



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Developing a Diverse Economy in Southern and Southwest Virginia



**Tobacco Region  
Revitalization  
Commission**



# Our Mission



The Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission's sole mission is the promotion of economic growth and development in tobacco-dependent communities using proceeds of the national tobacco settlement. The Commission seeks to accelerate regional transformation, giving citizens expansive opportunities for education and employment, and providing communities the benefits of economic stability, diversification, and enhanced prosperity.

To date, the Commission has awarded **2,512 GRANTS AND LOANS** totaling **\$1.5 BILLION+** that have...

**CREATED**  
more than  
**28,165**  
**JOBS**

**GENERATED**  
more than  
**\$4.3 BILLION**  
in private capital investment

**INVESTED** over \$219 million in education and workforce development programs, in partnership with our community colleges and workforce development centers.

**ASSISTED** hundreds of students in furthering their education and helped them acquire valuable, industry recognized credentials to meet the needs of top employers across Southern and Southwest Virginia.

# COMMISSION MEMBERS

## CONTENTS

- Commission Membership ..... 1
- Commission Leadership Message ..... 3
- About, Organization and Service Area ..... 5
- Project and Program Highlights ..... 9
- FY 2023 Financial Statements ..... 16
- Staff Listing and Contact Information ..... 17



Students work on a project at the Center for Information Technology Excellence (CITE) Lab, operated by Southside Virginia Community College, at the Lake Country Advanced Knowledge Center in South Hill. The CITE Lab trains students for high-demand IT careers.

### LEADERSHIP

Chair, The Honorable Frank M. Ruff, Jr., Clarksville  
 Vice-Chair, The Honorable James W. "Will" Morefield, Tazewell

### HOUSE OF DELEGATES MEMBERS

The Honorable Leslie R. "Les" Adams, Chatham  
 The Honorable Terry G. Kilgore, Gate City  
 The Honorable Danny Marshall, Danville  
 The Honorable James W. "Will" Morefield, Tazewell  
 The Honorable William Wampler, III, Abingdon

### SENATE MEMBERS

The Honorable John S. Edwards, Roanoke  
 The Honorable L. Louise Lucas, Portsmouth  
 The Honorable Joseph D. Morrissey, Richmond  
 The Honorable Frank M. Ruff, Jr., Clarksville

### SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND TRADE

The Honorable Caren Merrick, Richmond

### SECRETARY OF FINANCE

The Honorable Stephen Cummings, Richmond

### SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

The Honorable Matthew Lohr, Richmond

### ACTIVE FARMERS / TOBACCO PRODUCERS

Mr. Edward "Ed" Blevins, Abingdon  
 Mr. Randy Everett, Dinwiddie  
 Mr. Jay D. Jennings, Chase City  
 Mr. Walter H. "Buddy" Shelton, Jr., Gretna  
 Ms. Sarah Wilson, Abingdon

### VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Richard T. Hite, Jr., Kenbridge

### CITIZEN MEMBERS

Ms. Gretchen Blair Clark, Gretna  
 Ms. Amanda C. Cox, Boones Mill  
 Mr. Joel Cunningham, Jr., Halifax  
 Mr. Watt R. Foster, Jr., Gladys  
 Ms. Julienne D. "Julie" Hensley, Gate City  
 Mr. Arthur Dale Moore, Altavista  
 The Honorable William A. Pace, Chatham  
 Ms. Sandy J. Ratliff, Abingdon  
 The Honorable Gary D. Walker, Charlotte Courthouse



# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE:

## From Chairman Ruff and Vice-Chair Morefield

The past year has been one of success, but also change, for the Commission.

The Commission has a long history of being an early partner in investments that have made a huge difference to those living in Southern and Southwest Virginia. From Broadband expansion efforts that make it possible for businesses to thrive and allow our kids to get their schoolwork done, to site development efforts that have attracted major employers, education and workforce development programs that ensure we have a well-trained and highly capable workforce, and more. The Commission continued its work in many of these areas, welcomed new individuals with new experience and ideas to its staff, and evolved to better suit the needs of the communities it serves.

