

**VIRGINIA  
IS FOR  
LOVERS®**

**PARTNERSHIP MARKETING  
INITIATIVES  
2020 - 2022**





# IMPORTANCE OF TRAVEL

Travelers spend \$71 Million per day in Virginia supporting the livelihood of more than 235,000 people in our communities throughout the Commonwealth.

When we develop communities to attract travelers, we also increase the quality of life for our residents as well as make the destinations more competitive to attract workers for new and growing companies. Tourism helps create vibrant communities from the Ocean to the Mountains across Virginia. Our next generation of workers want to live, work and play in vibrant communities.

For every \$1 we invest in Tourism Marketing, \$7 are returned in State and Local taxes which helps pay for critical services and infrastructure. This investment makes our communities more competitive in attracting new jobs and new opportunities for our residents.



## WHO ARE WE?

Partnership Marketing's mantra for years has been a simple yet focused one:

### **Help Virginia Communities Maximize their Tourism Potential.**

We strive to accomplish this by providing three key resources that contribute to the livelihood of the communities we serve:

1. Strategic Tourism Planning
2. Tourism Business Development
3. Cooperative Partnership Marketing Opportunities

With a dedicated staff comprised of seasoned tourism professionals, Partnership Marketing focuses its efforts in helping build vibrant communities that not only attract visitors, but future residents and workers as well. When we create tourism promotional opportunities, we also create economic development. Simply put: Tourism equates to Jobs. Investments in tourism are producing better places to visit, live and work.

### **PARTNERSHIP MARKETING'S THREE INTERNAL TENETS**

Three Main Tenets for the next two years will drive the PM Corporate Culture for looking inward:

- 1. Knowledge**  
know the industry, our partners, their needs, our visitors and their expectations
- 2. Assertiveness**  
move to action before even being asked to do so – go two steps forward always
- 3. Best Use of Time**  
prioritize activities that produce the best return on time invested

Team Approach vs. Individual Approach – an added focus will be placed on creating teams within PM as well as with other VTC departments for increased collaboration and integration. The Team concept will be first used for Drive 2.0 Workshops, Tourism Leadership Summit and VA-1 Tourism Summit.

As for external Tenets, the following comprise Partnership Marketing's dedication to our industry:

- 1. Understanding** the industry's needs & expectations
- 2. Growing Destinations** by highlighting the complimentary nature of products and services within a region and community
- 3. Fostering Innovation** through people and business excellence

Whether it is an internal or external audience, the members of the Partnership Marketing Team should always strive to inspire and assist our industry partners, co-workers and peers in the Travel & Tourism industry as well as our residents and visitors. The following leadership traits are expected of all Partnership Marketing staff.

### **7 KEY LEADERSHIP TRAITS FOR ALL PM STAFF**

- Make others feel safe to speak up
- Communicate Expectations
- Challenge People to Think
- Be accountable to Others
- Measure and Reward Performance
- Be a Great Teacher
- Invest in Relationships

***HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?***  
***STATEWIDE INITIATIVES***



## **DRIVE 2.0**

Drive 2.0 is an update to 2013 DRIVE Tourism - *Virginia's Statewide Tourism Development Plan*. It is a community conversation with the goal of coming to a consensus for future planning and a strategic blueprint for development that will make our communities more competitive. Partnership Marketing is working with SIR (formerly Southeastern Institute of Research) to answer the following questions: "What should we be promoting now?" And "What should we be building now?" The result will be a statewide section including recommendations and situation analysis, ten regional sections with recommendations and a series of five **How to Guides** to assist the industry with tools they expressed needing. The final document will be shown to the industry in spring 2020. DRIVE 2.0 will be implemented through Tourism Leadership Summit and a series of community consensus workshops in 30 localities. Once communities come to a consensus on their promotion, product and advocacy plans they will have the opportunity to apply for grant funds to implement those product ideas.

### **Success:**

Thirty 5-Year Drive 2.0 Plans by end of 2021

***TOURISM LEADERSHIP SUMMIT***

Creating a space for sharing best practices and bold thinking has spurred the advent of the inaugural Virginia Tourism Leadership Summit. The Summit will focus on results of the new DRIVE 2.0 findings, as well as shared best practices from Travel Oregon, SIR and Longwoods International. In addition, the two-day summit will have industry partners sharing initiatives that have helped produce economic and community growth in their destinations. The summit will become an annual event held each Summer.

**Success:**

Thirty Destination Marketing Organizations sharing best practices with each other. Also, attract two-three national organizations to share latest trends and research to help grow our industry.





## ADVENTURE TOURISM MANUFACTURING

In Blueprint Virginia 2025, a collaborative business plan for the Commonwealth, VTC introduced an initiative to recruit manufacturers of outdoor tourism products (canoes, kayaks, ATVs, hiking/camping gear, etc.) to Virginia, while supporting expansion efforts of Virginia's existing outdoor businesses. This new initiative, titled Adventure Tourism Manufacturing (ATM), will drive job creation and capital investment while creating opportunities for new tourism experiences and partnerships.

This effort addresses two major focus areas from Drive 2.0: outdoor recreation and economic development partnerships.

In coordination with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and other state agencies, VTC is leading this cutting-edge initiative to blend tourism and economic development to create vibrant communities across the Commonwealth.

### Success:

- Engage at least 20 existing Virginia outdoor businesses, annually.
- Engage at least 75 out-of-state outdoor businesses, annually.
- Educate at least 150 industry partners through speaking engagements, VTC Orientation, and individual outreach.
- As a result of outreach and company engagement, generate at least five strong, sustainable recruitment/expansion leads, annually.



### GOVERNOR'S OFFICE ON OUTDOOR RECREATION

In July 2019, Governor Northam announced the creation of a statewide Office of Outdoor Recreation, making Virginia the 15th state to create this type of office. VTC was an integral part of the office's creation and will continue to work closely with this new office on outdoor business recruitment efforts and promoting Virginia as an outdoor destination.

#### Success:

- Work with the Office of Outdoor Recreation to secure at least one outdoor-focused, corporate partner to participate in an outdoor activation event.
- Work with the Office of Outdoor Recreation and VTC's Communications team to execute at least one outdoor-focused media or influencer tour.
- Engage the Office of Outdoor Recreation on at least a quarterly basis to provide updates on outdoor-focused projects at VTC.
- Have the Office of Outdoor Recreation formally adopt ATM as a key pillar of its strategy.





## MARKETING LEVERAGE GRANT PROGRAM

[vatc.org/grants/leverageprogram/](http://vatc.org/grants/leverageprogram/)

One of the greatest challenges facing any tourism industry partner is having enough dollars for marketing. Add to this the fact that small businesses comprise 90 percent of the Virginia tourism industry, and the need for marketing funding is even more critical.

One of the most effective ways tourism industry partners can amplify their marketing impact is through partnerships. The VTC Marketing Leverage Program is designed to allow such partnerships to leverage partners' existing marketing budgets as a match to apply for VTC funding.

The Marketing Leverage Program reimburses partnerships in the amounts of up to \$10,000 or up to \$50,000.

