in 2000. The number of persons below the poverty in 1990 was 27,929. A closer review of the poverty data indicates especially high incidence of poverty among female householder families with related children less than 18 years of age, with poverty rates ranging from 28.3 percent in Bland County to 54.8 percent in Bristol. Among the counties in the region, Carroll County registered the highest rate at 41.5 percent. Poverty estimates from 2009 indicate that the Cities of Bristol and Galax continue to have the highest poverty rates at 20.2 and 19.1 percent respectively. Washington County had the lowest poverty rate in 2009 with 13.9 percent of persons living in poverty. These figures indicate a strong need for affordable daycare facilities and services for working families, especially female householder families.

### **2.1.5 Employment Characteristics**

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. Agriculture continues to be a dominant land use as 826,499 acres were in farm use in the region in 2007, which is a decline of 13,801 acres since 2002. In addition, farms in the region sold over \$174 million in agricultural products in 2007, up from \$165 million in 2002.

The distribution of non-agricultural employment in the region continues to be dominated by the manufacturing sector with 19.6 percent of total employment. The next highest employment sector has historically been retail trade, which employs 14.1 percent of employment; however, the services sector continues to expand more rapidly than most sectors with health care and social services comprising over 14.5 percent of employment.



Between 1990 and 2000, the manufacturing sector experienced a 12.6 percent decline in employment. That trend worsened between 2000 and 2008, when the sector suffered a 31.5 percent employment decline. The heaviest manufacturing job losses between 1990 and 2008 were in the Food, Textile, and Furniture subsectors with declines of 70.1 percent, 97.4 percent, and 67.0 percent respectively. Plastics & Rubber and Beverage & Tobacco Product manufacturing were two subsectors that experienced job growth over the same period with increases of 97.6 percent and 281.9 percent respectively.

Between 1990 and 2008, the region experienced a significant loss in overall manufacturing employment (40.2 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. However, economic development efforts to diversify and raise the standard wage level must continue.

**2.1.6 Labor Force and Unemployment**

The labor force participation rate in the region was 49.5 percent in 2010, the most recent year for which data are available. This is slightly below the state average participation rate of 52.3 percent and the nation’s 49.8 percent rate. 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 Bland, Washington, and Wythe Counties. The Cities of Bristol and Galax had the lowest overall rates at 45.7 and 46.6 percent respectively. These statistics indicate that labor supply will be more than adequate in the region as development proceeds in the next five years. At 55.8 percent, Wythe County had the region’s highest overall participation rate.

**Labor Force  
2010**

Area	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate (%)
Bland	3,583	3,342	241	6.7
Carroll	14,550	12,946	1,604	11.0
Grayson	7,408	6,565	843	11.4
Smyth	15,226	13,630	1,596	10.5
Washington	27,326	24,924	2,402	8.8
Wythe	16,304	14,746	1,558	9.6
Bristol	8,156	7,381	775	9.5
Galax	3,278	2,943	335	10.2
MRPDC	95,831	86,477	9,354	9.8%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Labor Market Statistics



Over the past six years, the unemployment rate in the Mount Rogers Planning District has fluctuated from 10.1 percent in 2009 to as low as 4.6 percent in 2006. The average unemployment rate over the past five years was 6.6 percent; however, with the current national economic conditions, the regional unemployment is trending higher. Unemployment also varies greatly by locality in the Mount Rogers region. In 2010, Bland County had the lowest unemployment rate at 6.7 percent, while Grayson County experienced the highest unemployment rate at 11.4 percent.

**Monthly Unemployment Rates  
October 2010 to March 2011**

Area	October	November	December	January	February	March
Bland	5.9	5.8	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.0
Carroll	9.3	9.1	8.9	9.1	8.7	7.7
Grayson	10.1	10.1	9.7	10.5	9.5	9.1
Smyth	10.0	9.9	10.2	10.9	10.4	10.9
Washington	9.9	10.8	12.0	12.5	11.8	10.9
Wythe	9.8	10.2	10.5	10.9	10.2	9.5
Bristol	8.4	8.5	8.6	9.1	8.3	7.1
Galax	8.5	8.4	8.7	9.0	8.3	7.7
MRPDC	9.0	9.1	9.4	9.8	9.2	8.6

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Labor Market Statistics

**Regional Labor Force  
2005 – 2010**

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate (%)
2010	95,831	86,477	9,354	9.8
2009	96,678	86,959	9,719	10.1
2008	94,428	89,048	5,380	5.7
2007	93,051	88,456	4,595	4.9
2006	91,916	87,725	4,191	4.6
2005	93,058	88,687	4,371	4.7

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Labor Market Statistics

**2.1.7 Educational Attainment**

Based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 76.3 percent of the region’s population over the age of 25 had a high-school diploma, compared with a statewide average of 85.8 percent. While educational attainment statistics for adults give an indication of previous educational efforts, other statistics better reflect present schooling conditions. Among more current students, the high-school dropout rates declined during the 2000s, from 1.53 percent in 2000 to 1.25 percent in 2009.





**Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older  
2005 – 2009 Estimates**

Attainment Level	Bland	Carroll	Grayson	Smyth	Washington	Wythe	Bristol	Galax	MRPDC
Less than 9th grade	411	2,916	1,423	2,477	3,371	2,094	1,185	936	14,813
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	417	3,242	1,875	2,949	4,232	2,628	1,524	810	17,677
High school graduate or GED	2,078	7,616	4,399	8,299	12,083	7,059	3,529	1,489	46,552
Some college, no degree	1,038	3,245	2,189	4,014	7,899	3,999	2,870	983	26,237
Associate degree	400	1,674	1,034	1,990	2,897	1,594	1,151	283	11,023
Bachelor's degree	439	1,828	788	1,988	4,839	2,000	1,750	496	14,128
Graduate or professional degree	248	959	305	1,038	2,579	924	639	188	6,880

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 – 2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**2.1.8 Commuting Patterns**

Commuting patterns measure the daily travel between place of residence and place of work. Based American Community Survey data, 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 76.0 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. Approximately 12.9 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 the Mount Rogers region and adjacent communities, including communities in Tennessee, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

**Commuting Patterns  
2005 – 2009 Estimates**

Area	Work Inside County of Residence		Work Outside County of Residence		Work Outside State of Residence	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bland	1475	56.34%	771	29.45%	372	14.21%
Carroll	6361	50.81%	4220	33.71%	1937	15.47%
Grayson	2400	34.30%	3501	50.03%	1097	15.68%
Smyth	9646	75.96%	2759	21.73%	293	2.31%
Washington	15204	64.63%	5277	22.43%	3044	12.94%
Wythe	9187	69.99%	3589	27.34%	351	2.67%
Bristol	3209	45.22%	1772	24.97%	2115	29.81%
Galax	1223	49.49%	991	40.11%	257	10.40%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 – 2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



### 2.1.9 Tourism

Due primarily to the presence of two interstate highways, 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, total traveler expenditures in the Mount Rogers Planning District almost doubled between 1995 and 2009. In 2009, the Virginia Tourism Corporation estimated a total of \$304 million in total traveler expenditures in the Mount Rogers district.

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.

#### Travel Economic Impact 2009

Area	Expenditures (\$ Millions)	Payroll (\$ Millions)	Employment	State Tax Receipts (\$ Millions)	Local Tax Receipts (\$ Millions)
Bland	10.62	2.36	126	0.46	0.32
Bristol	11.31	2.14	120	1.94	1.21
Carroll	52.99	10.79	626	2.61	1.64
Galax	13.13	2.53	141	0.68	0.34
Grayson	11.89	2.76	138	0.52	0.37
Smyth	20.11	4.18	239	1.28	0.43
Washington	82.85	18.72	1,135	3.96	2.12
Wythe	100.58	15.75	858	5.12	3.12

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

#### Travel Economic Impact Percent Change 2008 - 2009

Area	Expenditures	Payroll	Employment	State Tax Receipts	Local Tax Receipts
Bland	-9.1%	-3.9%	-4.3%	-2.9%	-8.1%
Bristol	-68.9%	5.5%	4.3%	14.9%	-58.3%
Carroll	-4.3%	1.4%	-0.1%	2.2%	-3.2%
Galax	10.4%	5.0%	4.9%	17.9%	11.6%
Grayson	-0.3%	4.4%	2.2%	6.5%	0.8%
Smyth	-9.5%	-4.3%	-4.7%	-3.4%	-8.4%
Washington	-10.3%	-5.1%	-5.5%	-4.1%	-9.3%
Wythe	-8.8%	-1.2%	-2.2%	-2.5%	-7.7%

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation



## **2.2 Regional Economic Conditions**

### **2.2.1 Strengths & Opportunities**

#### **Workforce**

Labor availability and productivity is a key asset of the Mount Rogers region for economic development. The current imbalance between the number of jobs and the number of persons in the labor force indicates that labor resources are available. Labor productivity in the region is high, work absenteeism is low, and labor relations are good.

