**WPPDC Advances Regional Food Guide**

The West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) has nearly completed its local food guide for the region, entitled *Virginia’s West Piedmont Local Foods Guide*. The guide is a publication intended to provide area residents and those wishing to visit the region with information about where they can purchase locally-produced foods and value-added products, as well as lodging establishments that can accommodate them.

The content of the guide includes specific information about many local producers including name, address, phone number, e-mail address (if available), and products produced or accommodations available; a visual matrix which provides the reader with an overview of goods and services offered by each establishment; and a map illustrating a variety of these establishments in the region. Categories of producers contained in the guide include Artisan Food Products; Community Supported Agriculture; Farmers’ Markets; Farm Tours/Agritourism; Fruits & Vegetables; Lodging; Meat, Cheese & Dairy; Nursery/Greenhouse; Roadside/Local Food Stand; Specialty Product (Organic); U-Pick; and Winery. Local products range from common fruits and vegetables to locally-produced beef and lamb to a variety of value-added products such as honey, jams and jellies, baked goods, and natural soaps and body lotions.

Information for the guide was gathered from a local food producers’ survey, which was a collaboration between the WPPDC and Field to Friends—a local farmers’ coalition, and research by WPPDC staff using sources such as Virginia Grown—a publication of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Franklin County Fresh Foods, and other local information. The guide can be viewed online in the near future at www.wppdc.org.

**Danville Elementary School Earns National Blue Ribbon Award**

Forest Hills Elementary School in Danville is among ten schools in Virginia to be recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School. The program recognizes public and private K-12 schools that are superior academically or which have demonstrated significant improvements in student achievement. One of two benchmarks are used to select schools for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. These include state assessment performance or performance on national standardized tests, which is applicable to private schools, or schools encompassing at least a 40 percent student body from disadvantaged backgrounds and which have boosted achievement through national standardized tests or state assessments.

Forest Hills Elementary was honored for consistent performance; this has been the case despite more rigorous statewide Standards of Learning exams and other challenges. Forest Hills’ teachers were credited for enabling the school to be consistently successful.

The school’s principal will accept the award when she attends a conference and awards ceremony honoring the 2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools recipients in Washington, D.C. in November.
Production of West Piedmont Regional Promotional Video

“Live, Work, and Play in Virginia’s West Piedmont Region,” a regional promotional video created by the West Piedmont Planning District Commission in partnership with Patrick Henry Community College has been produced and is available on YouTube. The intent of the video is to draw attention to the region’s many exceptional attributes and its outstanding quality of life.

The video is just over four minutes in length and promotes the region’s abundant recreational activities including trails, state and national parks, and minor league baseball; the health and educational institutions that are available; the region’s low cost of living; and the many advantages to conducting business in the region including the availability of land and industrial parks, low utility costs, the presence of highly-skilled workers with an excellent work ethic, low labor costs, and proximity to various modes of transportation. The video concludes with the narrator stating that “We think you’ll agree that the West Piedmont Region is a great place to visit—just be careful, you might just want to stay.”

The video is available for viewing at www.wppdc.org.

Elements of Water and Wastewater Service in the West Piedmont Planning District

The table at the top right, entitled Municipal Water Service in the West Piedmont Planning District, provides a wealth of information pertaining to municipal water services in each of the localities served in the region. Information provided in this table includes the number of residential water units (connections), the number of non-residential water units (connections), a variety of water rate data, the year the last service fee change went into effect, and other information.

The table at the bottom right, entitled Wastewater Service in the West Piedmont Planning District, provides much of the same information as the table above it, but only with regard to sanitary sewer service.

### Municipal Water Service in the West Piedmont Planning District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th># Residential Water Units</th>
<th># Non-Residential Water Units</th>
<th>Residential Water Rate Inside (5,000 gal./month)</th>
<th>Residential Water Rate Outside (5,000 gal./month)</th>
<th>Last Water Rate Change</th>
<th>Water Rate - Business Inside (1 million gal./month)</th>
<th>Residential Connection Fee</th>
<th>Residential Capital Recovery Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Virginia Water Authority - Franklin County</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$5,400.00</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
<td>$2,500.00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>188</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>$32.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$5,065.00</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td>$1,500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry County PSA</td>
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<td>822</td>
<td>$34.70</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$7,017.00</td>
<td>$1,750.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsylvania County Service Authority</td>
<td>2,966</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$26.00</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>$5,896.00</td>
<td>$955.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Boones Mill</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>$39.00</td>
<td>$54.00</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$5,300.00</td>
<td>$2,500.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Gretna</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>$29.64</td>
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<tr>
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<td>454</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Danville</td>
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<td>2,519</td>
<td>$22.34</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>$2,672.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Martinsville</td>
<td>6,700</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>$25.50</td>
<td>$32.68</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$2,672.00</td>
<td>$675.00</td>
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</table>


