



REGION 2

VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION

COLLABORATION
INSPIRATION
SUCCESS

December 18, 2023

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Save the Date for Upcoming Council Meeting, January 25, 2024

January 25, 2024: GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting, Roanoke, VA. Location and virtual meeting information forthcoming on the GO Virginia Region 2 website.

Celebrate Success with GO Virginia Region 2



Chair of the GOVA Region 2 Council William Eddie Amos and President of Verge Erin Burcham welcomed attendees to the Roanoke Celebrate Success event.

On December 13, GO Virginia Region 2 held an event at the RAMP Regional Accelerator in Roanoke to celebrate success. Region 2 grantees and council members networked with one another and learned more about projects in the region.

Join us for upcoming Celebrate Success events:

- New River Valley [Dec 18, 4:00-6:00pm | COgro Labs, 2200 Kraft Dr, Blacksburg, VA, 24060]
 - Lynchburg [Jan 4, 4:00-6:00pm | VectorSpace, 2004 Memorial Ave, Lynchburg, VA, 24501]
- RSVP here: <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=hGiVYK0Q-kCGPU8yweOjeuMK0wzq71RNkGA0cDpBIxUMEVIQTJEN1QyUFJEOERGTjg1MjFBRkxKQi4u>

Next Submission Deadlines

The application submission deadlines for the next 2 quarters are December 22, 2023 at 5pm, and March 22, 2024 at 5pm.

Join Region 2 staff for an GO Virginia Applicant Q&A from 2-3pm on January 18, 2024. Zoom registration link: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMkdeitqD0rGdNJxoJZpougSmHf1MKc4h9H>.

View the 2024 GO Virginia Region 2 Calendar

The 2024 GO Virginia Region 2 Calendar is now live. View upcoming deadlines and meetings for GO Virginia Region 2: https://cece.vt.edu/content/dam/cece_vt_edu/govirginia_documentation/2024%20GO%20Virginia%20Region%202%20Calendar.pdf

Two Projects Approved for GO Virginia Region 2

RICHMOND—On December 12, 2023, the GO Virginia State Board announced its approval of one new Region 2 project aimed at growing the regional economy. Region 2 consists of the cities of Covington, Lynchburg, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem and the counties of Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke.

Board Approved Project:

ACA Classical & CTE Institute (Appomattox County)

ACA Classical & CTE Institute, a partnership between the County of Appomattox, Central Virginia Community College (CVCC), and the Appomattox Christian Academy (ACA), will develop an institute to offer workforce training for youth and adults in welding and machining. CVCC, which already offers degree-track classes on-site, will operate the welding program at the institute. The facility will enable CVCC to expand its program, now at capacity in Lynchburg, and better prepare graduates for the workforce with space to simulate real-world work experiences. The GO Virginia board approved a total of \$565,000 in state funds for the project, which is leveraging \$1,328,989 in non-state sources.

"This funding will add capacity for 35 more welding students annually throughout the Central Virginia Planning District and enhance the educational experience of every CVCC welding student by introducing the first dedicated fabrication shop for welders-in-training in the region," said Bruce Boone, board chairman of Appomattox Christian Academy. "Every CVCC welding student would have access to the shop, where they would learn related tasks like prep, measuring, and bending, along with welding."

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development administratively approved the following application:

NRV Materials and Machinery Cluster Scale-Up (New River Valley Regional Commission)

NRV Materials and Machinery Cluster Scale-Up will convene regional partners and develop a 10-year roadmap for supporting materials and machinery scale-up in the New River Valley. The process will include building and strengthening the capacity of the coalition of NRV stakeholders interested in growing the materials and machinery cluster through regular discussions and planning; mapping out assets and resources that could support industry scale up in the NRV; and identifying and prioritizing unique projects that could support ecosystem growth and transformation of the cluster. The project will build on the successful application to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for a Tech Hubs designation and is in partnership with the Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement and Onward New River Valley. The GO Virginia board approved a total of \$98,859 in state funds for the project, which is leveraging \$109,000 in non-state sources.

"We can tell from our application development that a coalition already exists informally with relationships between firms, local and regional economic developers, and higher education partners, but we know it needs to be much more robust to take it to the next level," said Kevin Byrd, executive director of the New River Valley Regional Commission. "With a focus on additive materials and advanced manufacturing, the project will help the region move forward in regards to challenges such as the electrification of vehicles. The final roadmap will scope out and detail 2-3 prioritized projects, designate regional champions for advancing those projects, identify possible funding sources for those projects, and propose steps for advancing those projects."