The available labor force still suffers from a lack of skills, particularly with advanced technology and manufacturing. Although the community colleges provide specialized training to industries upon request, these particular fields traditionally have not been emphasized as a part of the regular community college curriculum. That trend is changing, however.

#### **Available Developed Industrial Sites**

The region has a supply of developed, "ready-to-go" industrial sites to market to prospective industries. Most of these sites are either publicly-owned or under operation by a locality and are being actively marketed. Many of the available industrial sites have access to high-speed telecommunications as well as all other basic utilities. Available sites and facilities can be accessed through the Virginia's aCorridor website ([www.acorridor.com](http://www.acorridor.com)).

#### **Education**

There are several higher education institutions in the Mount Rogers district, including Southwest Virginia Community College, Wytheville Community College, and Emory & Henry College. The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon also provides programs from several partner colleges and universities, including Virginia Tech, Old Dominion University, University of Virginia, Radford University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Intermont College. The Crossroads Institute in Galax also provides traditional education opportunities as well as unique entrepreneurial courses for students in the southern portion of the district. The Manufacturing Technology Center on the campus of Wytheville Community College provides state of the art technology design and training services to enhance manufacturing processes. Finally, the Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program provides preparation courses and free GED testing to residents in the Mount Rogers region.

#### **Regional Cooperation**

Local governments in the Mount Rogers region have traditionally worked together through the Planning District Commission to achieve common objectives for the benefit of all jurisdictions. Virginia's aCorridor (Mount Rogers Development Corporation) is an effort to extend this regional cooperation to



industrial development marketing. Other examples of regional cooperation include the District Three Governmental Cooperative, New River Regional Water Authority, VA/NC Regional Water Authority, Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority, The Wired Road Broadband Authority, Smyth-Washington Regional Industrial Facilities Authority, Blue Ridge Travel Association, and others.

### **Natural Environment**

The Mount Rogers District experiences a mild climate with four distinct seasons. The region is nestled in the southern Appalachian Mountains with a scenic ridge and valley landscape. Opportunities for outdoor recreation abound in the region with numerous multi-use trail networks for horseback riding, hiking, and biking.

### **Quality of Life**

The Mount Rogers region is recognized for the scenic quality of the region's mountain vistas. The region is well known across the country for its outdoor recreation opportunities and slower-paced lifestyle. A diversity of cultural, heritage, and outdoor amenities, including the world-renowned Barter Theatre, the Virginia Creeper Trail and Mount Rogers National Recreational Area, Grayson Highlands Park, the New River Trail, old-time and traditional music venues, and the Bristol Motor Speedway, ensure a pleasant experience for residents and tourists alike. The rural nature of the Mount Rogers region has led to a relatively low cost of living compared to the rest of the country. The cost of housing is especially affordable when compared to the national average.

### **Interstate Access**

The Mount Rogers Planning District benefits from two interstate highways that bisect the district. Interstate 81, which extends from Tennessee to New York, is a major transportation route on the east coast. In the district, Interstate 81 connects the City of Bristol to the eastern border of Wythe County. Interstate 77, which extends from Columbia, South Carolina to Cleveland, Ohio, is another primary east coast transportation route. In the district, Interstate 77 extends from the City of Galax to the northern border of Bland County. Both interstates serve as key commercial corridors in the region, especially in Wythe County where the interstates converge and follow the same route for approximately seven miles.

### **Tourism**

The Mount Rogers Planning District is blessed with an abundance of tourism amenities, including a unique cultural and musical heritage and wonderful outdoor recreation assets. Many localities in the region are now incorporating tourism as an integral piece of the economy that can go hand-in-hand with traditional economic development to ensure economic diversity and longevity. Regional projects such as the Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail and 'Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network are backbones that tie together individual local attractions.

**Downtowns**

Southwest Virginia is a rural region with population clustered around small towns. A recent trend to redevelop the downtown business districts and Main Streets of those towns is proving successful. Main Streets, like that found in the Town of Marion, are a key to restructuring and diversifying the local economy. A rejuvenated central business district is also vital to improving the quality of life in these small towns.

**2.2.2 Weaknesses & Threats****Lack of Governmental Structure**

The lack of established land use controls and zoning in areas of the planning district creates many land use worries. In places like the Interstate 81/77 corridor, the governmental structure required to deal with the rapid growth that is occurring does not exist and thus there are no formal methods for exerting growth control.

**Healthcare**

Traditionally, the Mount Rogers region had limited access to healthcare. The region has four hospitals in Abingdon, Marion, Wytheville, and Galax; however, the more rural parts of the district have had to rely on small clinics. This has had an impact on the quality of life outside the region's population centers. Currently, the trend of limited healthcare access is beginning to shift. A state-of-the-art cancer center was constructed in Washington County and many of the rural clinics have access to telemedicine services that allow patients to interact with doctors from outside the region.

**Age of Population**

The population in the Mount Rogers region has been aging since 1990. The Virginia Employment Commission is projecting a 15.9 percent increase in the 65 and older age group between 2010 and 2020. All other age groups combined are projected to decline by 3.2 percent during the same period. This trend is even more evident when comparing 2010 and 2030 projections. Over that 20-year period, the 65 and older age group is projected to increase by 26.1 percent while all other age groups combined are projected to decline by 3.7 percent.

**Effects of Globalization**

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the Mount Rogers Planning District suffered a major decline in the labor-intensive manufacturing industries, such as apparel and furniture manufacturing, which traditionally supported the regional economy. The bulk of those industries moved offshore and left a low skilled workforce without jobs. Localities that were hit hardest by those closings and downsizings were Carroll, Grayson, and Smyth counties and the city of Galax. Since then, however, a move to diversify the regional economy at the local level has been relatively successful with unemployment declining from 8.9 percent in 1992 to



4.5 percent in 2006. Over the past five years, though, unemployment is trending higher due to national economic conditions.

### **Commuting**

The rurality of the Mount Rogers region results in a high percentage of employees who are required to travel outside their counties of residence to find work. Longer commutes mean workers have less time to spend with their families and must spend more on transportation.

### **Infrastructure**

Tremendous accomplishments have been made toward the improvement of public facilities and services over the last twenty years; however, deficiencies remain and do provide constraints to development. Additional facilities for telecommunications, water and sewer, and even public recreation and education are needed in many communities. Several projects are planned or currently underway to address these problems. There are two regional water systems under construction in the western and southern portions of the district. These systems are critical to ensure adequate public water for future economic and residential growth. Similarly, the counties of Carroll and Grayson and the city of Galax have partnered to complete the Wired Road, a project that proposes to connect every business, residence, school, and community facility to a broadband fiber optic network within the next five years.

### **2.2.3 Regional Clusters**

In 2005, the Southwest Virginia Alliance, which is composed of planning district commissions 1, 2, and 3, hired Chmura Economics & Analytics, LLC (CEA) to complete a target marketing study using grant funds from the Virginia Tobacco Commission. The process was initiated by the economic developers in the region who wanted to find a scientific approach to target marketing efforts that would enable them to identify the industries and firms with the greatest probabilities of having projects resulting in significant economic development. CEA developed a target market model and supporting process that identified opportunities for economic development that would create jobs and raise living standards in the region.

The study resulted in the identification of six tradable and one service-oriented target industry clusters for Southwest Virginia as a whole based on three selection criteria, job creation opportunities, high wages, and high location quotient (industry competitiveness). The target industry clusters identified were:

1. organic and inorganic chemicals,
2. transportation equipment,
3. wood,
4. general manufacturing,
5. pharmaceuticals,



- 6. electronics, and
- 7. business services.

While this study included planning district commissions 1, 2, and 3, it does hold true for the Mount Rogers region alone. To further define the organic and inorganic chemicals cluster, several localities in the district are working with Virginia Tech's Office of Economic Development (OED) to complete an industry cluster study and develop an action plan for the composite materials industry. According to OED, the region contains clusters of knowledge and competencies with the potential to support and stimulate future growth in the composites industry. Another important emerging industry cluster in the Mount Rogers Planning District is the food and beverage manufacturing industry, as evidenced by several new plant openings over the past few years and employment growth in this sector.



