



Veritas Vineyard & Winery, Nelson County

# RURAL VIRGINIA ACTION COMMITTEE

June 3, 2026



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

**JUNE 3, 2026 | 12:30 PM TO 1:30 PM**

**JAMES CENTER ONE, BOARD ROOM, 9<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
901 EAST CARY STREET, RICHMOND, VA 23219**

**Committee Members**

Nick Rush, Chair  
Mimi Coles  
Rick Harrell  
Bill Hayter  
Connie Loughhead

**Ex-Officio Member**

John Hewa

<b>12:30 – 12:32 PM</b>	<b>Welcome/Call to Order</b>
<b>12:32 – 12:33 PM</b>	<b>Public Comment Period</b>
<b>12:33 – 12:45 PM</b>	<b>Regional Workforce Dynamics in Southwest Virginia – Jessi Fritz</b>
<b>12:45 – 1:00 PM</b>	<b>Recruiting Challenges for New Businesses Using Talent Accelerator – Steve Youll</b>
<b>1:00 – 1:15 PM</b>	<b>Rural Regional Insights from Economic Development Policy Input Sessions – Regions 1 and 8 – David Devan</b>
<b>1:15 – 1:25 PM</b>	<b>Open Discussion and Anticipated Topics</b>
<b>1:30 PM</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>

# REGIONAL WORKFORCE DYNAMICS IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

# PRESENTER



**Jessi Fritz**

Senior Business Manager

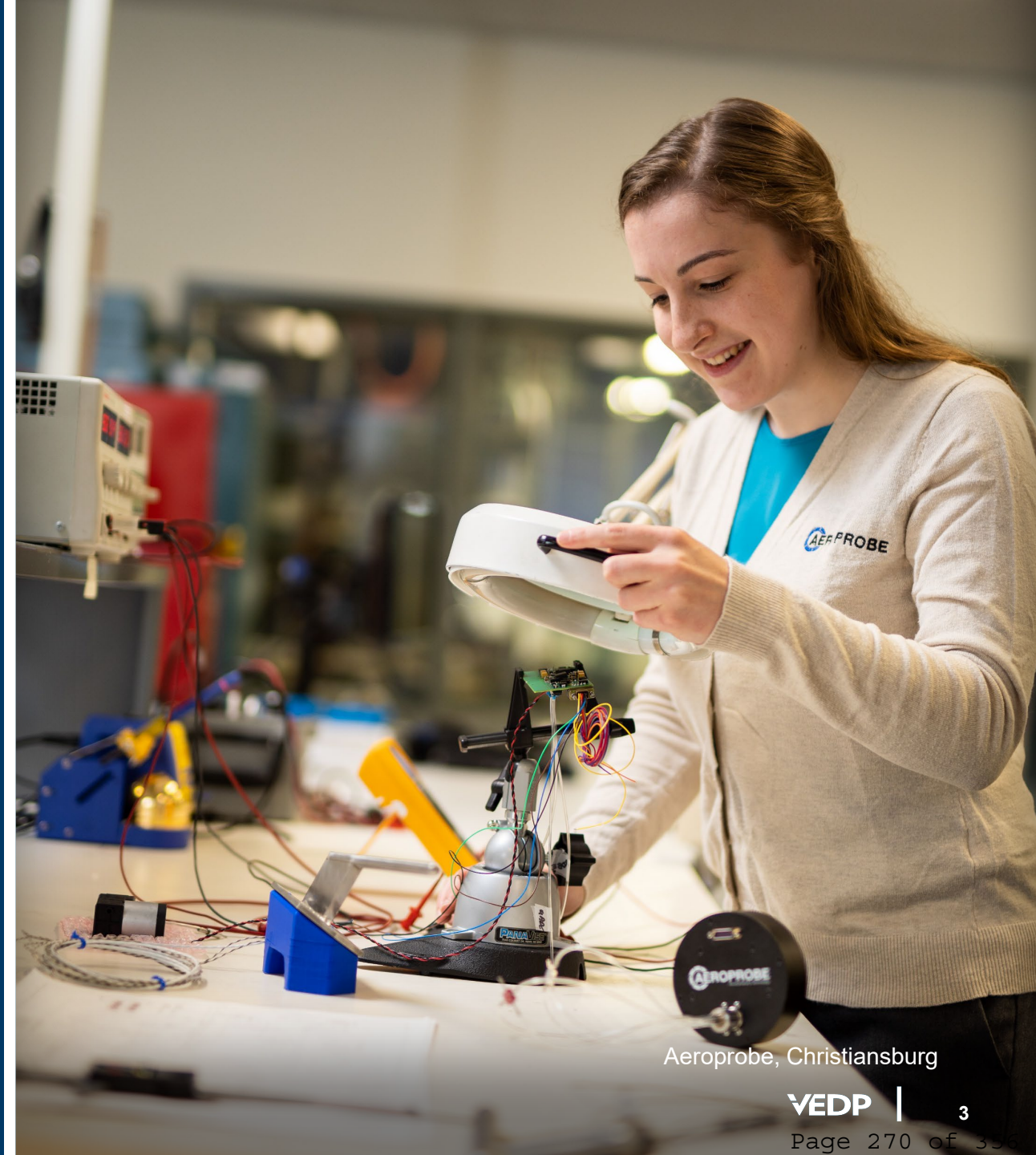
Regional Talent Solutions & Business Outreach

