



*Rural Center*

Partnership of the **Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr.**  
Center for Rural Virginia and the  
Council for Rural Virginia

# 2023-2024

## Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia Annual Report

### **Our Mission**

The Virginia Rural Center is a collaborative partnership of the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia and the Council for Rural Virginia, which work together on a joint mission to work with policymakers and stakeholders to create innovative solutions and expand entrepreneurial opportunities to ensure economic prosperity for all regions in the Commonwealth. The creation of the Center was a recommendation of the Rural Prosperity Commission, created by the General Assembly.

### **Our History**

Created by the General Assembly in 2004, the Center for Rural Virginia works to advance economic development, job creation, workforce development, education, infrastructure, healthcare and other vital initiatives for the prosperity of rural Virginia.

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Dear Friends,

This was a very special year for the Center, and we are so appreciative and grateful of these memorable milestones in our organization's history! The year 2024 marks exactly 20 years ago when the Center was created by the Virginia legislature, and we were thankful to celebrate this joyous milestone! In addition to the 20 year anniversary, on March 26, 2024, Governor Glenn Youngkin signed legislation, [HB 1381](#) and [SB 704](#), to rename the Center for Rural Virginia as the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia. Additionally, the legislation for the renaming of the organization was a priority for Governor Youngkin's Administration and supported by all 140 members of the Virginia General Assembly. The renaming is a tribute to one of the Center's founding members and former Chair, Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Our new name pays tribute to all the tireless work that Senator Ruff did to advance rural Virginia.

Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia (The Center) continues to build on recent successes and had an impressive and impactful year. It has been an exciting time for our organization as we completed the third year of the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute (VRLI) and congratulated 28 graduates who will now go on to complete their community impact projects within their respective rural communities. VRLI is the Commonwealth's first and only leadership program that was created by the Center with the goal of retaining and attracting the best and brightest in our rural communities. With VRLI launching three years ago, many of the community impact projects are coming into fruition and receiving great feedback from their communities.

The Center was very excited to announce the creation of the Rural Virginia Opportunity Dashboard this year and implementation will continue into 2025. This will be a groundbreaking project aimed at empowering rural communities across Virginia. This cutting-edge platform will deliver dynamic, data-driven insights to spotlight the incredible strengths of rural areas while listing vital funding opportunities. The dashboard will be packed with essential statistics on demographics, housing, education, business, and health, the dashboard will also feature interactive asset maps showcasing key infrastructure and community resources. A standout feature, the Rural Resource Index, will serve as a powerful guide to funding opportunities at all levels, empowering governments, non-profits, businesses, and individuals to drive impactful projects. With downloadable reports and trend data, this game-changing tool will help stakeholders unlock the full potential of rural Virginia!

In addition to our events, featured leadership programs and one-of-a-kind projects, the Center continues to serve as an educator, convener and facilitator of programs and initiatives that work towards making rural Virginia Thrive. The Executive Director at the Center continues to serve as statewide spokesperson on issues pertaining to Rural Virginia. In addition to her duties of running the organization, the Executive Director continues to place a large focus on fundraising to ensure that the Center's events, programming and projects can move forward.

This past year the Center celebrated many successes, including a substantial increase of state supported financial investment included in the Governor's proposed budget and overwhelmingly supported by the state legislature.

The Center was thrilled to launch the Rural Virginia Opportunity Dashboard, graduate the class of 2024 Virginia Rural Leadership Institute, a historic and recording breaking 2024 Governor's Summit on Rural Prosperity in Wytheville, the 2024 Rural Caucus Legislative Breakfast, and continued to serve as staff to host and organize regular meetings of the Virginia General Assembly Rural Caucus during the 2024 General Assembly session.

We hope you enjoy reading this report where you will find a summary of the Center's activities. It continues to be a privilege to work and meet with many of our friends in rural Virginia, as we traveled to all corners of the Commonwealth. We sincerely appreciate the dedication and hard work from The Board of Directors at the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia. We are grateful to have an incredible Board that cares deeply about the success of rural Virginia and works hard to ensure the Center's success. .

