



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

COLLABORATION
INSPIRATION
SUCCESS



On January 22, 2020, GO Virginia Region 2 council members, grantees, local government, and Virginia Tech staff gathered at Virginia Western's new STEM building to celebrate and showcase the 15 GO Virginia projects aimed at growing jobs in Region 2. GO Virginia Region 2 also launched their new website, which displays videos and case studies that seek to tell the stories of GOVA Region 2's grantees.

The Chair of Go Virginia Region 2 Raymond Smoot said, "This is really the first time that this region has come together to work on matters of economic development and workforce capacity...The persons on the GO Virginia Region 2 Council have a spirit of wanting to think regionally and advance programs across the entire region 2 area."

"You've seen where we've been," Vice Chair Ab Boxley said. "But where we go is really up to you."

FOLLOW US



There are over \$1.5 million in collaborative grant funds available for Region 2 focused projects and over \$14 million in statewide competitive funds for multi-regional projects. GO Virginia Region 2 is currently accepting proposals for projects that seek to address the growth areas identified in the Growth and Diversification plan and that will grow higher wage jobs. Full applications are due by 5 p.m. on April 15th. Learn more [here](#).

Visit the new GO Virginia website [here](#).



Future GO Virginia Meetings

March 17, 2020 - 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm - Capitol Building, House Room 1, 1000 Bank St. Richmond, VA 23219 - GO Virginia State Board Meeting

April 21, 2020 - 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Roanoke Higher Education Center, Room 701A, 108 North Jefferson Street, Roanoke, VA 24016 - GO Virginia Region 2 Executive Committee Meeting

May 6, 2020 - 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Board Room, Carillion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, 1906 Belleview Ave SE, Roanoke, VA 24014 - GO Virginia Region 2 Full Council Meeting



Interview with Sandy Davis, GOVA Region 2 Council Member

Sandy Davis has been a member of the Region 2 Council since it was formed in 2017. When asked what made her want her to become a member, she said, "I strongly believe that if we are to sustain solid economic growth, we need to broaden our thinking beyond our communities and region. I saw GO Virginia as a means to gather support of worthwhile projects."

Davis first worked for the State Health Department, followed by 14 years in banking. For the past 38 years, she has owned and operated BCR Real Estate and Property Management with offices in Blacksburg and Radford. She was introduced to the economic development field while working in banking. "In the banking industry, I worked closely with new businesses and industries in soliciting their relocation to the New River Valley, resulting in many new jobs, increased housing needs, and positive economic growth in the area," Davis said.

On her favorite part of being a council member, she said, "My favorite part is hearing the presentations of groups of their plans for outstanding projects, which will benefit the localities, region and state, and the feeling of being a tiny part of helping to bring something large and good for our region. I enjoy meeting the leaders from the different localities and sharing ideas on how we can expand our reach to embrace new formulas to address old and new needs of our region and state."

Davis said in the future she would like to see GO Virginia continue to monitor approved projects and encourage additional projects that will also benefit the region.

"We are discussing unaddressed needs, such as broadband, and I anticipate a positive solution as we work together to determine the various obstacles and how to overcome them. There are not always quick solutions, but we have talented members who are serious about making a worthwhile difference in our region and the state. I believe GO Virginia's future is bright."



Interview with Erin Burcham, GOVA Region 2 Grantee

Erin Burcham, Director of Talent Solutions at the Roanoke Regional Partnership, took an interest in the GOVA program because her team wanted to design projects that would make an impact on the region and help brand southwest Virginia as a destination for talent. Burcham's project, Stopping the Brain Drain, was a collaboration between The Roanoke Regional Partnership, Onward NRV, and Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance with a focus on retaining talent in the region.

Erin Burcham received her undergraduate degree in public relations and communications from the University of South Carolina. She also received a master's degree in Leadership Studies from Virginia Tech. "I was interested in communications and public relations because of the wide variety of things you can do with the degree, including working in non-profit and corporate sectors," she said.

Burcham's favorite part of the Stopping the Brain Drain Study was working with higher education, local government, and the business community, as well as getting college students involved in their community, whether that was participating in outdoor activities, or visiting gaming centers, museums and other sites. The project allowed for a better understanding of a college student's perspective, which helped grantees with creating marketing and programming

content. Some examples of programming content include: young professionals events, mentoring and internship programs, and affinity groups.

Burcham said, “The most surprising thing about the study was that many college students had neither a positive or negative opinion of Region 2 and hadn’t even considered it as an option, which provided us with a blank canvas to work with.”

A challenge of retaining talent in the region is students may have a lack of awareness of professional opportunities, said Burcham. By making companies more visible, young professionals can see there is growth in their region and they will not have to leave in order to move up the ranks in a company.

When asked what her advice would be for a recent college graduate, Burcham said, “Be open-minded and flexible and be open to opportunities even if they’re not what you had in mind. Even if the job may seem like it is not a perfect fit, it will allow you to learn and gain new skills.”

- [GO Virginia marks two years of boosting economic development](#)
 - [GO Virginia Region 2 celebrates successes driven by grantees](#)
-