### Wastewater Service in the West Piedmont Planning District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th># Residential Wastewater Units</th>
<th># Non-Residential Wastewater Units</th>
<th>Residential Wastewater Rate Inside (5,000 gal./month)</th>
<th>Residential Wastewater Rate Outside (5,000 gal./month)</th>
<th>Last Wastewater Rate Change</th>
<th>Wastewater Rate - Business Inside (1 million gal./month)</th>
<th>Residential Connection Fee</th>
<th>Residential Capital Recovery Charge</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Virginia Water Authority - Franklin County</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>$49.00</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferrum Water &amp; Sewer Authority</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>$34.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$5,605.00</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry County PSA</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pittsylvania County Service Authority</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>$22.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Boones Mill</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>$39.00</td>
<td>$54.00</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$5,300.00</td>
<td>$3,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Gretna</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$3,005.00</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Rocky Mount</td>
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<td>313</td>
<td>$19.11</td>
<td>$38.22</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$3,149.11</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Danville</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$3,745.93</td>
<td>$675.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Martinsville</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>$23.37</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$2,739.72</td>
<td>$650.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

West Piedmont Planning District Commission Participates in 2013 “Day to Serve”

The second annual Day to Serve took place from September 15th—29th. The Day to Serve includes activities such as book donations and/or donations of canned food, projects relating to environmental/community cleanup, asking communities to evaluate their needs while utilizing the initiative as a call to action, and other activities. The initiative is regional in scope, embraced by the governors of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, as well as the Mayor of Washington, D.C. For this year’s Day to Serve, Governor McDonnell offered a challenge to the Commonwealth to double the accomplishments of 2012, including the number of volunteers, the hours of service provided, and the pounds of food collected, which were 14,000, 26,000, and 600,000 pounds, respectively, in 2012. He stressed that each year, more than 1 million Virginians depend on the Virginia Federation of Food Banks for meals.

The Virginia Association of Planning District Commission (VAPDC) unanimously passed a resolution to endorse Governor McDonnell’s 2013 Day to Serve. The West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) was among the 21 planning district commissions in the Commonwealth to express interest in, and pass a resolution to, support the event. More on the Day to Serve can be found at www.daytoserve.org.

Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Planned

An effort is underway across the State of Virginia including within the West Piedmont Planning District to complete the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. This includes providing connections between completed segments along the tentative proposed route. The initiative is taking place via a partnership between the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The West Piedmont Planning District Commission is one of many entities providing input to VDOT and DCR with regard to the most effective route for the trail.

The proposed route extends from the Cumberland Gap, in the western part of the state, to the Chesapeake Bay, in the eastern portion of the state. Sections of the trail are already in existence, and those in the West Piedmont Planning District include the Ringgold Depot Trail, a 5.5-mile trail in Pittsylvania County east of Danville; the Dan Riverwalk Trail in Danville, at 8.5 miles, the Dick & Willie Passage Trail in Martinsville, at 4.5 miles, the Smith River Fieldale Trail in Henry County, comprising 2.4 miles; and trails through Fairy Stone State Park in Patrick County.

WPPDC Launches Facebook Page

In May 2013, the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) launched its Facebook page to supplement its website, www.wppdc.org. In this era of social media, the WPPDC’s Facebook page is a tool through which to provide information pertinent to the organization and the region to the public, local officials, and other interested parties.

Currently, the WPPDC’s Facebook page contains organizational contact information, a description of the organization’s activities, and a variety of photos from throughout the region including those of the Smith River, Philpott Lake, and the communities the WPPDC serves. The page is also used to draw attention to upcoming and recent events and activities, and advertises initiatives the organization has been involved with. For example, links to the recent Rural Virginia Skills Gap presentation and the Smith River Fest were posted, as was a notice of the availability of the 2013 Annual Report for the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Public notices for meetings will also be posted on the Facebook page. Additionally, the public can provide recommendations and feedback to the WPPDC through this page.

The WPPDC’s Facebook page can be viewed at https://www.facebook.com/WestPiedmontPlanningDistrictCommission.
Philpott Marina Nears Completion

The marina project at Philpott Lake is nearing completion and the associated group campground is complete. The groundbreaking ceremony for the marina took place on May 22nd. It is being constructed at the boat ramp located near the visitors center at Philpott Lake Recreation Area in Henry County.