Warm regards,

*Kristie Helmick Proctor*

Executive Director  
The Virginia Rural Center

# Organizational Structure

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## **Executive Director**

The Center for Rural Virginia hired the Executive Director, Kristie Helmick Proctor in 2017. Since that time, the Center has launched and implemented the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute, created the Rural Virginia Opportunity Dashboard, heightened the visibility of the Center and serve as a convener and educator for rural Virginia.

Additionally, the Executive Director has been able to obtain historic levels of investment from the private sector and from the state budget to ensure programming can grow and continue while being faced with record high inflation and expanding capacity and programming.

## **2024 Governor's Summit on Rural Prosperity**

The Virginia Rural Center held the 2024 Governor's Summit on Rural Prosperity in Wytheville, Virginia and this annual event was one for the record books, bringing together a record number of attendees. 300 attendees came from 46 different counties and 19 different cities throughout Virginia.

In honor of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Governor Glenn Youngkin, as part of his keynote address, also issued an official proclamation recognizing the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia. In addition, to Governor Youngkin, Lt. Governor Winsome Earle-Sears and the Honorable Don Scott, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates were featured speakers at the Summit, along with multiple members of the Governor's cabinet. The agenda, which also included legislators from across Virginia, featured presentations on economic development, as well as in-depth panel discussions on rural energy collaboration, innovation to enhance rural healthcare and attracting a next-generation workforce to rural Virginia.

## **Board Meetings**

In addition to hosting an all-virtual Board meeting, the Center was pleased to host quarterly Board meetings in the following locations:

- King William, VA
- Goochland VA
- Wytheville, VA

## **Collective Services Agreement**

The Center for Rural Virginia is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2004. The creation of the Center was a recommendation of the Rural Prosperity Commission, created by the General Assembly in 2000. The goal of the Commission was "Prosperity for all Virginians". The 18-member Commission was instructed by the General Assembly to "undertake a detailed analysis of rural Virginia economies and recommend flexible but targeted state policies which, combined with local efforts, will help foster sustainable economic growth in Virginia's rural areas."

The Center currently operates in a collaborative partnership with the Council for Rural Virginia through a collective services agreement as the Virginia Rural Center. The two organizations operate independently but share an executive director and operate in conjunction to fulfill their joint mission of economic prosperity for rural communities throughout Virginia.

The final report of the Rural Prosperity Commission was issued in December 2001 and featured specific policy recommendations, including the creation of the Center for Rural Virginia to address the obstacles and capitalize on the many opportunities of Rural Virginia. In 2004, founding board members Senator Frank Ruff and Delegate Steve Landes sponsored the enabling legislation, creating the Center.

The 21-member board of the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia works in partnership with the Council for Rural Virginia. Together, the Center and the Council work with policymakers and regulators as well private sector stakeholders to improve economic opportunities and preserve the quality of life throughout rural Virginia.

### **Institutional Partners**

In addition to the support of the Virginia General Assembly and the Governor's Office, the Virginia Rural Center continues to enjoy partnerships with two other entities that make the daily operations of the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia and the Council for Rural Virginia efficient, effective, and successful.

The first is the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). This agency provides office space for the Executive Director. Additionally, DHCD provides back-office support and assistance that enhances the productivity and accessibility at The Virginia Rural Center.

The second is Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. The Virginia Rural Center's partnership with VCE provides assets and operational efficiencies that enhance the cost-effective operation for the organization. Additionally, Virginia Tech serves as the payroll agent to the Executive Director.

## **Annual Sponsors**

The Virginia Rural Center is fortunate to have numerous organizational sponsors committed to the Center's mission and rural prosperity. The Executive Director spends a large amount of time obtaining financial support from various businesses and organizations to ensure the Center is successful.

The 2024 Annual Sponsors include (in alphabetical order):

- All Points Broadband
- Appalachian Power
- Cozen O'Connor
- Dominion Energy
- Farm Bureau of Virginia
- Farm Credit
- Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wise County
- Letterpress Communications
- Lumos
- Old Dominion Electric Cooperative
- Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
- RiverLink Group
- River Street Networks
- Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project
- The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- The Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission
- University of Virginia Wise
- Virginia Broadband Industry Association
- Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority
- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Virginia Ed Strategies
- Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association
- Virginia Housing
- Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation
- Virginia Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives
- Virginia Poultry Growers Cooperative
- Virginia Resources Authority
- Virginia Rural Health Association

# Project Overview & Status Updates

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## **2024 Governor’s Summit on Rural Prosperity**

The two-day annual event occurred in Southwest Virginia in beautiful Wytheville and started with a 20-year anniversary celebration with former and current Board members in attendance. This year’s rural summit event included a record number of attendees – nearly 300 – who came from 46 different counties and 19 different cities throughout Virginia.

