

A G E N D A

**VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AUTHORITY
RURAL VIRGINIA ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**March 6, 2024
12:30 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.**

**One James Center, 9th Floor – VEDP Board Room
Richmond, Virginia**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 12:30 p.m. – 12:33 p.m. | Welcome/Call to Order – Bill Hayter, Acting Chair |
| 12:33 p.m. – 12:34 p.m. | Public Comment Period |
| 12:34 p.m. – 12:36 p.m. | Approval of Minutes for 12/6/2023 Meeting |
| 12:36 p.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Taskforce for Rural Virginia Economic Growth Update – Abigail Wescott |
| 12:50 p.m. – 1:25 p.m. | Tourism in Virginia’s Rural Communities – Abigail Wescott
Confirmed: Stephanie Heinatz, Consociate Media |
| 1:25 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Topics and Discussion – 2024 Suggestions – Abigail Wescott |
| 1:30 p.m. | Adjournment |

Minutes
Rural Virginia Action Committee Meeting
Board of Directors of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership
December 6, 2023
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

One James Center, 7th Floor – Katherine Johnson Room
Richmond, Virginia

Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Chair Rush, who noted that a quorum was present.

In-person Committee members: Chair Nick Rush, Carrie Chenery, Stephen Edwards, Rick Harrell, John Hewa, and Secretary Caren Merrick

Committee members absent: Nancy Howell Agee and Mimi Coles

Other in-person Board members: Pace Lochte and Bill Hayter

In-person VEDP staff: Lesley Brown, Greg Burkart, Star Cranston, Nicole David, Jason El Koubi, Stef Florie, Stephen Hartka, Chris Hughes, Nicole Riley, Lisa Wallmeyer, Adam Watkins, and Abigail Wescott

Virtual VEDP staff: Carrie Vuori and Blake Omohundro

In-person guests: Anita Begnaud, Joseph Benevento, James Campos, Carthan Currin, Chris Peace, Matthew Shank, Kendra Shifflett, Jerry Silva, and Stephen Versen

Approval of Minutes for September 13, 2023

Chair Rush requested approval of the September 13, 2023, meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Hewa, and seconded by Ms. Chenery, and the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Public Comment Period

Chair Rush asked if any members of the public wished to comment. There were none.

Closed Meeting

Policy Discussion; Budget and Legislative Proposals

A motion was made by Secretary Merrick and seconded by Mr. Harrell to move into a closed meeting. The members unanimously approved the motion shown below.

I move that the Legislative and Policy Committee convene a closed meeting to discuss specific strategies pursuant to Subdivision A 50 of §2.2-3711 of the Code Virginia, which allows for the discussion of activities related to the strategic plan that would reveal to the Commonwealth's competitors for economic development projects the strategies intended to be deployed by the Commonwealth.

Chair Rush allowed VEDP staff and legislative guests to stay for the closed meeting.

Back in Open Meeting, Certification of Closed Meeting – Followed by a Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Wallmeyer read the following certification and then conducted a roll call vote:

Do you certify that to the best of your knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of FOIA were discussed in the closed session, and (ii) only such matters as were identified in the motion to go into the closed session were heard, discussed, or considered during the closed meeting?

Upon the vote:	Mr. Rush	Aye
	Ms. Chenery	Aye
	Mr. Edwards	Aye
	Mr. Harrell	Aye
	Mr. Hewa	Aye
	Sec. Merrick	Aye

Private Higher Education Institutions in Rural Virginia

Abigail Wescott introduced guest presenters Chris Peace, President of the Council of Independent Colleges, Matthew Shank, President of the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges, and Carthan Currin, President of the Commonwealth Alliance of Rural Colleges.

Chris Peace, Council of Independent Colleges

Mr. Peace gave a brief overview of his background. He shared that there are 28 member colleges and universities that are active across the three private higher education institutions represented at the meeting. He spoke about their common causes highlighting their statewide presence and largely rural focus.

Mr. Peace spoke about accessibility and affordability of the Commonwealth's private colleges, funding from the General Assembly, and the Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG).

Mr. Peace reviewed the Council of Independent Colleges 2024 Policy Initiatives and economic impact on the Commonwealth.

Matthew Shank, Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC)

Mr. Shank explained that the primary role of his foundation is to provide access to students who otherwise would not be able to afford to attend a private college/university. He said that 17 private colleges/universities, including two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Hampton and Virginia Union), are VFIC members.