In the past two years, VTC awarded funding of \$3.3 Million. VTC funds were matched by partner dollars in the amount of \$12.2 Million, a match of \$3.69 from the private sector for every \$1 awarded by VTC. Most importantly, the VTC Marketing Leverage program impacted over 780 Virginia tourism partners and provided a total of \$15.5 Million to help market travel to Virginia communities.

Marketing campaigns receiving VTC funds have shown a boost in visitor volume of around 15 percent.

### Success:

- Grow the available funding to \$2 million annually.
- Leverage the VTC dollars at a minimum of 3:1.
- Match the VTC dollars with a minimum of \$6 Million annually in partners' dollars.
- Impact a minimum of 360 Virginia travel industry partners annually.
- Host a minimum of 10 annual public media events in localities to highlight partner awards.
- Revise the online application process and questions.



### **VA-1 TOURISM SUMMIT**

Building off the success and excitement from the 2019 VA-Tourism Summit, Partnership Marketing will continue to work with the Programming Committee to generate relevant and engaging speakers for all sessions. The 2020 VA-1 Tourism Summit provides stakeholders with useful information that can be immediately implemented to grow their destinations for residents, visitors and stakeholders.

**Success:**

An attendance of 500 Industry stakeholders scoring the event as beneficial and worthy of their time and investment.

## **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FINANCING PROGRAM (TDFP)**

Virginia's Statewide Tourism Plan identifies new product development as a key to staying competitive. And across the Commonwealth, Virginia communities have identified deficiencies in their mix of local tourism businesses and visitor experiences. The TDFP closes that gap by leveraging local, developer and state investments to complete these projects that, otherwise, cannot find 100 percent sufficient lending.

With the TDFP program, a locality identifies the deficiency. Then, a developer (with 70 percent secured project funding that fills that deficiency), the state and the locality all share matching contributions to finance the 30 percent resulting gap, drawn from one percent of the project's new, quarterly revenue.

### **Success:**

- Secure **one** or **two** TDFP certified projects, annually.
- Engage at least **20** Virginia municipalities on potential TDFP projects (e.g. EDA, IDA, PDC, DMOs and community development organizations).
- Educate at least **400** industry partners via TDFP presentations at tourism meetings and symposiums (e.g. VTC orientation, state agency partners, PDCs, associations and community speaking engagements).
- Educate at least **250** industry partners on TDFP-required Tourism Zones, including localities, developers and other state agencies; maintain a growing statewide Tourism Zone database
- Establish **one** or **two** sustained contacts with commercial lending institutions on TDFP availability and process.





### **ASSISTANCE WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL AND FEDERAL FUNDING RESOURCES**

VTC's Partnership Marketing Division co-developed and leads **Catalyst VA** (formerly P.A.C.E.D.), a group of Virginia Partner Agencies for Community and Economic Development. Catalyst VA focuses connects Virginia businesses and communities to resources including technical assistance and funding. This partnership will focus on small business growth, tourism development and downtown development projects.

Current partner agencies include Virginia Community Capital, Virginia Tourism Corporation; Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development; Virginia Tobacco Commission; Virginia Housing Development Authority; Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Virginia Small Business Development Center Network; Virginia Economic Development Partnership; United States Department of Agriculture Office of Rural Development; and Virginia Resource Authority.

#### **Success:**

Identify and engage on **10** collaborative projects with focus on technical assistance, funding assistance, job creation and workforce training.

## LGBT TOURISM | INDUSTRY RELATIONS & MARKETING

In September of 2015, VTC led Virginia's first-ever *Governor's LGBT Tourism Task Force* through research, strategic planning and recommendation phases of development. Subsequently, VTC (1) created and initiated a VTC staff education and training program; (2) educated statewide LGBT and mainstream businesses, communities and organizations on best practices and future opportunities via *VA LGBT Tourism Guide*; (3) created LGBT-focused content and assets; and (4) launched Virginia's inaugural, multi-media LGBT Tourism Marketing efforts. This included website, social media, print, event, and U.S. and international LGBT media and industry engagement.

In the next two years, VTC will continue to engage the LGBT tourism industry through education, partnerships and marketing opportunities.

### Success:

- Engage 20 DMOs exploring LGBT tourism opportunities
- Support and grow awareness for 25+ annual Pride events
- Maximize *Owned Media* opportunities in social media, website and blog content
- Maximize *Earned Media* on news websites, forums, blogs, and social media
- Explore *Paid Media* with VTC Marketing; assist VTC Domestic and International media visits
- Track and share LGBT marketing trends, legislation and cultural happenings affecting LGBT travel



## **VTC ORIENTATION PROGRAM**

[vatc.org/pam/orientations](http://vatc.org/pam/orientations)

VTC offers dozens of programs to assist the Virginia travel industry; however, navigating through these programs can be daunting.

To better acquaint our industry partners with VTC services, VTC offers quarterly Orientation Sessions to new members of our industry, as well as a refresher course to anyone who needs to be updated on VTC services.

The two-day sessions educate industry partners on how to better market their businesses and destinations, provide trends and marketing tips, and demonstrate how partners can fully use VTC programs and services.

### **Success:**

- Continuing interest and demand with a minimum of 22 industry partners attending per quarterly Orientation session.
- Consistently maintain a satisfaction rating of 90 percent or higher from all attendees through follow up surveys.
- Annual follow-up survey showing that 90 percent of past participants are now using at least three VTC services within six months of attending Orientation.





### **BENCHMARKING TRIP WITH STAFF & INDUSTRY**

In 2019, Partnership Marketing conducted a small pilot project trip to Fayetteville, West Virginia to speak with leaders of their bustling outdoor recreation industry. Both staff and stakeholders rated the trip as extremely beneficial. Partnership Marketing will look at two destinations to visit over the next two years that should serve as models for tourism, community and economic development.

#### **Success:**

Seven staff members and seven industry leaders visiting Benchmarking Destinations each year to learn best practices for community place-making as well as community place-marketing.