## CHAPTER 3: GOALS & STRATEGIES

### 3.1 Regional Vision

The Mount Rogers Planning District is a region:

- #1 having a skilled, trained, and educated workforce;
- #2 guided by regional leadership;
- #3 having developed physical infrastructure and marketable industrial sites and facilities in all localities;
- #4 having a diverse, stable economy, grounded in traditional economic development, tourism, and entrepreneurship, that provides high quality jobs while maximizing a competitive cost of doing business;
- #5 recognized as an attractive and desirable place to live, work, and visit;
- #6 of local ideas and technologies capable of fulfilling future market demands.

### 3.2 Goals & Strategies

#### **Goal 1: To have a skilled, trained, and educated workforce.**

##### **Strategies:**

- Support the Workforce Development Centers in the region and the Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing.
- Encourage the shift of adult education to focus on advanced manufacturing and the knowledge economy.
- Assist in the establishment of remote/satellite sites and distance learning opportunities.
- Support programs to provide in-demand job training and encourage industry leaders to participate.
- Support RACE to GED and the Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program.
- Encourage the use of multi-media technologies to extend instructional delivery across the region.
- Establish partnerships between organizations that promote education.
- Support and encourage local industry assistance, export assistance, and other existing programs, such as the Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing.
- Establish partnerships between the business community and schools to identify needs and to promote the importance of skill development.
- Identify and secure funding to alleviate the cost of childcare, food, and transportation for students.





- Develop a program to identify and promote role models to improve student expectations and provide students with “real world” learning opportunities.
- Encourage career counseling and job training in high schools with a focus on science, math, and technology.
- Facilitate collaboration among teachers, counselors and parents to address industry needs.
- Introduce elementary school children to the benefits of continuing education.
- Assist and support the Virginia Highlands Community College and Wytheville Community College in the development of workforce development centers, certificate programs, and pre-employment training courses.
- Foster entrepreneurship and support entrepreneurship development through the Crossroads Institute and similar programs.
- Support the continued development and enhancement of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center and the center’s mission to bring higher education opportunities to the region.
- Support Emory & Henry College and participate, as requested, in the implementation of the college’s strategic plan.

### **Goal 2: To be guided by regional leadership.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Encourage local planning commissions and staff to attend land use, zoning, and development workshops provided by Virginia Tech and Citizens Planning Education Assistance of Virginia.
- Bring training opportunities to the region.
- Develop an exemplary leaders recognition program.
- Develop a regional legislative platform.
- Promote community and civic leadership in schools.
- Establish a youth leadership training program.
- Encourage youth participation in community programs and provide recognition.
- Work with the Appalachian Center at Emory & Henry College to publicize and market volunteer opportunities in the region.

### **Goal 3: To have developed physical infrastructure and marketable industrial sites and facilities in all localities.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Develop industrial properties designed to meet the needs of target industries.



- Pursue funding for regional industrial parks/shell buildings through the establishment and support of regional industrial facility authorities.
- Support the creation of regional authorities with power to acquire, develop land, and market industrial sites.
- Encourage public-private partnerships for land development.
- Encourage private landowners to sell potential industrial properties at a reasonable price.
- Seek more money from state and federal agencies (not based on “bird-in-hand” commitments).
- Encourage the provision and upgrading of water and sewer services, especially in the region’s growth areas, utilizing the recommendations of the 604-B Studies and Comprehensive Plans.
- Interconnect water and sewer systems regionally where feasible.
- Develop new, clean regional water resources from the New River.
- Develop joint interstate economic development initiatives, such as the VA/NC Regional Water System.
- Encourage the improvement of the region’s telecommunications capabilities.
- Support the upgrading of major transportation corridors, particularly Route 58, Route 16, Route 91, Interstate 81, etc.
- Promote the orderly development of the interstate corridors by planning development at strategic interchanges.
- Increase the capacity and utilization of the region’s three air service facilities.
- Work to establish multi-modal transportation services.
- Expand public transportation services into the rural areas of the planning district.
- Market the MRPDC’s project development and grant writing expertise to localities.

**Goal 4: To have a diverse, stable economy, grounded in traditional economic development, tourism, and entrepreneurship, that provides high quality jobs while maximizing a competitive cost of doing business.**

**Strategies:**

- Work with the Virginia Economic Developers Association, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Department of Business Assistance, Industrial Development Authorities, local economic developers, and other state and local groups to ensure that Virginia provides adequate economic incentives for recruitment and expansion of industry.
- Support the marketing and industrial recruitment activities of Virginia’s aCorridor.
- Support local tax incentives and Enterprise Zones.



- Promote the attraction of target industry clusters.
- Encourage targeted marketing efforts utilizing target industry studies to enhance diversification, including both manufacturing and service industries.
- Continue to promote and assist with the development of industrial sites and shell buildings.
- Recruit outside firms seeking a trained and skilled workforce, low utility costs, high quality industrial space, and convenient interstate access.
- Recruit outside firms that currently have significant vendor relationships with existing companies.
- Promote telecommunications industries, including work from home opportunities.
- Utilize the Southwest Virginia Regional Water/Wastewater Construction Fund to close the funding gap in strategic, ready-to-proceed water and wastewater construction projects.
- Promote and encourage the development of tourism in the region and support the activities of the Blue Ridge Travel Association, The Crooked Road, 'Round the Mountain, and other local and regional tourism organizations.
- Encourage the vitality of agricultural and forestry related businesses in the region by promoting the establishment and expansion of operations that create value-added products, new jobs and additional revenues.
- Encourage the recycling of by-products of area manufacturing processes and industrial waste exchange opportunities to increase productivity and add jobs.
- Support the Manufacturing Technology Center's initiatives to be a technical resource for Southwestern Virginia's business community to enhance economic growth and vitality.
- Encourage the development of existing industry support programs.
- Promote the regional and satellite business incubator networks across the region.
- Support the development of e-commerce opportunities for local businesses.
- Support regional branding and marketing efforts.

**Goal 5: To be recognized as an attractive and desirable place to live, work, and visit.**

**Strategies:**

- Revitalize downtowns and central business districts to diversify and restructure local economies with a focus on improved parking and pedestrian connectivity, green space, adaptive reuse, family-oriented amenities, accessibility for elderly and disabled persons, and downtown housing.
- Improve gateways into the area (exits on interstate highways, Blue Ridge Parkway, Main Streets, etc.) and establish greenways.



- Work toward affordable healthcare access across the district and maintain rural medical and dental clinics.
- Encourage the development of a variety of housing types for all income brackets using green building ideas and universal design.
- Encourage the expansion of childcare facilities and programs to enhance employability, improve productivity, and stimulate employment and job retention for working families.
- Provide access to family basic training, health screening programs, prenatal education programs, and wellness and nutrition programs.
- Implement programs to preserve and protect the region's heritage, historical, and environmental assets.
- Inventory the region's historical assets and provide incentives for preservation and adaptive reuse programs.
- Develop a regional recycling program and provide incentives for recycling.
- Develop hospitality skills training programs.
- Assist localities, non-profits, and regional organizations with website development.
- Use the Virginia Tourism Corporation website, [www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org), to promote tourism in the region.
- Promote and support the efforts of the Blue Ridge Travel Association.
- Support the development of partnerships to create regional tourism packages.

**Goal 6: To be an entrepreneurial region of local ideas and technologies capable of fulfilling future market demands.**

**Strategies:**

- Develop regional business incubators and networks.
- Support the search for and use of alternative financing arrangements for local business start-ups which, in-turn, promotes innovative local entrepreneurship.
- Continue to market the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission's revolving loan programs (RLF and Intermediary Relending Programs), secure additional funds, and re-capitalization as needed.
- Promote other public financial assistance programs in the region to ensure easy access to capital for small business development.
- Develop business plan and entrepreneurship training programs.
- Work with localities to develop existing small business support programs.
- Coordinate activities and planning with technology councils.



- Support the development of telecommuting potential in the region and the bridge of excess/unfilled jobs in Northern Virginia to Southwest Virginia and the district.
- Encourage increased productivity of existing businesses through opportunities with technology transfer and the Virginia Economic Bridge initiative.



## CHAPTER 4: ACTION PLAN

### 4.1 MRPDC Action Plan

The goals identified in the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission's original CEDS/Vision 2025 continue to be relevant in the current economic environment, although strategies must be adapted to ever-changing circumstances. Strides have been made in increasing job opportunities for area residents, in developing industrial sites and parks, and in attracting new, more diverse industries. The overall strategy has increasingly become one of not simply "industry-hunting" but one of overall regional development, incorporating a wide variety of improvements to the economic and social well being of the communities that make up the planning district.

