Regional Roundup

A Memo From the Executive Committee to the GOVA Region 2 Council

June 2024

GO Virginia Region 2 unveiled a new video, which tells the story of the impact the program has had on the 18 localities in the New River Valley, Lynchburg, and Roanoke-Alleghany regions.

[Watch the video here.](#)

GO Virginia State Board Approves Two Region 2 Projects

On June 4, 2024, the GO Virginia State Board announced its approval of two new Region 2 projects aimed at growing the regional economy.

Board Approved Projects:

Developing IT & Cybersecurity Certification Pipeline to Advance Cluster Growth (Radford University Division of Economic Development and Corporate Education in partnership with the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative Southwest Virginia)

Developing IT & Cybersecurity Certification Pipeline to Advance Cluster Growth will increase the number of professionals with IT and cybersecurity certifications, with the goal of supporting the growth of critical in-demand higher wage occupations in Region 2's IT & Emerging Tech cluster as well as other priority clusters that utilize similar talent. The project will enhance coordination and communication among higher education partners (Radford University, Virginia Tech, New River Community College) and regional employers to align certification pipeline with cluster needs; develop a pipeline of talent from partnering institutions with IT and cybersecurity certifications through on-campus outreach; and connect regional employers to the pipeline of credentialed professionals to fill in-demand occupations in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. The project will also establish a testing center at The HUB at Radford for Economic Development to make certification testing for IT and cybersecurity certifications more accessible to students and incumbent workers in the New River Valley. The GO Virginia board approved a total of $202,872 in state funds for the project, which is leveraging $116,863 in non-state sources.

"This collaborative project between Radford University, Virginia Tech and New River Community College will tap into existing courses and programs at these institutions to create a pipeline of graduates with IT and cybersecurity certifications to fill critical, in-demand jobs in the region," said Charlie Jewell, director of economic development and community engagement for Radford University.

Educating Engineers for the Region 2 Workforce (Randolph College)

Educating Engineers for the Region 2 Workforce seeks to expand a qualified workforce in the multi-disciplinary engineering program in mechatronics and robotics. The program will include enrollment opportunities in partnership with Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) and will include paid internships for students going through the program. Additionally, the program will launch a FANUC or FESTO robotics certification program in conjunction with CVCC and will provide community college students the ability to complete level 2 of the FANUC or NC3 certification. The GO Virginia board approved a total of $367,000 in state funds for the project, which is leveraging $379,784 in non-state sources.

"The engineering program was created through a collaboration between local colleges, school systems, and employers as part of an advisory board to identify how Randolph can meet the need for a talent pipeline that starts in local high schools and ends with Region 2 employment," said Peter Sheldon, professor of physics and engineering and division head of natural science, mathematics, and engineering at Randolph College.

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

Career Pathway Development Initiatives for the Lynchburg Region (Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance)

Career Pathway Development Initiatives for the Lynchburg Region proposes a two-pronged approach to better understand the landscape of the materials and machinery manufacturing industry in Region 2's nuclear and energy sector. This initiative focuses on the nuclear/energy sector and educating the educators regarding manufacturing workforce opportunities. The region will hire a consultant to complete a skills gap analysis and workforce sector strategy that will inform the region's immediate, short, and long-term needs in their largest sectors: nuclear and energy. Additionally, the region will develop and launch the region's first Educator Academy, which will consist of employer-school leadership workshops and employer facility tours. The GO Virginia board approved a total of $40,500 in state funds for the project, which is leveraging $37,500 in non-state sources.

"The Educator Academy is designed to educate the educators on the merits and skillsets required for students to be successful in manufacturing and the trades so they are better prepared to advise K-12 students. Educators and manufacturing leaders will engage in a mutual discovery that will lead to a more informed presentation of workforce options in our thriving region. The Lynchburg Region is America's Nuclear City. We are the edge for nuclear and energy innovation; therefore, the skills gap analysis and strategy will provide the data necessary to continue to sustain and grow the sectors," said Megan Lucas, CEO & chief economic development officer for the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance.

GO Virginia Region 2 In The News

[Radford University gets grant to collaborate on IT and cybersecurity](#) (The Roanoke Times)

[Radford University receives grant over $200k to strengthen IT & Cybersecurity workforce development](#) (WFXR)

[Radford University secures GO Virginia grant to strengthen IT and Cybersecurity workforce development](#) (Radford University News)

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