[jfritz@vedp.org](mailto:jfritz@vedp.org)

276.608.7498

## RTSBO Business Outreach and VJIP Management create unique strategic value for Virginia

- State-level business retention
- Talent expertise
- Professional retention capability
- Coordinated statewide strategy alongside partners
- Impact and credibility



Aeroprobe, Christiansburg

## WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA — MOMENTUM

### Growth continues

- Facility expansion, new equipment, and planned hiring
- Strong demand in mining supply chain, data centers, and transformers
- Continued export activity and growing global reach



Electro-Mechanical, LLC, Bristol

# WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA — PRESSURE POINTS

## Talent constraints persist

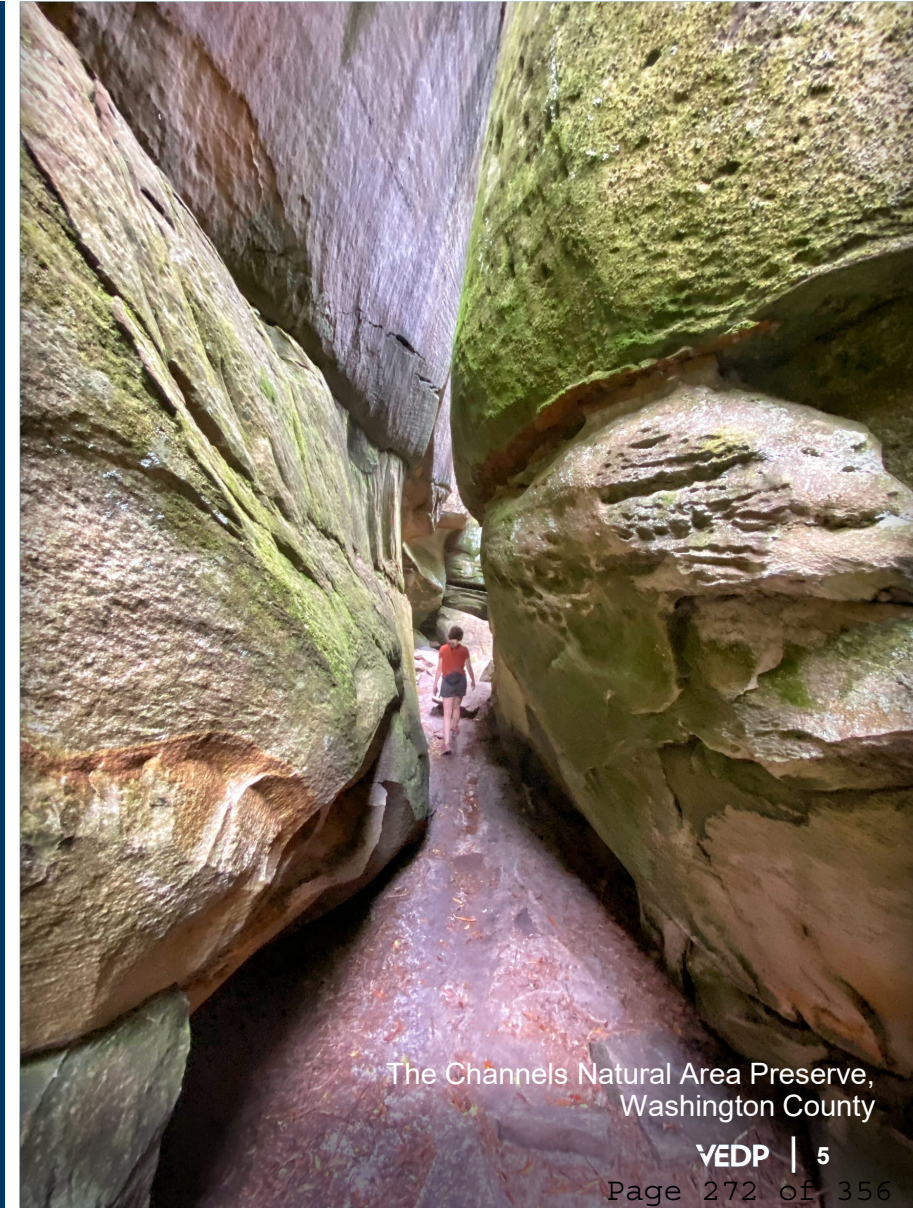
- Ongoing difficulty filling skilled trades and technical roles
- Aging workforce and concerns about upcoming retirements
- Attendance issues and soft-skill gaps affecting reliability

## Cost and competitiveness pressures

- Wide wage variability across the region
- Challenges competing with lower-wage neighboring states (TN, WV)
- Housing, transportation, and childcare impacting workforce stability

## Uncertainty shaping decisions

- Volatility in sectors like logistics and wood products
- Hiring pauses, layoffs, and slower customer decision-making
- Delayed investments and tighter cash-flow management



The Channels Natural Area Preserve,  
Washington County

## WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA — BUSINESS RESPONSE

### Businesses are adapting

- Stronger workforce partnerships (RTSBO, VA Works, GoVA, higher ed)
- Increased focus on retention, culture, and internal promotion
- Continued investment in process improvement and digital tools



## HOW RTSBO SUPPORTS BUSINESSES

### Incentives & lifecycle support

VJIP/VJIP Retraining funding and ongoing project consulting and outreach

### Business growth & market access

International Trade referrals, Economic Gardening, and access to capital resources

### Talent pipeline development

Connections to workforce partners, referrals to InternshipsVA, and collaboration with Virginia's Talent Accelerator Program

### Data, connections & regional



NanoSonic, Inc., Giles County



VFP Inc., a Roanoke-headquartered producer of custom-designed enclosures used to protect critical infrastructure for telecommunications, public-safety radio, data centers, and utility projects, expanded its operations in Scott County in 2021 to produce larger concrete shelters and meet future demand in the market. Critical utilities, municipalities, broadband providers, and Fortune 500 corporations depend on VFP to provide shelters, enclosures, and huts.

**New Jobs | 30**

**Capital Investment | \$7.2M**

“VFP is grateful to be located in Scott County with an available workforce and local talent that can meet our vast manufacturing needs.”

