



January 10, 2008

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ComSonics, Inc., Bridgewater

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 2007 legislative activities report. The report gives an account of the Center's activities during 2007 and identifies some of the steps taken to increase partnerships to evaluate and plan for rural needs and opportunities. The Center's priority is to serve as the link between government and our private-sector partners, to convene groups, to develop partnerships and work plans that 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, Governor Kaine for your continued support of the Center." The Center is excited about continuing our service to rural regions, and looks forward to your participation in that effort. Lastly, planning is underway for *Virginia's 2008 Rural Summit* which is tentatively scheduled for September 15-16, 2008. Please make a note on your calendar and plan to join us.

With kindest regards,

Glen C. Sink  
Executive Director

cc: Honorable Frank M. Ruff, Jr., Chair, Board of Trustees  
Joseph M. Newbill, Past Chair, Council for Rural Virginia Board of Directors  
Dr. Oliver McBride, Current Chair, Council for Rural Virginia  
Board Members



*Center for Rural Virginia*

**2007**

**Report to the  
General Assembly**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
<i>Introduction</i> .....	3
<i>Center for Rural Virginia-Defining Our Mission</i> .....	3
<i>Center Growth Activity and Strategic Planning</i> .....	3
THE CENTER ACHIEVES ITS MISSION OF RURAL ADVOCACYBY CREATING COALITIONS AND MANAGING COLLABORATIVE COALITIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS .....	4
THE CENTER CONVENES IDEAS AND PEOPLE .....	4
MATCHING RESOURCES (FUNDS).....	4
<b>CURRENT COMMUNITY ADVOCACY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS.....	4
NEW NETWORKS .....	4
VIRGINIA COALITION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES .....	4
<i>Mission</i> .....	4
<i>Objectives</i> .....	5
FINANCIAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY .....	5
THE RURAL VIEW .....	5
BUILDING BUSINESS THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLABORATION .....	5
HEALTHCARE – LEARNING EVENTS.....	5
EDUCATION/WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT .....	6
LAST MILE BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT .....	6
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES .....	6
PEOPLE WITH SKILLS AND A PASSION FOR THEIR COMMUNITY .....	7
CENTER FOR RURAL VIRGINIA BOARD OF TRUSTEES .....	7
OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATION: COUNCIL FOR RURAL VIRGINIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS .....	8
ENABLING LEGISLATION.....	8

# Center for Rural Virginia

## 2007 Annual Report to the General Assembly

### Executive Summary

**Introduction:** The Center's 2006 annual report to the General Assembly identified the goals established by the Board of Trustees for our scope of work. The scope of work was followed, and as time for Virginia's 2007 Rural Summit approached, six areas were narrowed to three areas of focus for the Rural Summit. The activity and approach that has evolved as we worked through 2007 to embrace new challenges has promoted substantial recognition for the Center. We are becoming known as the Leading Rural Advocate for Virginia.

**Center for Rural Virginia - Defining Our Mission:** To fulfill our mission of improving the quality of life in the Commonwealth's rural areas, the Center serves as an advocate to bring together key players in rural development, and to enhance communication and promote partnerships between individuals and groups who desire more effective/efficient programs and policy to address rural needs.

**Center Growth Activity and Strategic Planning:** In an environment of change and rapid growth, effective rural planning is critical. Amid change, the need to listen to and support rural citizens remains constant. The Center Advocate and Executive Director, Glen C. Sink has visited rural communities across the Commonwealth, listening to views about the issues that affect people living and working in rural Virginia. While the quality of life for the majority is good, many remain who deal with disadvantage and poverty on a daily basis. A problem not always recognized and often not addressed. In view of this, the Center supports the needs of rural citizens by:

- Serving as a rural advocate
- Staff and board members communicate at all levels, (local, regional, state, and national), to promote partnerships that collaboratively address both issues and opportunities.
- Facilitating planning and promotion of entrepreneurial opportunities, access to capital and financial resources, education and workforce development

It is our belief that helping rural people sustain themselves economically will bring job opportunities that will allow them to live and work in their own rural communities. Our challenge: Communicating our rural plans through a collaborative approach to get buy-in from individuals, partner organizations, and leadership at all levels.

