



Center for Rural Virginia

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January 10, 2007

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Center for Rural Virginia
501 North Second Street
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Governor of Virginia
State Capitol
Richmond VA 23219-3416

Attn: Virginia General Assembly Members

Dear Governor Kaine:

Attached, please find the Center for Rural Virginia's 2005 and 2006 legislative reports. The 2005 report gives an account of the Center's formative period and identifies some of the steps taken to get the organization established. In 2006, we are glad to report a significant increase in partnerships established to evaluate and plan for rural needs and opportunities. Our priority has been to be the link between government and our private-sector partners, to convene groups and develop partnerships to develop work plans and leverage resources to best meet the needs of the citizens of rural Virginia.

The Center Board of Trustees and staff are indebted to our partners across the Commonwealth who have worked with us, served as volunteers, given advice, and been instrumental in many projects now underway to improve the quality of life in rural areas. Along with our appreciation to you, we owe these agencies, organizations and individuals a sincere thank you.

"Thank you for your support of the Center during both years, and your participation made a great contribution to the success of the 2005 and 2006 Rural Summits."

We look forward to continuing to serve rural regions, and to your continued participation with the Center. Lastly, but very important, please make note on your calendar that Virginia's 2007 Rural Summit will take place in Fall and consider an invitation to serve as a key note speaker. We will have further announcements as planning takes shape.

With kindest regards,

Glen C. Sink
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Frank M. Ruff, Jr., Chair/Board of Trustees
Joseph M. Newbill, Chair, Council for Rural Virginia Board of Directors
Board members



Center for Rural Virginia

Activities report for 2006

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Partners collaborating to leverage resources for Rural Virginia

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Center for Rural Virginia - Activities report for 2006

Document Title

Annual Executive Summary of the Center for Rural Virginia

Author - Center for Rural Virginia

Enabling Authority - § [2.2-2720](#). The Center for Rural Virginia; purpose

The Center for Rural Virginia, hereinafter referred to as "the Center," is hereby created as an independent nonprofit local entity without political subdivision status, for the purpose of sustaining economic growth in the rural areas of the Commonwealth and lessening the burdens of government through the activities prescribed in subsection B of § [2.2-2723](#). (2004, cc. 938, 964; 2005, c. 703.)

Executive Summary - Activity and Work for 2006

Center for Rural Virginia

The Center for Rural Virginia serves as a catalyst to empower local governments, to encourage continuity, coordination, and cooperation across the state and between regions, and to generate creative approaches for the purpose of the economic, social and demographic revitalization of rural Virginia, while retaining its quality of life.

The Center is made up of leaders from across the Commonwealth looking for solutions to offer greater opportunities to rural citizens. *'Local people just like the people we serve!'* During 2006, four regular meetings of the Board of Trustees were held; through a joint effort with the Council for Rural Virginia, the Center helped plan and conduct Virginia's 2006 Rural Summit, and throughout the year was instrumental in bringing information about rural needs and opportunities to numerous groups across the state.

The hallmark of the organization remains constant, *'collaboration'*, and bridging the gap between services to urban and rural areas. Our challenges require innovative solutions and investing time and energy into promoting partnerships to work for increased opportunities and finding solutions for obstacles that face small business, rural farmers, agribusinesses, education and healthcare. Important to this effort is providing information on access to capital to give entrepreneurs the opportunity to position their business for growth.

In 2006, the Center partnered with technology companies across the Commonwealth to promote affordable broadband . . . broadband serves as a vehicle for rural advancement. Remote areas that once could not attract business and industry are on a more level playing field and have a greater opportunity to advance because of telecommunications.

This year has been a particularly busy one. The Center supported innovative approaches to addressing issues, challenges and opportunities facing rural areas. We are encouraged by the enthusiasm of rural communities and the inroads made with the help of volunteers across the state (i.e., citizens who care about and are willing to make a difference in rural). Positive results in 2006 represent the hard work of many groups, and serve to encourage continued efforts through regional dialogue to sustain long-term social and economic development in rural, remote communities.