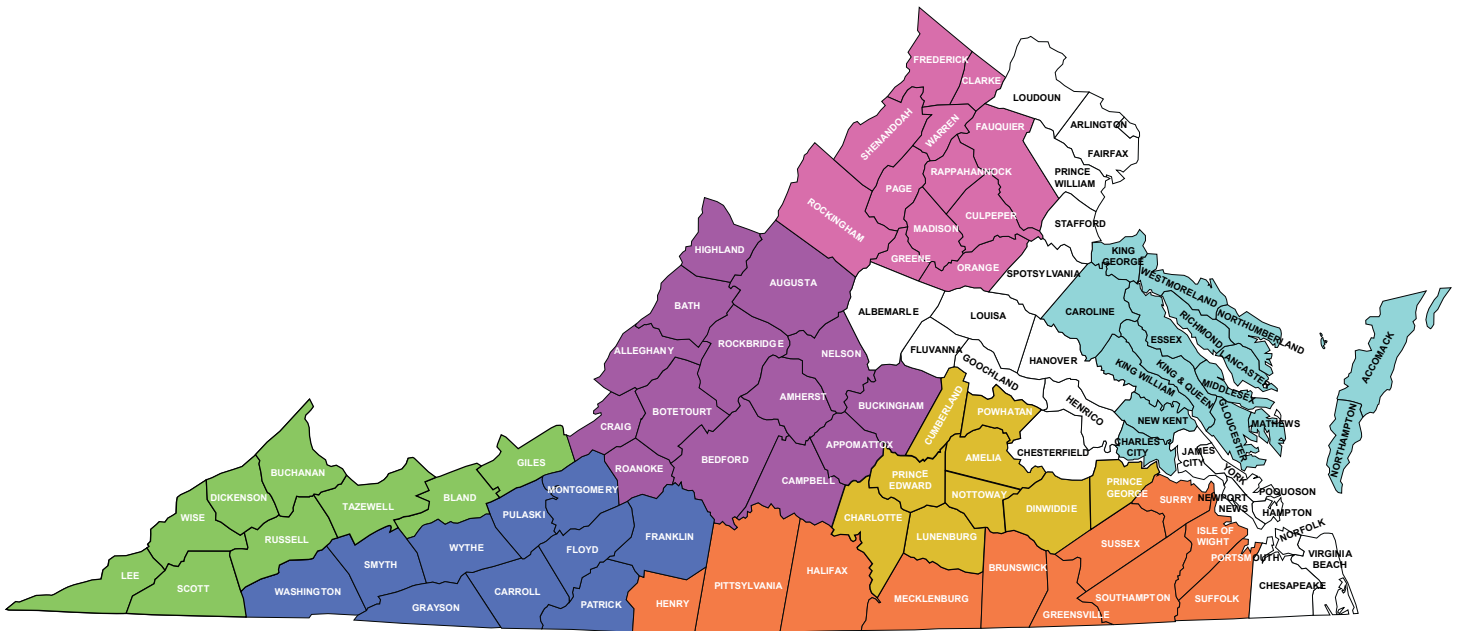
### **BRAIN EXCHANGE**

One of the findings we learned from Drive 2.0 is that our industry wants more face time with VTC leadership and marketing directors. PM will lead statewide Brain Exchanges with CEOs of Destination Marketing Organizations to ask two key questions: What are your priorities and how can we help you?

#### **Success:**

12 Brain Exchange Sessions per year with industry leaders and key VTC staff.

***DESTINATION  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS  
WHERE ARE WE?***



**DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS**

- Michelle Workman**     276 722 0238  
[mworkman@virginia.org](mailto:mworkman@virginia.org)
  
- Becky Nave**     276 791 9172  
[bnave@virginia.org](mailto:bnave@virginia.org)
  
- Katie Conner**     540 460 9512  
[kconner@virginia.org](mailto:kconner@virginia.org)
  
- Stephanie Lillard**     540 742 0168  
[slillard@virginia.org](mailto:slillard@virginia.org)
  
- Sandra Tanner**     434 774 9008  
[stanner@virginia.org](mailto:stanner@virginia.org)
  
- Staci Martin**     757 390 7330  
[smartin@virginia.org](mailto:smartin@virginia.org)
  
- To be filled**

**Steve Galyean - Director of Planning & Partnerships**  
 804 545 5517 | [sgalyean@virginia.org](mailto:sgalyean@virginia.org)

Contact VTC’s Destination Development Specialists in your area for strategic planning, marketing leveraging and other community development assistance and resources.

**WHAT ARE WE DOING?**  
**REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

**BLUE RIDGE PLATEAU (NEW INITIATIVE)**

(No website at this time)

**VTC PM Team Member**

Becky Nave

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Blue Ridge Highlands:** Patrick County, Floyd County, Carroll County, Grayson County, City of Galax
- **Virginia Mountains:** Franklin County

**Summary**

The Blue Ridge Plateau is a collaborative marketing effort of the communities surrounding the Blue Ridge Parkway. Tapping into a unique geographic point of reference and marketing differentiation, the group was brought together to create regional themes to connect downtowns to the Blue Ridge Parkway visitors.

**Status**

Planning phase

**What's Next?**

- Begin theme development work.
- Identify tourism ready assets and needs.
- Set timeline for theme development.
- Select imagery and photography.

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Facilitated first meeting to bring the group together.
- Ongoing technical assistance and guidance.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Year-round marketing of the Blue Ridge Parkway communities.
- Commercial airing Fall of 2020 featuring Blue Ridge Plateau communities.
- Communications assistance through PR, Social and Digital Marketing.
- Support community development in surrounding towns.

**Success is**

- Five themed itineraries developed.
- Marketing campaign designed and implemented.
- Increased social media, and website visitation.
- Tourism expenditure growth in the region.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **HOMETOWNS OF MOUNT ROGERS (NEW INITIATIVE)**

(No website at this time)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Becky Nave

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Blue Ridge Highlands:** Damascus, Glade Spring, Saltville, Chilhowie, Marion Troutdale, Rural Retreat, and Independence

#### **Summary**

Mount Rogers is the highest mountain peak in Virginia and provides unrivaled outdoor recreation opportunities for Southwest Virginia and beyond. The purpose of this initiative is to provide strategic framework for entrepreneurial and economic development growth for the eight gateway communities of Mount Rogers.

#### **Status**

Planning phase

#### **What's Next?**

- Identify priority targets specific to each gateway community's core theme.
- Develop and adopt Mount Rogers brand.
- Coordinate marketing identities for each gateway community.
- Expand local small business incentives and business planning competitions.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Hometowns of Mount Rogers design team.
- Tourism strategic planning for gateway communities.
- Ongoing technical assistance and guidance.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Assistance with identifying new outdoor focused products, opportunities and events to create new and additional demand.
- Support for tourism infrastructure (lodging, dining) through Tourism Development Financing Program (TDFP).
- Communications assistance through PR, Social and Digital Marketing.
- Provide assistance with community development in gateway communities.

#### **Success is**

- Creation of experience-based itineraries.
- Marketing campaign designed and implemented.
- Established Certified Guide Program.
- Strengthened knowledge between downtown business owners and regional offering.

**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA OUTDOORS – FORMERLY APPALACHIAN SPRING  
(ONGOING PROJECT)**

[friendsofswva.org/development/anchor-areas/](http://friendsofswva.org/development/anchor-areas/)

**VTC PM Team Member**

Becky Nave and Michelle Workman

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Blue Ridge Highlands**
- **Southwest Virginia - Heart of Appalachia**

**Summary**

Southwest Virginia Outdoors is a partnership of community and regional development, tourism, environmental stewardship, outdoor recreation, and entrepreneurial assistance stakeholders to develop and promote Southwest Virginia as a world class destination of natural and recreational assets for visitation and enjoyment.

**Status**

Under the guidance of Friends of SWVA, the project will continue to evolve.

**What's Next?**

- Continue to connect eight anchor recreation destinations to surrounding communities and develop an even larger outdoor recreation industry in Southwest Virginia.
- Appalachian Trail; Blue Ridge Parkway; Breaks Interstate Park; Clinch River; Daniel Boone's Wilderness Trail; High Knob; Mount Rogers; New River.

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Technical assistance for master planning processes.
- Serve as Chair of Wayfinding group for High Knob Regional Initiative.
- Continued support for their marketing efforts.
- Sponsor of SWVA Outdoor Expo.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Continued development team involvement/assistance.
- Market the eight anchor destinations & gateway communities.
- Include Southwest Virginia, Southwest Virginia Outdoors, #swva in our content.
- Outdoor recreation is huge for Southwest Virginia.

