

2010 - 2011

Center for Rural Virginia

# Annual Activity Report to the Virginia General Assembly



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## Center for Rural Virginia

### 2010-2011 Annual Activities Report

#### *Status, needs, and accomplishments of the Center for Rural Virginia*

In 2010-2011, Center for Rural Trustees and staff actively sought out and formed working collaboratives to address pressing economic issues that face rural regions. Specifically, an on-going outreach to Planning District Commissions, Economic Developers, government leaders and rural leaders at all levels concerning the need for economically viable solutions to sustain rural. Rural areas continue to lose ground, face loss of business, small and large, and lose valuable citizens to other areas of the Commonwealth or to the state entirely.

Stronger working collaboratives are not only a major accomplishment for the Rural Center; they are vital to the future of rural Virginia. The Center for Rural Virginia and the Council for Rural Virginia serve jointly as the statewide voice and leading advocate for rural policy under the umbrella of Va Rural Center. Rural strength lies in cross-sector collaboration in order to create a competitive advantage, enable and promote strategic initiatives, focus on comprehensive outcomes and advocate for policy to enhance economic growth and social development.

#### **Core Functions of the Center for Rural Virginia are to:**

- **Coordinate** with private and public entities and organizations in support of rural issues
- **Provide** a structured forum for organizations and their representatives to analyze and advance rural interests (i.e., Caucus, Summit, Convening, PDC Reports, Regional Rural Caucus)
- **Support** and pursue rural economic growth, social revitalization and sustainability
- **Develop** and advocate for policy that promotes rural economic growth and social vitality

**Va Rural Center** serves as a catalyst to generate innovative and creative approaches for economic, social and demographic revitalization of rural Virginia, brings focus and voice to the Commonwealth's rural issues and advocates for positive change.

**Rural Center work is guided by and focused around six Economic Essentials:**

*Education - Health - Natural Resources - Infrastructure - Economy - Community Capacity*



**Goals:**

- To provide the roadmap that leads to growing sustainable rural economies
- To enable and promote the creation of competitive advantages and the economic mix to grow healthy communities
- To coordinate the rural planning process

**Structure:** Region and economic sector partnerships, the Center for Rural Virginia, the Council for Rural Virginia, business, government, community organizations and citizens

## **Rural Center Accomplishments**

**Developed** partnerships to provide a structured forum for advancement of workforce development and job creation in rural areas

**Worked** with industry about the future needs and career opportunities from workforce training in areas such as advanced manufacturing, health, education and other technology driven sectors

**Supported** the alignment of education, workforce skills training, job creation and business development. In doing so, convene a meeting in March 2011 with Education leaders to address the need to tie skills training with industry requirements

**Advocated** for the Career Coaches as the vehicle to guide students and their family in planning appropriately for education and training based on individual student needs/desires

**Coordinated** a Rural/Urban convening to engage dialogue of products and services and market the assets of rural that are vital to the success of the Commonwealth and the respective communities

**Developed** partnerships to present a public relations campaign about energy, food, fiber, space for heavy and advanced manufacturing development which also addressed rural quality of life and rural amenities

**Provided** a structured forum and message to expand the number of rural leaders for appointment by the Administration and Legislature to boards and commissions to enhance the rural voice at the policy table

**Formed** a collaborative with the **Southern Growth Policies Board** to present *The Bioeconomy in Virginia* - On September 13, 2011, the Southeast Agriculture & Forestry Energy Resources Alliance (SAFER), Southern Growth Policies Board, the Institute for Advanced Learning & Research, and the Center for Rural Virginia hosted the Virginia State Policy Dialogue on the Bioeconomy in conjunction with the Center for Rural Virginia's annual conference. The white paper, "[The Opportunities & Challenges of Virginia's Bioeconomy](#)," is the result of that meeting.

## **Report**

**Access the 2011 Virginia Rural Summit Report** on line at [http://www.cfrv.org/Report-2011Su\(final\).pdf](http://www.cfrv.org/Report-2011Su(final).pdf)

## **Actions**

- Organized and hosted Virginia's Annual Rural Summit which bring public and private organizations together to address policy issues
- Organized, staffed, promoted and supported a weekly legislative rural caucus as a part of the annual session of the Virginia General Assembly
- Coordinated and distributed the 2010 Data Update of the Virginia Rural Prosperity Commission Report
- Communicated "The State of Rural Virginia" to numerous groups throughout the Commonwealth as reflected in the 2010 Update
- Hosted, in partnership with two statewide Local Government organizations, a Rural Caucus Dinner as part of the annual session of the Virginia General Assembly. Legislators and Cabinet Heads presented the program.

- Hosted regional meetings throughout the Commonwealth of elected and appointed officials in preparation for the annual sessions of the Virginia General Assembly
- Supported and participated as the rural representative in weekly statewide local government legislative dialogues
- Coordinated with USDA State Rural Development Council (SRDC), and as a member, participant in Partners for Rural America to engage in federal rural policy
- Organized, coordinated and hosted a Southern Rural Convening of 14 Atlantic Coast States on behalf of USDA. Cross jurisdictional boundary collaboratives were formed to work together on specified projects which have been completed, and a final report was sent to USDA in November 2011.
- Supported and represented rural Virginia at numerous regional, state, and national trade and organizational meetings
- Collaborated with Community and National Foundations in support of expanding philanthropy into rural places. Continue to educate and learn how philanthropy can be successfully implemented in rural Virginia
- Served as an agent of the State in distributing state funds encouraging the establishment of community foundations in rural Virginia
- Developed and disseminated strategies for rural revitalization, and continually research needs and opportunities to stay current
- Participated in three Gubernatorial Commission's impacting rural Virginia
- Participate and partner with Rural Health Coalitions in support of a Virginia's state rural health needs
- Supported and promoted a rural Energy Coalition as an economic development tool for rural places
- Coordinated with Virginia Economic Development Partnership, industry and government leaders, state agencies and individual rural leaders to prepare for the 2011 Virginia Rural Summit
- Virginia's 2011 Rural Summit addressed "the Realities of Rural; realities of rural people; and realities of rural communities
- Continually market the assets of rural Virginia to bring awareness to "Rural as a Quality of Life"

## **Leadership**

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

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