The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission continues to work toward the realization of the five general goals adopted in the region's original economic development plan. These goals, found below, are the foundation for the commission's annual work program, which serves as the commission's action plan.

1. To maintain an effective planning program rooted in full citizen participation and public information.
2. To promote the physical development of the district in accordance with local Comprehensive Plans that outline strategies for land use, community facilities, transportation, parks and open space, water quality and water supply, housing, recreation, and capital improvements.
3. To coordinate the funding of publicly financed projects and programs in the region and to serve as a regional data collection and information center.
4. To promote economic growth and development within the district with a balance between agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, recreation, tourism, and services.
5. To promote the development of a full range of human and social services designed to meet the needs of the people of the district.

### 4.2 Priority Project List

The following Priority Project List consists of planned and ongoing projects to address the goals and strategies identified for the Mount Rogers Planning District. These are listed and prioritized by jurisdiction, but are not prioritized for the region. On an annual basis, the localities in the planning district have an opportunity to review and update the projects on a local level. Local input, along with input from Mount Rogers Planning District Commission staff and the CEDS Committee, is used to gauge progress on CEDS implementation and identify needs for the coming year.



Project Information						Project Status					
Priority	Project Name	Description	Project Cost	Funding Sources	Outputs/Outcomes	Time Frame	Planning	Funded	In-Progress	Completed	Notes
<b>Bland County</b>											
1	Bland Wastewater Collection/Treatment System	Construction of a wastewater treatment plant and collection system in the Bland Proper community	\$9,300,000		Allow for the development of Exit 52 and approximately 1,000 acres	2011	X				PER completed; property purchased
2	Exit 58 Water & Sewer Extention	Extend water and sewer across Interstate 77 at Exit 58 to serve commercial buisnesses	\$2,000,000		Public water and sewer available at the Exit 58 interchange on Interstate 77	2011	X	X	X	X	Site approved by DEQ and VDH
3	Bland County Commerce Park	Develop a 22-acre business park in the Bastian community	\$2,000,000	EDA, TICRC, VDOT, Local	Future of County's Economic Development Program	2010	X	X	X		Plans/Specs submitted to VDOT 10/2010
4	Bland County Farmers Market	Construction of a 20 x 60 pavilion for local Farmers Market facility	\$40,000	USDA RD	Revitalize downtown Bland for local economy, local business/Part-time job created through grant funding during market season	2010	X	X	X		Completing Special Conditions
5	Bland Commercial Business District Revitalization	Revitalization and streetscape improvements in the Bland Proper community	1,500,000		Revitalized business distraction in Bland Proper	2012	X				Planning has been initiated/Project is not progressing at this time
<b>Carroll County</b>											



1	Wildwood Commerce Park	Regional Commerce Park with Galax and Grayson	\$6.5 million estimate	DHCD,EDA, USDA-RD, ARC, Localities, VDOT, MRPDC, Tobacco Commission	To utilize a regional authority (BRCEDA) to collectively invest and share in revenues generated from a 164-acre commerce park located in Wildwood, Virginia (I-77 (Exit-19)). This project will leverage various grant and funding sources to secure property and develop ready-to-market sites equipped with full infrastructure. The partnership between localities will be return-on-investment based, and will include the sharing of all revenues generated from real estate, machinery & tools, and/or merchants capital. The further benefits of our efforts to pool resources will be lower risks to individual localities and grant/funding agencies, the ability to compete for larger industrial prospects, the ability to provide an accessible cache of employment opportunities, and the diversification of each jurisdiction's portfolio of investments.	2010-2012		X		X	
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2	Phase III School Construction	Upgrades to Carroll County High School and Carroll County Intermediate School and the closing of Woodlawn School	\$15 million	QSCB - ARRA through Governor's Office	To create a 9th grade Academy at CCHS and to move the Woodlawn students to CCIS. This will create a middle school program for Carroll County	2012-2014	X	X	X	
3	The Wired Road	Extend a broadband fiber-optic telecommunications network across the Twin County region	\$10 million		Broadband telecommunications access available across the region	2012	X	X	X	Continued construction through FY12
4	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			
5	Fries Road Water	Provide water to Fries Road area	\$2,760,204	USDA-RD, Local, MRPDC, VDH	Provide 180 connections to a sustainable water supply from the New River Regional Water System through Carroll County lines.	2010-2012	X			
6	Cana Sewer Project	Provide Sewer services along US 52 to the NC boarder	\$2.6 million	USDA-RD, Local, MRPDC, VDH	The Carroll County Public Service Authority is applying to USDA-Rural Development for funding to complete the Cana Sewer Improvements Project. The improvements will make public sewer service available to 148 +/- potential customers along the Route 52 corridor in the Cana community. Several	2010-2013	x			



					<p>small businesses in the project area are experiencing difficulties with septic systems and will be forced to cease operations putting a minimum of 100 employees out of work without the installation of a public sewer system. The Cana Sewer Project will allow these businesses to remain open as well as provide sewer service to approximately 100 acres of commercial property creating additional employment. Proposed sewer improvements include approximately 33,800 lf of 12" and smaller gravity sewer, one (1) sewage grinder pump station, 1,900 lf of 2" force mains, and related improvements. The proposed extensions will connect to the City of Mount Airy, NC 's sewer system for treatment and disposal. The Carroll County Public Service Authority is applying to USDA-Rural Development for funding to complete the</p>					
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					<p>Cana Sewer Improvements Project. The improvements will make public sewer service available to 148 +/- potential customers along the Route 52 corridor in the Cana community. Several small businesses in the project area are experiencing difficulties with septic systems and will be forced to cease operations putting a minimum of 100 employees out of work without the installation of a public sewer system. The Cana Sewer Project will allow these businesses to remain open as well as provide sewer service to approximately 100 acres of commercial property creating additional employment. Proposed sewer improvements include approximately 33,800 lf of 12" and smaller gravity sewer, one (1) sewage grinder pump station, 1,900 lf of 2" force mains, and related improvements. The proposed extensions</p>					
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					will connect to the City of Mount Airy, NC 's sewer system for treatment and disposal.						
7	Recreation Park Development	Increase the quality of service of the Carroll County Recreation Department	\$2.5 million	unknown		2010 - 2013	X				
<b>Town of Hillsville</b>											
1	East & West Grayson Street Sidewalks	Construct sidewalk, curb, and gutters	\$3,000,000	TEA-21	Pedestrian safety, economic development, and improved Flea Market access	2011	X	X	X		Bid in August 2011.
2	Beaver Dam Recreation Area	Recreation Park and Related Amenities	\$2,500,000	DCR, RD	Safety, health, and leisure	2014	X				
3	Beaver Dam Recreation Area	Entrance & R.O.W. acquisition for Rec. Park	\$750,000	VDOT, Local		2012	X				
4	Replace/upgrade West	Emergency electric generation for waterh and sewer plants	\$500,000	RD, VDH, Local		2013	X				
5	58 West Sewer Interceptor	Serve unserved area near Interstate 77 with sewer	\$700,000	RD, VALF		2013	X				
6	Upgrades to Water Treatment Plant	Filter media replace and equipment upgrades	\$400,000	UNK	Meet current and future regulations	2011	X				
	Replace/upgrade West Grayson Sewer	Replace old sewer line off of West Grayson Street	\$300,000	DEQ, Local		2010	X	X	X	X	Complete.
<b>Grayson County</b>											
1	Wildwood Development (Exit 19)	Joint project through Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority for utility service and site development	\$6,500,000	DHCD, ARC, EDA, RD, TICRC	Significant job potential	2011	X		X		Project has been initiated
2	West Galax Technology Park (Hampton Property)	Design, grading, utility extension, and service road to develop business and technology park	\$3,000,000	RD, TICRC, DHCD	Creation of 500-1,000 new jobs	2012	X		X		Access road from US 58 currently under construction. Funded by TICRC grant
3	Twin County Airport	Extend the runway	\$4,261,000			2011	X				Pursue economic