**Success is**

- Major Southwest Virginia outdoor assets are linked together in cohesive trail and package.
- Regional outdoor marketing program is developed and implemented.
- Outdoor assets are connected to nearby towns.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **TAZEWELL/BUCHANAN TRAILS INITIATIVE (NEW INITIATIVE)**

(No website at this time)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Michelle Workman

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Heart of Appalachia:** Buchanan County, Tazewell County

#### **Summary**

The counties of Buchanan and Tazewell are working along with the Thompson Charitable Foundation, Friends of Southwest Virginia, Virginia Tourism, and Breaks Interstate Park to develop sustainable outdoor recreation options.

#### **Status**

Planning phase

#### **What's Next?**

- Four-county outdoor recreation development plan RFP.
- Development of outdoor recreation options, including hiking and biking trails, river access points, etc.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Serve as member of the Trails committee.
- Participated field trip to Knoxville to tour Urban Wilderness Trail System.
- Provide ongoing technical assistance.
- Assist with committee as liaison for VTC and other agencies.
- Provided letter of support for grant application for four county outdoor recreation assessment.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Ongoing marketing of the counties, and ongoing marketing technical assistance.

#### **Success is**

- Development of multiple hiking and biking trails in Tazewell and Buchanan.
- Trail connecting Burkes Garden to Breaks Interstate Park.
- Primary tourism amenities available (lodging, restaurants, etc.).
- Annual tourism expenditure growth in counties.



**CLINCH RIVER VALLEY INITIATIVE (CRVI) (ONGOING PROJECT)**[clinchriverva.com](http://clinchriverva.com)**VTC PM Team Member**

Becky Nave and Michelle Workman

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Heart of Appalachia:** Scott County, Russell County, Wise County, Tazewell County

**Summary**

The Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) is a collaborative effort in Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River Valley—one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America. Working at a watershed scale with many local partners, this grassroots effort has developed significant momentum with applicability for communities in Appalachia and beyond. The effort builds upon the unique cultural and ecological assets of the Clinch River to create new possibilities in the communities along the Clinch, particularly around environmental education, economic development, and entrepreneurship.

**Status**

- The Initiative is currently transitioning to a 501c3.
- The Clinch River State Park is in development with hiring a park manager.

**What's Next?**

Fundraising for 501c3, State Park Master Planning Process.

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Serve on the steering committee, Downtown Revitalization Action Group.
- Serves on the transition team and communications strategy team for the transition to 501c3.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Work collaboratively with CRVI partners to assist with communication and marketing strategies for the park and the communities along the Clinch River to increase eco and heritage tourism.
- **Public Relations** – assist with distribution of press release leading up to and as park opens.
- **Social Media** - share post when the park opens through Instagram, Facebook and Twitter
- **Digital** - featured blog post.

**Success is**

- Clinch River State Park is open.
- Full-time Executive Director hired.
- Financially stable.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **SPEARHEAD TRAILS (ONGOING PROJECT)**

[spearheadtrails.com](http://spearheadtrails.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Becky Nave and Michelle Workman

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Heart of Appalachia:** St. Paul (Wise & Russell Counties), Grundy (Buchanan), Pennington Gap (Lee), Pocahontas, Richlands (Tazewell), Haysi, Breaks (Dickenson)

#### **Summary**

Spearhead Trails is currently a system of five all-terrain/off-highway vehicle (ATV) trails, one four-wheeled drive vehicle and ATV trail, and one equestrian trail that wind through the mountains of Southwest Virginia.

#### **Status**

The Spearhead Trail has opened several trails and is expanding new trails.

#### **What's Next?**

- Scott County Horse Trail
- Clinch River Equestrian Trail
- Pound River Access Points
- Continued expansion of current trails

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Continued facilitation (VTC began the development of the initiative in 2006).
- Serve in a technical assistance capacity on the Board – along with other Board committees.
- Provide letters of support for funding – both for Spearhead Trails and businesses connected to the initiative.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Continued marketing through VTC channels.
- New photography needed for new trails.

#### **Success is**

- Backroads of the Cumberlands complete.
- Trail expansion to connect with Hatfield McCoy Trails.
- Opening of Sportsman Center.
- Trail connections between communities.

**SHENANDOAH SPIRITS TRAIL (NEW INITIATIVE)**[shenandoahspiritstrail.com](http://shenandoahspiritstrail.com)**VTC PM Team Member**

Stephanie Lillard

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Shenandoah Valley:** City of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Luray-Page County, Front Royal-Warren County, Clark County, City of Winchester/Frederick County.

**Summary**

The Shenandoah Spirits Trails connect wineries, craft breweries, cideries and distilleries across seven localities in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. In addition to libations, visitors are encouraged to experience farm-to-table dining, downtowns, and outdoor recreation.

**Status**

- The invested DMO partners are working to establish a long-term plan for funding and sustainability.
- The trail is supported by the DMO's and various marketing and advertising grants, with no dues payable by the trail members.
- The trail localities have been assessing past performance, for both digital and print and are finalizing marketing plans for 2020.

**What's Next?**

- Launch new website in early 2020.
- Develop trail member survey to validate marketing plan.
- Establish partnerships with visitor transportation services and inbound leisure marketing agencies to increase visitation from northern drive markets.
- Apply for marketing leverage grant.

**VTC PM Involvement**

PM destination development staff attends partner marketing meetings, serving in an advisory role, providing planning assistance and guidance on VTC programming, to include: grant funding, PR, brand, and digital media opportunities.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Public Relations and media contacts.
- Promotion and awareness by Communications and Sales team.

**Success is**

- New website launched, followed by execution of a robust marketing plan that increases visitor awareness and traffic.
- Increased trail membership.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **VISIT LYNCHBURG – SPORTS TOURISM MARKETING INITIATIVE (NEW INITIATIVE)**

[lynchburgvirginia.org](http://lynchburgvirginia.org) (Sports page not available at this time)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Katie Conner

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Central Virginia:** City of Lynchburg

#### **Summary**

Focus incorporates looking into recommendations for facility, event, and organizational development enhancements that will likely drive additional overnight stays and economic impact to the City of Lynchburg through the sports tourism market.

#### **Status**

- Strategic plan completed in May 2019 by the Huddle Up Group.
- Working group began meeting in October 2019.
- Planning and development phase – small group meeting to determine content for consumer brochure, as well as inquiring into budget needs to accommodate new website, marketing, etc.

#### **What's Next?**

Advance action items that support the following primary recommendation areas:

- Event Solicitation/Creation Concepts, Success Measures/Benchmarks, Local Messaging and Marketing Platforms and External Partnerships.
- Consideration of the secondary recommendation areas: Venue Enrichment/Development/Usage, Funding Mechanism and Investigate Organizational Structure.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- PM destination development staff will be part of working group.
- Provide guidance and feedback for applying for Marketing Leverage Program grant.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Sports Virginia acknowledgment and partnership.
- Leads through Sports Virginia.

#### **Success is**

- Create new sports facility guide.
- Increased marketing of Lynchburg Legacy events.
- Increased sales tax collection for room nights and restaurants.