Scope of Work - During 2006 the Center Established the Following Focus Areas:

- **Capital Access and Entrepreneurship** - Working to develop resources whereby rural business and entrepreneurs that need funding can be paired with resources for businesses start and/or operation.
- **Building Leadership and Community Development** through encouraging regional cooperation and facilitating local and regional meetings to hear the citizens' voice.
- **Promoting Affordable/Accessible Broadband Deployment** - The Center for Rural Virginia serves as a connecting point for telecommunications providers to support equitable expansion of broadband across the state. In today's market, access to broadband for everyone, especially rural access, is essential for community and economic growth
- **Healthcare** - The Center is promoting coordination of information about ways to make healthcare more accessible to rural residents. Geographic location, lack of transportation, economic issues and lack of education are often barriers. The Center's challenge is to help close this gap by affecting public policy.
- **Education/Workforce Development** - Affecting **Education** by strengthening relationships between rural school systems and educational resources through appropriate advocacy, and working for policies that benefit rural.
Workforce Development through approaches to education, job training and life long learning to ensure that the workforce has the skills to stay employed.
- **Agriculture and Natural Resources** - The Center partners with current agriculture organizations and promotes programs that help sustain agricultural and forestry production and protect land and water resources through sound land and community planning.
- **Providing Useful Information Exchange** The Center serves as a convener of issues and a clearinghouse for information at the federal, state and regional level on rural issues about any facet of rural need. Whether issue or opportunity, the Center has learned who the players are, who needs the information, which have the expertise, and promoted partnerships to join resources and people to strengthen and improve rural life.

Special Projects:

A number of new and distinct organizations and individual citizens convened with the Center to work for solutions and promote opportunities across the Commonwealth.

- **A Collaborative Activities Agreement** was created between the Council for Rural Virginia, funded by USDA/Rural Development and the Center for Rural Virginia forging a strong partnership for rural revitalization in Virginia.

A Joint Effort between the Center and Council for Rural Virginia convened successful Virginia Rural Summits in 2005 and 2006 with emphasis on:

- entrepreneurship
 - telecommunication and last mile broadband
 - community capital infusion
 - education and workforce development
 - community leadership capacity building
 - agriculture and natural resources.
- A **Capital Access Round Table** was held to bring together public and private organizations to identify financial resources and resource gaps for rural needs.

Conclusion

Education and coordination of available resources is the critical element missing in an effort to grow entrepreneurship in rural Virginia.

The Center's Goals include:

- To provide a ***Virginia rural business financial resource directory*** designed to improve the financial viability of rural producers and service providers.
- To assist rural entrepreneurs by providing information on access to ***specialized business planning assistance***
- To establish a program for ***access to special capital loan programs***
- To ***help early stage rural enterprises with the operational and market risk assessment*** and access to formal business plan development.

Affordable Broadband Access throughout rural Virginia

Broadband holds the same importance for moving goods and services as farm-to-market highways did for past generations.

Measurable Progress - Partnerships were formed with:

- The Office of Virginia's Secretary of Technology
- Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission
- Numerous other private and public telecommunications organizations.

Work in Process:

The Center is working to ensure that tools are affordable to citizens of rural Virginia, at their businesses and in their homes.

Rural Benefit: Broadband will level the infrastructure necessary to compete in our expanding global economy, and greatly aid access to quality and affordable services.

Telemedicine: The delivery of healthcare through telemedicine, and local healthcare providers will continue to improve access for rural citizens who do not have transportation or resources for long-distances specialized treatment.

Agriculture and Forestry: The Center serves as a partner to promote sound decisions and excellent planning for land and water resources.