											development
4	Grayson County Industrial Park	Infrastructure needed	\$1,000,000	RD	multiple jobs	2012	X				This infrastructure is a must to enable promotion of industrial sites
5	The Wired Road	Extend a broadband fiber-optic telecommunications network across the Twin County region	\$10 million		Broadband telecommunications access available across the region	2012	X	X	X		Phase II partial funded. Construction to begin Spring 2011.
6	Stevens Creek Water Project	Extend public water service to residents in the Stevens Creek area	\$3,200,000		Important to the Town of Fries and future development	2012	X				Pre-planning / PER
7	Fairview Wastewater Project	Extend public water service to residents in the Fairview area	\$12.8 million	RD, ARC, CDBG	Positive environmental impact through the elimination of leaking septic systems	2012	X				Pre-planning / PER
8	School Construction/Renovation Plan	Replace/Remodel all Grayson County schools	\$53 million			2013	X	X	X		Phases II and III are in progress.
9	Grayson County Fairgrounds	County Fairgrounds	\$1,835,000			2012	X				This would be a first for Grayson
10	Grayson County Adm. Building	Construct a new building	\$3,855,000			2012	X				Overcrowded
	School Construction/Renovation Plan – Phase I	Replace/Remodel all Grayson County schools	\$53,000,000			2011	X	X	X	X	Complete.
	VA/NC Regional Water System	Construct a regional water treatment plant and distribution system to serve Independence; Grayson County; Sparta, NC; and Allegheny County, NC	\$8,200,000	RD, TICRC	The project will support a new \$99 million, 1,200 inmate prison facility as well as future economic development in the area	2010	X	X	X	X	Complete.
<b>Town of Fries</b>											



1	Fries Carroll Grayson Regional Economic Development Project	Clearance and redevelopment of the former Washington Mills site. Hire Development Consultant, Market site to private developers.	\$1,135,840	DHCD, ARC, Local	Redevelop a former mill site to serve as a prime tourism destination	2011	X	X	X		Design underway for site/utility improvements
2	Downtown Economic Revitalization	Revitalize downtown Fries and restructure the town's economy	\$1,000,000	DHCD, Local	Revitalized economy and the removal of slum and blight	2012	X				Planning process complete
3	VDOT Enhancement Project - Park/Depot	Reconstruct the Fries' train depot and improvements to the New River Trailhead	\$1,200,000	VDOT, Local	Rebuilt train depot and improved tourism amenities	2009	X	X	X		Consultant hired, design complete, bid in fall 2011
4	Water Improvement Planning	Water plant assessment rate study	\$25,000	VHD		2009	X	X	X	X	
5	Fries Redevelopment Project	Fire Hall relocation	\$1,588,000	DHCD, RD	Removal of slum and blight / small business development	2010	X	X	X		82% complete
6	Water plant improvements	Miscellaneous Repairs	\$75,000	SWVWCF	Miscellaneous Repairs	2011	X	X			Ready for bid
	Industrial Site Redevelopment Project	Clearance and redevelopment of the former Washington Mills site.	\$1,273,500	DHCD, TIC, ARC, Local	Redevelop a former mill site to serve as a prime tourism destination	2010	X	X	X	X	Completed
	Wastewater Pump Replacement Maintenance	Pump replacement and plant maintenance	\$19,000	SERCAP	New pumps and blowers	2009	X	X	X	x	Completed
	Water System Evaluation	System Assessment	\$25,000	VDH	Mapping, Leak detection	2009	X	X	X	X	Completed
	Lee Drive Waterline Replacement	Replacement of 6 inch waterline	\$50,000	VDH		2009	X	X	X	X	Completed
	Wastewater system improvements	replace 2700LF sewer main	\$383,650	DEQ, TIC		2009	X	X	X	X	Completed
	East Main Street Waterline Replacement	Replacement of 6 inch waterline	\$50,000	VDH		2009	X	X	X	X	Completed
<b>Town of Independence</b>											



1	Water Delivery System to Prison	Upgrade bottlenecks from Water Authority delivery point south of Independence to the Prison on the east side	\$417K	Town of Independence , Grayson County IDA	The project will support a new \$99 million, 1,200 inmate prison facility as well as future economic development in the area	2010	X	X	X	Contractor start date May 2010, VDOT would not except completed work, Project is in mediation should be complete 8/1/2011
2	Water Delivery System Repair/Refurbish, VDH request project closed out, ask the Town make new application, project name: Water System Replacement Phase 1B	Repair/Replacement Anvil Rock Water Storage Tank, Replace 6300 ft/8", 3100 ft/6", 800 ft/2" waterline, 11 gate valves, 5 fire hydrant assemblies, 558 new radio read meters, 18 fire line meters	\$1.11M	VDH, MRPDC, USDA RD	Repairs needed to maintain existing service for 575 occupied housing units, two schools, one convalescence home, one shopping center, and numerous churches and businesses	2011/2013	X			VDH application submitted 4/1/2011
3	VA/NC Water Authority	Construct a regional water treatment plant and distribution system to serve Independence; Grayson County; Sparta, NC; and Allegheny County, NC	\$8.9M	RD,TICRC, VDH, MRPDC	The project will continue to serve existing 558 customers and new Prison equal to 900 residential units while creating 350 jobs as well as future economic development in the area	2010 - 2011	X	X	X	Waterlines, two water tanks, 3 pump stations, and water intake are complete. Water treatment plant 85% complete.
4	Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	Upgrade and improve the town's wastewater treatment plant	\$2.2M	MRPDC, RD	The project will support a new \$99 million prison facility, with 350 jobs created as well as future economic development in the area	2010 - 2011	X	X	X	Project construction approximately 40% complete
5	Robert Shaw Building/economic development	Clean up and improve 85000 sq.ft. industrial property for possible business incubator or other job development	\$1M	TIC, TOI, MRPDC, DHCD	Provide a means for new business development and creation of 60 to 100 new jobs	2011 - 2013	X			TOI purchase property 4/8/2011



6	Main Street Revitalization	Downtown revitalization, economic restructuring, and removal of slum and blight	\$2.8M	DHCD, TICRC, RD, TOI	Downtown revitalization, economic restructuring, and removal of slum and blight; creation of 50 to 100 new jobs	2011 - 2014	X				
7	New Town Hall	Existing building is too small, handicap inaccessible, and in need of major refurbishing	\$350K	TOI	A new building will support easier customer access, parking availability, ability to conduct DMV and other over the counter business	2012 - 2013	X				TOI has \$180K in building fund
<b>Town of Troutdale</b>											
1	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	SE/RCAP & SWVWWCF	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.	2012	X	X			Construction will begin in 2011.
<b>Smyth County</b>											
1	Atkins Water Source	Development of a new drinking water source for the eastern end of Smyth County and construction of a new 250,000g water tank	\$750,000	VDH	Additional water capacity for the system to support growth in the eastern corridor of I-81 and Highway 11 (residential, commercial, and industrial)	2011-2012	X				PER and preliminary test well location is complete. Option secured. Expect drilling to begin May 2011.
2	Lucky Lane water and sewer	Public water and sewer extension in the Hungry Mother Park area	\$1,300,000	USDA RD	Installation of this sewer system is expected to improve water quality and preserve Hungry Mother lake for future tourism.	2011	X				PER completed. Design 80% complete. Working on permits and easements. Grant application in





												process.
3	Hutton Branch Phase II Water Project	Public water extension in the Atkins area	\$1,738,000	USDA RD	Provide quality drinking water mostly for residences, but some small business growth potential. 150 new connections projected.	2011 - 2012	X					Final design complete. Grant application in process.
4	North Fork Holston River Water Treatment Plant	Construct a water treatment plant and distribution system to serve northwestern Smyth County	\$4,300,000	USDA RD	New water source for western Smyth County, including Saltville and Tannersville (Tazewell Co.)	2011 - 2012	X					Application to RD in progress.
5	Groseclose Sewer Project	Provide wastewater collection system for Groseclose area to support commercial and industrial development	\$850,000	EPA Tob Comm Other	Increased tax base and jobs, will allow existing businesses to expand and closed businesses to reopen	2012	X					PER Complete on alternate design. Some funding secured. Additional sources needed.
6	Exit 47 Interchange Modification Project	Will provide a safe and convenient access to proposed commercial development on southside of Exit 47	\$3.5 m	USDOT Private Developer	Increased tax base and jobs, will allow much-needed new development to occur next to I-81	2012	X					Traffic Impact Analysis Report completed. Public hearing held. FHWA has approved Interchange Modification Request.
<b>Town of Chilhowie</b>												
1	Chilhowie Walking Trail		\$250,000	VDOT		2011		X	X			Awaiting final VDOT review. Project started using Town resources due to delays imposed by VDOT.