**FIELDS OF GOLD/BIKE THE VALLEY (TOUR DE FARM PROGRAM)  
(ONGOING PROJECT)**

No dedicated Tour de Farm website at this time. Will likely live within Bike the Valley or Fields of Gold.

**VTC PM Team Member**

Katie Conner and Stephanie Lillard

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Shenandoah Valley and Virginia Mountains:** The current footprint that makes up the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission include the counties of Rockbridge, Augusta, Rockingham, Highland and Bath, the cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton and Waynesboro, as well as 11 towns.

**Summary**

Highlight cycling trails that connect Fields of Gold stakeholders/sites with the cycling community through the Bike the Valley program. Fields of Gold is more than just a thematic motorized trail.

**Status**

- Planning phase – Fields of Gold is in a transitional phase, determining next steps for how the program can best be sustained, and continue to be successful.
- Bike the Valley has identified Tour de Farm featured routes and is working with sites on best practices and ways to market the program.

**What's Next?**

Build-out marketing plan for program and identify best practices for sustainability.

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Serve on steering committee and marketing committee for Fields of Gold and provides facilitative and technical assistance as needed.
- Will assist with review of RFP's for website development and obtain research from VTC regarding applicable areas of interest for cycling, agritourism, etc.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Fields of Gold program would like stronger presence on Virginia.org as it relates to Agritourism in Virginia.
- Linking travel writers to the initiative for cycling magazines, bloggers, etc. is a priority.

**Success is**

- All bike routes developed/promoted (website, social media, etc.).
- One premier event each year.
- Five new destination sites/businesses in three years.
- Tourism expenditure growth in region.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **SHENANDOAH VALLEY TOURISM PARTNERSHIP (ONGOING PROJECT)**

[viriniasshenandoahvalley.com](http://viriniasshenandoahvalley.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Katie Conner and Stephanie Lillard

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Shenandoah Valley DMO partners:** Lexington-Rockbridge Area Tourism, City of Waynesboro, City of Staunton, Augusta County, Rockingham County, City of Harrisonburg, Shenandoah County, Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce, Page County, City of Winchester, Clark County, Front Royal-Warren County.

#### **Summary**

A collaboration of DMO partners who seek to increase awareness and advocate for the promotion of the Shenandoah Valley as a premier destination in Virginia to markets outside of the individual DMO reach.

#### **Status**

- Working group since 2014. Launched Today's Shenandoah Valley marketing campaign in 2017.
- Continue to work towards reaching markets outside of their individual reaches, included drive markets and Canada.
- Hold monthly meetings and an annual meeting.
- Annually host travel writers and media.

#### **What's Next?**

- Build-out website to incorporate an itinerary builder for real-time trip planning.
- Enhance content for website and printer collateral.
- Identify legislative agenda items supported by the partnership in preparation of general assembly session in January.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Serve in an advisory role to partnership – give monthly VTC updates.
- Coordinate applicable VTC marketing activities when needed.
- Facilitate and develop two-year action plan.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Public relations media contacts and staff FAM tour.
- Guidance with group tour market, international marketing opportunities.

#### **Success is**

- Steady tourism expenditure growth in the trail region.
- Enhanced partnerships with private sector businesses.

## **EASTERN LEGACY TRAIL EXTENSION TO INCLUDE THE LEWIS & CLARK HERITAGE TRAIL IN VIRGINIA (ONGOING PROJECT)**

(No website at this time)

### **VTC PM Team Member**

Katie Conner and Becky Nave

### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Statewide** through 10 localities, Albemarle to Bristol

### **Summary**

Extension of the Western Legacy Trail eastward to form the Eastern Legacy Trail portion of the Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail in Virginia.

### **Status**

- Planning phase; applicable state legislation passed through House and Senate legislative session in 2015; no Federal or State funding at present.
- Program leadership (volunteer) now includes chairpersons for each of the participating localities.
- Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Foundation Portrait Signage partnership established in 2019. Approved sites can make application to have signs on property.

### **What's Next?**

- Two separate Resolutions of Support documents will be presented during the 2020 General Assembly Session.
- Funds to support signage development and marketing efforts.

### **VTC PM Involvement**

Involved in a supporting/advisory role as needed and appropriate.

### **Assistance From VTC**

- Continued support and facilitation as needed and appropriate.
- Once established, a VTC staff familiarization tour will be organized of the locations to learn and promote the new trail.
- Provide guidance on marketing and applicable opportunities once established.

### **Success is**

- Trail acknowledged and accepted at the local level and completed.
- Marketing plan developed/implemented.
- Tourism expenditure growth in region.

## **REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

### **BRUNSWICK STEW TRAIL (NEW INITIATIVE)**

(No website at this time)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Sandra Tanner

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southern Virginia:** Brunswick County

#### **Summary**

Connects of assets in Brunswick County by creating a marketing effort based on Brunswick Stew. Ultimate goal is to connect all assets and have visitors moving throughout the county.

#### **Status**

Currently in the planning phase with goal of developing a cohesive brand and marketing program for Brunswick County.

#### **What's Next?**

- Official trail launch planned in February 2020.
- Continued development of tour route and sites.
- Development and implementation of marketing plan.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Technical assistance and guidance for tour development.
- Facilitation of meetings.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Ongoing marketing of the town/region, and ongoing marketing technical assistance.
- Assistance with tour development.

#### **Success is**

- Trail developed and implemented.
- Marketing campaign designed and implemented.
- Recognition for Brunswick Stew and Brunswick County.
- Steady visitation growth to social media channels and website.
- Five new/expanded businesses triggered by the trail.
- Tourism expenditure growth in region.



**SOUTHERN VIRGINIA RACING PARTNERSHIP (NEW INITIATIVE)**

(No single website at this time)

**VTC PM Team Member**

Sandra Tanner

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southern Virginia:** South Boston, Martinsville, Danville
- **Central Virginia:** Dinwiddie County

**Summary**

A collaboration of Southern Virginia Race Tracks with the main goal to get the tracks working together to create itineraries to attract race fans into the region and keep them staying longer in the area.

**Status**

Planning phase with the goal of developing a cohesive marketing and branding of the race tracks.

**What's Next?**

Development of relationships and marketing for Southern Virginia race tracks.

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Facilitation of meetings.
- Technical assistance for planning and marketing.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Assistance for developers through the Tourism Development Financing Program if applicable.
- Ongoing marketing of the town/region, and ongoing marketing technical assistance for racing in the region.

**Success is**

- Race Tracks working together.
- Development of marketing and Itineraries.
- Increase in race fan visitation to tracks.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### TOWN OF SOUTH BOSTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT (ONGOING PROJECT)

[southboston.com](http://southboston.com)

#### VTC PM Team Member

Sandra Tanner

#### Region/Localities Impacted

- **Southern Virginia:** South Boston

#### Summary

VTC continues to work with the town to assist with implementation of its master plan for downtown redevelopment/economic restructuring. The plans involve renovations of the John Randolph into a boutique hotel; trail development to connect the Tobacco Heritage Trail to the downtown area; and development of blue-way, greenspace and downtown businesses. Developing city/town centers to be competitive with the NC border communities is a component of the overall economic development strategy for the area.