**Over the past year the Commission invested in a wide range of projects including support for our community colleges and workforce development centers, helped bring PBS programming back to Southwest Virginia, supported cattle farmers across Southern Virginia and much more.**

In Southwest Virginia, The Birthplace of Country Music Museum in Bristol draws visitors from far and wide to learn about and experience the rich history of country music. When the museum sought to expand, the Commission was excited to partner with them on a project that will add a recording and radio production area, educational space and more to a facility that is already a source of great pride for Southwest Virginia and the Commonwealth as a whole.

InvestSWVA, a public-private business attraction and marketing campaign for Southwest Virginia created by the Tobacco Commission and backed by both the Commission and partners from private industry, has been incredibly successful. Folks from rural Virginia know that if you can get a company to come see all that rural Virginia has to offer from the great people to the vibrant communities, natural beauty and more they are very likely to want to locate there. InvestSWVA is proving that to be true with commitments from a growing number of top employers to locate in the region and more on the way.

In Southern Virginia, the Commission supported the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford as they add the first indoor museum space to a national monument that seeks to preserve the lessons and legacy of D-Day. The D-Day memorial attracts nearly 60,000 visitors a year, many of whom are from outside Virginia, and are introduced to all that our Commonwealth has to offer.

In South Boston, the Commission is proud to have been able to once again partner with the SOVA Innovation Hub as they add 13,000 square feet of space to their campus that will be used to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, collaboration and build on the region's reputation as an emerging rural technology hub.



Tobacco Commission Chair,  
The Honorable  
**Frank M. Ruff, Jr.**



Tobacco Commission  
Vice Chair,  
The Honorable  
**James W. "Will" Morefield**

Continues on pg 4.



These are just a few examples of the many impactful projects the Commission supported this past year, and we encourage you to take a look at the full list of supported projects contained in this report.

The Commission is always looking for ways to be more impactful for the Communities it serves and Governor Youngkin's Compete to Win plan outlines a number of areas in which the Commission can help produce results for the Tobacco Region. Workforce development, site and infrastructure development and driving innovation are all areas that the Commission has traditionally played a leadership role in. Increased concentration on, and investment in, key sectors like energy and agriculture will also help the Commission continue to be a catalyst for growth well into the future.

The Commission also welcomed two new members to our staff leadership. Acting Executive Director James E. Campos was appointed by Governor Youngkin in January to lead the Commission's staff. He brings a wealth of experience in economic development, energy, and workforce issues, all of which are major areas of focus for the Commission. James is particularly interested in the opportunities the energy sector can bring to Southern and Southwest Virginia, in terms of jobs and investment, and leveraging that to help the Commission contribute to the goals of Governor Youngkin's ambitious Compete to Win plan for the Commonwealth.

Stephen Versen joined the Commission as Deputy Director and has extensive experience in rural economic development in the Commonwealth, particularly in the agricultural sector. Agriculture has long been a top priority for the Commission and will be an area of increased focus moving forward.

Both energy and agriculture present huge opportunities for our communities so having leaders in those fields, like James and Stephen, working for the Commission will be vital.

As the Commission enters its 25th year of serving the communities of Southern and Southwest Virginia, we could not be more excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. With key investments over the last 24 years in infrastructure, sites, broadband and much more, the Commission has helped pave the way for bold new initiatives, regionally transformative projects, a renewed focus on the future of agriculture, an emphasis on the jobs and investment the energy sector can bring and so much more. We look forward to working with all of our partners as we continue the hard, but rewarding, work of developing a vibrant and diverse economy across Southern and Southwest Virginia.

The Commission is proud to be a long-time supporter of the Barter Theatre in Abingdon. Barter Theatre, the State Theatre of Virginia, draws visitors from far and wide to experience all Southwest Virginia has to offer.