Mr. Shank provided information on the students the VFIC serves. He spoke about the importance of Virginia's private colleges, highlighting their diversity, affordability, and personalized offerings.

Carthan Currin, Commonwealth Alliance of Rural Colleges

Mr. Currin provided details on the history of the Alliance, its mission, and its member institutions.

Following Mr. Currin's remarks, the Committee and presenters engaged in a discussion on enrollment challenges and trends, as well as specific programs that are needed to address workforce shortages in the healthcare field, including mental health.

Chair Rush thanked the presenters for their remarks and the Committee offered a round of applause.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Rush adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lesley Brown



Mount Rogers, Grayson County

RURAL VIRGINIA ACTION COMMITTEE

March 6, 2024

PRESENTER



Abigail Wescott

Managing Director, External Affairs

awescott@vedp.org

703 232 6841

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome/ Call to Order

Public Comment Period

Approval of Minutes for 12/06/2023 Meeting

Taskforce for Rural Virginia Economic Growth Update

Tourism In Virginia's Rural Communities

Topics and Discussions – 2024 Suggestions

Adjournment

TASKFORCE FOR RURAL VIRGINIA ECONOMIC GROWTH

THE RURAL TASK FORCE ALIGNED ON EIGHT PRIORITIES TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH IN RURAL VIRGINIA

Rural Task Force Priorities:

1. Educate/train local elected officials on economic development objectives
2. Develop small sites as well as large sites
3. Increase housing supply while mitigating cost burdens for governments
4. Develop dedicated funding streams for all Rural Virginia
5. Ensure robust local and regional economic development staff capacity
6. Provide support for grant writing and management and developing a consolidated portal for state grants
7. Develop key rural infrastructure corridors (e.g., US 58, US 460)
8. Align local and regional strategies for target industries, site development, and workforce programs



Rappahannock River Oyster Co.,
Middlesex County

(HOLD) MARCH MEETING UPDATE 3.4.24

TASKFORCE PROJECTED MILESTONES



Agenda:

- Establish goals of the Task Force
- Discuss core issues for rural Virginia

Agenda:

- Review rural priorities from the November meeting
- Review Southside-Southwest study findings
- Refine priorities and establish a defined list of items to address

Agenda:

- Review rural priority list
- Discuss actions to address the priorities
- Assign action owners to execute

Agenda:

- Members share updates on action efforts
- Establish next steps and timelines for executing actions

Agenda:

- Members share updates on action efforts
- Discuss modifications to actions and plan next steps, incl. outreach to key partners

Deliverable:

- Preliminary list of rural priorities

Deliverable:

- Final list of rural priorities

Deliverable:

- List of actions to address priorities¹
- Meet with the Rural Caucus during session

Deliverable:

- Updated list of actions and next steps
- Meet with the Rural Caucus during session

Deliverable:

- Updated next steps for executing actions

¹Priorities and actions will be included in VEDP's Strategic Plan

TOURISM IN VIRGINIA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Tourism Stories of Rural Virginia

Successes, Challenges
and Opportunities in
Rural Virginia Tourism

Presented by
Stephanie Heintz, Consociate Media





“Rural by choice.”



VIRGINIA'S RURAL TRAVEL STORY – a few examples



Virginia's Rural Travel Story

WILD at HEART

Escape to King & Queen County, where history meets natural beauty and adventure awaits around every corner.

Here the past comes to life and the present is brimming with opportunities for fun and relaxation.

Welcome to King & Queen County, where adventure and heritage will make you Wild at Heart!

King & Queen County is rich in American history with an array of colonial-era churches and landmarks throughout the county.

King & Queen County offers a lush landscape of towering forests, winding rivers, and endless opportunities for outdoor adventure.

Paddle down our pristine rivers or try your hand at hunting, fishing, and birdwatching in our unspoiled wilderness.

visitkingandqueen.com

VIRGINIA IS FOR

Scan here to plan your visit!