#### Status

Planning phase continues to progress, and resources are being identified to move forward.

#### What's Next?

- Acquisition of property for greenspace and park.
- Development of trails leading from the Tobacco Heritage Trail to the downtown area.
- Provide assistance for business development, including workshops, business consults, etc.
- VTC will hold workshops to assist the entrepreneurs in the region.

#### VTC PM Involvement

- Member of the downtown master plan committee.
- Assistance with the downtown master plan
- Assist with developers as liaison for VTC services. Ongoing technical assistance and liaison to other resources.
- VTC assisted as a judge in the Community Business Launch program. Businesses have opened in the downtown as a result and one business has already expanded into the Town of Halifax.

#### Assistance From VTC

- Assistance for developers through the Tourism Development Financing Program if applicable
- Ongoing marketing of the town/region, and ongoing marketing technical assistance.

#### Success is

- Connection to the Tobacco Heritage Trail completed.
- Hotel/lodging project completed.
- Primary tourism amenities available in town (brewery, lodging, coffee shop, etc.).
- Annual tourism expenditure growth in town.

**SALTY SOUTHERN ROUTE (ONGOING PROJECT)**[saltysouthernroute.com](http://saltysouthernroute.com)**VTC PM Team Member**

Sandra Tanner

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Coastal Virginia:** Southampton, Franklin, Suffolk, Surry, Smithfield, Isle of Wight
- **Central Virginia:** Sussex
- Opportunity to expand to other areas

**Summary**

A partnership among localities for the development of a marketing campaign promoting peanuts and pork, including restaurants that serve these items as signature dishes on the “trail”. The ultimate objective is to develop a trail connecting farms, restaurants and other attractions centered around peanuts and pork. Connecting these assets was a goal of the DRIVE Tourism 1.0 Statewide Tourism Plan.

**Status**

- The route was launched in Spring 2019 and is being marketed by the regional partners.
- Trail expansion and recruitment of new sites ongoing.
- Successful award of a VTC Marketing Leverage Program Grant.

**What’s Next?**

- Continued development of the trail, adding new sites.
- Continued marketing as directed in the marketing plan.

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Facilitation of meetings.
- Technical assistance.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Hold workshops in the region for social media, writing a press release, etc.
- Assistance with marketing, website splash page, assistance with public relations, etc.

**Success is**

- Trail is fully developed and implemented.
- Marketing campaign designed and implemented.
- Steady visitation growth to social media channels and website.
- Five new/expanded businesses triggered by the trail.
- Tourism expenditure growth in region.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **SOUTHERN VIRGINIA WILD BLUEWAY (ONGOING PROJECT)**

[sovawildblueway.com](http://sovawildblueway.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Sandra Tanner

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southern Virginia:** Halifax County and Mecklenburg County
- expansion possible to other areas in region

#### **Summary**

VTC continues to work with the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway committee to expand its footprint and add rivers/ lakes in the surrounding area to enhance the paddling experiences for visitors.

#### **Status**

The Southern Virginia Wild Blueway marketing campaign continues. The committee sees the need to add launch sites to the existing trail and to increase their footprint by expanding the marketing effort to other localities in the Southern VA region. Further development of outdoor activities and connectivity to the assets in the town and area are part of the Southern Virginia strategy.

#### **What's Next?**

- The committee will add other launch sites to the existing trail, and highlight the businesses (lodging, restaurants, etc.).
- The committee is also in the exploratory phase of adding to their footprint by looking at other communities in Southern VA along the water ways. Once they have explored and have other localities on board, they will expand the marketing effort to include other localities.
- Plans are to apply for grants and seek funding assistance with launch site development for this regional initiative.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Member of the steering committee.
- Ongoing technical assistance and facilitation.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- VTC continues to promote the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway.
- Social media push will be important.

#### **Success is**

- Funding for and completion of all targeted launch sites.
- Expanded marketing efforts to include new towns/launch sites.
- Increased outfitter/guide activity on the river.
- Tourism expenditure growth in region.

**TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL (ONGOING PROJECT)**

[tobaccoheritagetrail.org](http://tobaccoheritagetrail.org)

**VTC PM Team Member**

Sandra Tanner

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southern Virginia:** Halifax County - South Boston; Mecklenburg County - Boydton; Clarksville, South Hill, La Crosse, Chase City; Brunswick County - Brodnax, Lawrenceville, Alberta.

**Summary**

The Tobacco Heritage Trail focuses on the development of a 140-mile multi-use, non-motorized linear park/trail, including some on-road segments for connectivity. The trail construction is being done in phases around the towns so these towns can benefit from the economic impact of trail users. Several sections of the trail are now open. The final phase of the trail will be developed and connected as funds are available.

**Status**

This is an ongoing multifaceted project. The project is in the construction phase of some portions, the marketing/ business development phase in other open sections, and in the land acquisition phase of segments for connectivity in other areas.

**What's Next?**

Completion of acquisition of property in Halifax County providing connection to town of Halifax

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Active involvement in the Roanoke River Rails to Trails.
- Primary facilitator of all phases of the trail.
- Marketing Leverage Program funding invested.
- Supporting negotiations of contracts with Norfolk Southern.

**Assistance From VTC**

Continue marketing the trail, especially the portions where towns are ready for visitors.

**Success is**

- Downtowns revitalized in all trailhead/access areas.
- Increase outfitter/guide activity on the trail system.
- Continued tourism expenditure growth in region.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **TOWN OF FARMVILLE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT (ONGOING PROJECT)**

[visitfarmville.com](http://visitfarmville.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Steve Galyean (interim)

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Central Virginia:** Farmville

#### **Summary**

VTC is working with the town/county Leadership and Downtown Farmville Inc. to continue development of the town into a premier destination for the Central Virginia Region. This includes development of South Main Street, an otherwise overlooked section of Downtown. Focus strategies on creating alternative modes of transportation throughout downtown and Main Street, i.e. better walkability and creating bicycle lanes.

#### **Status**

Planning phase.

#### **What's Next?**

- Assisting town and Downtown Farmville Inc. with development of strategic plans.
- Act as liaison with developers and potential funding sources.
- Facilitate planning sessions and workshops.
- Working to get Community Business Launch (CBL) program into Downtown Farmville.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Ongoing assistance with technical assistance (planning, facilitation, resources, etc.).
- Seek funding sources for Downtown Development initiatives.
- Supporting development of trails connecting to downtown and spur trails off of High Bridge Trail system.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Continued support from Business Development team with Tourism Development Financing Program.
- Support of Farmville and Downtown Farmville marketing initiatives.
- Assistance with exposure to larger markets (Washington D.C., Charlotte, Raleigh/Durham).

#### **Success is**

- Occupation of South Main Street buildings with viable, fun, and attractive businesses to visitors.
- Support of Downtown initiatives throughout Town and County.
- Alternative funding sources to help with project completion.

