



REGION 2

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

COLLABORATION  
INSPIRATION  
SUCCESS

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January 7, 2026

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# Join us to celebrate GO TEC's launch in the NRV!



Please join Montgomery County Public Schools on January 22 at 1 P.M. to celebrate the launch of the first Great Opportunities in Technology and Engineering Careers (GO TEC®) lab in the New River Valley.

What: GO TEC Launch Ribbon Cutting

When: Thursday, January 22nd, 2026 at 1:00 pm

Where: Christiansburg Middle School- 1205 Buffalo Dr., Christiansburg, VA, 24073

Who: Local Officials, Manufacturers, Economic Development Departments, and Educators

[RSVP to the GO TEC Launch Ribbon Cutting here.](#)

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## Next submission deadline: March 13, 2026 by 5 p.m

There is \$1,028,992 available for Region 2 grants, with up to \$52,800 for planning grants.

[Apply on our website.](#)

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## Mark your calendar for upcoming meetings

**January 29, 2026:** GO Virginia Region 2 Executive Committee, 1-3 PM, Roanoke Higher Education Center, 108 N Jefferson St, Roanoke, VA 24016

**February 10, 2026:** GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting, 1-3 PM, Melrose Plaza Conference Room, 2502 Melrose Ave NW, Roanoke, VA 24017

**April 15, 2026:** GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting, 1-3 PM, Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, 4 Riverside Circle, Roanoke, VA 24016

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# GO Virginia State Board approves two Region 2 projects

RICHMOND—On December 9, 2025, the GO Virginia State Board approved the following Region 2 projects aimed at growing the regional economy.

## Board Approved Projects:

### Blue Ridge Innovation Corridor Vision 2050

Through this statewide competitive project led by GO Virginia Region 3 in collaboration with Region 2, the Blue Ridge Innovation Corridor (BRIC) will develop a megaregional playbook called Vision 2050. This project will guide economic growth in the BRIC region, which includes the counties of Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Halifax, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Pulaski, and Roanoke and the cities of Danville, Martinsville, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem. BRIC is a coalition of more than 50 CEOs and institutional leaders focused on advancing this quickly growing region, which is Virginia's fourth-largest economic engine.

The goal of the Vision 2050 playbook is to position the BRIC region as a national hub in three traded sectors: advanced manufacturing, life sciences and biotechnology, and IT and emerging technology. The playbook will develop four deliverables: a strategy for scaling the three sectors; a prioritized list and sequencing plan to invest in infrastructure such as transportation and broadband; a roadmap outlining how BRIC will fund its strategy; and a framework for connecting BRIC's assets into one cohesive innovation ecosystem.

[Learn more about the Blue Ridge Innovation Corridor.](#)

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### Regional Initiative for Startups and Entrepreneurship (RISE)

Through Project RISE, Virginia Tech's Corporate Research Center will expand the offerings of the Entrepreneurship Resource Center (ERC) by supporting existing businesses, cultivating new startups, increasing job creation, and boosting patent activity for university-based ventures in the Roanoke and New River Valley, complementing ongoing regional investments.

Project RISE will deploy technical commercialization assistance to move promising technologies to market; establish an entrepreneurial mentorship and development hub activated through regular programming within the ERC; and provide access to on-call experts and AI, digital, and cloud-based tools to support entrepreneurs.

[Learn more about Project RISE.](#)

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# Meet a GOVA Region 2 Grantee: Leo Priddy, New River Valley Site Advancement Strategy



*Leo Priddy is an economic development planner II for the New River Valley Regional Commission. Earlier in his career, he worked for the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce and served as a small business advisor with the Greater Roanoke and New River Valley Small Business Development Center. He graduated from Virginia Tech in 2016 with a degree in communications studies. He has also completed two years of the Institute for Organization Management and participated in Leadership New River Valley.*

## **1. What is your favorite part of your role at the New River Valley Regional Commission?**

I enjoy getting to work with all the localities in the region and seeing how individual projects fit into the bigger picture. Each community has its own priorities and helping bring those together in a way that supports the entire New River Valley is meaningful. I also enjoy the mix of research, planning, and collaboration.

## **2. What inspired the Site Advancement Strategy project?**

Our region knows site readiness is a barrier. We have strong assets: a skilled workforce, major institutions like Virginia Tech, Radford University, and New River Community College, and a quality of life that draws people here, but we don't have enough competitive sites for companies that are ready to move quickly. This need has also been reinforced by partners like Onward NRV, who see firsthand how site availability shapes business attraction efforts in the region. This project grew out of the need to take a coordinated, regionwide effort to site availability.