The Council and Center for Rural Virginia were chosen to participate in the Kellogg Foundation Rural People Rural Policy Networking Initiative. The initiative is aimed at building community capacity: learning events, partnerships and networks. Rural People, Rural policy is a multi-year initiative that is connecting and equipping organizations across the country to become stronger, more organized policy advocates for rural America.

**The Center achieves its mission of rural advocacy by creating coalitions and managing collaborative coalitions and partnerships** to accomplish initiatives for revitalizing rural Virginia. This fulfills the Legislatures' charge to bring agencies, businesses and local government together to gain efficiency and bring effectiveness to service delivery. This includes the collaborative development of an annual rural strategic plan.

**The Center convenes ideas and people**, researches needs, forms collaborative alliances, creates coalitions and partnerships that assembles the resources and manages the execution of initiatives. Through the Center/Council and the Rural Caucus -- rural reports of policy and accomplishments are made to the various agencies and government.

**Matching Resources (funds)** – Local Private, state, federal, foundations – generated from relationships and coalitions

### **Current Community Advocacy:**

**Collaborative Partnerships:** A collaborative partnership was formed to plan and produce Virginia's 2007 Rural Summit. The Center for Rural Virginia partnered with our sister organization, the Council for Rural Virginia, Virginia Economic Bridge, and Virginia Association of Counties to research the issues facing rural communities and to develop an action plan to bring experts in their field together with success stories to address the following:

- Financial Capital for Entrepreneurship
- Building Community Capacity
- Education and Workforce Development
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure - Broadband
- Agriculture

Ideas were brought to the table, experts addressed how to succeed, and rural "Success Stories" offered peer to peer learning information about resources available to rural citizens.

**New Networks:** The Center's efforts to facilitate networks have been very effective. Enhancing the capacity of communities and community organizations to develop responses to rural and remote community issues allows local people to contribute to the well-being of their home community.

The Center for Rural Virginia, in partnership with the Council for Rural Virginia, has created public – private partnerships to facilitate the development, funding and presentation of programs throughout the Commonwealth. The Center participated in the Virginia Association of Counties Rural Caucus in 2006 and 2007.

### **Virginia Coalition for Rural Communities**


**Mission:** The Center/Council for Rural Virginia and the Community Foundations of Virginia are collaborating to EXPAND community-based philanthropy, ATTRACT capital, and INVEST in communities for the purpose of building a sustainable and self-sufficient economic and social transformation of rural Virginia.

**Objectives:** The Coalition encourages citizens to participate in aggressive community economic development, and shall invest in initiatives focused on economic and social development that provides a strategic comprehensive approach to rural development by:

- Building community capacity by mobilizing a core group of people in local communities and training them to translate the mission into life and action and to discover and demonstrate the better way.
- Encouraging and expanding community-based philanthropy and attracting capital by facilitating public-private investments in the infrastructure of rural Virginia
- Energizing local entrepreneurs for economic development by fostering innovative strategies that promote prosperity in rural communities
- Engaging youth and education by strengthening the education progression with increased rural opportunities and participation

**Financial Resource Directory** - The Center has been the lead organization in a collaborative initiative to develop a Financial Resource Directory. The directory has been refined; a test model developed and will soon be ready for launch. The Center and Virginia Economic Bridge formed a working partnership to share staff expertise to plan and promote the project. The on-line and hard copy directory will serve as a resource for rural bankers/lending organizations, entrepreneurs and small business to access information for start up and current small business financial needs and to support and promote entrepreneurship.

*The Rural View*  ©

The Center will launch the inaugural edition of “The Rural View, our first newsletter in December 2007. *The Rural View*  © will be published monthly. Articles and guest editors will focus on information and issues important to rural areas and on information of interest to rural people. Feature articles will showcase rural people and rural communities.