**TOWN OF FARMVILLE RIVERWALK PROJECT (NEW INITIATIVE)**[visitfarmville.com](http://visitfarmville.com)**VTC PM Team Member**

Jacob Bower

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Central Virginia:** Farmville

**Summary**

VTC is working with the Town/County Leadership, Downtown Farmville Inc., Department of Conservation and Recreation, and local businesses to develop a riverwalk system that will highlight the natural features of the Appomattox River and create alternative walkability throughout Downtown Farmville.

**Status**

Early planning phase

**What's Next?**

- Move idea into further consideration with town officials.
- Work with local business owners, river advocacy groups (Friends of the Appomattox River) to develop strategic plan.
- Assist with facilitating public input and planning sessions for riverwalk idea
- Gain support from outdoor recreational community.

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Act as liaison between Farmville and communities and organizations with experience in development of riverwalks (City of Hopewell, Prince George County, and the Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR)).
- Ongoing assistance with technical assistance (planning, facilitation, development and research resources, etc.).
- Seek funding sources for Downtown Riverwalk system.
- Work with Town Parks and Recreation committee to add riverwalk to future development project list.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Marketing of Central/Southern Virginia river activities.
- Research assistance with a specific focus on waterfront communities.

**Success is**

- Development of Riverwalk plan.
- Unanimous support of this initiative within town, county, citizens, and business communities.

## **REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

### **APPOMATTOX RIVER REGION ACCESS PROJECT (NEW INITIATIVE)**

(No website at this time)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Steve Galyean (interim)

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southern Virginia**
- **Central Virginia**

#### **Summary**

Creating a focus on the Appomattox River as a premier natural tourism asset within the Central/Southern Virginia regions. Helping to develop more public access points and working with communities along river to highlight the river as a draw to the region through new marketing initiatives.

#### **Status**

Planning phase.

#### **What's Next?**

- Gaining consensus among counties/communities of the importance of the Appomattox River as a tourism draw.
- Work with local/county/state agencies, developers, and private citizens currently operating in Appomattox River region to create public access points.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Act as liaison between communities and organizations within Appomattox River region.
- Employ assistance from Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- Work with communities in Appomattox River region to develop marketing strategy for current and/or planned opportunities for visitors in the region.
- Ongoing assistance with technical assistance (planning, facilitation, development and research resources, etc.).

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Opportunities for development funds for outdoor recreational focused projects.
- Continued support of outdoor recreation projects through DRIVE 2.0.
- Research assistance with a specific focus on waterfront communities.

#### **Success is**

- Development of more public access points along Appomattox River.
- Designation of the Appomattox River as Scenic River.
- Marketing plan for Appomattox River region to include outdoor recreational opportunities.



**VIRGINIA WATER TRAILS—RURAL COASTAL VIRGINIA INITIATIVE  
(NEW INITIATIVE)**

[viriniawatertrails.com](http://viriniawatertrails.com)

**VTC PM Team Member**

Staci Martin

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Coastal Eastern Shore**
- **Chesapeake Bay, Coastal Virginia**
- The Virginia Water Trails program impacts Virginia’s Eastern Shore, Middle Peninsula, and Northern Neck. It will also include the Lower Chickahominy River region beginning in 2020.

**Summary**

The Virginia Water Trails program’s purpose is two-fold: promote ecotourism and paddling as low environmental impact/high economic impact driver in the rural coastal region and to promote stewardship ethics among the visiting public through eco-tour guide certification programs, interpretive programming, and interpretive materials.

- Assisting through the Virginia Water Trails eco-tourism steering committee.
- Ongoing technical assistance and facilitation as requested and needed
- Support community development in trail towns.

**Status**

The Virginia Water Trails program is funded in part by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality/NOAA Coastal Zone Management program. The Eco-Tour Guide certification course was revitalized with a grant from VTC in 2016.

**Assistance From VTC**

- Assist with promotion of the [viriniawatertrails.com](http://viriniawatertrails.com) website.
- Promote the opportunity through our industry outreach.
- Possible co-branding (with Virginia is for Outdoor Lovers) of T-shirts, glassware, etc.
- LOVEWorks with paddling themes along the water trails
- Marketing Leverage Program application.

**What’s Next?**

- The Richmond Regional PDC has expressed interest in joining the initiative as an outcome of a grant that reviewed the economic impact of conserved lands on the Lower Chickahominy.
- Partners will work with Charles City County, New Kent County, and James City County to bring them into the initiative and identify existing and new water trail potential in those regions.

**Success is**

- Trail fully designed/implemented. Water trail rating with difficulty for beginning paddlers.
- Marketing plan/campaign implemented.
- New outfitters and tour guide certified through the EcoTour Guide course.
- Three new outfitters open and operating in trail regions.

**VTC PM Involvement**

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **VIRGINIA'S SPACE LOOP/VIRGINIA IS FOR SPACE LOVERS (NEW INITIATIVE)**

[virginia.org/space](http://virginia.org/space)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Staci Martin

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- Statewide with focus on **Coastal Virginia**
- **Coastal Eastern Shore** and **Northern Virginia** rural and urban areas along I-95, I-64, I-66, US 17 and US 13.

#### **Summary**

The Virginia is for Space Lovers initiative includes the Virginia's Space loop concept. The Space Loop will be a designated route that creates a driving loop around the "East of 95" coastal region

#### **Status**

- Virginia is for Space Lovers logo was approved in 2017 and unveiled at the Governor's Aerospace Advisory Council as the first phase in development space-related tourism product.
- A landing page [virginia.org/space](http://virginia.org/space) was completed as part of the Apollo Moon Mission 50th commemoration in 2019.
- In 2020 Virginia Space Loop partnership meetings will convene to lay out a plan for a comprehensive regional approach to promoting and growing space tourism in the region.

#### **What's Next?**

- Quarterly Virginia's Space Loop partner meetings.
- 2020 update of [virginia.org/space](http://virginia.org/space) with new events and attractions.
- Creation of new Space Lovers sizzle reel.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Actively involved in keeping Governor's Aerospace Advisory Council and its members aware of the initiative and its potential impacts beyond tourism.
- Education of communities and businesses about the Space Loop as a tourism driver for tourism development and visitation.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Promote use of the Virginia is for Space Lovers logo for merchandise sales with partners in museum gift shops and at attractions.
- A special [virginia.org/space](http://virginia.org/space) digital page will be continually updated each year.
- Ongoing promotion of the Virginia Space Loop partner sites and events.

#### **Success is**

- Organizational structure for partners to take the Space Loop to the next step (marketing grant, website, rack cards).
- Growth in ecotourism as it relates to night sky/full moon tours/trips.
- Three new/expanded businesses in three years, directly attributed.

**COASTAL VIRGINIA DOWNTOWNS/MAIN STREET INITIATIVE (NEW INITIATIVE)**

(No website at this time)

**VTC PM Team Member**

Staci Martin

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Chesapeake Bay:** Callao (Northumberland County—Northern Neck), Town of Tappahannock (Essex County—Middle Peninsula)
- **Coastal Eastern Shore:** Onancock (Accomack County—Eastern Shore)

**Summary**

Development of three coastal towns to become designated Virginia Downtowns through the DHCD Main Street Program. All three towns have selected tourism as one of their community development focus areas. VTC continues to work with DHCD staff to help these towns create organizational structure and plans to achieve designation and grow economic impacts.