## ABOUT

The Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission was formed by the General Assembly in 1999 to revitalize Virginia's tobacco region and compensate tobacco farmers for the decline in tobacco production. Funding for these activities comes from the State's share of the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) between 46 state attorneys general and large tobacco manufacturers. The Commission was awarded half of the annual payments from Virginia's share of the MSA and successfully sought bond funding to replace that revenue stream with a single, static fund. Chapters 31 and 31.1 of Title 3.2 of the Code of Virginia contain statutes governing various aspects of the Commission.

The Commission's compensation program to tobacco farmers (indemnification) made payments to Virginia flue-cured and burley tobacco producers and quota holders to compensate them for their losses associated with the decline in federal tobacco quota levels (an aggregate loss of \$479 million). Many producers used the payments to help pay off debt and keep their farm operations running while they transitioned to crops other than tobacco. By 2013, the Commission along with other partners, had indemnified 100% of the aggregate loss satisfying its statutory obligation to indemnify burley and flue-cured tobacco producers and quota owners. From 1999 to 2013, the Commission made available \$309 million together with \$170 million from other sources for indemnifying losses.

With the completion of indemnification, the Commission's sole purpose is the revitalization of tobacco-dependent communities by awarding grants and loans for programs that support that goal.



The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center IT Academy offers hands-on training in networking, cybersecurity, Linux, cloud administration and more to prepare adults with the skills and certifications required for employment in Southern Virginia's growing IT sector.

## ORGANIZATION

The Commission has six standing committees. Four committees evaluate grant and loan proposals from eligible applicants and make recommendations to the Commission as to what projects should be funded, in what amounts, and whether funding should be in the form of a loan or a grant.

The committees that consider funding proposals are Southern Virginia, Southwest Virginia, Education, and Incentives and Loans. The work of the former Agribusiness, Research & Development, Special Projects, Southern and Southwest Economic Development committees continues in the Southern Virginia and Southwest Virginia committees. The Education Committee aims to prepare citizens for new-economy employment through GED and workforce development, higher education scholarship programs for the two regions and competitive grants to community colleges as well as other post-secondary educational entities. The Incentives and Loans Committee oversees the Commission Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund (TROF) program as well as the Commission's Community and Business Lending (CBL) program. TROF provides performance-based monetary grants and loans to tobacco region localities to assist in the creation of new jobs and investments, whether through new business attraction or existing business expansion. The CBL program provides access to capital in the tobacco region while contributing to the Commission's financial sustainability by providing low-interest loans to qualifying applicants and projects.

The Commission's non-grantmaking committees are the Executive Committee and Strategic Planning Committee.

More detail on the specific focus of each committee may be found on the Commission's website: [www.revitalizeva.org](http://www.revitalizeva.org)