Governor Youngkin served as the keynote speaker and in honor of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, he issued an official proclamation recognizing the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia, celebrating two decades of dedicated service to rural communities across the Commonwealth.

Delivering the proclamation at the Governor’s Summit on Rural Prosperity was fitting given that the annual event brings together state, business and civic leaders to explore the future of rural Virginia and discuss innovative initiatives occurring in rural communities.

In addition to Youngkin, Lt. Governor Winsome Earle-Sears and the Honorable Don Scott, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, presented at the Summit, along with multiple members of the Governor’s cabinet, including Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matthew Lohr and Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources Travis Voyles. First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin provided opening day remarks via video.

The agenda featured presentations on economic development – including an update on the Accelerate Southwest Virginia initiative – as well as in-depth panel discussions on rural energy collaboration, innovation to enhance rural health care and attracting a next-generation workforce to rural Virginia. Another panel explored how Wytheville is effectively capturing the assets of a rural community to drive the local economy.

Additionally, field trips were built into the agenda to allow attendees to explore all that Wytheville had to offer in agriculture, natural resources and downtown revitalization. The field trips included visits and guided tours of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Fish Hatchery, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Animal Lab and a walking tour of downtown Wytheville.

## **2024 Legislative Rural Caucus Breakfast**

Legislators, Board members, rural stakeholders and Administration officials attended a breakfast at the General Assembly Building to discuss legislation and the upcoming session. This networking event allowed conversations to occur among key stakeholders and legislators while the General Assembly was in session.



## **Virginia General Assembly's Rural Caucus**

The Virginia Rural Center (VRC) organized and staffed numerous meetings of the Virginia General Assembly's Rural Caucus during the 2024 General Assembly session. Senator Emily Jordan served as Chair of the Rural Caucus, Delegate Sam Rasoul served as Vice Chair of the Rural Caucus

The special guests for the 2024 Rural Caucus meeting included:

- The Honorable Caren Merrick, Virginia's Secretary of Commerce & Trade
- The Honorable Matthew Lohr, Virginia's Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry
- The Honorable Travis Voyles, Virginia's Secretary of Natural Resources
- The Honorable Bryan Slater, Virginia's Secretary of Labor
- The Honorable John Littel, Virginia's Secretary of Health & Human Resources
- The Honorable Don Scott, Speaker, The Virginia House of Delegates
- Bryan Horn, Director, Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development
- Dr. Tamarah Holmes, Director, Office of Broadband at the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

The Rural Caucus provides an opportunity for legislators and stakeholders to learn about legislation and initiatives impacting rural areas of the Commonwealth. At the Rural Caucus meetings, legislators heard from stakeholders and cabinet members about legislation and its potential effect on rural Virginia.

Rural Caucus meetings continue to provide a forum to share information, learn, and collaborate to increase prosperity across rural Virginia.

## **Virginia Rural Leadership Institute**

In its third year, the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute (VRLI) continued to fulfill its mission to retain, attract, and develop rural Virginians into innovative, responsible, and civic-minded leaders who build strong communities. The program remains highly competitive, with applications once again exceeding available spots. The third annual cohort, announced in April 2024, included 28 members from across the Commonwealth, representing a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives.

With its inaugural cohort established in 2022, VRLI has since grown and evolved over the years to address the unique challenges faced by rural Virginia and the limited opportunities for leadership programs focused specifically on rural leaders. Strong civic-minded leadership has been well-documented as a driver of community vitality, and VRLI seeks to foster such leadership to strengthen rural communities across the Commonwealth.

The program's development began in 2019 with extensive research and consultation with statewide leadership development program directors to design a curriculum tailored to the specific needs of rural leaders. This foundation ensured a focus on the critical skills required to navigate both current and future challenges in rural communities. The program's success has been bolstered by a diverse network of partners, who have played an instrumental role in the competitive selection process.