**Scott File**  
VFP Inc.  
November 22, 2021



# RECRUITING CHALLENGES FOR NEW BUSINESSES USING TALENT ACCELERATOR

# PRESENTER



**Steve Youll**  
Vice President  
Talent Accelerator  
syoull@vedp.org  
804.380.2862

**#1** Customized Training Leader in the U.S.

**#1** Top State – Workforce Development Programs



# FULLY CUSTOMIZED RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING SOLUTIONS DESIGNED TO ACCELERATE YOUR VIRGINIA START-UP

- Recruiting and training services uniquely crafted to our clients:
  - Equipment
  - Processes
  - Procedures
  - Requirements
  - Culture
- Highly experienced in-house team expertly built and intentionally delivered
- Services are provided free of charge as an incentive for job creation until the last committed to number is hired
- Initiated with a thorough needs analysis; support extends through the full project ramp-up
- Manufacturing projects delivered in collaboration with the nearest Virginia Community College



## VFP: VJIP AND TALENT ACCELERATOR X 2



Founded in 1965 and headquartered in Roanoke County, VFP Inc. manufactures custom building solutions designed to protect critical equipment. The company manufactures a variety of products ranging from heavyweight concrete to lightweight, flexible metal shelters that can be customized to meet diverse client needs. VFP shelters are used primarily by utility providers, municipalities, data centers, and broadband providers, and can be found on all seven continents.



September 23, 2024

### VFP Inc. to Expand Scott County Manufacturing Facility

Custom building solutions manufacturer will create 50 new jobs in Southwest Virginia



October 21, 2025

### VFP, Inc. Expands in Scott County, Va.

The company's new \$35M investment will create 200 new jobs, coinciding with VFP's 60th anniversary

# TALENT ACQUISITION

# CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT AND ATTRACTION



**3 Day**  
**HIRING EVENT**  
**Onsite Interviews**  
**September 9-11th**  
**10AM-2PM**

**Open Positions:**  
Conduit  
Concrete  
Carpenters  
CNC Operator  
Patch and Paint  
QC Document Control  
Electricians/Integration  
Field Service Coordinator  
Field Service Technicians  
Quality Control Inspectors  
Welders (assembly and fabrication)  
Engineering Electrical/ Structural Designers

**Building 3 Training Room**  
402 Industrial Park Rd.  
Duffield, VA 24244  
276-431-4000  
**CALL or TEXT**  
Jammie: 826-253-4261  
Joe: 276-248-8852

**On the spot offers contingent on passing a drug screen, background check, and for some positions a physical.**



# TECHNICAL TRAINING

## TRAINED AND UPSKILLED NEW EMPLOYEES



### Talent Accelerator Designed and Delivered

- Process training to develop insight into manufacturing practices
- Detailed procedure training for developing expertise
- Safety training to ensure compliance to standards
- Assessments to confirm knowledge transfer