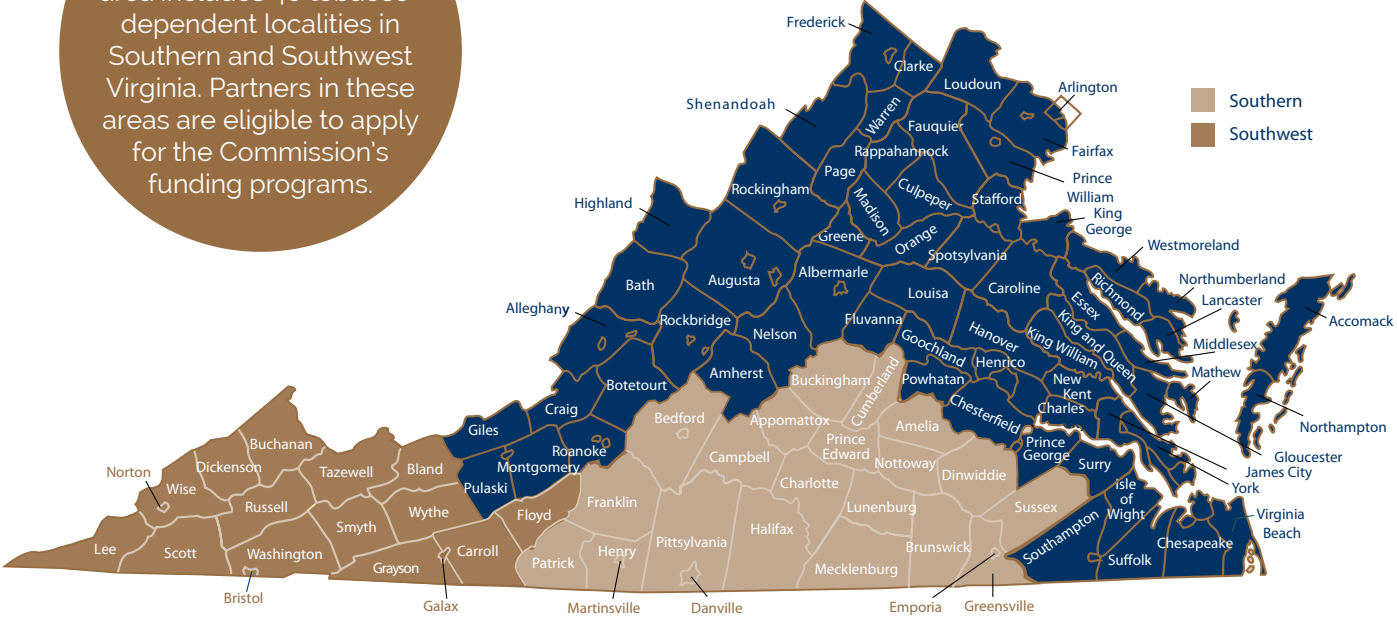
Staunton River Plastics is the first tenant of the Southern Virginia Multimodal Park in Hurt, and will bring \$34 million of capital investment and 200 new jobs to the region.



The Mountain Empire Community College Power Lineman program equips students with a number of critical, industry recognized credentials and allows them to fill high-demand jobs in the energy sector.



The Commission's service area includes 40 tobacco-dependent localities in Southern and Southwest Virginia. Partners in these areas are eligible to apply for the Commission's funding programs.



PerionX chose South Boston and Halifax County as the site for their first titanium demonstration facility. The facility will create over 100 new jobs and over \$80 million in investment.



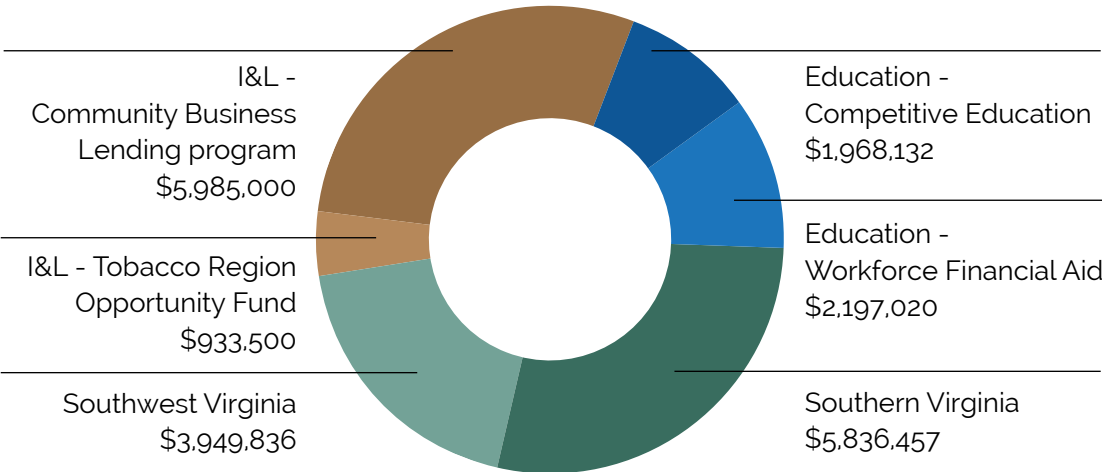
Certified welders are in high demand and the welding lab at Patrick & Henry Community College prepares students for a career in the trade. The Commission is proud to partner with our community colleges on programs like this one that are designed to provide quality jobs, meet the needs of industry and create opportunity for those living in Southern and Southwest Virginia.