The Virginia Rural Center was pleased to see the following Cohort members graduate in November 2024 and looks forward to seeing each of them continue to make meaningful contributions in their communities:

**Shanetta Beck**, *City of Emporia*

Community and Economic Development Director, City of Emporia

**Lincoln Boykin**, *Lancaster County*

Director of Affiliate Foundations, Community Foundation for a Greater Richmond

**Jonathan Comer**, *Page County*

SVP - Commercial Lender, The First Bank & Trust Company

**J. David Conmy**, *City of Richmond*

Deputy County Administrator & Economic Development Director, Sussex County

**Michael Crouse**, *Roanoke County*

Business Development Manager, ECS, Mid-Atlantic

**Matthew Culbreath**, *Dinwiddie*

Director of Planning and Zoning, City of Emporia

**Brian Falin**, *Wise County*

Industrial Development Supervisor/Executive Director, Wise County

**Heather Fay**, *Botetourt County*

Business Advisor + Regional Program Director, Greater Roanoke & NRV Small Business Development Center

**Brandy Flint**, *Rockbridge County*

Director of Economic Development, Rockbridge County

**Andrew Franzysen**, *Dinwiddie County*

Director of Environment, Housing, and Economic Development, Crater Planning District Commission

**Ian Ginger**, *City of Richmond*

Economic Development Program Director, George Washington Regional Commission

**Gerald Goad**, *Hillsville*

Clerk of the Circuit Court, Carroll County

**Jess Gray**, *Chatham*

CEO, Gray's Landscaping LLC

**Matt Herron**, *Christiansburg*

Business Development Manager, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

**James Houchins**, *Patrick County*

Director of Tourism and Marketing, Patrick County

**Katelyn Jordan**, *Pungo*

Local & State Advocacy Specialist, Regulatory Coordinator, Virginia Farm Bureau

**Kellie Lipscomb**, *Dinwiddie*

Drug Abuse Treatment Specialist, Federal Correctional Institution

**Brooke Love**, *Carroll County*

Tourism Director, Carroll County

**Jacob McCaleb**, *Warsaw*

Business Services Representative, Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board

**Stephanie Norris**, *City of Richmond*

Senior Research Analyst, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

**Kristen Pudlow**, *Prince George County*

Deputy County Administrator, Prince George County

**Holley Scheffel**, *Bedford County*

Business Programs Coordinator, Bedford County

**Giles Scott**, *Warsaw*

Youth Program Influencer, Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board

**Jennifer Stevens**, *South Boston*

President and CEO, Virginia Ed Strategies

**Josh Taylor**, *Alleghany*

Executive Director, Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

**Tara Tuck**, *Clarksville*

Economic Development & Tourism, Town of Clarksville

**Jack Wall**, *Floyd*

Board Chair & Senior Executive, Wall Residences

**Zachary Whitlow**, *City of Richmond*

Community Vitality Program Administrator, Department of Housing & Community Development

Each VRLI program spans two years, offering comprehensive leadership development experience. During the first year, cohort members engage in four immersive 3-day sessions held across various rural regions of the Commonwealth. These sessions provide opportunities to learn from the successes and challenges unique to each region, complemented by insights from guest speakers who share their expertise. The second year builds on this foundation, as VRLI graduates apply their skills through a Community Impact Project, demonstrating their growth and commitment to creating positive change in their communities.

2024 Session Locations included:

- **Southern Virginia**
  - Danville & South Boston
- **Southwest Virginia**
  - Abingdon, Bristol, & Marion
- **Middle Peninsula & Northern Neck**
  - Tappahannock, Warsaw, and the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe in King William
- **Shenandoah Valley**
  - Staunton, Weyers Cave, & Broadway

These VRLI sessions offer immersive experience in the host region's rural communities, where cohort members explore recent economic and community development achievements. Additionally, the sessions serve as a direct investment in the local economies by bringing participants to the area, showcasing local businesses, and highlighting regional assets.