Visit King & Queen



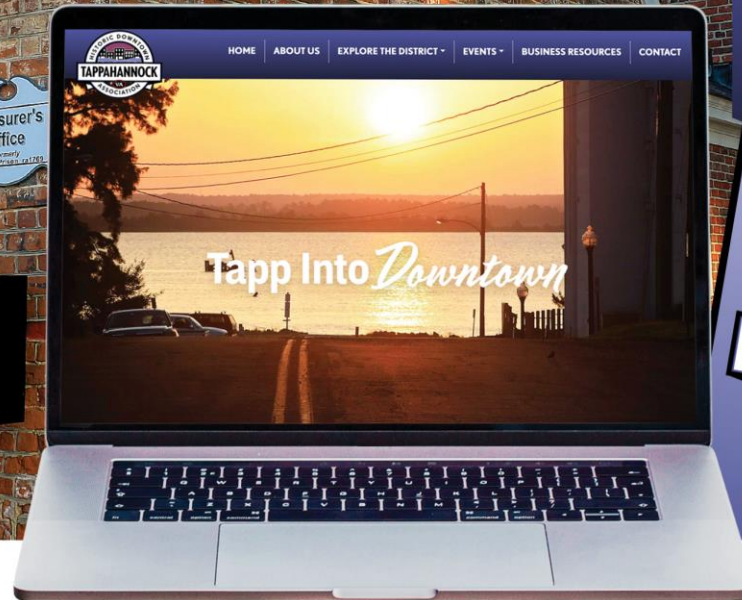
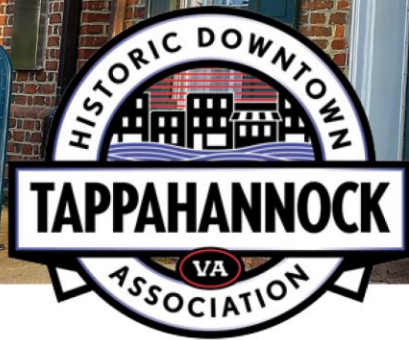
Virginia's Rural Travel Story

Virginia's Coastal Wilds



Virginia's Rural Travel Story

Historic Downtown Tappahannock



DOWNLOAD THE APP!

Check out the app or our widget and plan your visit around Downtown Tappahannock!