Effective Partnerships:

The Center formed a partnership to ***create a Rural Caucus*** and provided on-going support and interactions to involve:

- local leaders
- business and industry
- healthcare
- education
- all Virginians that have an interest in rural needs

Forward Progress:

The Center is effectively creating connecting links across the state to promote Rural Partnerships. Our partners include:

- Southwest Virginia Tourism through "Round the Mountain" and "the Crooked Road"
- Franklin County education and economic development strategy engagement session
- Southside Education Leadership through the Virginia Rural Education Association
- Eastern Shore and Southwest through the Virginia Rural Health Association

- Middle Peninsula telemedicine initiatives
- Statewide RC&D Councils and Northwestern Planning Districts involving regional dialogues around agriculture and natural resources land planning and conservation initiatives
- Virginia Economic Bridge to leverage resources for statewide rural issues and programs
- Longwood University, the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech and Southside communities on “Charting the Course for Southside Virginia” to evaluate the educational, economic, social and civic issues affecting the region
- Many other organizations to develop and expand initiatives in tourism, a capital access portal and sustainable energy alternatives for agriculture and natural resources.
- Focus and leadership groups across rural areas of the Commonwealth to learn who the stakeholders are and obtain input on core strategies and vision relative to “higher education and economic revitalization.

Rural Strategic Planning:

The Center helped bring rural agencies and organizations together in October to develop a Rural Strategic Plan. The **next step** is to identify partnership activities and organizations that will take responsibility to execute the plan initiatives.

- **Planned** accomplishment: Re-convene the groups for a roundtable discussion to evaluate the actions needed and success toward revitalizing rural Virginia.
- **Follow-up Measures** will be to evaluate the number of groups or entities that now have an impact on the revitalization and economic health of rural Virginia.
- **Measure** currently involved entities to those that become involved as a result of the groups outreach.
- **Geographic impact** that denotes the original eleven organizations and identifies new organizations as they come on board.

Lastly, the Center for Rural Virginia concluded the year with the Board of Trustees plan to finalize work that has already begun on a **Strategic Plan** to move the organization forward in 2007.

Serving Virginia from two locations, Richmond and Blacksburg

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Chapter of Title of the Code of Virginia

§ [2.2-2723](#). Powers and duties of the Board of Trustees and the Center.

Center for Rural Virginia Board of Trustees - Chairman: Frank M. Ruff, Jr.

The Honorable Robert S. Bloxom, Secretary of Agriculture, **The Honorable Allen W. Dudley**, Virginia House of Delegates, **The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.**, Virginia State Senate, **Woodrow 'Woody' Harris**, City Council, Emporia, **Brock Herzberg**, Assistant Director, Governmental Relations, Virginia Farm Bureau, **Donna Pugh Johnson**, Virginia Agribusiness Council, **The Honorable Joseph P. Johnson, Jr.**, Virginia House of Delegates, **The Honorable R. Steven Landes**, Virginia House of Delegates, **Mark S. Lawrence**, Carilion Health System, **The Honorable Dave Nutter**, Virginia House of Delegates, **Dr. Wayne Purcell**, Department of Agriculture & Applied Economics, Virginia Tech, **The Honorable Jackson E. Reasor**, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, **Susan Rubin**, Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, **The Honorable Frank M. Ruff, Jr.**, Virginia State

Senate, **Joseph L. Sheffey**, New River Community College, Pulaski County Board of Supervisors, **Steven C. Smith**, Food City Stores, **William Tucker**, Farmer and member, Rural Virginia Prosperity Commission, **Dennis Zimmerman**, ComSonics, Inc.