These sessions feature engaging discussions and presentations from experts, providing valuable insights and fostering a deeper understanding of the region's successes and challenges. The discussions spanned a wide variety of topics, including:

- **Agriculture & Forestry Challenges**
- **Agritourism**
- **Broadband**
- **Effective Communications**
- **Energy Innovations**
- **Community Engagement & Storytelling**
- **Difficult Conversations**
- **Economic Growth & Innovative Housing**
- **Engaging with Elected Officials & the Government**
- **Faith in Rural Communities**
- **Growing Your Network**
- **Leadership Development**
- **Main Street Revitalization**
- **Organization & Funding**
- **Regional Collaboration**
- **Rural Entrepreneurship**
- **Rural Health**
- **Rural Housing**
- **Rural Indicators & Demographics**
- **Rural K-12 Education**
- **Rural Media**
- **Tribal Governance**
- **Youth in Rural Communities**

The 2024 VRLI Community Impact Projects include:

### **Economic Development**

- Develop a private capital fund to revitalize the Town of Shenandoah.
- Create a Virginia Regional Exchange (VREx) to promote mutual understanding and advocacy among regions.
- Collaborate with local Main Street organizations to spearhead Community Business Launch (CBL) applications.
- Assist communities in applying for funding to encourage private investment, create jobs, and redevelop abandoned properties.
- Install EV charging stations in key areas to boost tourism and downtown economic activity.

### **Housing**

- Develop a workforce housing blueprint for rural communities, with a specific focus on the Northern Neck.
- Address the lack of housing options for essential workers by planning shovel-ready projects and securing funding for workforce housing development.

### **Agriculture and Food**

- Strengthen rural farming profitability through the adoption of biochar and composting.
- Establish a community farm labor portal to connect farmers with workers and resources.

### **Community Development**

- Create a strategic childcare plan, including a resource hub and survey-driven action items.
- Enhance and preserve access to public recreational spaces like Big Reed Island Creek.
- Renovate the Historic Carroll County Courthouse for community events and historical preservation.
- Establish better communication tools for citizens to engage with local government effectively.

### **K-12 Education**

- Develop regional talent pipeline programs to prepare K-12 students for high-demand jobs.
- Provide high school students with access to after-school STEM programs and skill-building activities.
- Create educational resources on renewable energy targeted at middle school students in Southwest Virginia.

### **Workforce Development**

- Expand career pathways for persons with disabilities through integrated resource teams.
- Implement a workforce training program for solar farm operations, focusing on local career development.

## **Tourism**

- Establish EV charging stations in various regions to attract visitors and support tourism activities.
- Boost access to recreational activities in key areas to enhance local tourism.

## **Health and Social Services**

- Challenge stigma surrounding mental health and educate children and parents about mental health awareness.

## **Data and Research**

- Evaluate wraparound services at rural community colleges to elevate their role as economic engines.
- Promote rural collaboration through data-driven initiatives and stakeholder engagement.

Financial support from sponsors is essential to the success of the VRLI program, enabling the year-over-year development of more rural leaders throughout the Commonwealth.

The 2024 annual sponsors to the VRLI program include (in alphabetical order):

- **Appalachian Power**
- **Danville Community College Educational Foundation**
- **Dominion Energy**
- **Microsoft**
- **Mid-Atlantic Broadband Communities Corporation**
- **RiverLink Group**
- **Virginia Housing**
- **Virginia Poultry Growers Cooperative**
- **Virginia Rural Health Association**

## Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts

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The Virginia Rural Center engages in numerous partnerships and collaborative efforts with other organizations. These partners, often sharing aligned missions, exponentially strengthen the Rural Center's efforts and provide a platform to elevate the Commonwealth's rural issues.

### **Taskforce for Economic Growth in Rural Virginia**

A collaborative effort organized by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC), and the Virginia Rural Center. The group officially launched in 2023 and works to foster a positive impact through collaborative and action-oriented efforts. The primary goal is to address rural areas' concerns and work together to discover sustainable solutions. The taskforce works to exchange insights on ongoing initiatives in different communities and delve into the current challenges faced by rural areas.

### **Partners for Rural America, Board of Directors Member**

Partners for Rural America (PRA) was founded in 1998 to support the efforts of its member State Rural Development Councils (SRDCs), which are uniquely positioned to expand economic and social opportunities for America's rural communities and their residents, promote equal treatment of rural America by government agencies and the private sector and provide a collective voice for rural America. Joined in January 2018, the PRA Board of Directors provides a networking platform for other state rural center leaders to share successes and answer inquiries on best practices in member states.