# PROJECT AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## FISCAL YEAR 2023 AWARDS

Program	# of Projects	Award
Education - Competitive Education	9	\$1,968,132
Education - Workforce Financial Aid	11	\$2,197,020
Southern Virginia Program	18	\$5,836,457
Southwest Virginia Program	13	\$3,949,836
I&L - Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund	4	\$933,500
I&L - Community and Business Lending Program	1	\$5,985,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>\$20,869,945</b>



# PROJECT AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## EDUCATION AWARDS

The Education Program aims to prepare residents of the Tobacco Region for new-economy employment through workforce development, higher education scholarship programs and competitive grants to community colleges and post-secondary education entities.



## WORKFORCE FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

Organization	Project Title	Award
Brightpoint Community College Foundation	2023-24 Tobacco Region Scholarship at Brightpoint Community College	\$77,020
Central Virginia Community College Educational Foundation, Inc.	CVCC Workforce Financial Aid 2023-2024	\$240,000
Danville Community College Educational Foundation, Inc.	DCC Educational Foundation Workforce Financial Aid 2023-2024	\$240,000
Mountain Empire Community College	MECC Works	\$240,000
New River Community College Educational Foundation	Floyd County ACCE (Access to Community College Education) Program	\$100,000
Patrick & Henry Community College Foundation	P&HCC 2023-2024 Workforce Financial Aid	\$240,000
Southside Virginia Community College Foundation	Investing in Southside Students	\$240,000
Southwest Virginia Community College	2023-2024 SWCC WFA Tobacco Scholarship Program	\$240,000
Virginia Highlands Community College Educational Foundation	Virginia Highlands Community College - Workforce Financial Aid FY24	\$240,000
Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation Inc	Workforce Financial Aid and Community College Access Program for Franklin County	\$100,000
Wytheville Community College	Wytheville Community College Forging Futures Scholarship Program	\$240,000
<b>TOTAL - WORKFORCE FINANCIAL AID AWARDS</b>		<b>\$2,197,020</b>

## COMPETITIVE EDUCATION AWARDS

Organization	Project Title	Award
Institute for Advanced Learning and Research	ExTRA: Expanding Talent through Registered Apprenticeships	\$497,890
Mountain Empire Community College	CWIA Expansion II	\$419,732
Patrick & Henry Community College Foundation	Career and Technical Education (CTE) Credentialing	\$40,425
Southern Virginia Higher Education Center	Welding Program Expansion	\$236,223
Southside Virginia Community College - Adult Education	Southside Race to GED/NEDP	\$70,000
Southside Virginia Community College Foundation	Fiber Technician Training Program	\$478,253
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation	Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Virtual Cadaver Lab	\$100,000
Virginia Technical Institute	Advanced Industrial Maintenance Mechanics Laboratory	\$25,285
Wytheville Community College	Advancing Wytheville Community College's Health Programs	\$100,324
<b>TOTAL - COMPETITIVE EDUCATION AWARDS</b>		<b>\$1,968,132</b>



The Tobacco Commission is proud to have supported a number of projects in collaboration with the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center over the years to meet the needs of the southern Virginia community and ensure that education, and the opportunity it brings, is available to all.

# PROJECT AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



## TOBACCO REGION OPPORTUNITY FUND (TROF)

The TROF Program provides performance-based grants and loans to localities within the Tobacco Region to assist in the creation of high-wage jobs and private taxable capital investment.