2	500,000 Gallon Water Tank – In Town		\$1,000,000			2011	X				
3	New Maintenance Building at Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant		\$150,000			2011	X				Grant funding required from MRPDC.
4	New Laboratory at Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant		\$300,000			2011	X				Grant funding required from MRPDC.
5	New Fire Department and Rescue Squad Building		\$1,000,000			2012	X				Grant application made, awaiting results.
<b>Town of Marion</b>											
1	Marion Sewer Treatment Plant Upgrade	Replace incubator, influent pump, UV system upgrade and "green reserve" digester project (biogas conversion to replace conventional fuel source)	\$1.5 million	Rural Development loan, DEQ grant and loan, local	Provide more efficient and environmentally friendly effluent disinfection of processed sewer water for the Town	2011-2012	X	X			Stage 1: Project will be bid Spring 2011, anticipated substantial completion by end of the year. Stage 2: Project to be bid Summer 2011, completed early 2012
2	Upgrade Marion high level water tank	Tank will be repaired and repainted	\$50,000	VA Health Department, Local	Provide continual source of quality drinking water sustained for Town of Marion	2011		X			Engineering procurement in progress. Anticipated completion Fall 2011
3	Marion Slum & Blight Removal -Downtown Streetscape on Broad, North Iron, and Main Streets	Streetscape improvements	\$400,000	TEA-21, local	Provide aesthetic improvements to assist with continued economic redevelopment of downtown	2011	X	X	X		In progress. Plans are under VDOT review and will go to bid soon.



4	Downtown Parking Deck	Partner with Smyth County to construct a 100-space parking deck to serve courthouse and downtown businesses	\$2,500,000	Tobacco Commission, Smyth County, local	The deck will provide much-needed parking that will enhance economic growth and revitalization for downtown	2012	X				Currently in design review. Town share is \$500,000, balance from Smyth County.
5	Comprehensive Water Line Replacement Project	Replacement of previously identified lines to curtail water loss	800,000	unknown	Reduction of water loss, ensure continuation of adequate and stable water supply and improving conservation efforts	2012-2013	X				Based upon PER completed by Anderson and Associates, where all lines were studied and recommendations made for replacement
<b>Town of Saltville</b>											
1	#11 Well Filter Plant	Develop a third water source to serve the town	\$1,110,000	RD	Saltville will have its third required water source	2011	X	X			
2	Saltville Water Project	Improvements and upgrades to the town's water distribution system	\$4,000,000	RD	New water lines, new water meters, new storage tank, etc.	2011	X				Funding was lost, currently working to secure new funding.
3	Battleground Industrial Park Access Road	Construct Industrial Access Road	\$150,000	DHCD	Industrial Development	2011	X				Design Complete. Pending funding.
<b>Washington County</b>											
1	Regional Sewer for Western Washington County	Sewer collection and treatment options for area from Exit 14 to TN line along I-81; joint BOS / WCSA study 2010/11	UNK	Seeking grant sources	Needed to meet commercial and residential growth	2010-2011	X				2011: Discharge Permit for new plant to be applied; addl capacity with Town of Abingdon negotiated



2	Exits 13 and 14 Sewer Project (Phases I, II, III, and IV)	Sewer service to general area of Lee Highway and Jonesboro Road between Exits 13 and 14	Phase I: \$4.09M Phase II: \$3.64M Phase III: \$1.87M Phase IV: \$1.5M	Southern Rivers, USDA RD grant and loan, TIC, Local	Needed to support and maintain important commercial, industrial, and residential growth	2011-2013	X	X		Phase I under construction- 2011
3	Mendota Water System Improvements Project	Improve the water supply by discontinuing the existing well which has poor water quality and quantity.	\$400,000	DHCD	Improve the water supply by discontinuing the existing well which has poor water quality and quantity.	2011-2012	X			Application submitted to DHCD April 2011. Funding decision by July 2011.
4	Access to Public Water in Remote Areas	Extension of public water to unserved areas of Washington County	UNK	seeking funding sources	Provide families in Washington County with access to clean water. Many are still on well water	UNK	X			Planning grant, income surveys, and construction of water lines. Many areas on Public Health notice.
5	Oak Park Access Road (SR 1745)	Creation of alternative access road from US Rt 11 into Oak Park to tie into recently completed Phase III; land acquisition, engineering, construction	\$3,377,179	Tob. Comm; VDOT; Bonds	Improve marketability of Oak Park mega sites	2011-2012	X	X	X	Public control of land; Funding approved; Project bid and awarded; Notice to proceed May 2011
6	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	Creation of medical teaching positions; bio-tech research; tourism; related	2011-2014	X			\$25 million TC grant requires match; local funds of \$7.5 each from WC and Town; site location undetermined
7	Project ABC	Major existing industrial employer	UNK	TC, RD, Local	200-700 Jobs	2011-2012	X			Retention project



8	Virginia Highlands Airport Runway Expansion	Extend runway from 4,471 ft to 5,500 ft	\$36 million	FAA, DOAV, Local	Needed for economic development of Washington County	2014-2019	X	X		Environmental assess 2010; Land acquisition and design 2013; Const to begin in 2014
9	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
10	Development of Mega Site	Mega Site to accommodate large industry	UNK	TC; VEDP; EDA	Need to conduct site selection	2011-2012	X			Planning grant for Site Selection
11	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
12	Regional Workforce Training Center	Regional training facility to increase skills of adult workforce for new and existing industry	UNK	TIC , VA, Local	Centralized, state of the art training facility for the region	UNK	X			Discussions with training partners; SWIFA; VHCC, HEC, Dream It, Do It; Needs assessment complete
13	Beaver Dam Recreational Park- Phase I and II	Phase I - Creation of softball, baseball, T-ball and multi-purpose field sport facilities for Damascus; Phase II - Lighting and misc. site improv	Phase I - 800,000; Phase II - \$100,000	Local; seeking funding sources	Improve outdoor recreation and sport opportunities for youth in eastern Washington County		X	X	X	Funding from Washington County is committed; Phase I complete; Phase II budgeted
14	Damascus Branch Library	Construction of new branch library in Damascus; 5,000 square feet	\$1,200,000	TIC, VDOT, Local	Improved access to library, technology resources and tourism center for Damascus	2012	X	X		Design complete; Bid Pending
15	Benhams Branch Library	Branch Library for Benhams Community	UNK	Seeking funding sources	Improve access to library, technology to eastern end of county	UNK	X			Possible Site Acquired



16	Damascus/Johnson City, 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 Ahistidy	UNK	Seeking funding sources	Enhance tourism, recreation, and economic opportunity for the Town of Damascus	UNK	X				
17	BWCIP Expansion	Expansion of Bristol-Washington County Industrial Park / Potential for a Regional Mega Site with Bristol, VA	UNK	TC, VDOT, Local, seeking other source	Create large rail served mega site	UNK	X				Feasibility study funded by TC in 2011; discussions pending
18	Glade Spring Branch Library	Main street adaptive reuse project	\$400,000	Local, TIC	Improve access to library, technology to Glade Spring community	2010	X	X	X	X	Local only funds; Design complete; Const complete
19	Heartwood: Southwest Virginia Artisan Gateway	Regional artisan center and location for SWVA Cultural Heritage Commission, Crooked Road, 'Round the Mountain, regional arts and music	\$16,000,000	ARC, RD, DHCD, VA, TIC, Local	Display and sales of regional arts and crafts - promote tourism	2011	X	X	X		Site at VHCC; design completed; funding in place; construction underway, completion July 2011
<b>Town of Abingdon</b>											
1	Heartwood: Southwest Virginia Artisan Gateway	Regional artisan center and location for SWVA Cultural Heritage Commission, Crooked Road, 'Round the Mountain, regional arts and music	\$16,000,000	ARC, RD, DHCD, VA, TIC, Local	Display and sales of regional arts and crafts - promote tourism	2011	X	X	X		Site selected at VHCC; design underway; analysis of funding mechanisms
2	Abingdon Muster Grounds and Rehab of Retirement	Reconstruction of existing garage into visitor center with interpretation and museum exhibits. Rehab house for use as tourist home and special events venue.	\$1,080,000	Local, State, Federal, National Park Service, VATIF	Revolutionary War and Civil War displays on history and culture/Jobs created - 3	2012	X	X	X		



3	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	\$200,000,000	Local, State, Federal, VATIF	Offer emergency entrance/exit to Tech Park/ Community College/Higher Ed/Heartwood Campus	2013	X				
4	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	2013	X				
5	Fairview Historic Homestead and Agriculture Incubator	Developing existing farm and historic structure into an agricultural incubator for organic farming practices. Restoration of 1790s log house.	\$200,000	Local, State, Federal, VATIF	Up to 5 jobs created on-site	2013	X	X	X		
6	Andrew Summers Folk Music Museum	Creation of folk music museum in historic law office once used by Summers. Summers is documented in Smithsonian for preservation of folk dulcimer music.	\$200,000	Local, State, VATIF, EDA, RDA, others	Jobs created -1 F/T, 1P/T	2012	X				
7	Storm Drainage Improvements for Country Club Estates	Channel improvements and culvert replacement	\$240,000			2011	X				Currently in the design phase with Altizer Hodges and Varney of Christiansburg VA.
<b>Town of Damascus</b>											
1	Damascus Library and Tourism Center	Construction of the Beaverdam Creek Trail Damascus Library and Tourism Center	\$1,100,000	VDOT, Washington County, TIC	Economic impact through improved tourism attractions	2012	x	x			Awaiting final funding commitment by Washington County
2	Beaverdam Creek Trail	Construction of the Beaverdam Creek Trail	\$393,000	VDOT	Economic impact through improved tourism attractions	2012	X	X	X		All funding secured.