### **Broadband Advisory Council, Board Member**

The Broadband Advisory Council was established to help determine the Commonwealth's goals for broadband and how best to achieve them. The Rural Center's executive director gathers knowledge and contributes thought to further advocate for broadband expansion across the Commonwealth.

### **Virginia Housing, Rural Housing Advisory Council Member**

The Rural Housing Advisory Council (RHAC) is a cross-regional group that will provide guidance and expertise to Virginia Housing regarding housing issues in rural Virginia. Mrs. Proctor became a member of Virginia Housing's Rural Housing Advisory Council in August 2018, and she is pleased to take on this role and provide additional insight to the housing needs in rural Virginia.

### **Legislative Sportsmen Caucus, Participant**

Formed in 2004, the Virginia Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus is a bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators dedicated to protecting and advancing hunting, fishing, trapping and recreational shooting in Virginia. Regular involvement by the Rural Center in the Legislative Sportsmen Caucus includes participating in and recruitment for weekly legislative sportsman caucus meetings and providing support for the annual sportsman caucus retreat.

### **Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Rural Initiative Steering Group, Member**

The Richmond Fed created this group with the goal of bringing together leaders who help rural areas and small towns thrive. Participants collaborate on the needs and challenges that are facing rural communities, as well as highlighting opportunities.

Areas of focus include helping rural communities develop innovations in community financing and leadership; and create a common set of community indicators, tools, and success stories.

### **Virginia Education Strategies, Board Member**

In collaboration with K-12, business, and community stakeholders, develops and implements best practices to align education with employers needs and assists schools in improving academic and career outcomes for students.



# Leadership

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## Board of Trustees Center for Rural Virginia

- *Chair*, Honorable Creigh Deeds, Senate of Virginia
- *Vice-Chair*, Honorable Emily Jordan, Senate of Virginia
- Bette Brand, CEO & Founder, Strategic Consulting LLC
- Honorable Nadarius Clark, Member, House of Delegates
- Amanda Cox, External Affairs Manager, Appalachian Power
- Paul Eberly, Executive Vice President- Chief Development Officer, F&M Bank
- Honorable Winsome Earle-Sears, Lieutenant Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
- Brian Istringhausen, CEO, Cranemasters, Inc.
- John A. King II, General Manager and Vice President of Sales, Virginia Poultry Growers Cooperative
- Honorable Amy Laufer, Member, House of Delegates
- Honorable Matthew Lohr, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Commonwealth of Virginia
- Honorable Allen Louderback, Member, Page County Board of Supervisors
- Sarah Marshall, Manager, State & Local Affairs, Dominion Energy
- Honorable Caren Merrick, Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Commonwealth of Virginia
- Marshall Pattie, PhD, Professor, James Madison University
- Liz Povar, Principal Officer, The River Link Group
- Eddie Ramirez, Ramirez Consulting, LLC
- Honorable Chris Runion, Member, Virginia House of Delegates
- Lindsey Watson, Director of Government Affairs, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

## *In partnership with*

### **Board of Directors – Council for Rural Virginia**

- *Chair*, Bryan David, Program Director, Growth and Opportunity Virginia Region 3
- *Vice-Chair*, Dr. Edwin Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech
- Shannon Blevins, Associate Vice Chancellor for Economic Development and Engagement, University of Virginia's College at Wise
- The Honorable Ruby Brabo, Realtor
- Katie Frazier, Director, Farm Credit of the Virginias Knowledge Center
- Michelle Johnson, County Administrator, Charles City County
- Sharon Johnson, CEO of the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board
- Hugh Joyce, Owner, James River Air Conditioning
- John A. King II, General Manager and Vice President of Sales, VA Poultry Growers Cooperative
- Dr. Angela Lawhorne, Director, Career Education Programs & Workforce Partnerships, Virginia Community College System
- Mark Lawrence, Vice President of Governmental and External Affairs, Carilion Clinic
- Patrick Mauney, Executive Director, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
- Jay Poole, Owner, Common Sense Strategies
- R. Morgan Quicke, County Administrator, Richmond County
- Bill Tucker, Tucker Family Farms
- Brian T. Warner, Rolls Royce
- Carlyle Wimbish, Hickory Hill Farm

## Contact Information

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