# PROVIDES CONSULTATIVE SERVICES FOR ORIENTATION AND ONBOARDING



## Proposal: Manufacturing Orientation and Onboarding Needs Assessment



# ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# TRAINING EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



**The Five Behaviors®:**  
**Team Development**  
Day One

**The Five Behaviors®**  
A Wiley Brand

**VEDP** Virginia Talent Accelerator Program

**WILEY**

**8 Executive Leaders**



**2 Days of Training**

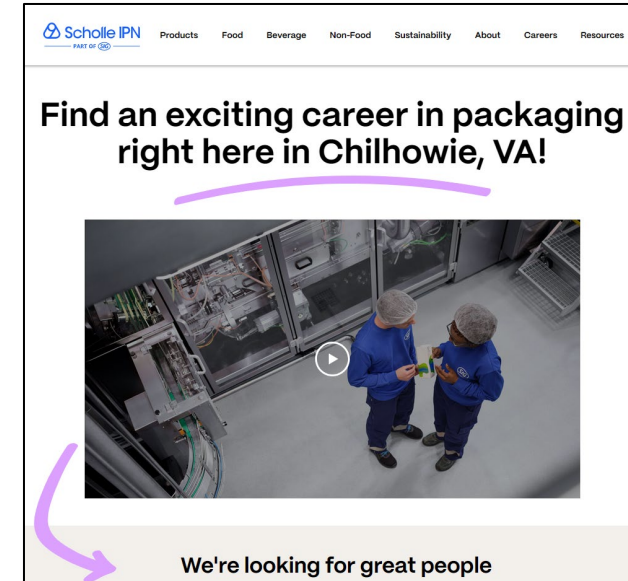
# RECRUITING IN SWVA: IT'S ABOUT THE COMMUNITY



Home Mailer



Regional/Local Radio



Website



Drive-In Advertisement



Billboards

# OTHER TALENT ACCELERATOR REGIONAL PROJECTS



**VEDP** | Virginia Economic Development Partnership October 29, 2024

**Electro-Mechanical, LLC to Expand Operations into Washington County, Va.**

**Electrical equipment manufacturer to invest \$16.5 million and create over 109 new jobs**

Federal Pacific

**VEDP** | Virginia Economic Development Partnership February 28, 2025

**Oasthouse Ventures to Open Sustainable Indoor Farming Operations in Carroll County**

**International low-carbon greenhouse will invest \$104.8 million and create 118 new jobs**

GrowingCareersVA

**VEDP** | Virginia Economic Development Partnership July 8, 2024

**Specialty Mining Equipment Manufacturer To Expand In Russell County, Va.**

**Simmons Equipment Company to invest \$8.5 million to expand operations into Russell County, creating 75 new jobs**

Simmons Equipment

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY LISTENING SESSIONS

# PRESENTER



**David Devan**

Senior Vice President, Policy & Strategic Partnerships

[ddevan@vedp.org](mailto:ddevan@vedp.org)

804.545.5762

## SECRETARY CHENERY HAS BEEN HOSTING INPUT SESSIONS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE GOVERNOR'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY (1 OF 2)

### Region 8: The Valley

- **Housing, childcare, and transportation as one system.** Participants returned to this trio as the foundation of workforce attraction and asked the state to treat them together rather than as separate programs.
- **Growth without losing the Valley.** Distinctive to this region: participants want investment and jobs but are wary of changes that would erode the Valley's rural character, with several explicitly resisting becoming Northern Virginia.
- **Lost in the middle.** Multiple groups described state funding formulas as built for either Southwest Virginia or Northern Virginia, leaving the Shenandoah Valley with assets too modest for big-state criteria and too built-up for distressed-locality set-asides.
- **Succession and the silver tsunami.** A recurring concern across both topics: retiring small business owners with no buyers, aging farmers with no successors, and tiny communities whose single doctor or attorney is heading for retirement. Participants asked for a state pipeline that prepares young people to take over existing businesses, not only to start new ones.
- **Fragmentation and the call to consolidate.** The most common state ask was not new funding but consolidation, coordination, right-sizing of criteria, and a single front door to existing resources, with DEQ's permitting streamlining cited repeatedly as a model worth replicating.

## SECRETARY CHENERY HAS BEEN HOSTING INPUT SESSIONS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE GOVERNOR'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY (2 OF 2)

### Region 1: Southwest Virginia

- **Tennessee Border competition.** This came up in nearly every group: lower minimum wages, no income tax, no property tax, and an annexation framework that lets cities grow. The minimum wage hike was specifically flagged as a risk for border industries such as call centers, with one participant asking whether a regional exemption could be considered.
- **One size does not fit Southwest Virginia.** Groups emphasized the importance of state programs tailored to distressed and double-distressed localities. We heard a call for VIPC to focus more on rural entrepreneurship and innovation opportunities.
- **The opioid crisis as an economic problem.** Substance abuse was framed not only as a public health issue but as a binding constraint on workforce participation, with prevention funding repeatedly described as inadequate relative to recovery funding.
- **Local capacity is the bottleneck.** Rural Virginia's challenge is not only funding levels but capacity to apply for, match, and report on funds. The most common state ask was not new programs but consolidation, navigators, and a single front door to existing resources, paired with grant-writing assistance for small localities.

# OPEN DISCUSSION AND ANTICIPATED TOPICS