3	Biking and Pedestrian Project	Sidewalk upgrades and streetscape improvements	\$43,000	VDOT, MRPDC	Improved transportation around town and connectivity to trail networks	2015	X				
<b>Town of Glade Spring</b>											
1	Glade Center	Main street adaptive reuse project	\$632,200	TIC, RD, ARC	Artisan Craft Development and Display to create jobs and increase retail sales	2011	X	X			PAR Complete
2	Virginia Salt Trail Development	Construction of the Virginia Salt Trail between Saltville and Glade Spring	\$548,000	TIC, VDOT, DHCD	New recreational tourism amenity	2012	X	X			PER Complete
3	Train Depot Restoration	Renovate Depot for Farmers Market	\$300,000	TIC, RD	Economic Stimulus for Central Business District	2012	X				Pending PAR
4	Glade Spring Comprehensive Downtown Revitalization Project - Phase 2	Revitalize downtown Glade Spring and restructure the town's economy	\$700,000	DHCD	For phases 1 and 2, it is hoped that businesses will come in, bringing more people into town for shopping, to conduct business, and possibly live	2012	X				Planning Grant Pending
<b>Wythe County</b>											
1	Development of Large, Rail-served Site in Progress Park	Project would grade a 165-acre pad on a 250-acre lot in the SW corner of Progress Park, extend rail, road, water, sewer infrastructure to site and develop an off-site storm water management facility	\$16,000,000	TICRC, ARC, VDOT, Wythe County	A large industrial prospect likely to need the infrastructure site developed will likely create 500-1500 jobs and invest \$300,000,000 to \$1,000,000,000	2011/2012	X	X	X		Project is 25% complete, will be completed by late 2011 or early 2012
2	Combined E-911 Center	Consolidate dispatch center - Wythe & Wytheville	\$1,000,000.00	Wireless Board	Provides greater and more reliable emergency services dispatch for localities	2012	X	X	X		
3	Regional Water Interconnects	Provide redundant water sources	\$5,000,000.00	RD, DHCD, ARC	provide water reliability and capacity	2013	X				Connection to Carroll complete, connection to Smyth





												PER complete, connection to Pulaski, PER complete
4	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	\$250,000.00	RD, TICRC, ARC	Encourage entrepreneurship and small business development in Wythe County	2013	X					Activity seeking a suitable site/building
5	Joint Smyth Wythe Industrial Park Site		\$1,000,000 - \$1,500,000	RD, TICRC, ARC			X					
6	Consolidated Central Accounting System		\$500,000.00	local	Provides better reporting for all county entities	2013	X					
7	Speedwell - Wytheville Interconnect	Construction of water line to provide water from NRRWA and provide required source supply	\$8,000,000.00	RD	provides adequate and reliable source and provides availability to over 200 homes	2012	X					Two facilities to inc recreational center, athletic fields
8	Lots Gap Tank		\$2,500,000.00	RD, TICRC, ARC	Town of Wytheville & County	2013	X					
9	County Wide Wireless		\$800,000.00	TICRC		2013	X					
10	Upgrade Entrance to Progress Park		\$9,000,000.00	VDOT, TICRC		2013	X					
11	Route 94 Water Upgrades & Replace Existing Lines		\$614,250.00	RD		2012	X					
12	Foster Falls Water Extension		\$574,460.00	RD		2012	X					
14	Airport Improvements		\$6,000,000.00			2010	X					
15	Ft. Chiswell Sewer Plant 2 MGD		\$2,000,000.00	RD		2013	X					



16	Gravity Sewer Upgrade, East Lee Highway		\$1,500,000.00			2010	X				
17	Progress Park Sewer Laterals & FM Extensions		\$2,000,000.00			2011	X				
18	Ft. Chiswell Ext S Along Route 94 - Sewer		\$1,000,000.00			2012	X				
19	Ivanhoe Sewer Project		\$10,000,000.00			2012	X				
20	Piney Extension		\$3,738,150.00			2013	X				
21	Spiller Annex		\$450,000.00			2014	X				
22	Poplar Camp/Foster Falls Sewer System		\$3,454,650.00								
23	Recreation Complexes		\$3,500,000.00	RD							
24	Ager Park Upgrades		\$140,000.00								
25	Grading of Industrial Development Lots in PP		\$20,000,000.00	RD, ARC, EDA, CDBG, TICRC							
26	Progress Park Connector Road	Construct a connector road between Progress Park and Interstate 81	\$10,000,000.00	VDOT, TICRC	Key to the long-term success of Progress Park and for regional economic development						
<b>Town of Rural Retreat</b>											
1	Water System Distribution Upgrade Out of Town	Upgrade and Improvements to Waterlines	\$1,600,000	RD	Reduce water loss & improve fire flows	2011	X	X	X		
2	Water System Distribution Upgrade In Town	Upgrade and Improvements to Waterlines	\$735,000	RD	Reduce water loss & improve fire flows	2011	X	X	X		
3	Sidewalk/Bikeway Improvements	Improve and construct sidewalks and bikeways to improve pedestrian safety	\$500,000	VDOT	Improved pedestrian safety	2011	X	X	X		



4	Water System Improvements Source Development and Interconnect with Smyth County	Develop Staley Spring and Phillippi Spring No. 2 Construct line to Smyth County	\$2,200,000	RD, VDH	Provide public water to users in Western Wythe County and Eastern Smyth County	2012	X				
5	Wastewater Collection Improvements	Improve wastewater collection system	UNK	RD	Reduce I & I	2014	X				
6	Rural Retreat Train Depot	Rural Retreat Train Depot Restoration	UNK	VDOT	Preserve the station to promote tourism	2014	X				
<b>Town of Wytheville</b>											
1	Wytheville 20" water line extension	20" Water line extension from interconnection with Regional Water System to Water Storage Tanks	\$4,800,00	RD, ARC, EDA, CDBG,	This will provide a critical link between the Town Water System and the Regional Water system and provide emergency water supply for both systems.	2012	X				Construction to begin in 2011.
2	Painting of Pine Ridge Water Storage Tanks	Refurbish and Repaint existing ground water storage tanks located on Pine Ridge	\$1,500,000	RD, ARC, EDA, CDBG,	This will provide update water storage for the Wytheville Water System	2012	X				PER has been completed and submitted to RD.
3	Community Blvd. Construction	The construction of a connector/access road along I-77/I-81 that will connect Peppers Ferry Road and East Main Street	\$6,500,000	VDOT, EDA	This will provide a much needed link between Peppers Ferry Rd. and East Main Street	2012	X	X			Construction to begin in 2011.
4	Peppers Ferry Road Improvement/Widening	The improvement and widening of Peppers Ferry Rd. From the Town limit line to I-77.	\$1,500,000	EDA, ARC, VDOT	This road will provide improved truck and employee access to Progress Park.	2014	X				This project is in the preliminary planning stages.
5	Heritage Walk/Truss Bridge Restoration	This walking and Biking trail will provide a link between the Visitor's Center and Parks and Points of Interest	2,000,000	VDOT Enhancement, EDA, CDBG	This biking and walking trail will be a promote tourism and provide alternative transportation in Town	2014	X	*			*Approximately \$.7million in funding has been provided by VDOT Enhancement Funds, and the project is in final design stages.