Meet a GOVA Region 2 Grantee: Marjette Upshur, Airport Commerce Park Regional Development



Marjette Upshur has served as the City of Lynchburg's economic development director for 19 years. For the first part of her career, she worked in banking and insurance. She is an alumna of Mary Baldwin College and a NYU Creative Cities certification program graduate. Her GO Virginia project, Airport Commerce Park Regional Development, is a collaboration between the City of Lynchburg, Campbell County, and the Lynchburg Regional Airport. The project will advance the Airport Commerce Park site from a Virginia Business Ready Sites Program characterization of Tier 2 to Tier 3 to strengthen its competitive position in the global marketplace and attract advanced manufacturing and technology, specifically focusing on aerospace.

1. What is your favorite part of your job as director of economic development for the City of Lynchburg?

All of the businesses and people I get to work with. I always consider it a great honor when businesses share their challenges and opportunities with me; their trust is how I judge whether I'm doing a good job, building strong relationships, and adding value. Also, there's never a dull moment. I work for the city with many other departments, and we intersect on multiple levels. I've always liked working on a team. You don't have to be the expert on everything because you've got a whole group of professionals you can tap into.

2. What made you interested in a career in economic development?

In my previous career, my professional journey primarily revolved around sales, where I engaged in marketing and shouldered direct, hands-on responsibility for delivering products or services. This experience allowed me to cultivate connections with numerous customers, emphasizing my commitment to building lasting relationships. Given my longstanding involvement in the business-to-business realm and my genuine concern for the well-being of my community, a natural affinity for public service emerged. When the opportunity arose for me to transition into a role in economic development, I was already deeply connected with many businesses in the area.

3. What inspired your GO Virginia project?

Conversations about this project started over twenty years ago. The city owns a large parcel in Campbell County. This property is adjacent to a 40-plus acre parcel owned by Campbell County. These properties sit right "outside

the fence” of the Lynchburg Regional Airport. This land at the airport is one of the largest contiguous parcels in the area and is very valuable due to its location.

Mike Davidson, director of economic development for Campbell County, advocated for many years that the City and Campbell County should consider developing an airport commerce park. However, he had difficulty making headway on the project as we knew it would be expensive to develop. In 2015, I worked on a master plan for the site with Mike, and we presented it to the Lynchburg Regional Airport Commission. With a plan, we would at least have something to show to interested prospects and had hoped to gain traction with our elected officials. This traction did not materialize. As is often the case, there are many competing priorities for municipalities.

In 2019, Andrew LaGala became Lynchburg's new airport director. He came to the City from Tampa International Airport, which has an airport commerce park. Having an enthusiastic partner from the airport is essential, and Andrew has been very supportive. In 2021, our new city manager, Wynter Benda, met with the Campbell County administrator, Frank Rogers, about the project. They gave Nina Rezia, Campbell County's Economic Development Director, who picked up the torch on this project after Mike retired, and me the green light to proceed with another master plan and due diligence on what it would take to develop. We completed a new master plan and applied to GO Virginia and the Virginia Business Ready Sites program afterward.

I'm so thankful to have gotten a GO Virginia grant and overcome the barriers we faced. We came together with a common goal and worked to apply for the GO Virginia grant. We continue to work together to bring this Airport Commerce Park to life. I see this project as a real testimonial to municipal cooperation.

4. What are the next steps for the project?

Complete due diligence with the GO Virginia Grant and collaborate with the Airport and the Federal Aviation Administration on the path forward for building infrastructure and utilities. This project has been included in the city's five-year Capital Improvement Plan with the estimates.

5. What do you like most about being a GO Virginia grantee?

Having the Region 2 council excited about our project and for them to walk alongside us to promote to the State and DHCD. We've worked so long and hard on this. Having the confidence of this group of professionals was a real point of pride for me.

6. What is one of the most memorable places you've ever visited?

Iceland was like being in another world; the topography is unreal. I recently visited Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. It's the longest known cave in the world, and to date, has 426 miles that have been mapped and explored. It was truly unique.

7. What activities do you like to do outside of work?

I love being outside. I'm a runner, and I like to hike. I also like to knit. We knit hats, gloves, scarves, and sweaters for a charitable event that happens once a year called "Chase the Chill." I try to incorporate at least one item a month, so I have 12 things to donate to the community when the event comes around on the first of January.

