



REGION 2

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

COLLABORATION
INSPIRATION
SUCCESS

October 24, 2023

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Next Submission Deadline: December 22, 2023 by 5 p.m.

As of October 24, 2023, we have \$693,878 in funding available for Region 2 implementation (per capita) grants and up to \$151,141 for Region 2 planning (enhanced capacity building) grants.

Learn more on our website: <https://cece.vt.edu/GOVAR2/RequestforProposals.html>

GO Virginia Region 2 Council Approves Two Projects



The GO Virginia Region 2 council approved the following two projects at their meeting on October 19, 2023. The projects will go before the state board on December 12, 2023.

Developing IT & Cybersecurity Certification Pipeline to Advance Cluster Growth (ITCCP)

The Radford University Division of Economic Development and Corporate Education is applying for a 2-year implementation (per capita) grant to increase the number of professionals with IT and cybersecurity certifications, 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.

New River Valley Materials and Machinery Cluster Scale-Up

The New River Valley Regional Commission is applying for a 1-year planning grant to convene regional partners, build capacity of the coalition, and develop a 10-year roadmap for supporting materials and machinery scale-up in the New River Valley.

Meet a GOVA Region 2 Grantee: Brian Hamilton, Falling Branch Corporate Park Phase II



Brian Hamilton has worked in economic development since 1996, serving as economic development specialist for Roanoke County, economic development manager for the city of Austin, Texas, and now as economic development director for Montgomery County. Before his career in economic development, he was a police officer for three years. He has a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Virginia Tech and a Masters of Business Administration from Radford University. The Falling Branch Corporate Park Phase II Regional Site Development project will build upon a regional 35-acre site, raising it from a Virginia Economic Development Partnership Tier 4 to a Tier 5. The project will entail grading one 20-acre graded pad; installing water, sewer, natural gas, and stormwater; extending electricity; and constructing a road leading to the site.

1. What is your favorite part of your role as economic development director for Montgomery County?

It is the diversity of things I get to do. We do everything from existing industry visits and product development to new industry attraction and workforce development. It is this spread of different items that allows me to always stay interested.

2. What inspired the Falling Branch Corporate Park Phase II project?

In 2012, our 46-acre pad in Montgomery County was filled. As a result, we only had a 16.9-acre pad available, and a new company wanted a minimum of 25 acres. So, we looked to an adjacent land owner and bought an additional 125 acres – which this project is focused on – so we could continue to grow the park and add jobs.

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

We worked with Federal Express to construct a 251,000-square-foot distribution center that cost about 37 million dollars to build. We are currently working on site plans and will bid them out in January.

4. Can you tell me about the long-term vision you have for the site?

The long-term vision for the site is a 300,000 square foot building plus stormwater. In 3-5 years, I see us having the road leading to the site, water, sewer, and fiber installed, the pad graded, and hopefully a prospect sitting on it.

5. Who are the partners you are working with on this project and what do you like most about working with them?

We're working with the Town of Christiansburg and the Montgomery County Economic Development Authority (EDA). The EDA plays the development role for the county. The Town of Christiansburg contributed water and sewer to get to Phase I, and they also provided \$300,000 for water and sewer for Phase II. The partnership between the Town, County, and the EDA is extremely important.

6. What is your favorite part of being a GO Virginia grantee?

The state shares on a local level the funds that are needed. We're going to put \$4.2 million into this project plus \$324,000 from GO Virginia and \$300,000 from the Town of Christiansburg. GO Virginia helps us get across the finish line as far as cost is concerned.

7. What is the most memorable place you've ever visited?

The Grand Canyon.

8. What hobbies and activities do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy spending time with my family, reading, and hiking.

Meet a GOVA Region 2 Council Member: Richmond Vincent, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys



Richmond Vincent graduated from Arizona State University with a bachelor's in political science and a master's in business administration. He served as the operations manager for Empire Southwest for a decade before becoming manager at a pharmaceutical benefits management company. He started his career in banking in 2005, working for organizations including JPMorgan Chase & Co, Compass Bank, and the National Bank of Arizona. In 2010, he stepped into the role of senior vice president of workforce development for the Goodwill of Central Arizona. He took on the position of President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of South Mississippi in 2017, and in 2021 became President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Valleys in Roanoke, Virginia.

1. What is your favorite part of your role as President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Valleys?

I enjoy having the opportunity to challenge my team members and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone. That discomfort results in their growth. I take the same approach to our community. Just because something hasn't been done doesn't mean it can't be done. That's one of the reasons why we're engaged in this transformational project of bringing a grocery store, a bank, a wellness center, and an adult high school to Northwest Roanoke. Everyone said it couldn't be done, and I'm proud our organization was the one who could step up and get it accomplished. Challenging the status quo is what I enjoy most about this role.

2. What are some of the projects you have been involved in during your time at Goodwill Industries of the Valleys?

We offered a youth internship program that exposed youth to career occupations. Especially in this region, a lot of the youth don't get the opportunity to learn about the emerging careers that exist. We had the opportunity to host the program and introduce youth to possible career paths. The second is this transformational project for a region that desperately needs it. There's a massive food desert here in Northwest Roanoke. The grocery store will eradicate that and will also bring family sustaining wage jobs to the market. The adult high school, called the Excel Center, will help those who do not have a GED or high school diploma – 14,000 individuals in Roanoke Valley alone – achieve their high school equivalency and acquire an industry recognized credential. The school will give them the opportunity to further their education and development at one of the community colleges or universities in the region.

3. What is your proudest accomplishment over the course of your career?

Seeing members of my executive team pursue their dreams and take on CEO positions throughout the country. I've been blessed to see several folks become CEOs at other organizations, and even now, we have multiple leaders who are primed and prepared to take on that opportunity if they so choose.

4. Can you talk about why a program like GO Virginia is important for community and economic development?

The work they're doing in this region is so critical. I'm excited the commonwealth took this regional approach. At Goodwill, although we're a nonprofit, we are a social enterprise whose business relies on donations provided to us by the folks in our community. If we can bring more business to this region and if we can bring higher wages, that means more opportunity for our organization as well. I have a vested interest in the success of this region, and GO Virginia gives us that extra push to grow the region to its fullest capacity.

5. What do you look forward to seeing GO Virginia Region 2 do more of in the future?

Providing a foundation to prepare the qualified workforce here and leveraging those that are here. Instead of having to pull talent from other states, we can employ our own workers because they're already prepared and ready for those emerging occupations we are pursuing through GO Virginia.

6. What is a book you read recently you would recommend?

I recommend *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson. We're moving so much faster than we ever moved before, and this book can help communities and organizations prepare for change in the future.

7. What hobbies and activities do you like to do in your spare time?

My wife and I like to exercise. During the week, we are full-contact leaders, so we also rest a lot. She listens to music, and I watch football.

GO Virginia Region 2 In The News

Two out-of-town businesses are part of the Roanoke-based regional accelerator's fall 2023 class (Cardinal News)

Two regional projects get green light (The Roanoke Times)

GO Virginia announces 2 awards in Southwest Virginia; more ... (Cardinal News)

Bedford firing up tech training (Virginia Business)