## **3. What have you accomplished with the project so far, and what steps do you plan to take?**

So far, we've collected site inventories and background materials from each locality, including previous studies and any known barriers that have slowed sites down. We completed the RFP and consultant selection process, which involved working closely with local partners to make sure the recommended firm reflects what the region needs.

As we move into the next phase, we will begin deeper evaluations and industry alignment work. From there, we'll develop clear recommendations on what steps will meaningfully advance our priority sites. The goal is to give the region a practical roadmap that improves our competitiveness and guides future investment.

#### **4. As you move forward with this project, is there anything in particular you are looking forward to learning or doing?**

I'm looking forward to diving deeper into the industry side of this. Part of the value of this project is making sure our sites aren't just technically ready, but competitive for the industries we're trying to attract. I want to better understand which sites align with which industry profiles, where we have real strengths, and what gaps we need to address so site selectors see the New River Valley as a viable option.

This process will help us identify which industries are the best fit for each site, what each site needs to meet those expectations, and how the region can position itself more strategically. It also gives our localities clearer guidance on how to shape their long-term site strategies with industry competitiveness in mind.

[Read more about Leo Priddy.](#)

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## **Meet a GO Virginia Region 2 Council Member: Nick Kessler, Kubota of Lynchburg**



*Nick Kessler has over 32 years of proven success in finance and sales in the Lynchburg region. For the past seven years, he has thrived in outside sales and relationship management roles with Kubota of Lynchburg and Confident Equipment of Roanoke. Committed to community service, Kessler serves on the Bedford County Planning Commission and the Bedford County Board of Zoning Appeals. He is a board member for the Bedford Chamber of Commerce and Lynchburg Regional Homebuilders Association and is actively involved in the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance.*

*Kessler completed his education in finance and business at Liberty University.*

## **1. Over the course of your career, what is your proudest accomplishment?**

I'm proudest of the relationships I've built over the course of my career. My sales are based off relationships, and I love getting to know my customers and making sure I find them the right equipment or product.

## **2. What do you like most about working at Kubota of Lynchburg and Confident Equipment of Roanoke?**

I love being able to go out to customers' properties and job sites. That's when I really get to know the customer. By visiting their properties, I get to see exactly what they're trying to accomplish with the equipment and what their challenges are.

I also love that I am constantly learning; my education never stops. A lot of my customers are very different, with industries ranging from agriculture to construction. When I find out something that I don't know much about, I enjoy taking the extra time to become as knowledgeable as I can.

## **3. What projects are you working on right now?**

Kubota has opened a new location in Montvale, and that's been a big expansion for us. I've been building new relationships and doing a lot of cold calling and marketing in the Roanoke, Botetourt, and Craig County areas to help build sales avenues for our newest locations.

## **4. What do you look forward to working on with the GO Virginia Region 2 council?**

It was great attending my first meeting and getting to know other council members and sub-grantees. I enjoyed learning about different avenues that I don't have experience in and seeing how welcoming everyone was. I look forward to learning a lot as well as bringing my experience to the council.

## **5. What is your favorite part of living in Region 2?**

I love the people, the scenery, and the outdoors opportunities. I've been in the Lynchburg region since 1991, and it's a great area. You're just a few minutes away from the Blue Ridge Parkway, the National Forest, and Smith Mountain Lake. If you want to go to a big city, we're not very far from that either. I was born in West Virginia, grew up in southern Maine, and always knew that I was going to come back south. When I applied to colleges, I fell in love with Liberty University.

[Read more about Nick Kessler.](#)

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## **Region 2 in the news**

[Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces \\$6.2 Million in Growth and Opportunity Virginia Grants](#) (Virginia.gov)

[GO Virginia awards technology, life sciences grants](#) (Cardinal News)

[Project Rise takes advantage of grant money to help young entrepreneurs grow](#) (WSLS)

[Virginia DHCD approves GO Virginia Region 2 project focused on business economic resilience](#) (Center for Economic and Community Engagement Website)

[Virginia DHCD approves GO Virginia Region 2 project focused on robotics program planning](#) (Center for Economic and Community Engagement Website)

[Virginia DHCD approves Region 2 project to upskill electric and automated vehicle workforce](#) (Center for Economic and Community Engagement Website)