Leadership and Community Capacity Development –  
Regional Community Meetings Held in Southwest and Southside Virginia.

**Building Business through Community Collaboration:** Staff and Board members have been directly involved in a number of community initiatives in 2006. Encouraging regional cooperation and facilitating five regional meetings in Southwest, VA and in coordination with the Planning District Commissions to learn what citizens wanted to see in the Financial Resource Directory, and which areas of learning would be important to them at the Rural Summit. This effort proved to be a very successful project. Once the data was gathered regarding the Summit, planning got underway to bring people to the Summit that the citizens asked for.

**Healthcare - Learning events:** Healthcare training and skills development for some of the medical students at the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine will be further enhanced due to a joint effort of the Center and VCOM to locate community stakeholders in rural remote areas with healthcare needs but no local doctor or hospital to meet the needs. Center staff has been directly involved in identifying the communities and helping work out the logistics with a host site for the

Mobil Health Clinic. One community has been identified, and the first health clinic was held November 30, 2007. Other communities with a rent free location are being identified to host the clinic.

Center staff routinely attends hearings of the General Assembly's Joint Commission on Healthcare and with do diligence inform the healthcare community of their need to be actively involved. To support the success of this effort, Delegate Dave Nutter who serves on the Joint Commission and on the Center Board of Trustees paid a personal visit to one of the four medical schools in Virginia, VCOM, to learn their views on healthcare issues.

As a rural advocate, the Center speaks to community groups to help them stay alert to the needs of the healthcare community, and works on the other end of the spectrum to stay informed about the proceedings of healthcare committees and the status of bills being sponsored before the General Assembly. The Center has established a working relationship with specific legislators who demonstrate an interest in rural healthcare needs.

Center staff, Glen Sink and Thelma Burris was selected to serve on the state-wide committee charged with developing Virginia's Strategic Rural Healthcare Plan. Sink works with the Legislative Group and Burris is working with the Quality Improvement Group.

**Education/Workforce Development** – The Center for Rural Virginia was selected by The Honorable Daniel G. LeBlanc, Senior Advisor to the Governor for Workforce to serve on his newly formed Workforce Development Committee. Approaching Workforce Development through education, job skills training and life long learning to ensure that the workforce has the skills to stay employed is the chief concern. The Center is promoting Entrepreneur education programs in K – 16 by supporting the concept of initiatives and programs to enhance the collaboration between secondary education systems, Community Colleges, Higher Education Centers, New College Centers, Colleges and Universities to promote, expand, and make needed educational curriculum and programs more accessible and affordable to and in the Commonwealth's rural areas and population. With a priority to retain those educated workers to live and work in rural areas, the Center/Council recognizes that Community Colleges Centers are on the cutting edge, and poised for the future to promote and advance satellite education and distance learning through cooperative partnerships with Colleges and Universities. Further, that the Community College System can serve as an important link and progressive model for bringing rapidly changing technological and futuristic education to rural areas of the Commonwealth.

**Last Mile Broadband Deployment** – Glen Sink, Executive Director, represents the Center on the Virginia Broadband Roundtable. He advocates for and support equitable expansion of broadband across the state with priority given to rural access for growth, expansion and job creation.

**Agriculture and Natural Resources** – The Center has existing partnerships with agricultural organizations and promotes programs that help sustain agricultural production and protect land and water resources through sound land and community planning. The need to promote home/ locally grown products is critically important to sustaining self sufficiency in rural communities.

As the leading voice for Rural Virginia, the Center provides Useful Information Exchange The Center serves as a facilitator of issues and a clearinghouse for information at the federal, state and regional level about any facets of rural need. Our purpose is to serve and support the people. The key is promoting partnerships to join resources and people to strengthen and improve rural life; thus, we strengthen the economy.