The marina will consist of 40 boat slips, each to be leased at $1,200 per year; a floating general store which will sell food, drinks, and fishing gear; a fueling station for boats; a multi-use area which will include picnic tables; restrooms; and associated parking. By late August, marina construction was well underway, as dock components arrived and were being assembled. The marina, which will be owned and operated by the Henry County Department of Parks & Recreation, was estimated to cost $1,354,109 to construct, with Henry County contributing $785,971, the Harvest Foundation providing $418,138, and the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation providing $150,000.

A component of the marina initiative is a nearby group campground project, which was completed in July and enhances a facility that existed at the site previously. The upgraded facility features ten group campsites, each with water, sewer, and electrical connections; restroom and shower facilities; and a picnic shelter. Recreational and entertainment amenities include a basketball hoop, a sandbox for children, a horseshoe pit, and an amphitheater; two boat slips (in addition to the 40 being constructed at the marina) which will be available to campground occupants. The facility is the only one of its kind at Philpott Lake offering utility connections. The nightly rate for this facility is $100.

The only other marina serving Philpott Lake was Twin Ridge Marina, located at Twin Ridge Recreation Area on the Franklin County side of the lake, but this facility was destroyed by fire in 2001. The new marina will be the 26th facility operated by Henry County and will likely increase tourism and economic development for the county. The Army Corps of Engineers estimates that the lake already attracts 500,000 visitors and contributes $20 million to the local economy annually. By September 2013, 71 individuals had inquired about leasing boat slips at the new marina.

In 2012, Henry County commissioned the West Piedmont Planning District Commission to conduct a market study to determine the feasibility of constructing the marina. A significant finding of the study was that the proportion of boat registrations in jurisdictions immediately surrounding Philpott Lake was three times that of the state.
The table above, entitled *Economic Trends in the West Piedmont Planning District*, summarizes a variety of demographic and economic data for the West Piedmont Planning District. One trend to note is the mixed average weekly wage for the period encompassing the 3rd Quarter of 2012 through the 1st Quarter of 2013, which shows the average weekly wage increasing in all localities—with the exception of Henry County—and the state from the 3rd Quarter of 2012 to the 4th Quarter of 2012, then decreasing again during the 1st Quarter of 2013 in all localities and the state. Another trend to note is the declining annualized unemployment rate in all localities, the state, and the U.S. from 2010 to 2012. Other data show trends in Per Capita Income, Median Household Income, population changes over time, and other economic data.
Attainment of Work Ready Community Goals in the Dan River Region Collaborative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workforce Type</th>
<th>Henry County</th>
<th>Patrick County</th>
<th>Pittsylvania County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actual NCRC</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers Supporting</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workforce Type</th>
<th>Danville City</th>
<th>Martinsville City</th>
<th>Halifax County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actual NCRC</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers Supporting</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Indicates that the Actual NCRC has surpassed the goal. In this case, the locality is not given additional credit for surpassing the goal, so the Actual NCRC figure only reflects the maximum for which a locality can take credit.

The table above, entitled *Attainment of Work Readiness Goals for the Dan River Region Collaborative, January 1, 2012—August 31, 2013*, relates to current goals attained by each locality in the Dan River Region Collaborative footprint, with regard to becoming an ACT Certified Work Ready Community. Attainment of ACT Certified Work Ready status is important to the region because it certifies that a minimum number of the region’s residents are able to perform certain jobs. For instance, bronze certification, the lowest certification level, ensures that an individual can perform 16 percent of jobs; and platinum, the highest, ensures that an individual can perform 99 percent of jobs. The exam one would take to determine their work ability evaluates skills in applied mathematics, reading for information, locating information, and “soft skills.” The table shows goals set for each locality and the region, as they pertain to accomplishment of work readiness certification status as well as the progress achieved for attaining those goals, expressed in both absolute numbers and percentages. Under the heading “Workforce Type,” Emerging workforce refers to high school juniors and seniors, college students, and recent graduates; the Current workforce refers to those individuals currently employed in either the public or private sector; the Transitioning workforce refers to those who are unemployed, are participating in an adult education or GED program, or have recently completed such a program; and Employers Supporting refers to businesses that have chosen to recognize, recommend, or prefer the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) in supporting their locality to become a certified work ready community.

The table shows that Henry County was the closest of each of the localities to achieving ACT Certified Work Ready Community status, with about 40 percent of goals attained for individuals earning career readiness certification. Pittsylvania County came in second, with about 35 percent of goals attained. The asterisks found under Actual NCRC within Current workforce indicate that the goal has been exceeded. Since the numbers in excess are not taken into account when compiling percentages and localities are not given additional credit for these figures, they are not included. However, for Henry County, this figure was 71; for Patrick County, it was 14; for Pittsylvania County, it was 74; and for Halifax County, it was 171.