6	East Wytheville Sewer	The installation of sewer lines and pump station to serve the interstate interchange at the eastern edge of town.	4,200,000	EDA, ARC		2015	X				Project is in preliminary stages.
<b>City of Bristol</b>											
1	Retail Expansion at Exit 7	Identify, market and attract new business to vacant commercial property in the vicinity of Exit 7 along I-81	\$500,000	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds	500	2012	X	X	X		Presently working to market property and negotiate packages with new prospective tenants
2	Retail Expansion at Exit 5	Identify, market and attract new business to vacant commercial property in the vicinity of Exit 5 along I-81	\$500,000	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds	1000	2012	X	X	X		Presently working to market property and negotiate packages with new prospective tenants
3	Downtown Revitalization	Continue to market and attract new business and residential to downtown	up to 1\$million	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Tax Credits, Utility Cost Reductions	300	2012	X	X	X		Believe in Bristol is a service entity who markets downtown and has been a key in its revitalization, with many vacant properties remaining a key priority for the City is to assist in the redevelopment of these properties



4	Sugar Hollow Business Complex	Market and attract new business to a single remaining lot in this nearly created complex	up to 1\$million	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Tax Credits, Utility Cost Reductions	500	2012	X	X	X	Presently completing construction of complex's first major tenant and reserving second lot for possible expansion if needed
5	Gordon Business Park	Market and attract new businesses to as many as 4, 4 acre tracts remaining in this park	up to 1\$million	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Tax Credits, Utility Cost Reductions	1000	2012	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
6	White Site Industrial	Market and attract new businesses to as many as 2, 5 acre tracts remaining at this industrial location	up to 1\$million	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Tax Credits, Utility Cost Reductions	1000	2012	X	X	X	This 10 acre location is surrounded by other industrial development with excellent access to Interstate 81 and is a corner parcel with no tenant



7	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	2015	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 and
8	Twin Cities Metal	Redevelop existing vacant manufacturing location with approximately 24 acres and several structures	\$500,000	Economic Development Incentive Funds, General Funds, Virginia HUD Brownfields Grant	100	2015	X	X	X	This 24 acres site is bounded by Beaver Creek and is located in close proximity to downtown, current potential projects include a multifieldd tournament sports complex
9	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	2015	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



10	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 gateways
11	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
<b>City of Galax</b>											
1	Wildwood Development (Exit 19)	Joint project through Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority for utility service and site development	\$6,500,000	DHCD, ARC, EDA, RD, TICRC	Significant job potential	2012	X		X		Project has been initiated
2	The Wired Road	Extend a broadband fiber-optic telecommunications network across the Twin County region	\$10,000,000		Broadband telecommunications access available across the region	2012	X	X	X		Phase I underway, Funding applications out for Phase II
2	West Galax Technology Park (Hampton Property)	Design, grading, utility extension, and service road to develop business and technology park	\$3,000,000	RD, TICRC, DHCD	Creation of 500-1,000 new jobs	2012	X				Access road from US 58 currently under construction. Funded by TICRC grant
4	Water System Capacity Improvements	Increase system capacity of storage and pressure	\$250,000	RD, VDH Revolving Loan Fund		2011	X				Loss of Spivey reservoir has reduced our storage capacity that could be corrected with series of valves and use of CCPSA tanks



5	Fries Water Line Upgrade	Upgrade of water line to serve Fries Road customers, with possible connection by Carroll County and Grayson County	\$600,000	Federal stimulus funding, VDH Revolving Loan	Safe potable water for public health, encourage new development	2011	X				Many wells in area outside of city are heavily concentrated with iron.
6	City View Water Pressure	Improve fire flow capacity in older pressure system	\$1,500,000	VDH Revolving Loan Fund, RD	Protection of real property and tax base, improved public safety, retain 200 jobs	2011	X				3 schools are served by this system, which generally has lower pressure and undersized lines to provide adequate fire suppression in large fires
7	Sewer System Improvements - CMOM program	Identify and correct high probability areas that are subject to overflows during storm events and undersized for current or future capacity	\$3,000,000	DEQ Revolving Loan Fund, RD	Environmental compliance	2012	X	X	X		City is trying to comply with a DEQ consent order issued in 2000.
8	Crossroads Expansion	Purchase of adjoining property for Crossroads, installation of equipment, broadband connection	\$700,000	VTIC, USDA, ARRA Funds	Unknown, but would allow distance learning, crossroads expansion, etc.	2010	X	X	X		Partially funded
9	Chestnut Creek Flood Control	Flood control along Chestnut Creek	\$1,000,000			2012	X				Working with the Army Corps of Engineers
10	Givens Street Improvements	Comprehensive planning project for the "Bottom" – the area off of Givens and Shaw Streets	Up to \$3,000,000			2012	X				Potentially becoming three phase project at \$1million per phase





## ACTION PLAN

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11	Mill Creek Sewer Interceptor Improvement Project	Construct 0.75 million gallon equalization basin to reduce overflows during heavy storm events, diversion structure, 1,500 ft of 12 in gravity sewer line and 1,200 gpm pumping station	\$2,388,000	Southern Rivers Grant; DEQ Revolving Loan Fund	Improved environmental health	2011		X	X	X	X	Construction expected to begin fall 2009
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## CHAPTER 5: EVALUATION

### 5.1 Performance Measures

Overall district development is a complex, multi-faceted activity. In order to indicate the Commission's concern for these complexities, its goals are molded into a strategy that will take into consideration the development of human resources, environmental improvements with both direct and indirect impacts, technological advancements, supplements to capital, and the mobilization of the District's leadership, among other things. Through this approach, the effort to stimulate economic development may involve such divergent projects as educating and training area citizens for more skilled, advanced manufacturing jobs, providing the necessary utilities for industrial expansion, improving housing conditions, providing funds to assist with building or equipping new plants, and developing or inspiring the leadership to become involved with such an involved and complex undertaking. The overall planning program of the Commission is designed to implement this strategy.

Each year the CEDS Committee in conjunction with the MRPDC staff will prepare and submit an annual report to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The annual report will analyze and evaluate the CEDS and report on the progress made in the previous year. The annual report includes the following activities:

1. *Adjust the CEDS as needed.* Adjustments to the strategies and priority projects may be necessary during the course of the year to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities or address unexpected problems. These adjustments will be consistent with the overall goals and will be documented in the annual report. Any changes in the structure or composition of the CEDS Committee or staff will also be described in the annual report.
2. *Reports on the previous year's economic development activities and on any significant changes in the region's economic conditions.* The report will describe economic development activities undertaken in the previous year as they are related to the goals identified in the strategy.
3. *Evaluates the effectiveness in meeting goals.* The report will contain an evaluation that measures effectiveness in meeting the CEDS goals. To determine the degree of success of the development strategy, measures of progress have been identified and will be reported on an annual basis. These include a review of the progress made on priority projects, as well as the following: population change, labor force participation and unemployment rates, manufacturing employment, economic impact of tourism, wage rates and income levels, poverty levels, educational attainment, initiation and completion of key infrastructure projects, and private investment in critical projects and through the Mount Rogers Revolving Loan Fund Program.

**Appendix 1:****Industry Announcements – May 2010 to April 2011**

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Business Description</b>	<b>Month Announced</b>	<b>New or Expansion</b>	<b>New Jobs</b>	<b>Investment</b>
Innovative Technologies, LLC	Washington	Pharmaceutical drug/pill manufacturing	May 2010	E	18	2,500,000
Evatran LLC	Wythe	Manufactures Plugless Power charging technology for electric vehicles	June 2010	E	84	3,500,000
Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Company	Galax	Wooden bedroom furniture	June 2010	E	0	1,000,000
Roger's Trucking	Washington	Long-distance freight trucking	October 2010	E	31	5,100,000
Independence Homes LLC	Grayson	Modular homes and accessory dwelling unit manufacturing	December 2010	N	42	1,000,000
Consolidated Glass and Mirror Corporation	Galax	Solar energy glass products	December 2010	E	40	2,100,000
Lakeside Ready Mix, Inc.	Smyth	Concrete	December 2010	E	7	945,000
American Mine Research, Inc.	Bland	Monitoring and control electronics manufacturing for the mining industry	December 2010	E	11	800,000
Klöckner Pentaplast of America Inc.	Wythe	Rigid plastic films	January 2011	E	42	10,000,000
Scholle Packaging, Inc.	Smyth	Manufactures plastic bag-in-box packaging	January 2011	E	25	1,500,000
				<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>\$28,445,000</b>