**People with skills and a passion for their community** ---The Center constantly learns of people in organizations, schools, healthcare, etc., who are potential rural advocates with a passion to accept the challenge to promote their local area. They look for solutions and tackle the obstacles by promoting investment in education and training. We've found that successful projects are often the result of young people themselves being involved in all stages of the project.

The Center believes that young people who acquire marketable skills are more likely to use those skills at home, and entrepreneurs who establish a local presence are more likely to stay when they see community people working together to promote more services at the local level. The Center, in partnership with local communities, can take steps to address issues, and accept the challenge to coordinate resources of financial and human capital to make local retention possible. Mentoring to help both groups build confidence and learn valuable lifetime skills will help them consider the obstacles they can expect in the business world. Creative thinking and decision making to solve problems can dramatically impact the younger populations understanding about how public policy works.

With all populations, the Center and Council for Rural Virginia, a state/federal mix created through a Collaborative Activities Agreement, serves as a lead organization to develop Networks of Rural Partners. Our purpose is to enhance the quality of life for citizens of rural Virginia by enhancing communication among leadership at all levels-local, state and federal by strengthening ties to rural areas across the Commonwealth. The Center advocates for a plan to sustain 'rural' by investing in human capital and keep young people living local.

*In their collaborative partnership the following Center Board of Trustee members and Council Board of Directors are committed to this end.*

#### **Center for Rural Virginia Board of Trustees**

**Chairman:** The Honorable Frank M. Ruff, Jr.

Honorable Robert S. Bloxom, Secretary of Agriculture  
Honorable Allen W. Dudley, Virginia House of Delegates  
Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., Virginia State Senate  
Woodrow 'Woody' Harris, City Council, Emporia, Virginia  
Donna Pugh Johnson, Virginia Agribusiness Council  
Honorable Joseph P. Johnson, Jr., Virginia House of Delegates  
Honorable R. Steven Landes, Virginia House of Delegates  
Mark S. Lawrence, Carilion Health System  
Honorable Dave Nutter, Virginia House of Delegates  
Jay Poole, Director-Office of Recovery and Support, Virginia Tech  
Honorable Jackson E. "Jack" Reasor, Old Dominion Electric Coop  
Susan Rubin, Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives  
Honorable Frank M. Ruff, Jr., Virginia State Senate  
Joseph L. Sheffey, Pulaski County Board of Supervisors  
Steven C. Smith, Food City Stores  
William Tucker, Farmer and Member, Rural Virginia Prosperity Commission  
Dennis Zimmerman, ComSonics, Inc., Bridgewater



## **Our Partner Organization: Council for Rural Virginia Board of Directors**

**Chairman:** Dr. Oliver McBride

**Vice Chair:** Brian Calhoun,

**Secretary:** Gary Keener,

**Treasurer:** William Tucker

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Carthan F. Currin, III, Director of the Department of Economic Development

R. Bryan David, King George County Manager

Ellen Matthews-Davis, State Director of USDA Rural Development for Virginia

Terry Garrett, CEO, Capitol Management and Information Engineering

Basil Gooden, Principal Deputy Director, Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development

Karen Jackson, Vice President, Broadband Programs, Virginias Center for Innovative Technology

Gary Keener, Continuing Ed & Workforce Services, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College

Dr. Oliver McBride, Executive Director, Crossroads Institute

John Meade, III, Senior Vice President, First Bank & Trust

Carl Mitchell, President, Virginia Economic Bridge

Laurie S. Moran, CCE, President, Danville/Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce

Joseph W. Newbill, Former Director, USDA Rural Development for Virginia

H William Smith, Executive Director, Virginia Heritage Music Trail

Paul Stapleton, Superintendent, Halifax County Public Schools

Tammy Stephenson, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, Dean, Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine

William Tucker, Farmer and member, Rural Virginia Prosperity Commission

Carlyle Wimbish, Virginia Association of RC&D Councils

### **Enabling Legislation**

§ 2.2-2723. Powers and duties of the Board of Trustees and the Center.

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.)