Organization	Project Title	Award
Dinwiddie County	DroneUp, LLC	\$111,000
Halifax County IDA	Hitachi Energy USA	\$220,000
Halifax County IDA	Skip Barber Racing School	\$32,500
Halifax County IDA	IperionX Technology LLC	\$570,000
<b>TOTAL - TOBACCO REGION OPPORTUNITY FUND AWARDS</b>		<b>\$933,500</b>



The Prince Edward County Industrial Park is well positioned to attract top employers to the southern Virginia Region. The Tobacco Commission has been heavily involved in site development throughout southern and southwest Virginia.



## COMMUNITY BUSINESS LENDING PROGRAM

The Community Business Lending Program provides access to capital in the tobacco region while contributing to the Commission's financial sustainability by providing low-interest loans to qualifying applicants and projects.

Organization	Project Title	Award
Scott County Economic Development Authority	Project Delta	\$5,985,000
<b>TOTAL - COMMUNITY BUSINESS LENDING AWARDS</b>		<b>\$5,985,000</b>



The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville is playing a leading role in the growth of Virginia as a center for the rapidly expanding Controlled Environment Agriculture industry.



## SOUTHERN VIRGINIA PROGRAM AWARDS

# PROJECT AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Southern Virginia Program provides grants and loans for projects that diversify the economic base of Southern Virginia through creation or improvement of sites, buildings and utility infrastructure, workforce training facilities and tourism infrastructure.

Organization	Project Title	Award
Blackstone, Town of	Operation Swedish Chef	\$581,000
Brunswick County	Herman Road Lake Gaston Day Use Park - Kayak and Canoe Launch	\$230,400
Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority	Sledge and Barkley	\$437,000
Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority	Brunswick County Produce Project	\$500,000
Cumberland County	Operation Connect-The-Dots	\$218,000
Dinwiddie County	Dinwiddie County's Universal Broadband Project	\$781,820
Halifax County	Virginia International Raceway Water Supply Interconnection - Halifax County	\$546,029
Halifax County	Halifax County Universal Broadband Support 2022	\$540,598
Mecklenburg County	Virginia's Growth Alliance Site Development Project	\$602,210
Mecklenburg County	Southside Virginia Beef Producers Increase Efficiency and Their Bottom Line Through Use of Certifiable Livestock Scales	\$7,500
National D-DAY Memorial Foundation LTD	National D-Day Memorial Motor Pool Museum and Courtyard	\$350,000
Patrick County Economic Development Authority	Rich Creek Corporate Park Shell Building	\$95,850
Patrick County Economic Development Authority	Cockram Mill/Freehouse Brewery	\$30,000
Prince Edward County	Project Clementine	\$75,000
SOVA INNOVATION HUB CORPORATION	SOVA Innovation Campus Construction	\$400,000
Sussex County	Megasite - Master Planning, Conceptual Engineering, & Water Line Extension	\$61,050
Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Inventory Advance Incentive and Cattle Processing Initiative Fund	\$330,000
West Piedmont Planning District Commission	Southern Virginia Regional Branding and Marketing Plan	\$50,000
<b>TOTAL - SOUTHERN VIRGINIA PROGRAM AWARDS</b>		<b>\$5,836,457</b>



## SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA PROGRAM AWARDS

# PROJECT AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Southwest Virginia Program provides grants and loans for projects that diversify the economic base of Southwest Virginia through the creation or improvement of sites, buildings and utility infrastructure, workforce training facilities and tourism infrastructure.