Meet a GOVA Region 2 Council Member: Greg Feldmann, Skyline Capital Strategies



Greg Feldmann grew up in Roanoke and started his career in finance with Dominion Bankshares in 1979, where he stayed for 12 years, ending his time there as president of Dominion Capital Markets Corporation. Beginning in 1991, he held a variety of roles focused on investment banking, private equity, and corporate advisory work, serving as vice president and treasurer for Ferguson Andrews & Associates, senior consultant for ESOP Services, and managing director of Gryphon Capital Partners. In 2004, he joined FNB Corporation and later became president & CEO of First National Bank, which merged to form StellarOne Bank, for which he also served as president, CEO, and a board director. In 2011, he co-founded Skyline Capital Strategies with Roanoke based law firm Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black, where he serves as president. He graduated from Hampden-Sydney College with a bachelor's degree in Classical Studies. He has been happily married to his wife Betsy for 41 years. Their daughter, Anne Tyler Howell, a community planner and development professional, resides in Charleston, South Carolina with her husband, Drew. Son Ned Feldmann is a data scientist with EY and recently relocated from Chicago back to Roanoke with his wife Haley.

1. What is your favorite part of your job as president of Skyline Capital Strategies?

I love working with a wide variety of people and companies. Some are early stage companies focused on technology, and some are mature companies engaged in mergers and acquisitions. It is very rewarding to help management teams and boards build their companies and achieve their business goals.

2. What made you interested in a career in finance?

When I graduated from college, Dominion Bankshares was offering a management training program. I went through that program, thinking it would be a good foundation that might lead either to a career in banking or give me some

ideas for what I wanted to do in the business world. It turned out to be a good marriage between my interests and also allowed me to work in my home region. Community banking is about helping local individuals and businesses succeed financially. It's a way of giving back to your local economy, which has always been a big motivator for me.

3. What are some similarities between your role at Skyline Capital and your work on the Region 2 Council?

I have done a lot of work over the course of my professional life with entrepreneurial companies. For example, I currently work with startup founders that are trying to figure out how to fund their businesses. GO Virginia also works to improve the entrepreneurial environment in the region. Further, the grants GO Virginia funds to enhance workforce, sites, and other economic development infrastructure in the region where I've lived and worked my entire life very much align with my interest to see this area prosper.

4. What are you looking forward to learning or doing as a Region 2 council member?

All of us want to see the grants we fund translate into having big economic impact. But that's going to take time because a lot of what we're working on does not have a short-term return. I'm going to enjoy watching the evolution of the grant work and the manifestation of tangible results that will improve economic circumstances of our region. Over the last 40 years of my time working here, I've seen this economy change in many ways no one could envision. For example, when I first came back to the Roanoke area, Norfolk and Western railroad was the dominant corporate entity and employer in the valley. Now, while the railroad still has an important presence, it has greatly diminished as a local employer. The whole fabric of our local economy has changed in the last few decades, and it will continue to change as technology and markets evolve. Daunting perhaps, but also exciting! As a region, we're in a sweet spot. We have an abundance of colleges and universities and a major research university presence in the form of Virginia Tech. If we parlay these educational assets, along with our business, government and workforce correctly, we're going to be successful because we are creating the kind of knowledge workforce the future economy demands. And if we capture bright young people to stay here in the region, that's going to be a good thing long-term.

5. What was the last book you read that you couldn't put down?

I usually read about 8 to 10 books at a time in episodic fashion. In the past month, I've finished a history of the U.S. involvement in Europe during World War II and a book on the history of central European kingdoms. Currently, I'm reading a book on the history of Europe and another book on the history of Greece and its impact on western civilization.

6. What activities do you like to do in your spare time?

I live on top of a mountain, and we do a fair amount of hiking and walking on nearby trails. I also play and teach pickleball. And I enjoy lecturing at local colleges and mentoring company founders on a volunteer basis.

7. What is the best advice you've ever received?

Don't be afraid to fail. I have been willing to step out and take some risks in my career. And it's worked out. I haven't always been successful, but I've always learned. The adage of 'learning to live and living to learn' is a driver for me. So many of the opportunities I've had in life allowed me broaden my experiences and skills sets, which has been truly rewarding.

GO Virginia Region 2 In The News

Abingdon workforce hub gets \$1.5 million gift; more ... (Cardinal News)

GO Virginia economic development program is improving regional collaboration, state study finds (Cardinal News)