Virginia's Rural Travel Story

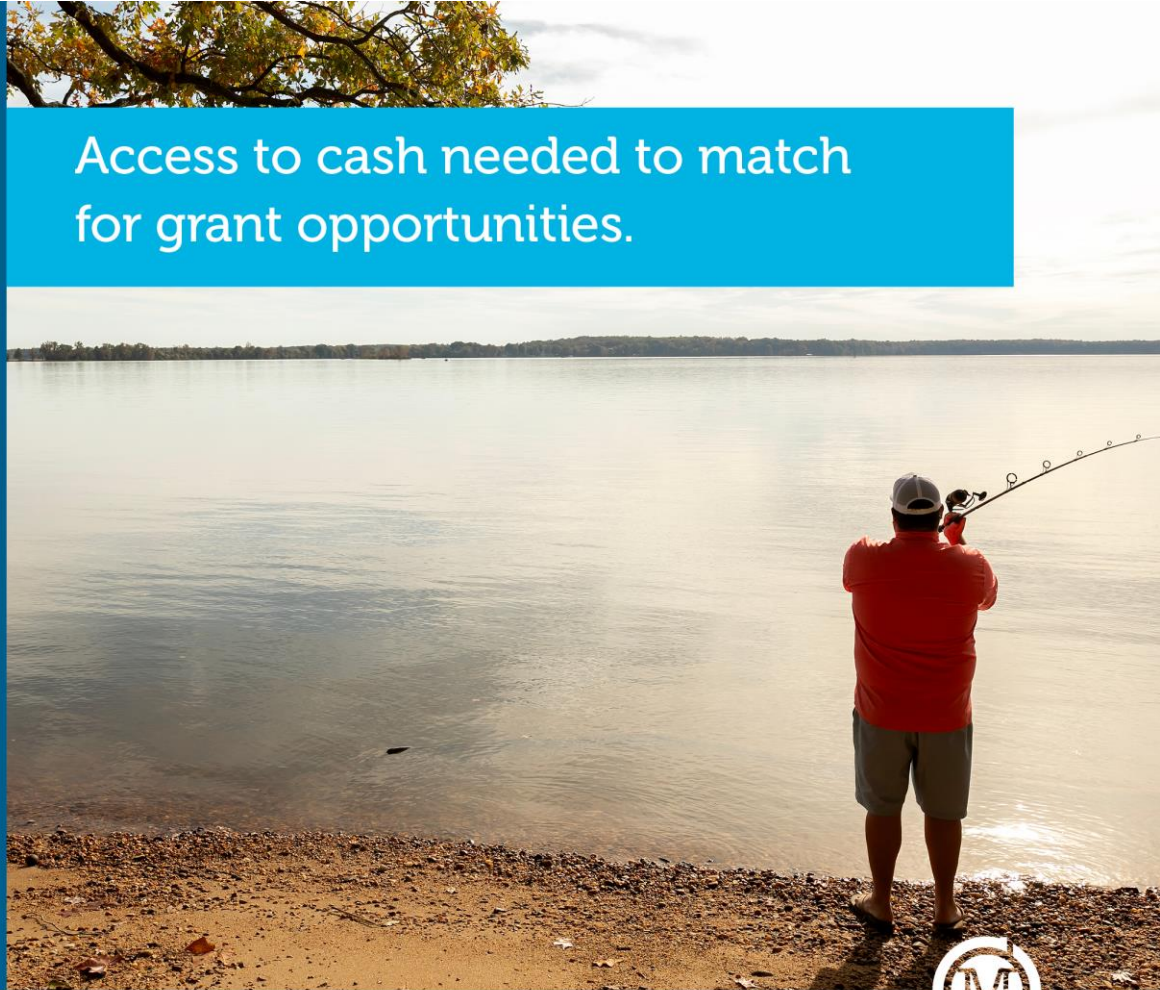


Challenges Faced by Rural Communities in Maximizing Tourism Marketing Opportunities



Challenges Faced by Rural Communities in Maximizing Tourism Marketing Opportunities

Access to cash needed to match
for grant opportunities.



Challenges Faced by Rural Communities in Maximizing Tourism Marketing Opportunities

Access to cash needed to match
for grant opportunities.

Support to stage 2 companies to
scale operations and opportunities.



Challenges Faced by Rural Communities in Maximizing Tourism Marketing Opportunities

Access to cash needed to match for grant opportunities.

Support to stage 2 companies to scale operations and opportunities.

Workforce. Affordable housing. Population losses. Regulatory environment.



Challenges Faced by Rural Communities in Maximizing Tourism Marketing Opportunities

Access to cash needed to match for grant opportunities.

Support to stage 2 companies to scale operations and opportunities.

Workforce. Affordable housing. Population losses. Regulatory environment.

Loss of cultural identity. Brain drain.



Opportunities for Rural Communities to Maximize Tourism Marketing Opportunities



Allow in-kind
match for grant
opportunities in
rural communities.



Encourage and incentivize cross regional / locality collaboration.

The Edge



The promotional flyer for 'The Edge' is divided into two main sections: 'Dine on the EDGE' and 'Drink on the EDGE!'. The 'Dine' section features a photo of a burger and a glass of wine, with the text 'Innovative cuisine Emerging culin' and 'The Edge is the place to Dozens of restaurants - fine dining - are located With just one bite and this has become the edge of the histo'. The 'Drink' section features a photo of various craft beverages, including beer and whiskey, with the text 'Imbibers, rejoice!' and 'The Edge District is home to award-winning craft beverage producers. From craft beer to craft spirits, sip and savor some of Virginia's finest craft beverages right here in the Edge!'. Both sections include the website 'edgedistrictva.com' and social media icons for Facebook and Instagram. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the flyer.

the EDGE EST. 2014

Dine on the EDGE

Drink on the EDGE!

Innovative cuisine Emerging culin

The Edge is the place to Dozens of restaurants - fine dining - are located With just one bite and this has become the edge of the histo

Explore the EDGE's drinking scene!

edgedistrictva.com

edgedistrictva.com



Redefine what it means to be
a stage 2 company in a rural
community and create economic
gardening opportunities.



Create unique opportunities
and incentives for growing eco
and agritourism experiences.



A photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a field of tall grasses. In the middle ground, a white house with a dark roof and two chimneys is visible, surrounded by trees. The background is a dense line of trees under a clear blue sky.

“Rural by choice.”



Contact

Stephanie Heintz

Founder & CEO

stephanie@consociatemediacom

757-713-2199

consociatemediacom | [@consociatemediacom](https://www.instagram.com/consociatemediacom)



TOPICS AND DISCUSSION – 2024 SUGGESTIONS

ADJOURNMENT