In Partnership with the Council for Rural Virginia

Council for Rural Virginia Board of Directors - Chairman: Joseph W. Newbill
Vice Chair: Brian Calhoun, Secretary: Gary Keener, Treasurer: William Tucker

Brian D. Calhoun, Virginia Tech College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, **Carthan F. Currin, III**, Woods, Rogers Strategic Solutions, **R. Bryan David**, King George County Manager, **Jerry W. Davis**, Northern Neck Planning District Commission, **Ellen Davis**, Virginia State Director-USDA Rural Development, **Nancy Franklin**, Institute for Advanced Learning & Research, **Shea Hollifield**, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, **Karen R. Jackson**, Broadband Programs, Virginia Center for Innovative Technology, **Gary Keener**, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, **Oliver McBride**, Carroll County Public Schools, **John Meade, III**, First Bank & Trust, **Carl E. Mitchell**, Virginia Economic Bridge, **Joseph W. Newbill**, Former Director, USDA Rural Development for Virginia, **H William Smith**, Virginia Heritage Music Trail **Paul D. Stapleton**, Halifax County Public Schools, **Tammy Stephenson**, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, **Dixie Tooke-Rawlins**, Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine, **William Tucker**, Farmer and member, Rural Virginia Prosperity Commission, **John H. 'Jerry' Walker, III**, Virginia Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils

Advisors: Rebecca Davis, National Cooperative for Health Networks (NCHN), **Steve McHenry**, Rural Maryland Council, **Jack Shaw**, United States Department of Agriculture

Background

A. The Board of Trustees shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Manage, control, maintain, and operate the Center;
2. Take all actions necessary to qualify the Center as exempt from taxation pursuant to § 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and operate the Center in accordance with the provisions governing nonstock corporations as set out in Chapter 10 of Title 13.1, provided that, in the event of the dissolution of the Center, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of § 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the Commonwealth or a local government for a public purpose;
3. Establish bylaws as may be necessary for the governance and conduct of business of the Board;
4. Employ and establish the qualifications and duties, and fix salaries and compensation of staff of the Center from such funds as may be available to the Center;
5. Seek federal funds available to state rural development councils, pursuant to the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, P.L. 107-171;
6. Seek, accept, administer, and expend gifts, grants, donations, bequests, and any other funds on behalf of the Center to support and facilitate its work;
7. Accept, administer, and expend donations, bequests, or devises of real and personal property for the endowment of the Center or for any special purpose designated by the donor that is consistent with the purposes of the Center set forth in this article;
8. Have, in addition to its other powers, all the corporate powers given to nonstock corporations by the provisions of Title 13.1. The Board shall also have the power to accept, execute, and administer any trust in which it may have an interest under the terms of the instrument creating the trust;
9. Enter into contracts with respect to the duties and responsibilities imposed upon the Center herein;
10. Report annually concerning the status, needs, and accomplishments of the Center to the Governor and the General Assembly; and
11. Perform any lawful acts necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of this article.

B. The Center shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Develop a broad-based constituency to advocate for the interests of rural Virginia in the formulation of the Commonwealth's public policies;
2. Coordinate and facilitate research on rural issues and analyze the effect of public policies and private sector interests on rural communities;
3. Prepare a detailed analysis of rural Virginia economies annually for submission to the Board, together with feasible and appropriate alternatives designed to sustain economic growth in rural areas of the Commonwealth;
4. Facilitate public-private investments in the infrastructure of rural Virginia;
5. Develop programs designed to train local elected officials and community leaders for effective leadership in rural communities;
6. Foster innovative strategies that promote the development and prosperity of rural communities in the Commonwealth;
7. Provide for the collection, organization, storage, and dissemination of documents, data, and other information concerning issues relevant to the needs and continuous development of Virginia's rural areas, including technical and research assistance to rural localities in the development and implementation of their strategic plans;
8. Identify potential public and private resources for the Board's consideration and review that may be used to generate additional funds to support and facilitate the Center's work and foster the development of rural communities;
9. Submit to the Board of Trustees such reports regarding the Center's work, including, but not limited to, programs, activities, policy analyses, and financial statements, as may be requested by the Board; and
10. Perform such other acts as may be necessary to accomplish the objectives of this article.

(2004, cc. 938, 964; 2005, c. 703.)