Organization	Project Title	Award
Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association	Improving Genetics, Health, and Management of Small Ruminants in SWVA	\$299,880
Appalachian Music Heritage Foundation, Inc. d/b/a Song of the Mountains	Song of the Mountains Revitalization	\$120,000
Birthplace of Country Music	Birthplace of Country Music Museum Expansion	\$500,000
Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority	Wildwood Commerce Park Site 1 Due Diligence and Design Services	\$188,750
Blue Ridge Public Television, Inc.	PBS Appalachia Virginia	\$530,000
Carroll County	Vacuum Cooler Value Added Project	\$96,000
Haysi, Town of	Haysi Trails Center	\$650,206
Joint IDA of Wythe County, VA	Phase 1 for 140 S 1st Street Property	\$20,000
LENOWISCO Planning District Commission	LENOWISCO InvestSWVA 3.0 (RMI)	\$400,000
Sunset Holler, Inc.	Southern Gap Amphitheater Project - Construction Documents & Construction	\$500,000
The Barter Foundation, Inc.	Barter Theatre Regional Marketing Campaign	\$105,000
Virginia Coalfield Coalition	Virginia Coalfields Cell Coverage Assessment Planning Grant	\$40,000
Washington County	Oak Park, Lot 8 Railway Extension	\$500,000
<b>TOTAL - SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA PROGRAM AWARDS</b>		<b>\$3,949,836</b>

# FY 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF NET POSITION (UNAUDITED)

	Fiscal Year 2023	Fiscal Year 2022
<b>Assets:</b>		
Current and other assets	\$343,025,028	\$363,674,290
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>343,025,028</b>	<b>363,674,290</b>
<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Current and other liabilities	4,219,172	4,507,118
Long-term liabilities	95,270	102,520
<b>Total liabilities<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>4,314,442</b>	<b>4,609,638</b>
<b>Net position<sup>2</sup>:</b>	<b>\$338,710,586</b>	<b>\$359,064,652</b>

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with GASB Statement No. 33, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Non-exchange Transactions, total liabilities do not include \$66 million at June 30, 2023, and \$68 million at June 30, 2022, in obligations for grant awards made prior to fiscal year end.

<sup>2</sup> Total net position includes \$98 million at June 30, 2023, and \$105 million at June 30, 2022, in the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Endowment, which is subject to certain restrictions on annual withdrawals by the Code of Virginia.

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (UNAUDITED)

	Fiscal Year 2023	Fiscal Year 2022
<b>Revenues:</b>		
Interest, dividends, and other investment income	\$6,054,953	\$6,776,763
Other income	793,339	2,467,996
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>6,848,292</b>	<b>9,244,759</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
Administration	2,075,910	2,352,043
Community revitalization	15,897,419	17,780,434
Payments for securities lending transactions	30,702	1,444
Unrealized loss on investment held by the Treasurer	9,198,327	25,754,670
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>27,202,358</b>	<b>45,888,591</b>
Change in net position	(\$20,354,066)	(\$36,643,832)
<b>Net position, beginning of year</b>	<b>359,064,652</b>	<b>395,708,484</b>
<b>Net position, end of year</b>	<b>\$338,710,586</b>	<b>\$359,064,652</b>

# STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION

## COMMISSION STAFF

James E. Campos, Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade & Tobacco Commission Acting Executive Director

Jordan Butler, Public Relations Director and TROF Program Manager

Sarah Capps, Southern Regional Director

Adrian Counts, Grants Assistant - Southwest

Hannah Franke-Fuller, Special Assistant

Sarah Goodwyn, Financial Services Specialist

Vicki Humphreys, Grants Director

Stephanie Kim, Finance Director

Joyce Knight, Meeting Coordinator

Suzette Patterson, Grants System Manager

Emily Van Pelt, Grants Assistant - Southern

Jerry Silva, Director of Regional Energy Development and Innovation

Stephen Versen, Deputy Director

Sara Williams, Southwest Regional Director

## Main Office

701 East Franklin St., Suite 501  
Richmond, VA 23219

**Phone:** 804-225-2027

## Southern Field Office

50 Claiborne Ave.  
Rocky Mount, VA 24151

**Phone:** 540-483-0179 ext. 2168

## Southwest Field Office

1 Partnership Circle  
Abingdon, VA 24212

**Phone:** 276-619-4325



### General Email

[info@revitalizeva.org](mailto:info@revitalizeva.org)



### Website

[www.revitalizeva.org](http://www.revitalizeva.org)



### Social media





701 East Franklin St., Suite 501  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.revitalizeva.org](http://www.revitalizeva.org)  
804-225-2027