**Status**

- Towns are undergoing revitalization in terms of events and product development.
- Partners are working together to create tourism product in key downtowns and surrounding areas.

**What’s Next?**

- Creation of managements teams, community-led committees, and organizational structure through facilitated sessions to narrow roles and responsibilities of tourism support organizations and individual town members is anticipated.
- Creation of annual marketing and event plan that will allow the towns to participate in VTC incentives (TDFP) and VTC marketing grants (MLP) are planned for 2020-2022.

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Facilitation of tourism development plans/tourism marketing plans when requested.
- Sharing of regional success and strategies.
- Coordinate applicable VTC marketing activities when needed.
- Coordinate potential partnerships between regions and towns where applicable.

**Assistance From VTC**

Marketing of the towns through VTC channels.

**Success is**

- Sustainable program/organization to ensure ongoing promotions, programing, product development etc.
- Consistent event listings and marketing of events to drive visitation.
- New tourism related business and organizations added in the region.
- Steady tourism expenditure growth in the localities and adjacent regions

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **DISCOVER MIDDLE PENINSULA (NEW INITIATIVE)**

[mpava.com](http://mpava.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Staci Martin

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Chesapeake Bay:** Middle Peninsula (King William, King & Queen, Mathews, Essex, Middlesex, Gloucester, Town of West Point).

#### **Summary**

Discover Middle Peninsula is the tourism development and tourism marketing sub-brand of the Middle Peninsula Alliance (MPA), economic development partnership. MPA has identified tourism as an economic driver for the region and is working on a regional "Discover Middle Peninsula/Meet in the Middle" tourism economic development and visitation campaign.

#### **Status**

- A sub-committee focused on tourism development and tourism marketing has been formed. VTC is part of this sub-committee.
- Currently under development is a website that will be used for marketing to visitors and for attracting tourism related small business.

#### **What's Next?**

Develop marketing plan, tourism plan, workforce development plan and product gaps for the website.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Ongoing support, including technical assistance and meeting facilitation.
- Serve as a liaison to potential funding sources such as DHCD, SBDC, SBDS, and Rappahannock Community College.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

Continue ongoing facilitation and development support for tourism development and tourism marketing.

#### **Success is**

- Marketing plan and gaps analysis completed.
- Funding secured for marketing and entrepreneurship.
- Implementation, business and marketing plans completed.
- Application for Marketing Leverage Program to market the region.
- Visitation projections met.

**CHINCOTEAGUE HISTORIC FIREHOUSE REVITALIZATION (NEW INITIATIVE)**

[delmarvanow.com/story/news/2019/10/08/chincoteague-officials-vote-buy-old-firehouse/3906002002](https://delmarvanow.com/story/news/2019/10/08/chincoteague-officials-vote-buy-old-firehouse/3906002002)

**VTC PM Team Member**

Staci Martin

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Coastal Eastern Shore:** Chincoteague (Accomack County)

**Summary**

Chincoteague's Historic Firehouse located downtown on Main Street was recently acquired by the Town of Chincoteague for redevelopment. At 30,000 sq. feet with dorms, commercial kitchen, three vehicle bays, parking and adequate wastewater capacity, the site is prime to jumpstart redevelopment of Main Street in Chincoteague.

**Status**

- An informal advisory group was form in mid-2019 to pursue grant funding for revitalization.
- Industrial Revitalization Funds, Virginia Housing Development Association funds, and historic tax credits are all being explored to convert the site into mixed use workforce housing, retail, restaurant, and parking.
- Plan include historic interpretation of VFD history and Chincoteague Pony Swim.

**What's Next?**

- Develop fundraising plan, renovation plan, business plan, etc.
- Site visits with funding partners, community input meetings, and entrepreneurs.

**VTC PM Involvement**

Ongoing support, including technical assistance and facilitation.

**Assistance From VTC**

Ongoing marketing of Chincoteague.

**Success is**

- Feasibility and revenue plans completed.
- Funding secured for renovation.
- Implementation, business and marketing plans completed.
- Application for Marketing Leverage Program to market the facility.
- Renovation and opening.
- Visitation projections met.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

### **EASTERN SHORE RAILS TO TRAILS (NEW INITIATIVE)**

[www.delmarvanow.com/story/news/2019/07/02/va-shore-looks-rails-trails-railroad-seeks-abandon-tracks/1616241001](http://www.delmarvanow.com/story/news/2019/07/02/va-shore-looks-rails-trails-railroad-seeks-abandon-tracks/1616241001)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

Staci Martin

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Coastal Eastern Shore:** Accomack County, Northampton County

#### **Summary**

Railroad is currently owned by Canonie Atlantic Company and is working with the Federal Railroad Commission on rail operation abandonment and transition to a rails to trails program with easements for improved utilities including wastewater and broadband.

#### **Status**

- The Rails to Trails initiative is in its initial phase of seeking appropriate permits and operators through the specified Railroad Commission requirements.
- Meetings with the Virginia Bicycling Federation were held in October 2019 to discuss potential vision for 55 miles of track.

#### **What's Next?**

- Public information coming through county, planning district commission, and Eastern Shore Tourism Commission.
- Creation of subcommittee should occur in mid to late 2020.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Actively involved in the Eastern Shore Tourism Commission and with the Planning District Commission as it relates to this project.
- Connections with other state and federal partners to access Rails to Trails funding, Recreational Trails Program funding, and Federal Transportation Enhancement Authority funding.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

Continued promotion of current bicycling events and bicycle routes on the Eastern Shore.

#### **Success is**

- Permanent/capable organization overseeing trail program.
- Full tourism related economic development plan designating needed bicycle tour operators, outfitters, repair shops, and other tourist related amenities including restaurants, lodging.
- Consistent growth in Virginia's bicycling industry in the coastal region; differentiation from mountain biking.
- Three new/expanded businesses in three years, directly attributed to development of rails to trails programming.

**ONANCOCK SCHOOL REVITALIZATION (ONGOING PROJECT)**[onancockschool.org](http://onancockschool.org)**VTC PM Team Member**

Staci Martin

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Coastal Eastern Shore:** Accomack County

**Summary**

The concept for the repurposing of the school includes space for artists, incubator space for entrepreneurial initiatives, office space for government and NGO's (Co-op Extension; SNAP/WIC), tourism marketplace, farmers market, community commercial kitchen and summer camp programs. It has potential to be a regional tourism driver.

**Status**

- An advisory board has been formed, in which VTC is involved and assists as needed.
- Engineering and environmental studies are completed.
- Possible industrial revitalization fund site if locality match can be allocated.
- Potential project for 2021-2022 is addition of a community kitchen in the former home economics building. Conversations with VDACS on possible funding for this aspect will continue in 2020.

**What's Next?**

Develop fundraising plan, renovation plan, business plan, etc.

**VTC PM Involvement**

Ongoing support including meeting facilitation and technical assistance.

**Assistance From VTC**

Marketing of the town/region, and ongoing marketing technical assistance.

**Success is**

- Feasibility and revenue plans completed.
- Funding secured for renovation.
- Implementation, business and marketing plans completed.
- Application for Marketing Leverage Program to market the facility.
- Renovation and opening.
- Visitation projections met.







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