



OUTREACH & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VIRGINIA TECH

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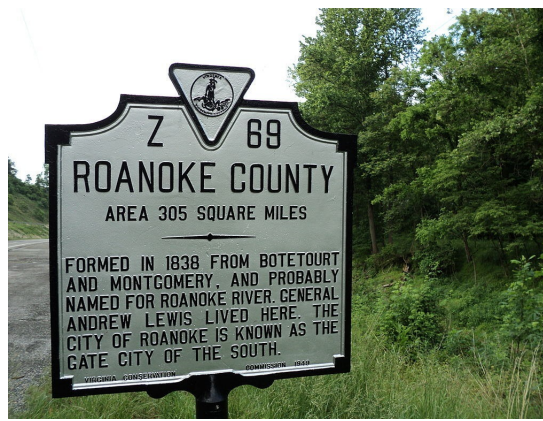
'Vibrant Virginia' book explores urgent topics affecting communities across Virginia's urban-rural continuum

A new book from the Center for Economic and Community Engagement and Virginia Tech Publishing, housed in University Libraries, examines Virginia's urban-rural continuum and offers practical guidance for communities striving for a more resilient and prosperous future.

"Vibrant Virginia: Engaging the Commonwealth to Expand Economic Vitality" presents a multifaceted glimpse into the many ways that regions across the commonwealth are working to cultivate strong, robust, and inclusive economies and how seemingly dissimilar localities may be experiencing very similar challenges.

The eBook (PDF and ePub) can be downloaded for free from the [Virginia Tech Publishing website](https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2022/02/outreach-cece_vibrant-virginia-book.html). An affordable paperback can be purchased [from Amazon](#).

[Read more about the Vibrant Virginia book.](https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2022/02/outreach-cece_vibrant-virginia-book.html) https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2022/02/outreach-cece_vibrant-virginia-book.html



Five-year strategic plan for Roanoke County puts a spotlight on economic recovery

The Center for Economic and Community Engagement developed a five-year strategic plan for Roanoke County's Economic Development Department, providing recommendations to advance the county's economy and help them recover post-pandemic.

Center staff completed secondary and primary data collection, conducted focus group sessions and interviews, and distributed surveys to gain an understanding of community needs.

"I love doing the interview portion of any project because it gives me the opportunity to learn about a community from someone else's eyes and hear their perspective and opinions," said economic development specialist Ashley Posthumus, who co-led the project with associate director Scott Tate.

"Even if you're familiar with an area, you never really know the ins and outs of everything. We had twelve interviews from a variety of stakeholders. They gave some great feedback and ideas on how Roanoke County can develop in the future."

[Read more about the Roanoke County strategic plan.](https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/02/08/cece-completes-five-year-strategic-plan-for-roanoke-county/) <https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/02/08/cece-completes-five-year-strategic-plan-for-roanoke-county/>



Impact analysis focuses on Melwood's AbilityOne program activities

The Center for Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) is partnering with Virginia Tech's Institute for Policy and Governance to conduct an impact analysis and program assessment of the non-profit Melwood's AbilityOne Program activities. The AbilityOne Program is the United States' largest provider of jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities, providing employment opportunities to more than 42,000 individuals.

[Read more about CECE's collaboration with Melwood.](https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/02/24/cece-analyzes-impact-of-melwoods-abilityone-program-activities/) <https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/02/24/cece-analyzes-impact-of-melwoods-abilityone-program-activities/>



Onward NRV data profiles showcase trends in the New River Valley

The Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement worked with [Onward NRV](#) to create a set of 12 profiles that overview important trends in the New River Valley. Housing, colleges and universities, and cost of living are just some of the profiles' focuses. The data profiles are [available as PDF downloads](#) and will be updated twice a year.

"Onward NRV was impressed by the knowledge and professionalism that CECE staff brought to this project," said Katie Boswell, executive director of Onward New River Valley. "These NRV data profiles will provide relevant information about demographics, employment, and wages to site selectors and businesses who are looking to locate in our region."

[Read more about the data profiles.](https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/02/22/cece-works-with-onward-nrv-to-showcase-trends-in-the-new-river-valley/) <https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/02/22/cece-works-with-onward-nrv-to-showcase-trends-in-the-new-river-valley/>



Sarah Lyon-Hill promoted to associate director for research development

The Center for Economic and Community Engagement has promoted Sarah Lyon-Hill to associate director with special responsibility for research development.

In her new role, Lyon-Hill will work to enhance CECE's project portfolio by helping team members build and sustain relationships with community and faculty project partners. She will also offer support for the design, planning, and implementation of applied research and technical assistance projects.

"I am thrilled to continue working with such a wonderful and passionate group of people. I look forward to supporting the team in producing quality research that aptly serves communities and organizations across the commonwealth," Lyon-Hill said.

[Read more about Sarah Lyon-Hill.](https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/01/20/ceces-sarah-lyon-hill-promoted-to-associate-director/) <https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/01/20/ceces-sarah-lyon-hill-promoted-to-associate-director/>